

PRAYING WITH MOTHER JULIAN

1. ENCLOSED WITH GOD

Good morning

Today and for two other morning reflections, I'm going to be sharing

with you some of the writings of Mother Julian of Norwich.



Julian lived in the 14th century, and spent the greater part of her life as an anchoress, that is to say, she chose to be enclosed (walled into) a cell attached to the side wall of St Julian's church in Norwich. It was from the church that she took her name.

We may think this to be a strange sort of lifestyle to choose, but in her time it was not so unusual. At the time of Henry VIII, it was recorded that there were 32 anchorages in the city of Norwich alone.

Julian chose this way of life in order to meditate upon a remarkable set of visions she'd had. And we know about them because she wrote a book – the first ever book to be written in the English language by a woman.

Julian's cell had a window that opened onto the street outside, and from this window she met and counselled and prayed with visitors and pilgrims. Through her writings she can meet and pray with us too, across the centuries.

She chose to be totally lost in God. Enclosed with God.

She wrote:

For as the body is clad in clothes

And the flesh in the skin

And the bones in the flesh

And the heart in the breast

So are we, soul and body, clad in the goodness of God, and enclosed.

So her message to us is that when we pray we too become enclosed with God, completely rooted in endless love. Enclosed, enfolded, wrapped, knit, rooted, were all words she used. In a world dominated by Popes and empires, crusades, cruelty and superstition, Julian gave us a beautiful vision of the unending reality of divine love.

She wrote:

*Before ever he made us, God loved us,
and when we were created, we loved him*

*And this is a love created by the natural essential goodness of the Holy Spirit
mighty by reason of the power of the Father
and wise in reminder of the wisdom of the Son
And thus is man's soul made by God
and at the same moment knit to God.*

Indeed,

I saw no difference between God and our essence, but just as if all were God.....

*The all-powerful truth of the Trinity is our Father,
for he created us and keeps us within him,
and the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our mother
in whom we are all enclosed,
and the exalted goodness of the Trinity is our Lord,
and in him we are enfolded and he in us,*

*We are enfolded in the Father
we are enfolded in the Son
we are enfolded in the Holy Spirit
and the Father is enfolded in us
and the Son is enfolded in us
and the Holy Spirit is enfolded in us
all power, all wisdom,
all goodness,
one God, one Lord.*