

**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.

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### **The True Nature of God**

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

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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 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.

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### **"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.**