College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU

School of Theology and Seminary Graduate Papers/Theses

School of Theology and Seminary

Spring 5-14-2017

The Paradox of Remarkable/Unremarkable Julian of Norwich

John P. Fitzgibbons College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, JPFITZGIBBONS@CSBSJU.EDU

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/sot_papers Part of the Religion Commons, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation

Fitzgibbons, John P., "The Paradox of Remarkable/Unremarkable Julian of Norwich" (2017). *School of Theology and Seminary Graduate Papers/Theses*. 1910. https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/sot_papers/1910

This Graduate Paper is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Theology and Seminary Graduate Papers/Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csbsju.edu.

The Paradox of Remarkable/Unremarkable Julian of Norwich

by John Patrick Fitzgibbons 4320 Elliot Avenue South Minneapolis, MN United States of America

A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Theology and Seminary of

Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts in Theology

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND SEMINARY

Saint John's University

Collegeville, Minnesota

December , 2016

This paper was written under the direction of

[Signature of Director]

Dr. Charles Bobertz, PhD.

The Paradox of Remarkable/Unremarkable Julian of Norwich

Description: A brief exploration of the themes and influences found in the literary work, *Showings: A Revelation of Love* by the English author, Julian of Norwich. Initially written for Prof. Sr. Mary Forman, OSB, PhD, as part of the requirements for the class, History of Christian Prayer at St. John's University, School of Theology.

This paper may be duplicated.

[Signature of Student Writer]

The Paradox of Remarkable/Unremarkable Julian of Norwich

Although relatively little is known about whom the woman actually was, much has been written about the Lady Julian of Norwich. Julian is primarily known for her literary work entitled Showings: A Revelation of Love, which exists in two forms. The first, known as the Short Text, is her somewhat immediate response to a series of visions she experienced while suffering from a physical malady of some nature. The Long Text is the result of her re-working her own initial text over roughly the subsequent twenty years. The mere existence of this twofold work is significant not only because it is the first extant writing by a woman composed in English, but also because given its nature as essentially a report on a mystical experience, it is a surprisingly coherent literary work. Through exploring and reflecting on the Short Text, it is hoped to show how her initial experiences of a series of sixteen visions are a conveyed through the style and manner of the work, taking into consideration her environment and theological concepts prevalent in her day and age. A further exploration of some of the more significant of these concepts will aid in showing how strong and pertinent Julian's theology was in line with and yet further deepened her understanding of almost every one of the issues of the day. Among the numerous themes she addresses, suffering and sin are significant and catalytic proponents that drive much of her work, both being brought into balance in the recognition and experience of the magnitude of God's love and forgiveness. In addition to this, throughout it all she is continually being made aware of how God, creator of all things, is also the protector of all things. As she journeys through her visions, she develops these ideas in such a manner so as not to put forth any sense of challenge to the male dominated social and religious structure of the time, but rather supports and expounds upon church teaching and doctrine. By constantly returning to the notion of God's enveloping, protecting and undying love for us, we as the readers, are invited to learn

from her experience of the possibility of eternal bliss in an ultimate union with the Triune Godhead.

Not much more is known of her personal life apart from what we can read in her writings, although we do know a little of what was happening in her surrounding area prior to and during her lifetime. She was born probably around the end of the year 1342 or early in 1343 in the rather large East Anglian town of Norwich, England, which was a notable center of learning in medieval Europe located near the eastern coast. As was the case with many medieval cities, the spire of the local cathedral was a significantly visible structure, factoring prominently as a constant reminder of the presence of God in the lives of the inhabitants of the medieval town. Because of its nearness and accessibility to the continental mainland, Norwich also grew to be a center of learning. As a result of this educational prominence, scholars were drawn there from the continent and no doubt contributed to creating an environment where 'the quality of sermons must have been enviable, and an eager listener might well absorb both advanced ideas and the formulations that would most economically express them.¹ This environment could indeed be a factor in the understanding Julian developed of theological ideas and concepts of her day and age. A leading scholar on the life and writings of Julian, Georgia Ronan Crampton, points out that 'It was chiefly the cathedral that patronized the artists who shaped the great period of East Anglian art [which] was coming to an end at the time of Julian's birth, but...that art...she would have seen about her.² Not only could this exposure to literacy and art help support the idea of a woman growing amidst such vibrant intellectual stimuli, such exposure could also provide a basis for some of the visions Julian experienced and indeed, she herself writes, 'I believed firmly in all Christ's pains, as Holy Church shows and teaches, and as the paintings of

¹ Georgia Ronan Crampton. "The Shewings of Julian of Norwich: Introduction," p. 1, http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/julianin.htm .

