



Magazine
August
2022

The Julian Meetings Magazine August 2022

CONTENTS	PAGE
Beginning - Being - Becoming - JM at 50	2
50th Anniversary event	4
Picture of Christ by Reginald LLOYD	5
Called by Name by Rosemary Weekes	6
Painting and Prayer by Anne Stamper	8
‘Beginnings’ by Hilary Wakeman	10
Your experiences of Julian Meetings	13
In a Time of War from a Norfolk JM	14
Quote from Quaker Faith and Practice	15
Advertising your Julian Meeting	16
Publications Order Form	
Quotation. CD review.	17
Audio developments	18
A Request. Newly Registered Julian Meetings	19
An Introduction to Quiet Prayer from Shoreham-by-Sea	20
Beautiful Silence poem by Elizabeth Mills	23
Book Reviews: Monastic Vocation, <i>Sisters of the Love of God</i> ; Behold the Word: 52 visual meditations, <i>James Roose-Evans</i> ; The Life of Christ Pts 3 & 4, <i>Ludolph of Saxony</i> ; Silent Rosary: a contemplative, exegetical and iconographic tour through the Holy Mysteries, <i>Addison Hodges Hart</i> ; On Retreat with Henri Nouwen: engaging life’s big questions, <i>Chris Pritchett & Marjorie Thompson</i> ; St Benedict’s Rule: and inclusive translation & daily commentary, <i>Sr Judith Sutura OSB</i>	24-29
JM Magazine information and JM contact details	30-31

*Each writer expresses their own views, which may not be held
by the Editor or by the Julian Meetings Council.*

The Julian Meetings

- *Foster the teaching and practice of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition*
- *Encourage people to practise contemplative prayer in their daily lives, and explore ways of doing this which are appropriate for them*
- *Support the individual ecumenical Julian Meetings — groups whose members meet regularly to practise Christian contemplative prayer together*

For more information,
visit our website at
www.thejulianmeetings.net

This QR code will
take you directly to it



We do not charge a subscription for this magazine.
We do invite readers who enjoy the magazine, or
value our promotion of contemplative prayer, to
make a donation towards our costs.

A minimum donation of £3 per magazine would be
much appreciated.

Please see page 31 for details of how to donate.

Individual and extra copies can be bought from the
on-line shop

The Julian Meetings network will be 50 years old next year. Back in 1973 life was very different, so we are including in the magazine, over three issues, 'Beginnings'. This is Hilary Wakeman's introduction for 'Circles of Silence' and explains how JM started and how it developed during its first 21 years. The first instalment is on page 10.

Beginning - Being - Becoming

JM began at a time when far-eastern practices of meditation were in the news: Christians began to realise that they had neglected their own contemplative practices, which were not being widely taught. JM was one of several contemplative groups which developed at that time.

When Hilary wrote 'Beginnings' JM was 21 years old, with 300 Julian Meetings in the UK, and a number overseas. We had no website. Everything was paper based. We communicated by letter or phone call (landline!). We had a limited number of booklets and publicity items. But we did have a logo, newly designed for us, and we held an annual retreat weekend.

JM today

Sadly the retreat weekends ended 20 years ago, due to costs and practicalities. Today we have fewer than 200 Meetings in the UK. But we do have a website, a facebook page, twitter and instagram accounts, and PDF versions of our publications which can be e-mailed round the world. We use e-mail and zoom; on-line banking and shopping. We are launching podcasts with audio versions of our main booklets, and we've some videos about JM. We are well into the digital age, but not to the exclusion of members who are not computer savvy.

More people are reading our magazine and our social media attracts an increasing number of visitors and followers. At the same time the number of Meetings is declining, with many badly hit by Covid. Meetings that transferred online reported an increased number of members. As Covid restrictions have

eased we have noticed an increase in new meetings and enquiries about existing meetings. So we are hopeful that JM still has something unique to offer.

JM in the future?

The world, and JM, are very different from 50 years ago. But people's need for silence, stillness and contemplation are, if anything, even greater. JM has had to change with the times. How should it go forward?

WE is the important word.

The Julian Meetings exist because people who value what they offer have been willing to put their time, expertise and effort into the network. Many people who belong to a Julian Meeting are unaware that there *is* a network - they just wish to belong to their local meeting and share in its silences. But just as each local Meeting requires someone to take responsibility for it, the whole JM network needs people to do the same at the national (and wider) level.

Most of the volunteers who keep JM running are now over 60. We were much younger when we joined JM, keen to help it develop further. Some of our drive has waned with age. If JM is not only to live, but to thrive, then we need to hand it on to people who value it, and have the energy and fresh ideas to take it forward.

Prayer and vision

We do need people who can deal with the necessary admin. and IT - but equally important is to have people of prayer, vision and commitment who can discern where God may be leading the network into the next 5, and 50, years, and help His will to be done.

