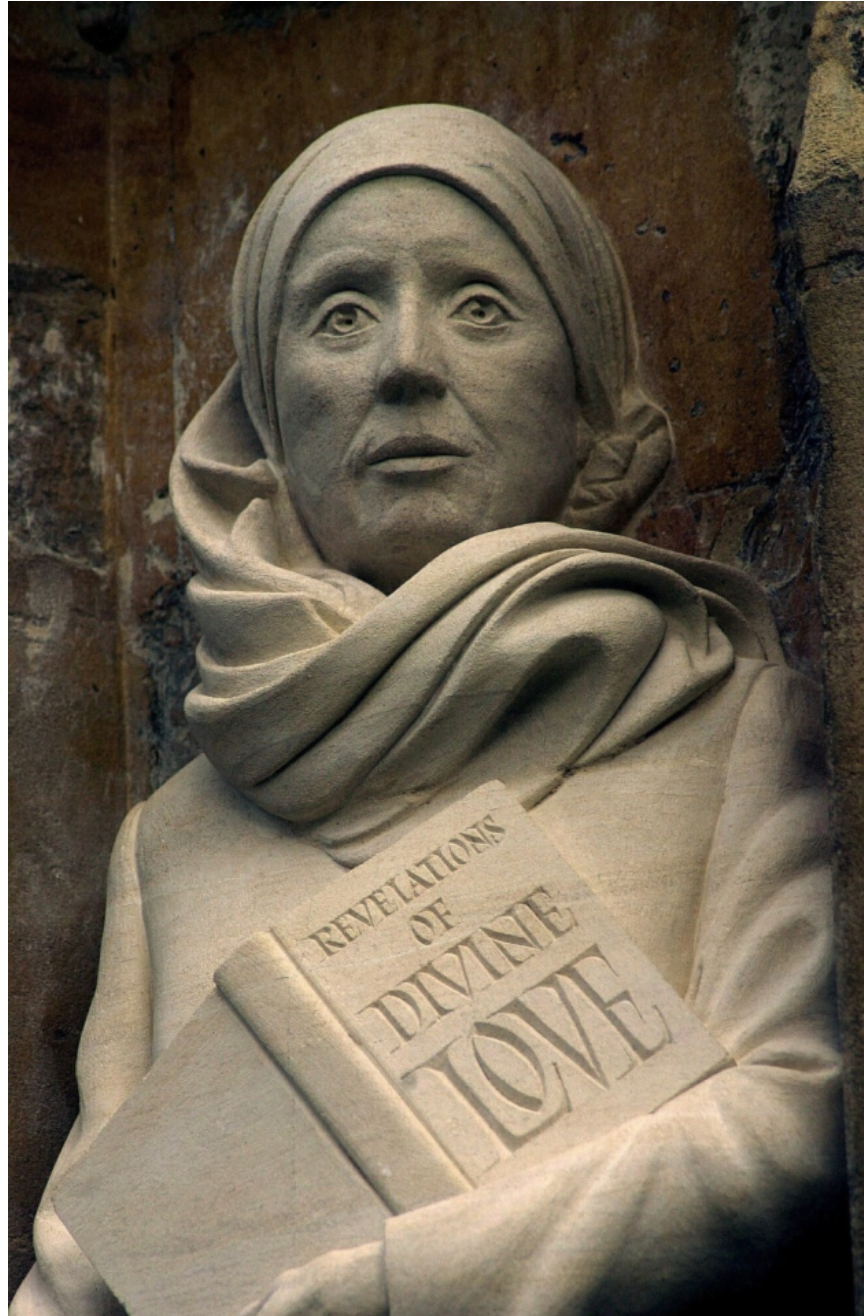


Diocese of Derby Reading Group

Julian of Norwich – “Revelations of Divine Love”



Statue of Julian outside Norwich Cathedral

Author

Julian (or Juliana) was an anchoress and mystic who lived in Norwich between 1343 to sometime after 1416. She lived most of her life as an anchoress in seclusion based in a cell attached to the church of St. Julian, from which it is thought she took her name. Various theories over the years have suggested that Julian was either originally a nun or a married woman who lost her husband and children to the Plague.

Julian withdrew from society to become an anchoress following a severe illness when aged 30 during which she had a series of visions which she spent the rest of her life reflecting upon. She claimed to be 'unlettered', which might mean she had not received a formal education, yet writing in Middle English, she reveals a wide knowledge and vivid insights into the Trinity, creation, the Motherhood of God, prayer amongst other subjects.