² Crampton, p. 5.

the Crucifixion represent',³ which substantiates her familiarity not only with the teachings of the Church but with the artwork that she would have seen as well. Another significant influence on the formation of thought throughout this region would be witnessed in the horrors of the Black Plague brought to the country on two separate instances, in 1347 and then again in 1361. This calamity brought with it a reality of death and suffering, reflected in much of the artwork and which would provide themes which would factor prominently into her work.

Her visions do not occur in a distinct, chronological order, and yet in the removal of a linear sense of time, she is allowed more freedom to touch upon several topics and show their inter-relatedness. "Although it is possible for her to list the revelations separately, none of them stand on their own without reference to each other and especially to the first one which is [love and] fundamental to them all. This becomes apparent also in her theological explorations of their meaning, in which she cannot proceed in a straightforward linear pattern, but is constantly referring back to what has gone before".⁴ This style of her writing provides a reflection of the visions which in a sense, shares the experience with the reader alongside Julian. This form is also one that lends itself particularly well to the idea of not only fourteenth century mysticism, but mysticism in general. There are particular yet few times when Julian indicates that God is speaking directly to her but for the most part, what is revealed happens not with audible or vocalized words, but 'by words formed in my understanding and by spiritual vision' and still before anything is spoken she writes 'before God revealed any words to me, he allowed me to contemplate longer all that I had seen and all that was contained in it. And then there was formed in my soul this saying, without voice and without opening of lips: With this the fiend is

³ Julian of Norwich: Showings, translated and introduced by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh,

Classics of Western Spirituality (New York/Ramsey, NJ/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978) Short Text(ST) p. 125.

⁴ Grace M. Jantzen, Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian(New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1987) p. 89.

overcome.^{55 6} In fact, it is not until nearly a third of the way through her visions that we encounter God actually speaking, when the 'Lord said: I thank you for your service and your labour, and especially in your youth.⁷⁷ It is not until chapter *xii* do we encounter a type of dialogue between the Lord and Julian, although this too bears an indication of occuring 'in her understanding.' With phrases such as this throughout her work as well as many others, brought to my mind, contemplation, in my reason, there came a suggestion and even when 'Christ showed me his Father, not in any corporeal likeness, but in his attributes and in his joy'⁸ we encounter the sense that what is occurring takes place not only out of time but out of language itself. So, early on we are invited to experience her visions much in the manner the Lady Julian...in our understanding.

Placing Julian in an historical context may serve to help give a sense of the importance of her contribution to the fields of both theology and literature. Born possibly in the same year as she, was her contemporary, the great English poet and author Geoffrey Chaucer, sometimes referred to as the father of English literature. Both authors spent a good portion of their lives amidst the chaos of the Hundred Years War between England and France (1337-1453). In addition to the surrounding political strife, around the year 1378 the Church would begin its involvement with the Great Western Schism which would put the structure of the Church into turmoil for almost four decades. This is the environment in which we find Julian of Norwich, a lay woman who composes a significant work of literature based on a religious experience. How then is this work indicative of the influences of this environment in which she is situated? One possible explanation is that the focused, internal nature of the piece is a direct reaction to the external strife and turmoil. Regardless of any exact reason, it is interesting to note that the

⁵ ST 7, p. 135

⁶ ST 8, p. 138

⁷ ibid

⁸ ST 7, p. 145

writing emerges out of a time when academic, political and theological leaders were primarily male, and yet this is a work by a woman which shows a definite awareness and understanding of many serious theological concepts that are incredibly relevant even in today's theological playing field.

In addition to the male dominated socio-economic establishment, it was also a time when death was around every corner, bringing with it a fear for what happens after life on earth is ended. Everyday life was a constant battle to balance this life with death and God's role in everything became paramount and central, much like the spire of the cathedral. Subsequently, Julian's recording of her experiences reflected her search for such an understanding. As was the case with many young women of the time, it was possible that Julian was sent to Norwich to live and study with nuns which would have cultivated her love for Christ in her young life.⁹ Right away in her text we learn that when she was a young girl she had the desire to contract an illness when she would be thirty years old that would bring her a sense of the sufferings Christ had in his Passion. Through the subsequent visions that did indeed come to her at age thirty as a result of such an affliction, she was able to support suppositions concerning a multitude of theological issues in an extremely remarkable manner. Nothing that Julian purported to have encountered or come to understand through her visions was contradictory with the lines of her current theology. What was remarkable was the way in which she was able to achieve a completely unique way of upholding and reinforcing the beliefs and teachings of the day.