10 years ago our 40th Anniversary Gathering was pivotal in the development of JM and the introduction of new people and ideas. We are planning (see overleaf) a 50th Anniversary Gathering next year and pray that it will give us a similar impetus for the next ten years.

**Silence and Sharing
Celebration and Conversation
Your chance to take part in a
50th Anniversary
Julian Meetings Gathering**



We hope to hold the event on Saturday 17 June 2023, at Friends House, the Quaker HQ opposite Euston Station.

It is a chance for Julians from all over the country to share in person with others. It would be wonderful if someone could come from most of our Julian Meetings, plus 'lone' Julians.

Beginning

We plan to celebrate the last 50 years, with Hilary Wakeman as our opening speaker.

Being

We want you to be able to share with each other, and to celebrate, all that JM means to you.

Becoming

We'd like to look forward to how JM can grow and develop in the next few years.

Be There

So we need you to come and share what is good about JM and also how it could be better! We hope there will be lots of conversations, questions, hopes, ideas - and many of you!

More details in our December issue, and on the website.

For those unable to attend we are looking at live-streaming and/or recording parts of the event and/or holding a separate event on Zoom. Any thoughts or comments on this would be helpful. If anyone is familiar with the necessary technology and is able to help make this happen, please contact Ann Moran it@thejulianmeetings.net



Picture of Christ by Reginald Lloyd 1957

Called by Name

Our mysterious God has ways of communicating with us that are sometimes so hard to discern, so quiet - a still small voice - that we often miss his word. Yet those of us who feel called by God, who in some mysterious way have felt drawn to him, must have answered that voice deep within ourself.

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

Isaiah 43:1b

God has called his chosen through the ages, as we see in the Bible. Right up until Jesus called his disciples, who left everything and followed him with no certainty of where they were being led.

‘Lord, where are we going?’ ‘With me’.

High and humble

We know about those people who have, in the eyes of the world, done great things for God: prophets, martyrs, teachers of the faith, saints. But what of those we might call ‘ordinary people’ living ordinary lives, perhaps even unaware that their kindnesses, thoughtfulness, willingness to help are all by God’s Grace? What strange joy it is when we realise that it is God from whom all blessings, all gifts, life itself proceeds.

Each called by name

So how is it we respond to the calling of our name? It is a name known to God alone, which one day we shall know. Sometimes the call comes as a dawning realisation over time. Sometimes it seems to come suddenly, as in St. Paul’s encounter on the Damascus road. In many cases the call is known only to God and the person he calls.

Keep alert

I believe there are no coincidences when it comes to God’s work. Opportunities may be taken or lost. We have to look and listen, and keep on looking and listening, through and beyond the sometimes dull routine of our lives. Then we may glimpse the glorious God who longs to communicate with his

children at every stage of their lives and in every kind of situation.

The cost

We don't always get it right, and make mistakes, sometimes costly ones. There are times his heart must break when he sees our folly and cruelty, but still he chooses to entrust us with his world, his creation. So may the God who calls us, and continues to call us, find an answering loving response in our hearts through all things.

Rosemary Weekes

Reading JM

Attending a Julian Meeting is one way in which we make that time and space, silence and stillness, for God to communicate with us in whatever way he chooses. Instead of us talking to him, he gets chance to speak to us.

Many hymns refer to being called in some way:

I heard the voice of Jesus say
Jesus calls us, o'er the tumult
God has spoken
Speak Lord, in the stillness
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
Will you come and follow me, if I but call your name?
In the quiet, in the stillness
Master, speak, thy servant heareth
Christ is the one who calls
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.
God has chosen me
I heard the saviour say

Painting and Prayer - a personal story

What is prayer?

It is often referred to as 'talking to God' but for me, as the years have passed, it has become much more about 'being with God', and involves silence - and painting.

Silence through the Julian Meetings - 'listening to God in the silence' - and painting as a form of prayer and contemplation. I have no formal training in art but have painted and drawn since I was a child and I enjoy exploring the use of a variety of media.

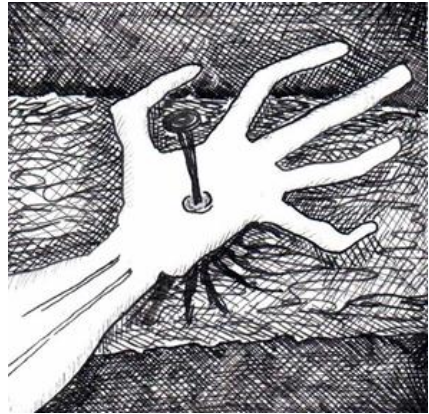


Enfolded

Paintings, like music, can express things beyond words. Our public worship is very word filled and so silence and painting provide a good balance. Many of my paintings do start with words, heard or read, and the painting then takes me further. The final product is an offering – my prayer. I recently read a book that referred to 'left brain – right brain religion'. The left side of the brain is the 'head' and right side is the 'heart' – intuition, art, music.

