


# Magazine
# August
# 2024

# The Julian Meetings Magazine August 2024

CONTENTS PAGE


**A Last Goodbye** 2

**Closing and Opening** 3

**Reflection** Jennie Dixon **Using Rest to Pray** Tony Horsfall 4

**Contemplative Prayer** by Richard Carter 6

**Still Me** by Pat Marsh 7

**Part of a General Trend** 8

**Change** by Jennie Harris A **Prayer** 10

**What's the Use of All that Silence, Mum?** P A Thomas 12

**Reflection on Corporate Prayer** by Vera Gillespie 13

**I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say** by Deidre Morris 14

**The Beck'nin'** by Mary Blue 15

**Being** by Muriel Cuttler **Little Things** by Mary Blue 16

**Publications Order Form**

**Could you help with safeguarding?** 17

**In The Future / New Meetings / Quote** by Thomas Merton 18

**Help with JM Publications and IT - Why no offers?** 20

**A Reflection on Contemplative Prayer** by K Marsh 22

**Rowan Williams on Prayer. 'I am the door'** 23

**Palm Labyrinths** 24

**The Fire & The Rose Are One** Keren Dibbens-Wyatt 25

**Our Books Into Your Hands** 26

**3 books that might be of interest** 27-29

**JM 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 for this magazine.

We do invite readers who enjoy the magazine, or value our promotion of contemplative prayer, to make a donation towards the cost of it.

A suggested donation of £4 per magazine would be much appreciated.

Please see page 31 for details of how to donate.

# A Last Goodbye

The JM Magazine began as a Newsletter for Julian Meetings in 1974. It carried articles, prayers, poems etc. in addition to news of Julian Meetings at both local and national level. For some time a separate Newsletter was produced just for Great Britain and Ireland, with only 'local' information included. This was edited by Yvonne Walker 1983-1992

**Editors**

**Hilary Wakeman** edited the newsletter until 1981**.**

**Pam Fawcett** was editor for many years, when the format was simply printed A4 sheets stapled together. In 1994 it cost £1 per issue, 3 issues a year.

In 1997 Pam Fawcett retired as editor, and **Graham Johnson** took up the role. The format was changed to A5, as easier to post and store. It was professionally printed and cost £1.50.

In 2000 **James Toon** took over as editor, introducing photos and a revised layout.

In 2005 James stood down and **Frances Ballinger** agreed to become editor. Each magazine now cost £2.

Health issues meant Frances stood down In 2008 and **Deidre Morris** took on the role in 2009. This is the last magazine she edits, and is also the last printed magazine of this type that JM will produce.

**Thank You**

We give thanks for all the people who, over the years, have helped to edit, write for, provide material for the magazine. Thanks also to all those who have created address labels, stuffed magazines into envelopes and got them in the post. For over 20 years now the magazine has been printed by Perpetua Press, Newent, Gloucestershire, who have done an excellent job on this, and also on our publications.

**On the website**

Copies of the magazine, back to 2011, can still be accessed on our website.



**The magazine closes: what new doors may open?**

Infinitely accessible - God waits for me
Only a thought away from the mind's touch
Only a glance away from the soul's eyes gaze
Fool that I am, can I condemn myself
to wander in amaze
When waiting on God in the silence
Would transform the spirit of my days.

*Jenny Dixon*

# Using Rest to Pray

Most of us think of prayer as a very demanding activity, but did you know it can be extremely restful?

**Slow down**

One of the great verses in the Bible says this: 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm 46:10). It suggests that we experience God most fully when we are still. When we cease rushing around and pause for a moment of thought and recollection, we are becoming prayerful, and God is very near. Even a break for a morning coffee can be a moment of prayer, if we slow ourselves down and allow our thoughts to turn towards God.

**Breathe**

An essential part of resting is to breathe slowly. Christian tradition has always made a connection between prayer and breathing. You can learn to pray to the rhythm of your breathing, using chosen prayer words to focus. As you breathe in, you might say 'Abba', and then as you breathe out, add the word 'Father'. Choose words which are meaningful to you, deliberately slowing your breathing so you become relaxed and peaceful.

**Be still**

Perhaps you have a favourite chair where you are able to

unwind easily. For a few moments sit and do nothing. Simply become aware of the present moment, reminding yourself you are in the presence of God. As you feel yourself relax, bask in the knowledge of God's love and acceptance of you. Sense His smile of approval upon you. You don't have to *do* anything, just 'be' for a moment. This too is prayer.