⁹ Georgia Crampton explores more in detail the options of religious life for women in the fourteenth century, offering various reasons for how the work might have come into being in the first place. She also notes the possibility, although still merely speculative, of Julian's being a nun, as the work was first discovered in a Benedictine community of nuns in the seventeenth century.

As noted earlier, her initial *Short Text* was a somewhat immediate, visceral and raw response to the series of sixteen visions she had.¹⁰ These visions, which took course over the span of a few days, may have been the result of hallucinations due to an illness in spite of which, reflected in the form of her work which superseded time and space, presented quite a coherent reflection of theological values current in her time, most of which would be upheld even in our world today. Throughout the writings of her encounter, she is able to address numerous theological concepts including, but not limited to, Christology, soteriology, Trinitarianism, sin, grace, prayer, eschatology and ecclesiology. In light of this veritable treasure trove of concepts, she is well aware of her place as a woman in the society and writes directly: 'God forbid that you should say or assume that I am a teacher, for that was never my intention; for I am woman, ignorant, weak and frail.¹¹ This declaration occurs at what seems to be a somewhat lucid moment early on amidst the throes of her illness. Although at that particular moment in time she may indeed have been physically weak and frail, disabled as she was by her malady, in her writing she shows no signs of being weak or frail and certainly not ignorant in her thought, or her writing. Quite to the contrary, she appears to exhibit a certain cleverness in acknowledging her humility, not only to satisfy a male-dominated Church that she was not presuming to 'step on their toes' by professing to be a teacher, but by honestly putting forth to her audience of her fellow Christians that what she has received comes from Jesus 'who is the sovereign teacher... [and] it is truly love which moves me to tell it to you, for I want God to be known and my fellow Christians to prosper, as I hope to prosper myself, by hating sin and loving God more.¹² By offering her humility to the Church and what she has experienced to her fellow Christians, she

¹⁰ We do not know exactly how soon after her visions she wrote this initial response. Although it is intimated that she may have been encouraged to write down her experiences at the urging of her Confessor, there is no exact mention of any date as to when this might have occurred.

¹¹ ST 6, p. 135.

¹² ST Ibid.

has hopes that she will not get in the way of what can be learned because of what God wills to be learned.

Right away at the beginning of her *Short Text* where we learn that as a young girl she asked for the Lord to grant her a 'recollection of the Passion of Christ... [and] a bodily sickness¹³ that would bring her close to death. She wished to be brought so close to death that she might know even a little of the true pain and suffering Christ experienced. We learn of her desire to truly know Christ and more specifically, to know the sufferings of Christ through the witnessing of his Passion on the Cross and in the very next chapter, we read that this has been granted her. This experience begins on the fifteenth of May in the year 1373, as we discover in the more detailed and elaborate second work. Even though she was at death's door, she was reluctant to die, 'because [she] wanted to go on living to love God better and longer, and living so, obtain grace to know and love God more as he is in the bliss of heaven'¹⁴ and this ardent desire of hers to know and love God more was a driving factor throughout her visions, 'for our bliss lasts forevermore, and pain is passing and will be reduced to nothing.¹⁵ Her priest comes to attend to her and asks her to focus on the crucifix which he holds up in front of her. It is during this fixation where her visions begin. All goes dark save for a curious light upon the crucifix and she finds herself aware that her first wish of being present at the suffering of Christ on the Cross is beginning. Immersed in this experience, she learns that his suffering is incurred because of his immense love for us. However, her journey of discovery is not one that travels linearly through time. Her images and experiences and revelations are not sequential –they are out of time and they touch on numerous theological topics, which given the relatively short length of this initial text, is fairly remarkable. In her commentary on Julian's texts, one of the foremost scholars on

¹³ ST 1, p. 125. ¹⁴ ST 2, p. 127.

¹⁵ ST 9, p. 140.