I think painting crosses between the two. For me painting can be both a creative and a spiritual activity. Offer the activity to God and see where it leads.

This has led me to places I never expected to go. My spiritual director asked me if I had shown any of my paintings to other people, saying 'if God has given you this gift then you should share it'. This resulted in my giving talks and showing some of my paintings to church groups all over the diocese. I also led painting and prayer days at two Retreat Centres. My paintings have sometimes been shown in my church as part of a service and my Stations of the Cross are used on Good Friday.



I feel blessed that I can use my pictures to witness to my faith. As my spiritual director said 'if God has given you this gift then you should share it'. We all have different gifts that God has given us and we can try to see ways in which we can use them in His service.

Anne Stamper

Ringmer JM

*Anne's image of a
Julian Meeting.*



Circle of Quiet

This is the first part of Hilary Wakeman's introduction in Circles of Silence, written when the Julian Meetings were 21 years old. She describes how the Julian Meetings came into being.

Beginnings..... (part 1)

Nobody could have planned such a crazy thing. After a few years we could see that it had all been done by the Holy Spirit. It certainly wasn't what I had in mind when, 21 years ago, I wrote a letter to some church papers asking if there were any other people who'd like to form a religious order for ordinary people of all denominations, living in the ordinary world but practising contemplative prayer.

It was 1973. Meditation was big: the very word was for most people synonymous with Eastern religions, and the influence of the Beatles was still strong in spreading Transcendental Meditation. As someone who had come through years of atheism and agnosticism back into Christianity with great joy, and had rediscovered the wordless and imageless prayer of my childhood, I was amazed that the church was not speaking of its own tradition of meditation.

Of course, there was a problem with words. To most Christians meditation meant a thinking process – the mulling over of a Biblical passage for example – while the word in its eastern sense was closer to what Christians called contemplative prayer. But why was no one talking about it, I wondered? Why were the churches letting so many people say that the Christianity didn't have the real spirituality they were looking for and go all the way, metaphorically or physically, to the East for it?

Initial thoughts

The letter came out of my own needs too. For local rather than theological reasons I'd become a member of the Church of England. A desire for a greater sense of commitment almost led to my becoming a tertiary, a fringe member, of an

Anglican women's religious order. Very traditional, and furnished in every sense with polished Victorian gloom. A family crisis at the eleventh hour prevented my formal reception, and within hours I saw that I had in fact been saved. I realised that what I was really seeking was something much broader: I wanted an ecumenical order, based on the practice of contemplative prayer, for ordinary people.

No such order existed, I discovered. I didn't know where to start to make it exist but there seemed a sort of inevitability about the need to try. I knew the Archbishop of Canterbury was Michael Ramsey, so I wrote to him. He replied that he would always encourage those called to live as an order, but that any such group had to make its own plans. But I didn't know any other people who wanted to be that group. I wrote to Archbishop Cardinal Heenan. He said it might be better to become affiliated to something that already existed. I wrote to Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. He replied that he understood what I was aiming at, but that it had been tried before and had been a flop. So I wrote to the Church papers.

The letter was published by the Church Times, the Catholic Herald, the Baptist Times and Reform, the magazine of the United Reformed Church. It began by describing the turning East of so many, and asked:

"Might there not be, on an ecumenical basis, a coming together of Christian lay people interested in, or already practising, contemplative prayer or mystical prayer, with a view to becoming a new type of Order: an association of lay people of all branches of Christianity who wish to dedicate their lives formally to God: married or unmarried, remaining in their own homes and occupations, living lives of simplicity and spiritual discipline, worshipping in their own churches but coming together from time to time; being in some way visually identifiable - by clothing, or badge - and showing

forth in the world joy and peace and love. . . . Such an Order would bring together together those trying to combine contemplative and secular lives, and commend this state to others. It would seek to attract those who would otherwise turn to Eastern religions or cults and it might be a small but useful part of the ecumenical movement . . . Would anyone interested please get in touch with me.”

Response to my letter

The response was wonderful! Within a week or two I had 166 letters. Dividing them geographically, I picked from each area one correspondent who seemed to be likely to be both enthusiastic and efficient, and wrote asking them to find a room in their city where we could meet on a particular date, and a bed for the night for me. When the plans were made others who had written from that area were informed.

My husband agreed to look after our five young children for a few days, and in the last week of May 1973 I drove across the south of England to Oxford, Exeter and Chichester. Looking back it was all very naïve. If the organiser had been a mature member of the clergy (as I now am) it would have been very different. And the Julian Meetings would probably never have happened.