**Enforced rest**

Sometimes we are forced to rest by circumstances… illness, disability, growing older and so on slow us down and we can't rush around like we used to do. Never mind. Don't fight against your circumstances. Enter into the place of rest that God is giving you. He loves you for who you are, not for what you do. Turn your thoughts into prayer and offer them to God. You don't need to advise God as to what He should do; simply hold people before Him, leaving the outcome to Him.

*Tony Horsfall,*
*retreat leader and author*

*Editor: This is my last JM magazine, but I will still be editing my parish magazine 11 times a year! This article came in the syndicated material provided by 'Parish Pump' for its parish magazine editor subscribers. I was delighted that they included an article that encouraged people to rest in God rather than bombard Him with requests; to be more passive than active in approaching God. Many people never come across contemplative prayer of any kind, so having an article for the average parish magazine reader at least introduces them to a probably unfamiliar way to pray.*

## *The practice of contemplative prayer in the face of distraction*

So here in the midst of the world
With all its present pain and madness
You are not the sponge soaking up carbon emissions
Rather you are the channel of God's peace
Let that peace arise within you
Deeper than the sea of your own need or desire
Let that peace be a purity
A swept room
A tidied house
A simple order
An inner spaciousness
A forgiven, merciful place
Released from clawing need
Let go of the castles you have dug for yourself in the churned sand
Be washed flat by the beauty of the incoming waves
Let God's goodness in
Like a sparkling incoming tide
Smoothing the sand
And leaving a sheen of silver
Now you have cleared your near distance of the debris of your mind



See the expanse
Where heaven and earth meet
And all, all from east to west
From north to south
Is filled with light

*Richard Carter*

*From 'The City is my Monastery'*
*published by Canterbury Press ISBN: 9781786222138*
*© Used with permission.*

## Still Me

In the turmoil
of this complicated life, Lord,

still me;

return me for a moment
to the silence
at my heart:

draw forth
from my deep still pool of inner quiet,
draw forth
your overflowing love.

Still me, Lord:

still me
anew

*© Pat Marsh*

# Part of a General Trend?

Mortality drag is a statistical term that actuaries use in the calculation of annuity rates. In brief: the longer you live, the better your chances of living longer. Or, the younger you are the higher the likelihood of an earlier death.

For example: There are many people who die in their 40s/50's, but those who survive to 60+ have a better chance of reaching 70+ than they did when they were 50. Likewise people who survive to 70 have a greater chance of reaching 80+ than they did when they were 50. It isn't that people did not live as long in the past, but that more of them died younger. People generally now have a better chance of reaching 100+.
*Apologies to any statisticians/actuaries reading this, it is a bit of a simplication but does help explain what we think is happening with JM.*

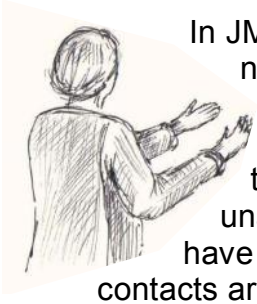
**How Mortality Drag affects groups today, including JM**
Several groups I belong to, which have been around for 40+ years or longer, have an increasingly elderly membership. The older members, in their 70s+, have done their stint of running the group but there are few in their 50s and 60s to replace them.

This is true of JM. In 2015 we seemed to have many members over 60, a few over 80 and very few over 90. We thought that the number of older members would reduce and that younger members would take over as Meeting contacts as older members became unable to continue.

Often this seems not to have happened. Those in their 50s and 60s died, or were unable to take over. It is now common for Meeting contacts to be in their 80s and 90s, with Meeting members of a similar age. Once only two or three are left, or the first contact dies or cannot continue, the Meeting closes.

This is happening in many groups, not just JM. Two craft

groups I belong to have a dwindling membership because so few younger people join – either due to lack of interest or lack of time. A local children's football club folded because the kids were keen but their parents / grandparents were unable to take on some of the work involved in running it.



In JM, instead of Meetings continuing under new, younger leadership there has been a steady decline in the number of Meetings. Younger members have either not been there to take over the running or have been unable to do so. As the younger elderly cohort have retired/died, so our remaining meeting contacts are becoming more elderly. The laws of Mortality Drag are operating immutably.

**Going Forward**

Fewer Meetings means less local promotion of JM. Modern communications offer a wide range of ways in which the JM concept can be experienced, accessed and be easily discoverable by the world at large.

As General Booth, of the Salvation Army, said: 'You can't change the future without disturbing the present'. So JM is having to change as we deal with the reality of mortality drag within JM and in the wider world.

While meetings have declined since 2015 the number of individual members has remained steady. There is also a substantial new interest in our Facebook page and new blog. We will continue working to publicise the JM concept and develop our membership, praying that we will be open to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

We welcome your thoughts on this.