Julian, Ritamary Bradley, notices 'her pattern of speaking simultaneously of time, of the consummation of time and of eternity.¹⁶ Likewise, another Julian expert, Denys Turner, notes that 'Julian's theology is distinctly spiral: it moves forward, as one does along a straight line. It constantly returns to the same point, as one does around a circle. The repetition is therefore never identical, for it has always moved on.¹⁷ While the weaving of themes, topics and ideas vacillate back and forth, all seems to make sense, almost as if one topic sparks a remembrance of something just mentioned. This in turn might bring one back to something just experienced moments before, and so on...much like what might happen in a extemporaneous dialogue. These topics, therefore, become connected and interrelated. At one point she even recognizes how little importance time has on her current life when she writes, '[f]or it seemed to me that all the time that I had lived here was very little and short in comparison to the bliss which is everlasting.¹⁸ Here, even her own life seems to be something lifted out of a larger, eternal timelessness schema.

Sin and suffering are underlying components from the beginning of the work throughout until the end. The harsh realities of her day and age made suffering a daily occurrence, with sin often being made manifest as the progenerator on such suffering. However, as medieval scholar, Joan M. Nuth notes in her comparison of the theologies of Julian and Anselm of Canterbury, "Julian has a broad understanding of the word, 'sin.' It means more to her than the active free choice of evil on the part of the sinner."¹⁹ Marveling at God's omnipresence in chapter viii, she arrives at the conclusion that since this vision reveals that everything God does is 'well done, and I was certain that God does no sin. Therefore it seemed to me that sin is nothing, for in all this

 ¹⁶ Ritamary Bradley, Julian's Way: A Practical Commentary on Julian of Norwich (London, GB: Harper Collins Religious, 1992) p. 76.

¹⁷ Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (Yale University, 2011) p. 4.

¹⁸ ST 2, p. 127.

¹⁹ Joan M. Nuth, "Two Medieval Soteriologies: Anselm of Canterbury and Julian of Norwich," *Theological Studies* 53 (1992) p. 635.

sin was not shown to me.²⁰ Her understanding is developed further in chapter xiii when she learns that 'in the word sin, our Lord brought generally to mind all which is not good.' Continuing in this vein, Julian notes, 'but I did not see sin, for I believe it has no kind of substance, no share in being, nor can it be recognized except by the pains which it causes. And it seems to me that this pain is something for a time, for it purges us and makes us know ourselves and ask for mercy.²¹ Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that this invisible sin is experienced in pain and suffering. Julian comes to learn that 'sin is necessary.'²² When she writes 'God brought to my mind that I should sin' she is coming to understand how she can therefore share in the experience of Christ's suffering.²³ Out of love for humanity and with this new understanding, she sees a way that that will guide her on the road to eternal bliss. Learning from God 'that sin is no shame, but honor to man²⁴ it becomes apparent to her, once again in her mind, that even all the saints, (although revered as holy) were also human and therefore sinners; this brings her comfort. Her understanding that in spite of the pain of sin that all endure, 'all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.²⁵ This is a direct result of God's undying love. That God's love is so powerful and enveloping that blame, retribution, and unworthiness all fall to the wayside and that all suffering is as a result of not being one with God and God's love becomes one of the more crucial ideologies which evolves from her experience. To her, even in our sin, God holds no blame. God is not unattainable or distant or exceptionally harsh in judgement but rather is continually offering us mercy and love. It is in *our* decisions where it falls on us to choose this love which allows us to know the comfort and subsequent joy of this love.

²⁰ ST 8, p.137

²¹ ST 13, pp. 148-149.

²² ST 13, p. 148.

²³ ST 16, p. 153.

²⁴ ST 17, p. 154

²⁵ ST 13, p. 149.

So great is this love that Christ says to her, 'It is a great joy and a bliss and an endless delight that ever I suffer my Passion for you, for if I could suffer more, I would.²⁶ What a truly beautiful statement this is; it is no wonder Julian found herself joyful because of this. She has come to learn that through Christ's suffering because of the love he holds for us, her pain is lessened. In knowing this, she also comes to realize that this love is so great that it stirs up within her a desire for ultimate union with Christ; to be at one with him. This realization has been made possible only through his suffering out of such an immense love for human beings and for their sins; sins which humans are meant to do, otherwise they would never have an opportunity to experience this joy. Throughout her experiences, defying concrete space and time and returning repeatedly to the image of Christ's Passion on the Cross, we are also made aware of the love and sufferings of others, and in particular, the Virgin Mother. From the mother grieving for her child dying a horrible and lonely death, Julian notes that particular suffering through love unites them as one. This theology kindles and reaffirms her own desire to be at one in Christ's love. The desire for her ultimate goal: awareness of and union with Christ as Savior, all bound together with his all-encompassing love. This unity is always at the forefront, and we are continually reminded of the incredible significance of Christ's selfless and immense love for all of humanity.