I had suggested that when we met, it should be for an afternoon and an evening, ‘with occasional breaks for silent prayer, or a bite to eat and a cup of tea’. This was to give plenty of time just to talk, to find out why each one had responded and what we all really wanted. What people wanted, it turned out, was very different from what I had proposed in the letter.

Of the 20 people who had written from the Oxford area, the 10 who met didn’t like the word ‘Order’ and didn’t want a Rule of Life. But they were a very ecumenical group, and keen to start meeting regularly.

At Exeter the 4 people, out of 14, who met said they wanted

an Order, but no Rule of Life - and definitely no advertising. At Chichester 6 very enthusiastic people met, out of 11, and were keen to formulate a simple Rule, to produce a booklist and to have an annual national meeting. They arranged to meet monthly in the cathedral.

One week in the following month I drove up to Durham, Glasgow, Manchester and Leicester and met with people there. It began to be clear that what nearly everyone wanted was simply to meet regularly with others who practised contemplative prayer. Many had met with incomprehension from their local clergy when they talked about it. Some had even been told that it was 'of the Devil' and should be abandoned at once. Quite a few had thought they must be going mad to pray in this way since no one else they knew seemed to understand it. Their joy at finding others like them was marked, and the possibility of mutual support and encouragement was clearly what brought them together.

Your experiences of Julian Meetings

We'd be delighted if you'd like to share something of what JM means to you.

Perhaps:

- * What do you value most about JM?*
- * Has JM helped your spiritual journey in any way?*
- * How do you want JM to develop in the future?*

If you've any comments, good or bad, to share about the Julian Meetings we'd love to hear them.

Please post or e-mail your responses to the editor, Deidre Morris - contact details on pages 30 & 32



In a Time of War

- 1** *Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,*
- 2** *and he began to teach them. He said:*
- 3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4** Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- 5** Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- 6** Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- 7** Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- 8** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- 9** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- 10** Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5 vv1-10 (NIV)

At such a time as this, it is easy to become lost in the horror of the hourly news bulletin, the rhetoric of the politicians, the images of death and destruction and the conflicting 'truths' proclaimed by opposing sides.

This is not new, for the psalms are full of such confusion: 'I cry out by day, O my God, but You do not answer and by night I have no rest' (Ps 22) 'My tears have been my food both day and night, while men ask me all day long, "Where is your God?"' (Ps 42).

I believe that our path through such a time is shown in the collection of sayings called the Beatitudes. We are commissioned to be peacemakers. To listen to both sides and with understanding and insight walk between both, without taking sides, seeking honesty and condemning falsehood, to choose words to cool rather than inflame, reflective in judgement, and in all things seeking that of Jesus Christ in every person and every situation.

But this situation is far off, and I am here.

We are part of this conflict. What we say, pray and do here in Norfolk matters.

This was used for a Julian Meeting in Norfolk.

The Benedictus from Karl Jenkins mass 'The Armed Man' was used as a music introduction.

The picture, by Pablo Picasso, is Guernica, commemorating a village devastated in the Spanish civil war.

Our vision of the truth has to be big enough to include other people's truth as well as our own.

We have to learn to love difficult, unlovable people.

Accepting each other, and each other's relationship with God, let us continue to hold together at our deepest level.

We are a forgiven community.

Part of the cost of discipleship is living with the other disciples.

From Quaker Faith & Practice

Advertising your Julian Meeting

One contact was asked to provide something about the Julian Meeting for their chapel's regular e-mail out to the congregation. The item could not be too long, and needed to include how JM started, and why Julian. This is what they came up with.

Perhaps you could adapt it to advertise your own Meeting.

The Julian Meeting at our chapel is one of over 200 groups in Great Britain that meet regularly for a time of silent Christian contemplative prayer. Julian Meetings started 50 years ago. At a time when Eastern forms of meditation were being popularised, Christians re-discovered their own contemplative roots and several Christian silent prayer networks developed. The JM originator came from Norwich, and many early members from across the country suggested the name of Julian, as she held that the highest form of prayer was simply waiting on God.

At the chapel we meet with chairs arranged in a circle around a candle. One member (we take turns) reads a prayer, poem, passage of scripture or other extract and this leads into 30 minutes of silently waiting on God. We are there to give God our time and attention: for God to take the initiative with us. At the end of 30 minutes the silence is closed with a prayer or brief reading. We then have a time of coffee, tea and conversation.

If you are unfamiliar with silent prayer, we can offer guidance on how to approach the silence, and cope with the inevitable distractions. At the chapel we can provide booklets and the JM magazine, but for the widest information please go to the Julian Meetings website www.thejulianmeetings.net

You are welcome to come along and give it a try – perhaps it is something that would enhance your spiritual life. If you would like to speak to someone about it, please contact
..... on.....

