



Magazine
August
2021

The Julian Meetings Magazine August 2021

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*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 our costs.

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

Please see page 31 for details of how to donate.

Imaginative Meditation

The car is parked on a natural raised platform facing south west, looking over a large man-made expanse of water. My eyes absorb the tranquil view of a reed bed, softening the edges of the far shore, highlighted behind by a narrow belt of grass and then a few bare trees screening the smart new houses.

I'm listening to gentleness here.

Soft, occasionally gusty, wind...

Some sparrows chattering.....a bee buzzing...

In my foreground, on closely cropped grass with a few bunches of reeds and low bushes, the geese occasionally honk as they maintain their territory.

A dog barks in the distance ... a pigeon chants and some children wander past on the path behind me.

The westerly breeze constantly ripples and moves the surface of this vast silvery pond, sparkling grey beneath a pale blue sky.

As I stare from this rounded peninsular, I notice a sheltered bay, where the water is still and shallow.

Penguins?! I see upright black birds with the sun, gleaming white off their oily chests. The cormorants are perching, still as statues, on posts just peeping above the water line.



A few calm sea gulls surround them while others dance above in the wind, occasionally swooping down to the water.

To my left, a pair of swans glide westwards around the edge of the lake, facing the sun, looking for a place to settle.

In the centre, a small flock of petite, black and white ducks fly with the wind along the length of water. As I watch, they descend, turning to brace the waves and swim back again.

Nearby, some grebes glide thoughtfully, then suddenly disappear. My eyes scan the surface, guessing where they will emerge.

The stage in front is now taken with pairs of Pink-footed and Canada geese.

Some take the lead, like confident scouts stepping outside the cosy space to guard the way to longer grass. Their partners dutifully follow, and both nibble the ground as they go. They gesture with powerful outstretched necks, which quickly recoil to menace away encroaching competitors.

The afternoon sun heats this sanctuary, and some pairs saunter to the edge to take a dip. They slip sumptuously into the cool, becoming instantly elegant and swift on the water.

Enter some wagtails, who peck and pull at the surface and then a solitary gull lands, stepping thoughtfully, and finds a hollow in the grass. It beds down and rests, to bathe in the warm autumn rays. In my mind, I am there too.....

Suddenly, like a grenade, a ball bounces into the centre and scatters the remaining birds. A soaking wet black spaniel gallops to retrieve the ball and rushes back to the thrower.

As my peace is temporarily shattered, the now empty scene is filled with the arrival of awkward looking crows, who march around scavenging the clearing.

I smile in thankfulness for nature's rhythm, for this healing gift emerged in our neighbourhood, and the joy of this beautiful place of rest.

Fiona Elliott
Peterborough JM

This was provided as part of a zoom Quaker Quiet Day

A Story of Seeking

Contemplative prayer – drawing closer to God in silence – is most nearly related in Hinduism to that tradition's practice of meditation. Christian meditation as taught by John Main is one of several approaches to Christian contemplative prayer. His meditation method is closest to the Indian tradition, and Main learnt his meditation technique from an Indian *guru*.

I spent my 20s and early 30s studying *Advaita Vedanta*, a major religious strand in India, and learnt meditation using a Sanskrit mantra. Returning to the church in my 30s I found a deep connection between that meditation and what became my own practice of the Jesus prayer.

In the Indian tradition of *Vedantic* practice I found a sense of presence, peace and fullness. My challenge now was to find this experience in the Christian tradition. I discovered the Jesus prayer and explored using it. I also started a Julian Meeting in our parish. The Julian Meetings are so wise in not being prescriptive about the form of contemplative prayer used. We use various forms of contemplative prayer in our meeting, with material available for new members to access.

Would I have found the Jesus prayer, and contemplative prayer, without my experience of *Advaita Vedanta*? I do not know. I never rejected the Christian faith. I'd been presented with a creed and 'things to believe' in my young life in the church, but contemplative prayer was not part of this; maybe I was not mature enough to receive it. My Christian practice lacked the fullness I found in meditation in the Indian tradition.