If you can help us, even better: see our 'situations vacant' articles on Pages 17, 20 and 21.

# Change

Change is frightening.

We may have chosen change
or it may have been thrust, unwelcome, upon us.

Change means entering new and uncharted territory,
unfamiliar and unknown.

Often we prefer to stay with what is familiar and safe,
even in situations which are stifling and destructive,
rather than reach out to what is new.

Even when we have chosen change,
excitement can be mingled with fear.

We fear the demands the new will bring
and the loss of old securities.

But to change is to grow:
there is no growth without change ;
there is no life without growth.

The more we love, the more we will be called upon to change
in a continuing process of growth.

Life flows like a river,
continually changing,
continually moving on.

We can stand hesitantly on the bank, watching it pass.

Or we can enter gladly
and be carried in its waters.

Letting go of fear and false securities
we are held in the ever constant love of God,
gentle and strong.

Beneath the ever changing ebb and flow of the waters
there is a place of stillness and silence.
A still centre in a changing world.
From that still centre, where God is,
flow all life and love and healing.
Peace comes in accepting with love
all that life gives us,
carried in the moving waters.
Held in the silent love of God.

*Jennie Harris*

Almighty God,
source of every blessing,
your generous goodness comes to us
anew every day.
By the work of your Spirit
lead us to acknowledge your goodness,
give thanks for your benefits,
and serve you in willing obedience.
Indeed, we pray you to
pour out your Holy Spirit upon us:
your Spirit of joy and laughter,
of comfort and strength,
that we might celebrate with you
and you with us,
as we offer our prayers and ourselves to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

## What's the Use of All that Silence, Mum?

Dear God,
that living, exquisite awareness,
that open waiting,
that knowing it is already accomplished
but not yet finished.

That yearning for completeness,
that utter needing;
that moving, calming silence
when every sound is amplified:

the turning of a page,
the fall of a footstep in the grass,
the creak of a chair, or a joint,
the bump of a door,
the song of a bird.

That gentle breath of God
which touches for a moment,
then is gone
to be yearned for again
as we seek that utter, perfect, oneness.

That powerful touch
like a sigh of wind
which urges us to move on;
to seek God's will
in trust
knowing our lives may be
turned around in our completeness.

What is the use of all that silence, Son?
God knows.

*P. A. Thomas*

There is an unexplainable power in corporate worship. We are all, every one of us, different individuals. Yet there is an inexpressible feeling of unity in a properly functioning group with a common aim. It is a tacitly accepted unity; we do not gather to discuss the advisability of a joint approach. If our target is the same, our action - or, in the case of the silence, a suspension of action - will quite naturally be unified.

The silence is not an aim, a target, an achievement in itself. It is simply a tool that we use to aim at a target. And the target is God, not ourselves. That is the main distinction between worshipful silence and meditation. It is not a matter of how we feel, how we react, whether we can slough off the cares of everyday life, but of reaching out, beyond and in spite of cares, worries and troubles, towards God, our loving Lord.

We cannot assert that there is more 'value' in group prayer, vocal or silent, than in the same individual effort. It just feels smoother, deeper, somehow (probably quite illogically) more effective. This is where the informality of the Julian Meeting scores. It implies no commitment, not even to the group; in places big enough to have several Meetings, individual members can be as comfortable in the silence of one group as in another.
We remain members of our own churches (not all 'Julians' belong to any church) but when we drop into the corporate silence we become part of the JM group. The group makes many things easier, smoother, more effortless, than the individual can achieve. When two or three or more are gathered together, it is good to know that the others around us are also waiting on God in the silence.

It is, nevertheless, much more difficult than sitting passively in a pew and letting the minister do the work. Perhaps that is why some people fear the silence: it demands discipline and effort. But for most of us that effort is worth making.

*Vera Gillespie (written in 1994)*

**When we had a 'Songs of Praise' to close our Festival Day picnic, I had to explain why I chose this hymn:**

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast':
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one,
stoop down, and drink, and live':
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright':
I looked to Jesus and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till travelling days are done.

I chose this hymn, not because it is my favourite, but because it expresses so much that has been true in my faith journey.