The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you, the better you will hear what is sounding outside.

.....

How can you expect to keep your powers of hearing when you never want to listen? That God should have time for you, you seem to take as much for granted as that you cannot have time for Him.

Both from 'Markings' by Dag Hammarskjöld

Review of a CD

REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE

Julian of Norwich, translation by M. L. del Mastro,
published by Burns and Oates

Audio CD read by Sister Wendy Beckett (1 hour 7 minutes).

Goblin Market Theatre Company Ltd., 2021.

£9.75 + £2.29 p&p from

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/str/friendsofjulianofnorwich>.

These extracts from the *Revelations of Divine Love* were originally recorded by Sister Wendy in 1993, and have been digitally re-mastered on to CD. It has an excellent, mellow sound quality and clarity — clear without being ‘tinny’. The recording is very-easy-to-listen-to, beautifully clear and read with the right amount of gentle feeling, by someone used to reading aloud.

I decided to try to listen to it in one sitting and was amazed that I could listen to the whole CD without difficulty: without being tired from listening; hearing every single word; it all sounded quite natural. I’m not familiar with the translation, but it flowed well.

I really enjoyed listening to it and found it an encouraging experience in both content and delivery. It would be a valuable resource for a Julian Meeting and for anyone who finds the spoken word adds to their experience of reading. It is thoroughly recommended.

Gail Ballinger

New Sound Recordings

In 2020 the JM National Council agreed to update our existing recordings of booklets etc. These are currently available on CD, and were originally recorded for those who are visually impaired.

However modern technology means many more people enjoy listening to audio versions of the written word. So we have expanded the range of our literature which is available on audio: previously it was limited by the size of the CD.

Instead of using professionals, as in the past, we have used the voices of some JM members who have kindly volunteered to make the recordings.

We are making the recordings available in a number of ways, eg YouTube, Vimeo, podcasts.

The recordings are available on:

Our own website www.thejulianmeetings.net

Sound Cloud <https://soundcloud.com/the-julian-meetings>

You Tube <https://tinyurl.com/thejulianmeetings> or search YouTube for The Julian Meetings

Vimeo <https://vimeo.com> and search for 'The Julian Meetings'.

Podcasts Initially you will be able to find us on Spotify, and other platforms will become available later.

Ongoing

This is a work in progress so please keep visiting your favourite apps / platforms and our website as new recordings will be released during the year and beyond.

Could you help?

If anyone has experience of producing podcasts and would like to help with the project please e-mail Ann Moran at it@thejulianmeetings.net

Important request:

Please check your Meeting entry on the JM website.

You do not need to log in to do this.

Just go to www.thejulianmeetings.net and find your meeting on the public list. View the meeting details.

Are these still accurate?

Does the entry contain any personal details such as phone numbers, home addresses, e-mail? We do not recommend including personal information on the public site. This is for your safety and data protection.

We are very grateful to those first contacts who use our online renewal facility, as it saves us a lot of work, but we do not check every entry. Hence this request.

If you wish to amend your Meeting details you can:

- * Log in and make your updates
- * E-mail it@thejulianmeetings.net with the information and Ann will do it for you.
- * Post the information to Ann, at the address shown on page 32, if this is easier.

Please take a few minutes to do this, and ensure your entry is correct.

We recently registered Meetings at:

Barkway	<i>Hertfordshire</i>
Carisbrooke	<i>Isle of Wight</i>
Heaton	<i>Newcastle-on-Tyne</i>
Fressingfield	<i>Suffolk</i>
Abinger Common	<i>Surrey</i>

St Mary de Haura, which hosts a Julian Meeting, provides a tri-fold leaflet for its congregation to introduce them to silent prayer. The text of the leaflet (but in A5 format) is given here. Download the leaflet itself on the Contemplative Prayer and Meditation page of our website www.thejulianmeetings.net

An Introduction to Quiet Prayer

IN A BUSY WORLD

We often think of prayer as ‘saying something to God’, but when we feel the need for God’s presence, we do not always want to use words. Sometimes, when we are in the middle of all that goes on in the world, in our own lives or in the lives of family or friends, we need to find a place just to ‘be’. We may even need to find peace against the background of world news.

At the same time we want to bring all that we are worried about and all that concerns us into the presence of God. To sit quietly with God is not to hide from the world, but to bring the world to him – our own lives and the lives of others.

WITH A BUSY MIND

It is not easy to sit in silence with God, but if we feel that is what we want to do, then there are simple ways which can help us to find stillness.

- * We can sit comfortably and allow our body to relax.
- * We can feel our weight on the chair, our feet on the ground.
- * We can listen to the sounds around us, and out to the farthest sound.
- * We can listen beyond the noises that we can hear, to the silence that contains them.
- * We can pay attention to our breathing, keeping it natural, but feeling the breath going in and out of our bodies.