Studying the Indian tradition was very fulfilling. The main things I missed – which brought me back to Christianity – were regular worship and Christ's Gospel of love. But *Advaita Vedanta* presented me with some challenges when I returned to the church. Above all else, *Advaita* proposes an identity between the individual self (or Self) and the supreme Being. One 'great saying' is *Aham Brahmasmi* - I am *Brahman*. Returning to the church this challenged me to look again at my own relationship with God, and to find how to explore it.

Advaitic doctrine is distinctly different from the Christian faith. The experience of unity with the divine is expressed in the compound word *saccidananda*, translated variously as consciousness, knowledge, bliss; or being, awareness of being, joy. The Christian experience of the presence of God has no single accepted description – it is beyond words – but maybe we do not speak of it enough.

So my experience of *Advaita* led me to contemplative prayer, which I had not found in the church as I grew up. The beliefs of the Indian tradition do not translate into the Christian faith, but they led me in a helpful direction. Under the heading 'What We Do' on the Julian Meetings website, the first item is 'Foster the teaching and practice of contemplative prayer and meditation in the Christian tradition.' This is such an important aim and purpose. Sharing with others in a Julian Meeting, and receiving the support that such a meeting provides, is exactly what the Julian movement has given me.

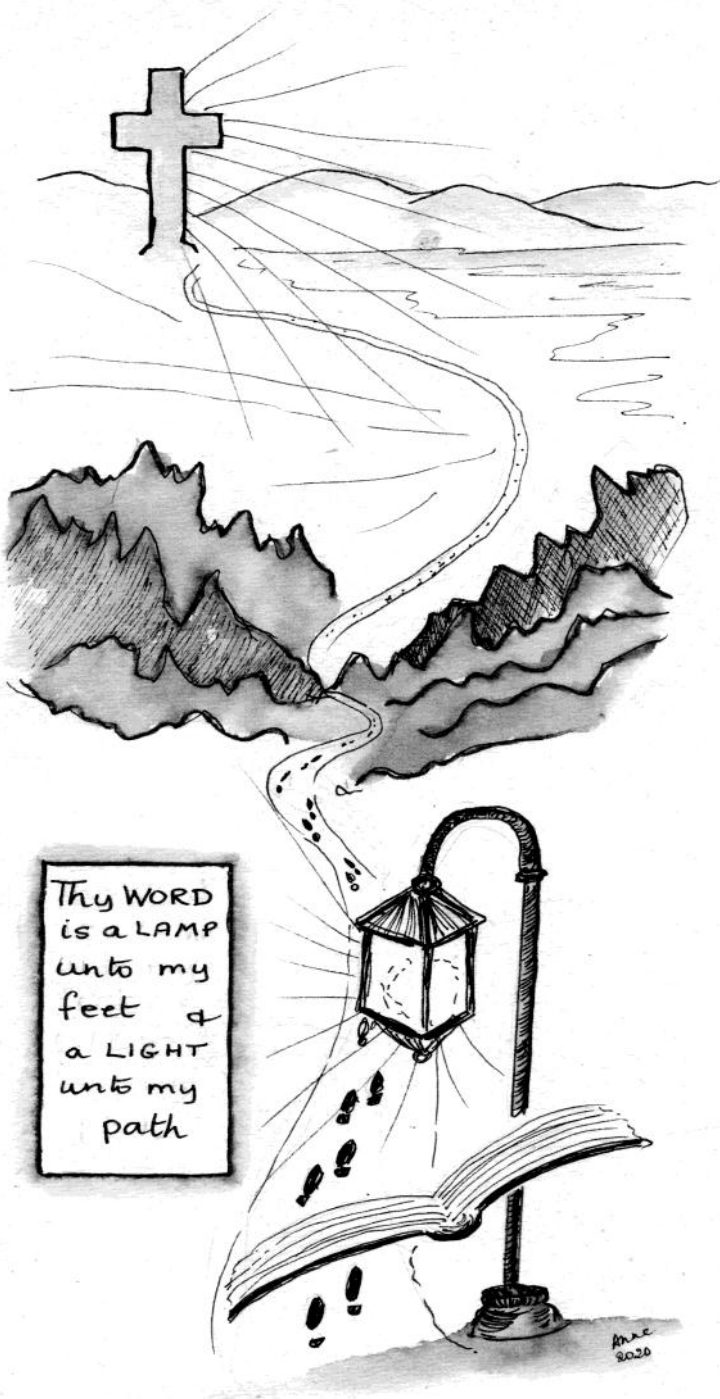
What should I draw from all this?