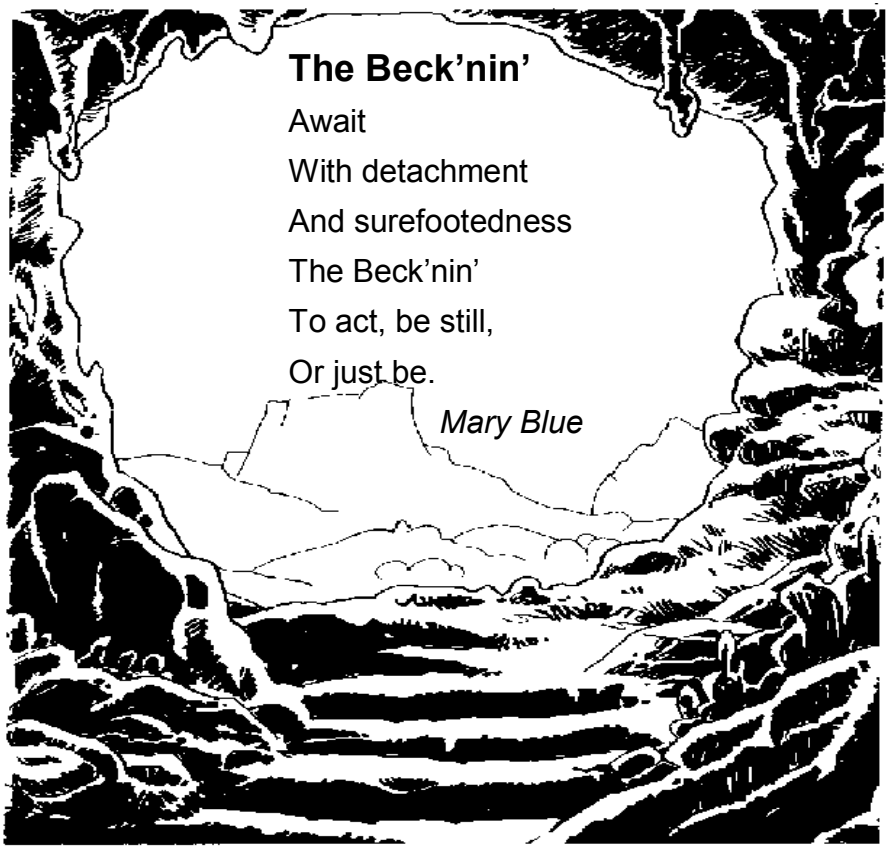
Each verse starts with 'I heard the voice of Jesus say'. On a few precious occasions Jesus has spoken directly to me – but most often I hear his voice when I'm reading the Bible, or listening to it being read. Also in poetry, and often in the words of other people. I have learned to listen for, to be alert to, times when Jesus is speaking. Being a member of a

Julian Meeting for so many years has helped a lot with this.

In each verse of this hymn Jesus offers us something of himself – to be our light, to be living water, to be a place of rest - and we are free to respond and accept it, or to ignore his offer, or to reject it.

But if we don't actively listen for God - make times of quiet and stillness with him - why should we expect to hear him speaking? Most of our lives are so busy and noisy that Jesus' still, small voice is easily drowned out. However, if we do turn to him, in response to his word, it is quite amazing what he can do for us, or in us, or with us, or through us.

*Deidre Morris*



**The Beck'nin'**

Await
With detachment
And surefootedness
The Beck'nin'
To act, be still,
Or just be.

*Mary Blue*

## Being

Some days it's nice simply - to be,
to be me.

Not that I'm anyone special,
but being - allows me to think so.

Being is now.
Not in the past or the future.

Just sitting still in the silence
with a quiet mind.

Sacrament of the present moment,
listening to God.

This little poem expresses just what the Julian Meetings have meant for me as an individual. The shared silent prayer of a loving group of people has drawn me into that 'fullness of joy' that Mother Julian so describes. She writes of the 'discord and tension' that intrude on life and thought and how important it is to develop that 'essential nature' that is for ever kept 'whole, safe and sound' in God. Corporate contemplative prayer for me has encouraged this development. A strong move towards love ands peace.

*Muriel Cuttler*
*(written in 1994)*

## Little Things

As acorns to oaks.
As yeast to bread.
So littleness and humility raises souls

*Mary Blue*

## Would you like to help the work of JM?
## Do You Have Experience, or an Interest, in Safeguarding?

The Julian Meetings are seeking a new Safeguarding Officer. Sue has held this role since we introduced a Safeguarding Policy in 2016. Recently, following best advice, we revised the Policy, and its implementation: you can read both documents on our website.

The role is not onerous or time consuming and will involve:

* Being available to provide help and support to individual meetings.
* In the unlikely event of a situation which requires reporting abuse to a statutory body, the Safeguarding Officer should be able to advise an individual meeting of how to do so.
* Annually reviewing the Safeguarding Policy and its implementation.

