Julian of Norwich and Us
Revelations of Divine Love
Maple Grove UMC
October 10, 2021
Rev. Patricia Wagner

Quotes (in italics) are from "Meditations with Julian of Norwich" a translation of her writings by Brendan Doyle. Bear & Company Publishers, 1982.

We do not know her true name, only the name of the church in which she would come to live, St. Julian's Roman Catholic Church, in Norwich, England. She was born in 1342, and the Black, or Bubonic Plague, reached England in 1349, when she was 7.

The disease was airborne, and was carried by rats and fleas, people and clothing. It traveled the world road, by river or by ship, and caused inflammation and boils and terrible pain. It killed all the street sweepers in London, 2 of every three clergy and a great many children. Half the population of England died, and at least 1/3 of Europe and much of the world.

There was no world health organization to warn or guide, there were no vaccines or treatments other than comfort and quarantine. The plague would come and go for more than would last her whole lifetime, into the next century.

Julian became sick with what illness we do not know, and hovered near death, receiving last rites. During this time, she received sixteen revelations from God.

Julian -
When I was only thirty and a half year old
I had a sickness unto death
and it pained me to think of dying
not because I had any special plans for my life, nor fear of any pain
In so short a time,
I had experienced so little of life.
I thought my life as nothing
and no longer giving praise to the Good Lord

but I longed to live to love God
better and longer here,
so I might know and love God more
when in the joy of heaven

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Then God showed me in my palm
a little thing round as a ball,
about the size of a hazelnut

I asked myself,
What is this thing?

And I was answered, "It is everything that is created"

I wondered how it could survive
since it seemed so little
it could suddenly disintegrate into nothing.

The Answer came:
"It endures and ever will endure,
because God loves it."

And so everything has being because of God's love.
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Julian felt called to leave her world and was accepted as an anchoress,
After a special service of holy communion, she was conducted to a small room built into the wall of the church with a window to the sanctuary, and one to the outside world. She lived there the rest of her life.

There she wrote down the visions God had given her. And the book, Showings, and her second "Revelations of Divine Love" are the first known writings by a woman in the English language.

Her words were simple, but stunning, for they turned around the church's teaching of an angry, wrathful God, who set the plague to punish a sinful world.

The True Nature of God

God is good
and
and the goodness
that everything possesses
is
God

God feels great delight
to be our Father
and God feels great delight
to be our Mother
and God feels great delight
to be our True Spouse
and our soul, God's loved Wife

Jesus feels great delight
that he is our Brother
and Jesus feels great delight
that he is our Savior

These are the five great joys of God
The fullness of our joy
is to behold God in everything

**The Mingling of Sorrow and Joy**

Julian recognized it is difficult to feel this joy. People would come to her window at the church to seek her counsel: Mothers and fathers who'd lost children, children who lost parents,

What would we tell Mother Julian? What might she say as we share with her this mingling of heartache and hope in us.

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**Julian** -

The mingling of both well-being
and distress in us
is so astonishing that we can
hardly tell which state we
or our neighbor are in.

We stand in this mingling our whole life.

We seek rest where there is no rest
and therefore are uneasy.
not knowing that God is our True Rest

Sometimes, we experience such darkness
that we lose all our energy

But our intent in life
is to continue to live in God
and faithfully trust
that we will be shown
compassion and grace.

God did not say:
"You will not be tempested."
You will not labor hard.
You will not be troubled."
But God did say:
"You will not be overcome."

There is no Separation between Us and God

Julian recognized how we fail, she saw it clearly in herself and in the situations of those who came to her. But God showed her we are in her words, "oned" with God, and have been so since the beginning of creation and while we may may be inclined to division or self-hate, nothing we do or think or say can separate us now, or ever, from divine love

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Julian
Often,
our trust is not full.
We are not certain that God hears us because we consider ourselves worthless and as nothing.
This is ridiculous and the cause of our weakness

I have felt this way myself.

But God has chosen the soul of humanity as his resting place.
God never began to love us We have always been known and loved from the beginning. we are knit and oned with God.
We are unlike God
in our sinful ways.
But our prayer is a witness
to the fact that we want
what God wants.
and this strengthens our conscience
and empowers us with grace.

Prayer ones our soul to God

When we think that our prayers
have not been answered
we should not become depressed
over it.

I am certain
that God is telling us
that we must wait for a better time
more grace,
or that a better gift will be given us.

God kindles our soul
and brings it to life
and makes it grow
in grace and capacity.

All Shall Be Well

I met Julian just when I turned 30, in this translation we are using today
by Brendan Doyle, and carried it around in my backpack for 10 years.
When I was so wounded by others, when the world got so grim, when I
wasn't sure what or how to believe, I went to this book and Julian met
me at the window of her cell and carried me through. As they did all
those who came to her window and have come to hear her.
There is no better saint for the times of pandemic than she, no one to counter the world weariness, no one more available to open our eyes and say, be not afraid.


"Love is his meaning"

Julian
We see so much evil around us
so much harm done
that we think it impossible
that there is any good in this world

We look at this in sorrow
and mourn so
that we cannot see God as we should.

My good Lord answered all my questions
and doubts by saying,
full of energy:

"I can make all things well
I know how to make all things well
I desire to make all things well,
I will make all things well,

and you will see with your own eyes
that every kind of thing will be well."

Afterwards, it was said to me:

"Do you wish to see clearly
your Lord's meaning
in these Showings?
See it well.
Love
was your Lord's meaning.

Who showed it to you?
Love.

What did you see?
Love.

Why was it shown?
For Love."

And on the last day
we will clearly see in God
the secret thoughts
that are now hidden from us.

Then none of us will be stirred to say:
" Lord, if we had known these things
then all would have been well."

Instead
we will all say with one voice.

"Lord, may you be blessed!
For it is well."

Amen.