1. I am not alone in wanting to deepen my experience of the presence of God through contemplative prayer, nor is it something for just a spiritual elite.
2. Seeking ways to draw closer to an experience of the love of God is a central part of the historic Christian faith.
3. There is nothing wrong with searching widely, but many people search Eastern faiths for deep experiences because the Christian church has failed to provide teaching and experience of something which is profoundly within the Christian tradition.
4. Those who seek will find. It may be by a roundabout route, but those who look for God's love will surely find it.

Jonathan Gordon Smith

Shoreham-by-Sea Julian Meeting

Jonathan's book, Advaita, Christianity and the Third Space: Abhishiktananda and Bede Griffiths in India is published by Peter Lang Publishers, 2020. He has also written, The Power of the Jesus Prayer, published by Kevin Mayhew, 2005.



O Lord, the scripture says “There is a time for silence and a time for speech.”

Saviour, teach me the silence of humility, the silence of wisdom, the silence of love, the silence of perfection, the silence that speaks without words, the silence of faith.

Lord, teach me to silence my own heart, that I may listen to the gentle movement of the Holy Spirit within me, and sense the depths which are God. Amen

Frankfurt Prayer, 16th century

*We do not know how to pray as we ought,
but the Spirit prays in us with sighs too deep for words.*

Romans 8.26

Deeper than my words,
deeper than my knowing,
Spirit, pray in me.

I open the door of my heart for you.
I hold the arms of my spirit open for you.
Welcome.
Spirit, pray in me.

I only hold the space.
I do not hear your prayers,
your sighs too deep for my hearing.

I do not know how to pray.
I only know how to be still,
Spirit, as you pray in me.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes
Posted on Unfolding Light
May 18, 2018

The article below first appeared in the Spring 1992 edition of the JM Magazine when M.E. was very little understood. We have reprinted it here because the symptoms of M.E. can be very similar to those suffered by people who, in the last 18 months, have developed the condition known as 'long covid'.

An Unusual Retreat

I set off for my weekend at Pleshey with high expectations. I loved the period house, with its tranquil garden, in the heart of the Essex countryside. A bonus was being able to talk to my fellow retreatants, as we were there to learn about the Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator, and its relationship to spirituality and prayer. The latter was hardly touched upon. I could see why three priests, whose advice I sought, seemed dismissive about the value of psychological delving.

Worn out

I had thought it would be fun to explore the countryside, with my friend who was new to Pleshey, during our free times for relaxation. I was very mistaken. The busy timetable left little room for other activities: on our one free afternoon I collapsed on my bed in utter exhaustion.

So had the weekend been a waste of time?

I'd no enthusiasm to know more of Myers-Briggs, but I had been greatly helped by the friendliness and support of my fellow guests. Intelligent and articulate, they compared favourably with people I had met at medical workshops on psychological topics. Unlike the usual retreat, it was a pleasant change to find equal numbers of men and women, and most were young clergy.

What I did bring back, unexpectedly, from the weekend was a re-thinking of my whole attitude towards my illness (M.E.) and the lessons it had taught me.

A charming Deaconess specifically reassured me that it was natural and normal not to be able to pray when you were ill. I said the only 'prayer' I could manage at times was 'Lord, what

have I done to deserve this?', said through gritted teeth. She assured me that most people with an illness like mine would react in the same way.

Lessons learned

Looking back, I could see all the good things adversity had taught me, which could only be appreciated in hindsight. I hated being dependent on others, e.g. having to cadge a lift home rather than being able to offer one. It is indeed more difficult to receive than to give.

But through being more and more dependent on others I've met some wonderful people. One such is my hair-dresser, who ferries me to and from his salon at no extra charge. I've received a great deal of kindness. My church has given me invaluable support, not least by providing a part-time secretary!

So what have I learnt through suffering?

Primarily that people are more important than possessions and should be judged by what they are: appearances can be deceptive.