The magnitude of this enveloping love is made apparent in one of the more frequently cited and commented upon of her sixteen visions. In this 'hazelnut vision' in chapter iv of the *Showings*, we, along with Julian, encounter God as Creator and Protector and come to realize the love God holds for us as small as we may be within the vastness of God.

And in this he showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, and I perceived that it was round as any ball. I looked at it and thought: What can this be? And I was given this general answer: It is everything which is made. I was amazed that it could last, for I thought that it was so little that it could suddenly fall into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything

²⁶ ST 12, p. 144.

has being through the love of God. In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that he loves it, the third is that God preserves it.27

This particular vision offers a much more expansive explanation of God, one in which God is so much greater than human beings can even fathom. Having been created out of God's immense love, we human beings, along with all of creation, continue to exist, taken care of due to the protection God offers. Gazing upon the small object in her hand, she experiences the smallness of herself in her similarly small world in comparison to the vastness of God which she senses to be all around and infinite. It is a pretty cosmic awareness, especially knowing today, as we do, that in the very year of her visions the notable astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus was born. With his significant and jarring heliocentric theory which would shift the center of the medieval mind's universe from the earth to the sun, and soon, even in her own lifetime, open up the mere idea of the cosmos itself, significantly broadening the medieval mind. Is Julian's vison here prescient of a heavenly body that exists not as the center of a universe, but rather as something which is inextricably in relation to and dependent upon a power which can be known as God the Creator and Protector? In today's day and age, it would be easy enough to equate the hazelnut to our own very earth, and marvel at how this little planet is allowed to exist in this unfathomably vast universe, whereas in the late fourteenth century, that would be nothing short of a remarkable idea. However, even today, if we were to ruminate upon how out tiny little planet fits into all we know about the vast expanse of the ever-growing universe, in our wonder we might find ourselves, like Julian, 'amazed that it could last, for I thought that it was so little that it could suddenly fall into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God.²⁸ We can then think about where we are in this universe and subsequently realize that where we are is on a tiny

²⁷ ST 4, p.130 ²⁸ ST ibid

hazelnut of a planet, any 'I' reference, therefore, becomes completely inconsequential, invalid, inadequate and inordinate. Individual no longer works and we sense that instead of 'I,' it must be 'we.'

This recognition of others is yet another tenet that Julian brings forth. She is constantly referring to her "fellow Christians," for whom she wishes not to be teacher, but to be an example by which God can show the effects of God's eternal and undying love. People are not alone in this world and Julian states such plainly when she writes, 'I am in the unity of love with all my fellow Christians.'²⁹ That is why all that Julian of Norwich describes makes sense. The planet, Julian's 'hazelnut' lies in that which is so vast we cannot comprehend the magnitude. The planet is here and it exists regardless of whichever law of physics might be able to explain that fact. It was made and it is here and it is protected. Something allows our earth and subsequently us to remain here living and thinking, something greater than us. Even the most intellectual *and* the most ignorant should be able to detect the fact that human existence here is, frankly, remarkable.

What is so remarkable about the visions of Julian of Norwich? Perhaps it might be better to step back and ask what is *not* so remarkable about her visions? Frankly, the answer to the latter is the fact that they are not ground breaking in what they purport. Everything she writes about makes sense and seems to fit in and adhere to current beliefs and teaching of her day. And yet, the fact that she seems to be able to write concerning just about everything, is fairly remarkable; in a short period of time she hits virtually all major points of theology. What is perhaps not so remarkable is that all these major points make sense. Maybe her most famous vision of the hazelnut is remarkable in showing that the world and its surroundings are made and protected by God. All the things she encounters throughout her visions, she has more than likely encountered in some manner or aspect throughout her life.

²⁹ ST 6, p. 134.