Devoting her life to prayer and reflection, Julian's cell had two windows: one faced into the church where she could join in worship and receive the sacrament and the other facing into the world where visitors would come to seek spiritual advice. Her writings speak to a world full of fear and uncertainty, sharing the Divine message of mercy, grace and love that *"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."*^d

Context

Julian lived during a period of great upheaval and turmoil. There were two waves of the Black Death (1348-1350 & 1361-1362) which devastated the economy and killed between 40-60% of the population in the first wave and 20% in the second. The upheaval caused by the disease led to increased unrest in society which culminated in the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. All this was set against the backdrop of a long troubled relationship with the European mainland and ongoing conflict with France in what later became known as the Hundred Year's War (1337-1453).

Outline & Contents

Julian wrote two versions of her Revelations or Showings known as the Short Text and the Long Text. We are invited to read and reflect on the words of the Long Text

Editions

Copies of the Revelations of Divine Love or Showings are readily available in a number of editions from bookshops or online retailers including:

Julian of Norwich 'Showings' (Translated & Introduced by Edmund Colledge, O.S.A & James Walsh, SJ, Paulist Press, 1977 [Classics of Western Spirituality])

C.Wolters (Tr) 'Julian of Norwich: Revelations of Divine Love' 1966

Suggested Reading Scheme

What speaks to you from the passage?

Are there any words or images that resonate?

Are there any images or phrases that you find challenging?

How might some of Julian's thoughts resonate with our current situation?

Day 1

Read chapters 1 & 2

Julian introduces the 16 showings she received and her three desires / requests of God

Day 2

Read chapters 3 & 4

Julian's illness and her vision of the crucified Lord. Reflections on the Trinity and the Virgin Mary

Day 3

Read chapters 5 & 6

Reflections on creation and prayer

Day 4

Read chapters 7, 8 & 9

Further reflections on the first revelation

Day 5

Read chapters 10 & 11

The second & third revelations

Day 6

Read chapters 12, 13, 14 & 15

The fourth, fifth & sixth revelations

Day 7

Read chapters 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20

The seventh & eighth revelations

Day 8

Read chapters 21, 22 & 23

The ninth revelation

Day 9

Read chapters 24, 25 & 26

The tenth, eleventh & twelfth revelations

Day 10

Read chapters 27, 28, 29 & 30

The thirteenth revelation & reflections on sin

Day 11

Read chapters 31, 32 & 33

Further reflections

Day 12

Read chapters 34, 35 & 36

Reflections on salvation

Day 13

Read chapters 37, 38, 39 & 40

Reflections on sin

Day 14

Read chapters 41, 42 & 43

The fourteenth revelation & reflections on prayer

Day 15

Read chapters 44, 45 & 46

Further reflections on judgment

Day 16

Read chapters 47, 48, 49 & 50

Further reflections

Day 17

Read chapter 51

The Parable of the Master & the Servant

Day 18

Read chapters 52, 53 & 54

Reflections on Divine Love

Day 19

Read chapters 55, 56 & 57

Further reflections on the fourteenth revelation

Day 20

Read chapters 58, 59 & 60

Reflections on the Trinity & Christ as Mother

Day 21

Read chapters 61, 62 & 63

Further reflections

Day 22

Read chapters 64 & 65

The fifteenth revelation

Day 23

Read chapters 66, 67, 68 & 69

The sixteenth revelation

Day 24

Read chapters 70 & 71

Further reflections

Day 25

Read chapters 72 & 73

Reflections on sin

Day 26

Read chapters 74, 75 & 76

Reflections on fear

Day 27

Read chapters 77, 78 & 79

Further reflections

Day 28

Read chapters 80, 81 & 82

Reflections on sin & Love

Day 29

Read chapters 83, 84 & 85

Reflections on charity

Day 30

Read chapter 86

'Love was His meaning'

Further Reading

'Enfolded in Love: Daily readings with Julian of Norwich',	DLT	1980
B.Doyle 'Meditations with Julian of Norwich'	Bear & Co.	1983
R.Llewelyn 'With Pity Not With Blame' (2 nd ed.)	DLT	1989
E.R.Obbard 'Through Julian's Windows'	Canterbury	2008
R.Llewelyn (ed) 'Julian:Woman of our day'	DLT	1985
B.Pelphrey 'Christ our Mother'	DLT	1989
G.Jantzen 'Julian of Norwich' (New edition)	SPCK	2000
D.Turner 'Julian of Norwich, Theologian'	Yale	2011

'He did not say, "You shall not be tempest-tossed, you shall not be work-weary, you shall not be discomfited." But he said, "You shall not be overcome."'