The main skills, apart from an up-to-date knowledge of basic safeguarding principles, are the ability to listen and empathise with a member of JM who is seeking support in dealing with a difficult issue; to provide well-founded advice on safeguarding to groups and to the JM Council; to make a brief anonymised report to the Council about any issues that arise and actions that need to be taken.

Ideally the Safeguarding Officer has experience of Safe-guarding, in a Christian parish situation or in their workplace: either can provide some relevant training. If the person is receiving on-going training in their role, this would be a bonus. JM could consider arranging training for some-one new to this field, who feels they can offer support to our meetings if they encounter a safeguarding issue.

If you feel you may be able to support The Julian Meetings in this role, please contact safeguarding@thejulianmeetings.net with an expression of your interest and experience.

# In The Future

This is the last printed JM magazine. It will be replaced by a blog on our website.

Our 'membership' (current magazine subscribers and meeting contacts) will receive a Monthly Update of new blog posts by email.

Anyone visiting our website can subscribe to the blog and get notification of each blog post without becoming a member.

Membership of the Julian Meetings will remain free.

For those current members and meeting contacts who do not have an email address, a Newsletter will be posted to them containing essential news and a selection of articles.

Meeting first contacts with email addresses will receive a printable version (PDF file) of the Newsletter for any members of their meeting who do not have access to the internet.

We will encourage members for whom we do not have an email address to supply one, if possible, so that they can enjoy the full content of the website and blog.

New meetings will need an email to register. This is not a requirement for meetings already registered without one.

**Printed Newsletter**

The Julian Meetings Council is very aware that not all our members have access to the internet.




We will continue to provide these people with a printed resource in the form of a Newsletter three times a year. The Newsletter will not contain quite all the content of the online blog, but will contain all essential notices and news, an order form, and a selection of articles. The newsletter will be posted out three times a year to those members for whom we do not have an email address.

A printable PDF file will also be sent to Meeting first contacts with e-mail addresses, for any members in their meeting who cannot access the website and read the blog.

**Accessing the blog**
All those who currently receive our emails (meeting contacts and magazine subscribers – whom we describe as our 'membership') will receive an e-mail Monthly Digest advising them of what is new in the blog.

**Joining us**
Visitors to our website can join as members and receive the monthly notification. There is a new "Join Us" page on the website. Membership will continue to be free, and donations will be requested. New meetings will also be registered on the website, but an email will be needed for new meetings. Anyone who wants to keep up with the blog, but does not want to be a member, can subscribe to it on the blog

## We recently registered Meetings at:

| | |
|---|---|
| St Columb Major | *Cornwall* |
| Colne St Aldwyns | *Gloucestershire* |
| Beckenham | *Kent* |
| Leeds | *West Yorkshire* |

The true contemplative is one who has discovered the art of finding leisure even in the midst of his work, by working with such a spirit of detachment and recollection that even his work is a prayer.

Thomas Merton

**It only takes a few minutes a week. Could you spare a few minutes to post out JM publications? You would:**



* Hold the printed copies of our publications and post the requested items when orders arrive by post or via the online shop.
* Have enough space to store the publications, envelopes etc. Currently 3/4 largish boxes.
* Parcel up the items ordered, and post them out as promptly as possible.
* Have easy access to a post office to send a range of parcel sizes.
* Pay-in cheques from orders arriving by post and keep a simple spreadsheet for the treasurer
* Keep track of stock and advise if any items are getting low and need reprinting.

Because so much of our material is available free online, this job has reduced greatly in size but is still a vital service for those who need printed copies of booklets, publicity etc. In the first 6 months of 2024 only 32 orders were dealt with.

**Please contact Deidre Morris (see page 38) if you would like more information about this role.**

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## *Could you help with any of the following?*

**Website management** – WordPress.com / Woo Commerce
This includes a distinct role of Shop Manager, and various roles connected with the blog:
Editor – to publish / manage posts, inc. posts of other users.
Author – who can publish and manage their own posts.
Contributors – who can write and manage their own posts but cannot publish them.

**Social Media –** Facebook, X, Instagram, SoundCloud, YouTube, Vimeo, Spotify Podcast

**Domain** registration and management including e-mail addresses - One.com and 123Reg

If you've relevant experience of any role's technical aspects, even if not of the specific software, could you help us?

**If you would like to know more about any of these roles, please e-mail Ann Moran: it@thejulianmeetings.net**

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*One member's observations about the lack of response to requests for help with running JM*:

JM seems to be suffering from a social factor that is well recognized in the voluntary sector: volunteering has, in some respects, skipped a generation. Those retiring in the last few years have been far less willing to take on unpaid roles than those who retired earlier and are now in their 80s and 90s. People now often expect an organization - sports club, hobby group, scouts & guides, charity - to be there when they want it, but are unwilling to contribute their time or effort to ensuring it continues to exist.