That the best things in life - for me, music, friendship and writing - are free.

I have learnt to have a deeper empathy with other people's suffering. Something that, as a doctor, I did not even realise I was lacking until I too experienced the frustrations of being a patient.

Time for a heightened awareness of beauty, be it a landscape or a single flower.

And without doubt I have drawn closer to God through this adversity or, more correctly, He has drawn closer to me. At Pleshey in particular I have been overwhelmed on more than one occasion by the feeling that God is certainly in this place.

Kay Moss

Has anyone else more recent experience of eg ME, MS, Long -Covid, that they might like to share?

Pray without ceasing...or maybe for just an hour!

Jess from Walthamstow reflects on taking part, in April 2020, in the Christian Aid prayer chain for climate justice.

In a fit of enthusiasm I signed up for an hour of prayer as part of Christian Aid's 24/7 prayer chain. 'Pray without ceasing' was to run through 2020 until the critical UN climate talks in November. 'Yes!', I thought, I want to join my prayers and actions with thousands of others around the world as we tackle this climate crisis together.

Have you ever prayed for an hour? When I woke on Sunday morning the task loomed before me. All I could think was 'it's a really long time'! I started feeling a bit prayer-anxious as I watched my time slot creep closer. 'Pray without ceasing' said St Paul to the Thessalonians. Without ceasing, Paul? I don't know if I can make it through the first 10 minutes!

Having a prayer plan

I needed a plan, a prayer plan! It may sound strange to plan for prayer, but people have been doing it for centuries. If you walk into your local parish church you'll find books full of prayer plans (formally called The Book of Common Prayer).

It felt like a marathon hour ahead of me, so I did what any good runner would do – set short distance targets. I split my hour into 15 minute chunks, each dedicated to a particular type of Prayer: Thanksgiving, Lament, Confession, Petition.

I also decided that praying for an hour, or even 15 minutes, didn't mean I had to be in constant spoken word with God. I could read the bible, sit in contemplation, speak and listen.

Praying from the confines of my bedroom, I wanted a way to connect to the living world that surrounds us. Rather than open the window to listen to the sounds of my urban London street, I found a video on Youtube. It was of a beautiful stream surrounded by woodland and I listened to the trickle of water, the sound of birds and the rustle of leaves as I entered my time of prayer.

Praying in chunks

I set my phone alarm to 15 minutes: my first prayer chunk. I spent this time in contemplation, listening to the sounds of nature as I read Genesis chapter 1. It was wonderful to read aloud this beautiful, ancient story of creation and reflect and give thanks for what we have been gifted: it is 'very good'.

When 15 minutes timed out, the next began. I spent this time recognising that what was gifted and very good had been tainted by our actions, individual and collective. Climate breakdown is made by us and the poorest are suffering. I named nations and places most impacted; recognised the human and environmental cost of it before God, our maker.

From this lament came confession, for my next 15 minutes. I laid before the cross my own part in the problem, the part played by my nation and government. I said sorry. I waited. I put my trust in the forgiveness we are offered and recognised that repentance is to turn from our old ways to new ones.

In an act of turning, my last 15 minutes was petition, both prayerful and practical. I asked God to give me the strength and will to change. I lifted before God those living at the brunt of the crisis, asking for hope and change. I prayed for local, national and global government – that those with decision-making power would make this climate crisis into climate justice. Then I took action, signing Christian Aid's petition calling for a New Deal for Climate Justice, putting my name with thousands of others to say we need urgent change.

And as my hour closed, I thought perhaps St Paul was onto something when he said 'pray without ceasing'. To put yourself in the attitude of unceasing prayer, even just for one hour, is powerful and transformative. I was blessed to be part of the prayer chain and to say Amen to Climate Justice.

The climate talks were postponed for a year, due to the pandemic, but 'Pray Without Ceasing' continues right up until they take place this November. You could join in with Jess and many others at www.christian-aid.

Wind Whispers

Softly whispering Spirit
Blow gently into our lives
Blow softly into our minds
And bring peace
Blow softly into our thoughts
And bring understanding
Blow softly into our concerns
And bring calm
Blow softly into our fears
And bring courage
Blow softly into our hearts
And bring love
Life giving Spirit
Breathe Your Life into our lives
This day and every day
Amen

Elizabeth Mills

TAKE TIME

Take time to watch the clouds unroll
Their feathery strands across the sky
Take time to watch the little ants
The flutterings of a butterfly.