LISTENING

Sitting in stillness with God is not only about the silence, but also about listening for his promptings – what he might be trying to say to us. We are unlikely to hear that with our ears,

but after sitting in silence we may realize something that we had missed up to now, or reach a new understanding.

CENTERING PRAYER

There are ancient forms of prayer which have been found, down the years, to help one to sit in silence with God, and to listen for what he might be saying to us. One of these is Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer usually uses a word that people choose for themselves as a focus. It is usually a short word and one that has meaning for them.

GOD FAITH LOVE JESUS
TRUST PEACE HOPE

In choosing a word, and in using Centering Prayer, we are acknowledging that we want to come into the presence of God, and want him to work within us. The word is spoken and repeated within with gentle attention, and when thoughts or feelings arise we do not try to expel them, but calmly turn our attention back to our chosen word.

Centering Prayer is not meditation on the word itself. We do not need to think about the word during our prayer time. We just say the word quietly within, and without intensity. The goal of the period of prayer is just to spend time with our loving creator. That is the whole goal.

We are not trying to attain any particular spiritual state, nor to have any particular experience while we pray. We are simply paying attention to the word with the intention of coming into the presence of God and allowing him to work within us.

We can use this method of prayer for as short a time as we wish, but the usual length of time for Centering Prayer is 20 minutes. If we find this form of prayer is helpful, it can be used twice a day. After our period of prayer, we sit quiet for a few moments.

LECTIO DIVINA

Another form of quiet prayer is Lectio Divina, a Latin phrase meaning 'divine reading'. In this way of prayer we sit in God's presence and listen to what he is saying to us, beginning with a *short* passage from the Bible, which is a collection of stories

of how God has spoken to his people.

When you have taken up a comfortable position in a quiet place, choose a short passage from the Bible and read it through slowly, listening to what God is saying to you. Don't worry about the meaning of words or where and when they were said; just listen as though they were being said to you now.

Read the passage several times and you will find that a particular word, phrase or idea 'hits' you as being important. Repeat this to yourself until it starts repeating itself inside you rather like a tune sometimes gets into your head and keeps popping up without your thinking of it.

This phrase or idea is what God seems to want to say to you today so let it keep repeating inside you and when it is time to move onto the next thing, just thank God very simply for being with you, for giving you this thought, and ask him to stay with you.

Your phrase will probably keep popping up in your mind throughout the day, just like the song, so turn to God when it does and give him a smile of gratitude!

LET GO AND LET GOD

When we sit in silence, or when we use Centering Prayer or Lectio Divina, we do so in the confidence that God is present in all places and at all times. God meets us in daily life, and it is there, not in our period of prayer, where the fruits of the prayer are found.

Julian Meeting

The Julian Meeting is an opportunity to share a time of silent prayer with others.

We meet: 1st and 3rd Monday each month, 7.30-8.30pm
at: The Garden Room, 18 Southdown Rd, Shoreham-by-Sea
(go through the side gate directly to the room in the garden)

If you would like to come, please phone first, as sometimes we have to alter our arrangements: Jonathan Smith 01273 389207

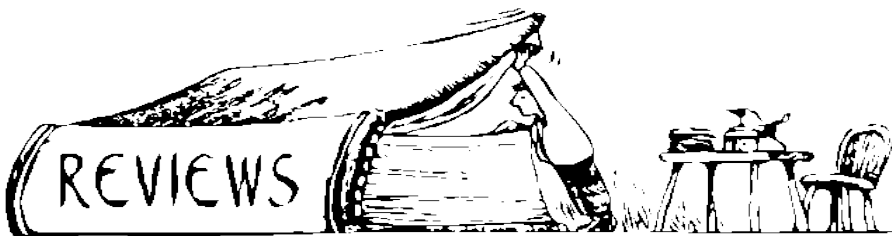
Beautiful Silence

*Beautiful silence
Whispering softly
Calling us above
The parapet of noise
And activity*

*Beckoning gently
To a new world
Here and now, never-ending
Always beginning
Again
And again*

*Transcendent
In its beauty
Immanent
In its love
This day and every day
Amen*

Elizabeth Mills



MONASTIC VOCATION

Sisters of the Love of God, preface by Rowan Williams.

(Fairacres Publications 200) SLG Press. 2021.

Paperback. ISBN 978 0 7283 0308 9. Price £7.00.

Also available from Amazon on Kindle. Price £6.70.