There is a glimmer of hope, as members of the younger generation are starting to volunteer. Perhaps because the sales pitch to them is now 'develop your skills' or 'improve your mental health' or 'develop your CV' and stresses that volunteering is two-way:- it benefits you as well as the organization you support. Altruism is no longer required!

What might this mean for JM? All the people who lead local Julian Meetings, and those who help run JM nationally, have their own reasons for volunteering to do this, and we are very grateful for all they do. But perhaps we should also ask what JM might give to them, not just in terms of furthering JM's aims but as individuals who might themselves receive a benefit from volunteering.

If you have any views on this, why not share them on the JM blog?

# A Reflection on Contemplative Prayer

“Prayer should not be transactional, rather it should be transformational”

In a lifetime our prayer may take many forms of expression. Some of which will be words and actions, others heartfelt joy or deep suffering to which we yield in the spirit (as best we can). We may experience everything from bliss to abject misery. In these times our prayer may change from songs of joy to tears of despair.



It may seem, particularly in relation to specific requests, that our words go unheeded and unanswered. The issue does not lie with God but with our thoughts and attitudes regarding the best outcome of our prayer.

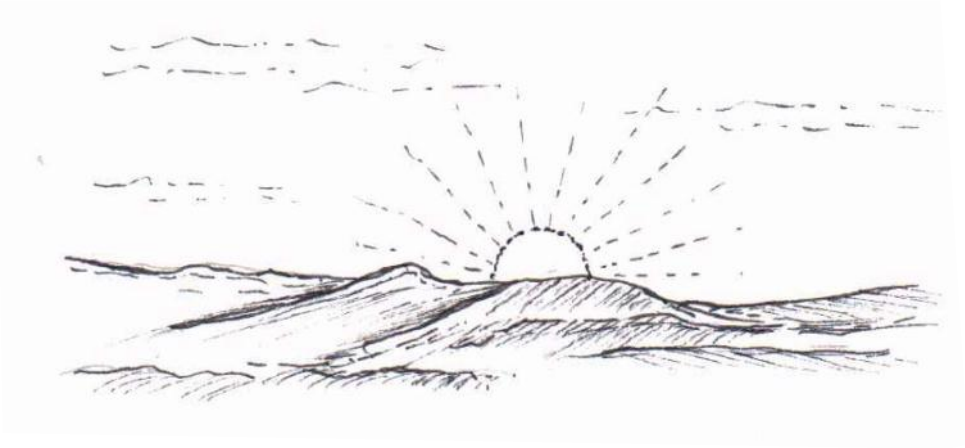
Though we express ourselves in words and actions, prayer is a relationship in which the communion rather than the mental, physical or verbal content is transformative. God is unchanging. It is we who are refined by the ever deepening relationship which contemplative prayer enables.

This is why silence and surrendered stillness are so powerful. When we let go of the desire to direct our own destiny, we enter a sacred space in which the Holy Spirit communes with our Spirit and we may rest; as the Divine work of transformation and ever deepening love and trust helps us transcend our physical, emotional and spiritual limitations. It is the nature of seeds, in time, to break ground and bear fruit. In the same way this unseen, unfelt miracle of growth in the ground of our being can lead to the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

*K. Marsh*

*Bexhill JM*

*Rowan Williams once compared prayer to sunbathing:*



When you're lying on the beach something is happening, something that has nothing to do with how you feel or how hard you're trying. You're not going to get a better tan by screwing up your eyes and concentrating. You give the time, and that's it. All you have to do is to turn up. And then things change at their own pace. You simply have to be there where the light can get at you.

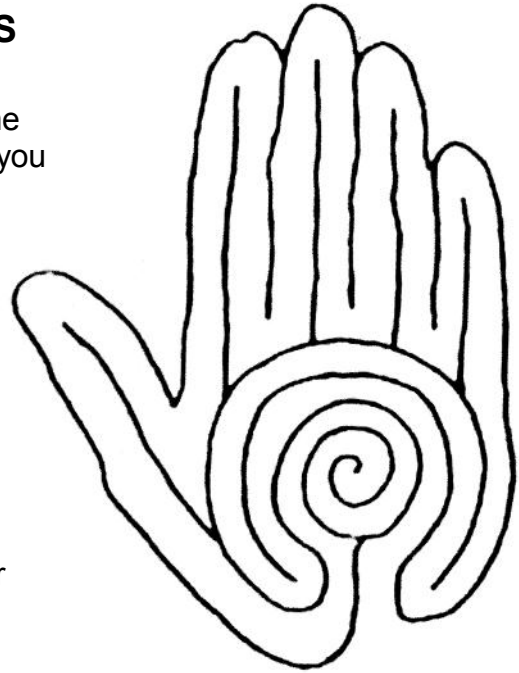
I am the door at which you knock
I hear your voice behind
I am the face beyond the lock
My welcome you will find.
I am the keeper of the gate
I hold the hallowed key
Speak softly as you call my name
Walk in the light with me.