Take time to listen to the birds
To breathe the scent of dampened grass.
Take time to share sweet nature's gifts
And you will find your troubles pass.



Shirley Fry (Sherborne Abbey JM)

*You appointed the sun in heaven to begin
the day and the moon to begin the night.
You inscribed the chorus of the stars in
heaven to the praise of your magnificence.*

(4th Century)

Psalm 23: XXII Dominus regit me

To suffer my own dereliction for me,
To be my shepherd, and lead me through
The grave and gate of death, in strength and mercy
Christ has come down. At last I've found the true
Shepherd and the false just fade away
Before him. I will sing of how he drew
Me from the snares I set myself, how day
Dawned on my darkness, how he brought me forth,
Converted me and opened up the way
For me, and led me gently on that path,
Led me beside still waters, promised me
That he'd be with me all my days on earth,
And when my last day comes, accompany
And comfort me, as evening shadows fall,
And draw me into his eternity.

Malcolm Guite

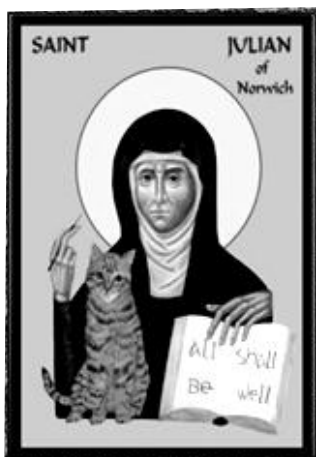
*(from 'David's Crown; Sounding the Psalms' reviewed on
page 25 and used with permission from Canterbury Press)*

This article was written for a parish magazine, explaining about Julian Meetings in general and the local one in particular. You might like to produce something similar if there is a suitable parish or local magazine in your area.

.Rye Julian Meetings Prayer Group

Meeting in silence with God

Julian meetings are ecumenical groups who gather locally to practise silent contemplative prayer, and the Rye Julian Meeting group has been going strong since 1975.



We take inspiration from Julian of Norwich, who was an English anchoress and mystic of the Middle Ages (living around 1343 to 1416) and who wrote the first book in English by a woman, entitled '*Revelations of Divine Love*'. Julian lived in the city of Norwich. At the age of 30, when seriously ill and on her deathbed, she received a series of visions of the Passion of Christ. Following the visions, she recovered from her illness and wrote details of these revelations for others to read.

For much of her life she lived in permanent seclusion as an anchoress. Her cell was attached to St. Julian's Church, Norwich, and this is why she is now known as Julian of Norwich. There is no record of her true name. Today St. Julian's Church has become a place of pilgrimage to Julian and contemplative prayer.

The Julian Meetings organisation provides support for local groups across the UK, and the Rye group was one of the earliest members, now in its 46th year. The original founder for Rye was Ann Hamilton, who handed over co-ordination to Barrie Wright in 2016. Ann is still an active member but is simply taking things a little easier now. Meetings since 1975 have taken place at a variety of local venues, including private

homes, in Rye, Beckley, and Camber, and for a short period at St. Anthony's in Rye. However, from 2013 we have been hosted by St. Mary's parish church, Rye, where we gather on alternate Tuesdays.

Each meeting lasts about 50 minutes. Members arrive in silence and take a seat in the circle around the prayer table. We say an opening prayer and one member gives a short reading either from the writings of Julian or another spiritual resource before we go into silent contemplation for about 25 minutes. At the end, we simply say some closing prayers, give Peace to the World, and remember any people who have asked for prayers. Finally, as a group we stand, and extinguish the central candle, seeing its Light spreading across God's world.

Of course, with lockdown, things have been a little different. Since early 2020 we have been observing the Tuesday prayer meeting from home and in seclusion (similar to Julian of Norwich), but maintaining the distance-meetings weekly rather than fortnightly. A meeting sheet with prayers and a suggested reading is emailed to everyone a few days before, so that we can all gather in our homes at the same time and connect prayerfully.