Here is a slim volume of arresting wisdom relevant to anyone seeking a deeper prayer life and discipleship without necessarily aiming towards a monastic life. The Preface by Rowan Williams on the discovery of vocation in any form is typically pithy (and accessible). The following essays on the religious vows by some of the sisters are searching examinations of the positive nature of commitment to the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Those committed to them regard them as liberations to love. Sr. Clare-Louise on the vow of chastity writes:

When our loves flow from the love of God, an integration can begin to happen that enables us to love from a heart set on God; the love with which we love others is God's love, flowing through us. (p.26)

Of particular relevance to those engaged in contemplative prayer would be the two final chapters on 'Contemplation and Enclosure' and, perhaps surprisingly, on 'The Cell'. The latter examines the demands of solitary prayer that bids us open ourselves to allow God's searching and knowing of us in our frailty and vulnerability. The hope of this long abiding in such costly grace is that persevering and constant prayer may become all the more welded within us; that the purity of heart whereby we might see God could be wrought in us.

Sister Mary John Marshall, O.S.B.

BEHOLD THE WORD. 52 Visual meditations

James Roose-Evans

with painted inscriptions by John Rowlands-Pritchard

Redemptorist Publications. 2020.

Paperback. ISBN 978 0 85231 597 2. Price £9.95.

Ette Hillesum said: 'With much space around a few words ... they emphasize the silence — the few great things in life can be said in a few words.' This book delivers beautiful words and thoughts, brought to life in the shape and colour of the images, in order to take us deeper into our hearts and memories. It contains one meditation on a text for each week of the year.

The authors suggest that daily seeing a simple text causes the word to sink permeate our consciousness — like the repetition of a mantra or the regular praying of the rosary. A few words singled out make a greater impact than many words page after page.

The texts are an eclectic collection from a surprising number of sources.

Some, like a koan, are challenging: 'At midnight, noon is born', maybe prompting an exploration of light and darkness.

Some are quoted from poets and novelists: Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett, Rumi. Rilke, Emily Dickenson.

Others are from theological sources: Thomas Merton, the Desert Fathers, a Celtic prayer, or an Irish blessing, the Psalms.

Some words are seemingly simple: 'God is love'; others reflect on mystery: 'Leap and the net will appear', and yet others challenge, as when Jesus asks: 'Do you really want to be healed?'

The authors ask us to accept that each of us is born into this world with a purpose, with a blueprint of the life we are meant to live — and they encourage us to realise our full potential through meditation. A book I will treasure.

Ann Morris

THE LIFE OF CHRIST: Part Two, Volume 2, Chapters 58-89
(Cistercian Studies Series, No.284)

Ludolph of Saxony; translated by Milton J. Walsh

Liturgical Press, USA. 2022.

Hardback. ISBN 978 0 87907 284 1. Price US\$79.95.

(From Amazon £47.99)

ePub. Price US\$44.99.

Also available from Amazon in Kindle. Price £27.53

In my short article about the 14th century Carthusian mystic, Ludolph of Saxony, (August 2020 JM magazine) I referred to his *The Life of Christ (Vita Iesu Christi)*, which was translating from Latin. Two of an eventual four parts had been published, and I described Ludolph's work as ideal 'for those of us who value deep and sustained reflection which eventually leads us into silent prayer and adoration'. In August 2021 I reviewed the third part, and am delighted to say that the publication has been completed with the final part now available.

The first 350 pages are devoted to meditations on the passion and death of our Lord, and his time in the tomb. The next 200 pages cover the Resurrection and the period after it ending in the Ascension. The last seven chapters are meditations on, and prayers about, other matters related to Christ, including the Apostles' Creed and the four gospels, Pentecost, Mary's Assumption, the Last Judgment, and the punishment of hell and the glory of heaven.

This final book of the four ends with a table to show where each gospel passage mentioned anywhere in the text is presented, plus a comprehensive index to all four of the published parts of this colossal work of medieval spirituality. Taken as a whole, this translation into English is a major work of scholarship. It gives us a wonderfully rich collection of ideas and prayers which lead anyone reading even a page or two a day ever deeper into communion with God. If you could only nourish your life of prayer with the Bible and one other book, a strong case could be made that Ludolph's *Life of Christ* is that book.

Peter Rowe

SILENT ROSARY: A contemplative, exegetical, and iconographic tour through the mysteries

Addison Hodges Hart (original icons by Solrunn Nes)

Cascade Books, Eugene OR, USA. 2021

Paperback ISBN 978 1 7252 7232 3. US\$25.00, Amazon £15.55

Hardcover. ISBN 978 1 7252 7231 6. US\$35.00 Amazon £25.25

eBook: ISBN 978 1 7252 7233 0. US\$25.00. Amazon Kindle £7.19

This book is a little gem.

Part 1: Entering the Circular Gallery, gives the reader an understanding of the history of the Rosary, the significance of Mary, the importance of 'beholding' the iconography of the mysteries, and the 'mysteries' them-selves and is ready to approach the rest of the book.

Part 2 explores each mystery in turn: Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious.