The influences of the plague in her town, with its gruesome death, may have risen to the surface in her delirium and manifested itself in her visions, coloring how she experienced them. Perhaps the paintings she had at some point viewed, lent them themselves to be revisited in her visions of Christ's Passion on the Cross. The Church's teachings on sin and grace and other theological concepts clearly have been deeply immersed in her thought and being, and perhaps these thoughts and concepts sought to rise in her awareness and cry out for understanding and clarity. What is remarkable about these visions, however, is that God allowed them to happen. God granted her, in a sense, a manner in which she could process things and events that she had experienced: art that she had seen, books that she had read, sermons that she had heard. She was a woman in the fourteenth century who was not allowed to do much in her society, least of all teach, but she was clearly intelligent enough to be capable of teaching, and she most certainly had a desire to know God more intimately and to 'rejoice only in our blessed savior Jesus, and trust in him for everything.³⁰

But she was also clever enough to make it seem that she was not being 'presumptuous' enough to claim to teach, but rather be an example for her fellow Christians to 'contemplate Jesus, who is every man's teacher.³¹ The doctrines of the Church are very important to her, evidenced in her obvious love for and recognition of the blessed Trinity. This concept is much more heavily examined in her Long Text, but this may have been subliminally germinated in her first text with the fact that the idea of three is thematically intertwined throughout the work in examples of wishes and things learned in the course of her visions. From the very beginning, we encounter such examples: she 'desired three graces by the gift of God.'³² she desired three

³⁰ ST 4, p. 151. ³¹ ST 6, p. 135.

³² ST 1, p. 125

wounds' of St. Cecilia,³³ she saw the three properties of the small object shown to her,³⁴ and the revelation of three nothings,³⁵ the three parts of the blessed teachings,³⁶ the three things against the devil,³⁷ the three degrees of bliss,³⁸ the three heavens,³⁹ three sayings,⁴⁰ the three occasions of the Virgin Mary⁴¹ and even to the three repetitions of God's question to her near the end of her visions, 'Why then should it grieve you to endure for a while, since it is my will and to my glory?⁴² Perhaps these are nothing more than curious coincidences and there really nothing is significant about these instances. Indeed, she upsets any sort of solid theory with the introduction of *four* fears in her ultimate chapter and yet, the number three is clearly significant and by the end of her visions she has come to the realization that '[t]hough the persons of the blessed Trinity be all alike in their attributes, it was their love which was most shown to me, and that it is closest to us all.⁴³ Once again she displays a grasp of a theological idea that many would grapple with while at the same time reiterating the idea that love is the all-encompassing force that makes it possible for all of humanity to be healed and protected.

Because of the relative immediacy of her response to the visions, her initial reactions are remarkable in the sense that they are near to when she experienced them, they are unremarkable in the fact that she was not bringing anything necessarily new to the theological insight. They are remarkable in that she was able to experience this out of time allowing her brain to process all that she encountered and to have a vision that was free from earthly ties. We see the idea of God the protector and we learn along with Julian that 'He is our clothing, for he is that love which

- ³⁴ ST 4, p. 131 35 ibid
- ³⁶ ST 7, p. 135
- ³⁷ ST 8, p. 138
- ³⁸ ST 9, p. 139
- ³⁹ ST 12, p. 145
- ⁴⁰ ibid

³³ ST 1, p. 127

⁴¹ ST 13, p.147 ⁴² ST 20, pp.160-162

⁴³ ST 24, p. 168

wraps and enfolds us, embraces us and guides us, surrounds us with his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us.⁴⁴ Through her experience, we are allowed to explore the paradox of the idea of sin being necessary but nothing, as it is not created by God, but 'as sin is punished here with sorrow and penance, in contrary fashion it will be rewarded in heaven by the courteous love of our Lord God almighty,⁴⁵ because of the undying and eternal love that Christ has for all. This love is truly the through-line of Julian's visions, weaving in and out between images and concepts and ideas, creating an experience that, above and out of the confines of time and space, provides the energy which binds everything to God and ultimately draws us to a blissful union with God in which: "All will be well."

History of Christian Prayer

Prof. Sr. Mary Forman, OSB

⁴⁴ ST 4, p. 130. ⁴⁵ ST 7, p. 155.

Bibliography

- Bradley, Ritamary. Julian's Way: A Practical Commentary on Julian of Norwich. London, GB: Harper CollinsReligious, 1992.
- Crampton, Georgis Ronan. "The Showings of Julian of Norwich: Introduction," pp.1-10, <u>http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/julianin.htm</u>.
- Jantzen, Grace M. Julian of Norwich: *Mystic and Theologian*. New York/Mahwah, New Jersey, :Paulist Press, 1987.
- Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays. Edited by Sandra J. McEntire. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998.
- *Julian of Norwich: Showings*. Translated and introduced by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York/Ramsey, NJ/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1978.
- Nuth, Joan M. "Two Medieval Soteriologies: Anselm of Canterbury and Julian of Norwich." *Theological Studies 53* (1992) 611-645.
- Turner, Denys. Julian of Norwich, Theologian. Yale University, 2011.