If you'd like to know more about THE JULIAN MEETINGS it is really worth visiting www.thejulianmeetings.net If you are specifically interested in the Rye Julian Meeting group, there is a contact facility via the main website. You would be warmly welcomed to join us in Rye and discover the peace and strength of contemplative prayer.

*With blessings from Julian of Norwich,
Barrie Wright (Rye JM Co-ordinator)*

***“Whenever you pray, go to your room, close the door,
and pray to your Father in private” (Matthew 6:6).***

Prayer Stool

I leave aside my shoes, my ambitions;
and undo my watch, my timetable;
take off my glasses, my views;
unclip my pen, my work;
put down my keys, my security;
to be alone with you, the only true God.

After being with you,
I take up my shoes to walk in your ways;
strap on my watch to live in your time;
put on my glasses to look at your world;
clip on my pen to write up your thoughts;
pick up my keys to open your doors.

+Graham Kings

*(from Nourishing Connections, reviewed on page 28
and used with permission from Canterbury Press)*

*Go as far as you dare,
for you cannot go beyond the reach of God.
Give as extravagantly as you like,
for you cannot spend all the riches of God.
Care as lavishly as you are able,
for you cannot exhaust the love of God.
Keep journeying as a servant
for God will always be with you.*

ORDER FORM (AUGUST 2021) for Julian Meetings Publications

This order form is for use only within the UK postage area.

You can also order and pay online at www.thejulianmeetings.net

This form has **4** pages. Please total the cost for each page, and transfer these totals to the spaces provided on page 3. **Do remember to fill in your name, address, phone number and e-mail on page 4!**

ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE & PACKING CHARGES

Publication	Price	Quantity	Cost
Waiting on God <i>A tri-fold leaflet introducing Julian Meetings, contemplative prayer, how JM began, and JM today. Includes reply slip. Useful as handouts or to leave on display. These are free: the charge is only for postage & packing.</i>			
Waiting on God x 10	£1.25		
Waiting on God x 20	£1.70		
POSTERS to advertise The Julian Meetings, in blue print on pale blue paper Trailing Flower design in A4 and A5 sizes. <i>This has The Julian Meetings top left, a passion flower motif across the top, down the right side of the sheet and across the bottom to where Contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition, and our web address are written. Large centre space for your own information.</i> Blue Border A4 <i>This has 'The Julian Meetings' logo, with space for your details below it and "Ecumenical groups for silent Christian contemplative prayer" + website at the bottom, all within a dark blue border.</i>			
POSTER BUNDLE <i>5 x A4 posters (some of both designs); 5 x A5 posters; 5 x A6 Noticeboard cards. (Price is for post & packing only, posters are free, so bundle is limited to one per customer).</i>	£2.25	Limited to one only	
Posters A4 x 5 <i>Trailing flower or Blue border (please delete the design you do NOT want)</i>	£2.70		
Poster A5 x 10	£2.20		
Blue A6 Noticeboard Card x 10 <i>Brief note on what Julian Meetings are, logo at top, space for your meeting's info. Useful for any noticeboards.</i>	£2.20		
Total for Page 1 Waiting on God + posters etc. (this page)			

We have booklets on Contemplative Prayer, on Stillness and on the Julian Meetings, plus publicity items. We hope all Julian Meetings will keep a set of booklets for members to read and borrow. Some are useful aids to your own time of silent prayer