## PALM LABYRINTHS

are always with you

Once you have learnt the pathway on your hand, you will have your own portable labyrinth, literally at your fingertips, always at hand.

Palm labyrinths have the advantage of always being with you, no more than an arm's length away, always ready to use where ever you are.



**As you enter** the labyrinth, you are like the disciples on the Emmaus road. You may be distracted by daily life. You may find it hard, at first, to recognise the risen Christ, walking alongside you, everywhere, always.

**As you finger-trace** your way to the centre of the labyrinth, take it slowly and try to leave distractions aside. Become aware of Christ with you: listen for his voice, as the disciples listened to his teaching as they travelled.

**At the centre** of the labyrinth, think how the disciples finally recognised Jesus in the breaking of the bread at Emmaus. How might you recognise Christ's presence in your life? Take time to contemplate, pray or just to rest at peace with God.

**Retrace your steps**, out of the labyrinth, and recall the disciples retracing their steps to share the news of Jesus' resurrection. Take your labyrinth experience with you back into your everyday life.

# The Fire and the Rose are One

If you gaze into the fire of the Sacred Heart, your own core will be broken into tiny pieces every day. Even if you decided not to watch the news, not to open the scrolls, if you closed your eyes and sat, maybe *especially* if you closed your eyes and sat, with your small yes in the silence, wouldn't your heart be shattered by the presence of the loveliness of a hurting world? By the soft crying of the swifts circling in the air, searching for home, and the beauty of roses, spilling out their flames onto the ground?

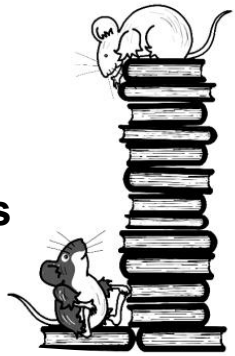


Couldn't you sense, then, the heart you are breaking with and into? There is a centre, a fulcrum, a crossways, a holding, an anchor. It is here, at the heartwood, in the groans of Spirit, a pained love so magnanimous that it never ceases to be cracked open, over and over, like a flower that blooms and opens to harshness, and chooses to blossom again the next day, knowing the effort will force death? Like eggshells hatching over and again inside one another, without seeing the freedom they are birthing, as cosmic Russian dolls.

And each of these mortalities, the quiet and the vicious, creates another layer, another crinoline surround, a nebula within those crinkling into fire before it, till this heart is full and overflowing into other universes, even as its centre burns to ash and rises again. An outpouring, a constant cataract of seeing, feeling, bursting, and from all of this, a love unthinkable, too enduring to grasp. And yet we sit and sense the edges of it, in our small pauses for prayer. We offer our song and our cries and our petals to this One, this Everything, this Love. And we too, become flame.

***Keren Dibbens-Wyatt***

**Don't forget the Julian Meetings own books**



**Try Stillness**
A gentle introduction to stillness and silence

**Voices from the Silence**
A book of poems from the Julian Meetings magazine

**Circles of Silence** and **Circles of Stillness**
Extracts from the JM Magazine

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*Into your hands, O Lord,*
*we commend the Julian Meetings.*





# Books that might be of interest

**SILENT COMPASSION: finding God in contemplation**
***Richard Rohr***

SPCK, 2022.
Paperback ISBN 9780281 086603. Price £8.99.

Richard Rohr OFM (b. 1943) is an American Franciscan priest and communicator. Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 2013 he founded the Living School for Action and Contemplation.

*Silent Compassion* was first published by Franciscan Media in the USA in 2014, on the heels of the City of Louisville's occasional Festival of Faiths. This was attended by Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and Muslims, including Richard Rohr and the Dalai Lama.

The book has a Preface by John Feister, Editor in Chief of St Anthony Messenger magazine; an Introduction focusing on the Perennial tradition ('affirm[ing] that there are some constant themes, truths, and recurrences in all the world religions' (xi)); five short chapters; a helpful Appendix listing an interfaith timeline of mystics; Notes; and Sources for the chapters.