It is a beautifully prepared piece of writing, weaving together biblical knowledge, theological insight, and spiritual reflection.

To many coming to the Rosary for the first time, the whole experience can be a bewildering one, confused by pious agglomeration, instead of a calm and restorative sharing with God and one another.

Silent Rosary succeeds not least because it is an ecumenical project. Addison is a retired Anglican priest. His Roman Catholic wife Solrunn has a deep love of Orthodox iconography. This sharing leads our writers to a deep empathy with their readers, articulating the simplicity of this prayer.

The book is further enhanced by insights from classical writers and a Bibliography.

Not since Maisie Ward's post war book, *The Splendour of the Rosary* (with the possible exception of J Neville Ward's *Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy*), have we been blessed with such a depth of understanding of the Rosary.

Luke Penkett

ON RETREAT WITH HENRI NOUWEN:

Engaging life's big questions

Chris Pritchett and Marjorie Thompson

Canterbury Press. 2021.

Paperback. ISBN 978 1 78622 376 0. Price £12.99.

eBook. Price £12.99.

Also available from Amazon on Kindle. Price £10.06.

I first came across Henri Nouwen in 1996 when I borrowed and read his *Solitude Silence and Prayer: The Way of the Heart*. It was life changing, a point of conversion. I became one of the many people who have found in his writings an eye-opening spiritual guide to life, for which I am eternally grateful.

In the book under review Pritchett and Thompson treat Nouwen's reflections on life's big questions in six clearly laid out chapters on 'Identity', 'God', 'Love', 'Suffering' 'Freedom' and 'How then shall I live?' in a way that facilitates both private reflection and sharing in a group setting. I particularly appreciated the exerts from Nouwen's writings, which could fruitfully be used as lead-ins to contemplation and as introductions to further study. The central chapter on 'Love' with the telling question which Jesus poses to his very first disciples ('What are you looking for (John 1:38)) draws us to the heart of our human yearning for unconditional love and our predicament in that, as Nouwen's reflects, 'no human being is capable of offering such love, and each time we demand it we set ourselves on the road to violence'. In the following chapter on 'Suffering' we are reminded that realistically suffering is a universal experience and that in Nouwen's words 'The deep truth is that our human suffering need not be an obstacle to the joy and peace we so desire, but can become, instead, the means to it.'

The final two chapters complete the move from retreat to the call to a transformed attitude and life along with the necessary spiritual resources for it.

Sue Cutts

ST BENEDICT'S RULE:

An inclusive translation and daily commentary

Sr Judith Sutura OSB

Liturgical Press USA. 2021

Paperback. ISBN 9780814688182. US\$24.95. Amazon £19.99

eBook: ISBN 9780814688434; US\$17.99. Amazon Kindle £9.39

This delightful new translation is a good introduction for first-time readers of the Rule and an inspiration for veterans. The author achieves her objectives set out in the introduction. She eschews awkward inclusive constructions, *e.g.*, 'monk and/or nun', that mar other translations. Her style is informal, even conversational, and her inclusivity seems effortless.

This translation is divided into the traditional sections for daily reading. Scriptural references are provided within the text, and each section concludes with a commentary followed by three questions for consideration.

The author acknowledges that inclusive language can have a downside, particularly in Benedict's portrait of the abbot as 'father'. She uses the gender-neutral word 'superior', but fleshes this out by commenting on the loving and caring aspects of the role. She compares Benedict's image of the watchful eye of God in RB 7 to the gaze of a parent toward a child at play. Her similes are simple, often striking, and aimed at the modern reader. Current issues - climate change, the pandemic - are included. This translation will weather well, but how soon might such an up-to-date book become history.

This is not an academic work, but Sister Judith has done her homework with the Latin text and other works of reputable scholars. In no way can it be considered 'commentary light' (p.7). She expresses herself in pithy, often memorable ways, presenting Benedict's wisdom wisely, making it accessible to all who are seeking and willing to listen. As she says: when it comes to the offer of holiness, 'God is an equal opportunity employer' (p.256).

Sister Mary Owen de Simone, O.S.B.

At our website:
www.thejulianmeetings.net

You can:

- * find out more about Christian Meditation & Contemplative Prayer
- * find information about the Julian Meetings
- * view our worldwide Meetings directory
- * contact our administrators
- * find our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts
- * view an events diary
- * download our free leaflets and listen to audio versions
- * buy our publications by post or online
- * join our Magazine mailing list
- * make a donation
- * read our latest news

Other resources for JM Meetings include:

- * advice and information on how to start a Julian Meeting
- * publicity for JM events
- * registration of a new Julian Meeting
- * publicising your Meeting on the Meeting Directory

You can follow us on
Facebook and Twitter @JulianMeetings
and Instagram thejulianmeetings
so if you, or friends, are into social media
do pay us a visit!