The chapters are headed

(1) *Finding God in the Depths of Silence*,
(2) *Sacred Silence, Pathway to Compassion*,
(3) *The True Self is Compassion, Love Itself*,
(4) *Looking Out in Prayer with Contemplative Eyes*,
(5) *The Path to Non-Dual Thinking*.

Each is sourced either from the talks given by Richard Rohr, together with their Q and A sessions, at the conference, or from interviews given by Fr. Richard and published in the St Anthony Messenger magazine.
All are chapters that assuredly feed our minds – *and our hearts*.

***Luke Penkett***

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**THE QUIET PATH**
***Andrew Rudd***

Canterbury Press
ISBN 9781786225894 £12.99 paperback

Andrew writes: The Quiet Path begins exactly where you are. This is a book for the armchair traveller as well as the pilgrim, for the clear sighted tourist or the bewildered wanderer. It's not designed to tell you the way, but to walk alongside you, and point out some things you might discover as you go. The Quiet Path has three parts, or movements:
1. 'The Walking Way' ~ how a simple practice of walking along the paths you know, can become a quiet path full of wonder.
2. 'The Seeing Way' ~ What might it mean to live in a contemplative way?
3. 'The Writing Way' ~ how writing itself can become a quiet path.
This is a book of bits: reflections, digressions, maps, jottings, listenings. There are some ideas for practice. Every so often there is a poem. Each poem might be a path leading on to somewhere else, a small pilgrimage. You could read a page a day, or dip in and out, starting and stopping. Every page is a short walk to a quiet place. Most importantly, may you find your own quiet path, and take a walk.
*Andrew Rudd is a poet, spiritual director, leader of retreats and quiet days. He was poet in residence at Manchester Cathedral 2017-2022 and is a Church of England Reader.*

**BIOGRAPHY OF SILENCE: AN ESSAY ON MEDITATION**
***Pablo d'Ors***

Parallax Press,
ISBN 9781946764232
Kindle, Hardcover, Audio book

I found this an extraordinary book. It is only 113 pages long and Kindle says it takes 44 minutes to read. For me it is in a class with the anonymous 14th Century 'Cloud of Unknowing' and 'Letter of Privy Direction' and Thomas Merton's 'Contemplative Prayer'. As Amazon likes to tell me, 'If you like these you will like this'.

Pablo d'Ors is a Spanish Roman Catholic priest, theologian, Zen disciple and writer. He has written a number of novels.

As the title suggests, it is an account of his journey with silence and meditation. It contains no mention of God or any particular religion or any traditional theology. In this respect it differs from the Cloud and Thomas Merton.

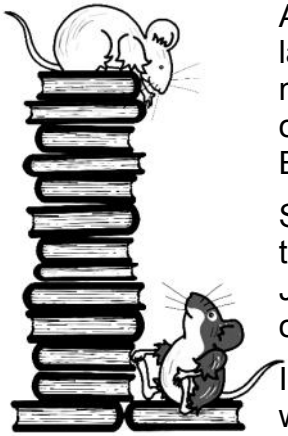
It is in ordinary, simple, but not patronising language. And so in many respects it is very accessible and meaningful to the 21st Century reader.

It is not a devotional book: not intended to evoke any warm fuzzy feelings. Or any emotional response at all. In that respect it is a difficult book to read. It embodies in the text and reading experience the 'nada' of John of the Cross (also a Spaniard) without the poetry. So in reading it I experienced all the difficulties and distractions of the practice of silent meditation.

It is also difficult to find a sound bite to quote, to give you a flavour of the book. It is probably not useful for leading the silence in meetings.

Nevertheless, the contemplative - beginner or experienced - will find it hugely interesting and rewarding and will empathise with and recognise much of his experience.

*Ann Moran*



Although this magazine is our last issue, much of the normal magazine content will still appear on the JM website and the JM Blog, including book reviews.

So if you read a book that you think would interest other Julians, why not send in a review of it?

Ideally a maximum of 300 words, with details of title, author, publisher, price and ISBN number.

It does not have to be a new book. Many older favourites or classics may be unfamiliar to current readers, and are still relevant to people today.

We've always welcomed articles, short meditations, stories, poems, book reviews etc. for the Magazine, and these could now go on the Blog.



[redacted]

## At our website:

## www.thejulianmeetings.net

**You can:**

* find out more about Christian Meditation & Contemplative Prayer
* find information about the Julian Meetings
* view our Meetings map
* contact our administrators
* find our Facebook, X and Instagram accounts
* download our free leaflets
* access audio, and some video, formats of publications
* buy our publications by post or online
* join our 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 Meetings Map

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

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