OTHER JM RESOURCES	Price	Quantity	Cost
A5 Leaflets x 2 (<i>Downloadable from our website</i>). <i>A Brief Introduction to Contemplative Prayer / Books, CDs, websites that may be helpful</i>	£1.60		
Copy of the current issue of the JM Magazine	£3.00		
Back issue of JM Magazine	£3.00		
Bookmark x 10 <i>Blue card with a thoughtful text on each side, and suggestions for using the silence. Useful for new members, or enquirers</i>	£4.00		
Pew / Handbag / Wallet Card x 20 <i>Small blue card with JM information and a prayer suggestion. To hand out or leave in pews at church.</i>	£3.00		
Postcard x 10 <i>Blue, with JM logo and strapline. Useful both for noticeboards and correspondence</i>	£3.00		
Coaster / candle mat x 2 <i>Cork-backed blue leather with gold JM logo. Useful as a candle mat and for mugs</i>	£3.00		
QUIET DAY / MEETING BUNDLE <i>20 Waiting on God, 20 bookmarks, 20 pew cards, 2 A4 posters (1 of each design), 2 A6 noticeboard cards, 1 contemplative prayer leaflet, 1 resources leaflet</i>	£11.00		
Total for Page 2 (this page)			
<p>Circles of Silence <i>Articles and poems from early JM Magazines. Ed: Robert Llewellyn Pub. Darton, Longman & Todd.</i></p> <p>Circles of Stillness <i>Sequel to 'Circles of Silence'. Ed. Hilary Wakeman. Publisher DLT.</i></p> <p><i>Both out of print but often available to buy on-line</i></p>			

JULIAN MEETINGS BOOKLETS (most are 8 pages long)	Price	Quantity	Cost
Introducing Contemplative Prayer Bundle <i>has the booklets 'Some Basics of Contemplative Prayer' and 'Approaching Silence' + the leaflet 'Introduction to Contemplative Prayer' + a bookmark</i>	£4.50		
Some Basics of Contemplative Prayer <i>Introduces contemplative prayer; practicalities; problems you may encounter; coming out of silence; contemplative living</i>	£3.00		
Approaching Silence <i>David Self's introduction to contemplative prayer</i>	£3.00		
Going Into Silence ... and Coming Out <i>Advises on the practicalities of a Julian Meeting, its setting and atmosphere and ways to lead in and out of the silence</i>	£3.00		
Try Stillness A6 booklet to encourage anyone to try being still. Line drawings with brief text on facing page. £2.00 for 1, £12.00 for 10	£2.00 £12.00		
It's Your Turn to Lead Into The Silence <i>Advice on leading into and out of the silence at a Julian Meeting.</i>	£3.00		
The Ideal Julian Meeting <i>Hilary Wakeman, founder of JM, describes her ideal Julian Meeting</i>	£3.00		
Starting a Julian Meeting <i>Practical advice on starting a Julian Meeting:- publicity; initial meeting; going on; belonging to the JM network</i>	£3.00		
The Healthy Julian Meeting <i>Take stock of your Meeting, with suggestions for situations you may face</i>	£3.00		
CD 1 <i>with Waiting on God, Some Basics of Contemplative Prayer, An introduction to contemplative prayer, Approaching Silence. For those who need / enjoy the spoken word.</i>	£6.00		
CD 2 <i>with Waiting on God, The Ideal Julian Meeting, Going into Silence .. and Coming Out, It's Your Turn to Lead.</i>	£6.00		
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The April magazine had an article on the St Thomas Way in South Wales. Several new Pilgrimage routes have recently been developed in the NE of England.

A 'Santiago of the North' has been launched, encouraging people to walk some of the ancient pilgrimage routes to Durham, many dating back more than 1,000 years.



Around 30 churches in the dioceses of Newcastle and Durham are part of four revived pilgrimage routes. These start from villages and towns in the region, and re-create the routes taken by pilgrims to Durham Cathedral and the shrine of St Cuthbert.

'The Way of Learning, The Way of Life, The Way of Light and The Way of Love,' provide pilgrimage walks of 27 to 45 miles, while exploring places of historical and religious significance.

Modern-day pilgrims can visit churches and historical monuments, museums and galleries on the route. These include shrines and places associated with Saints Cuthbert, Bede, Hilda, Helen, Wilfrid, Oswald, Aidan and Godric.

Further pilgrimage routes, *The Angels Way* (30 miles) and the *Way of the Sea* (62 miles), link Lindisfarne and Durham, the two most important pilgrimage centres in the region.

Northern Saints Trail Coordinator David Pott says: "There is a 21st-Century revival in pilgrimage. Pilgrimages attract people who are not necessarily of strong Christian faith but who want to explore more."

If you have walked a pilgrim route and would like to share your experience please send your account to the editor.

New Beginnings?

As we head towards the autumn, those who lead a Julian Meeting may be looking to the future. Some Meetings have already resumed meeting in person, under covid restrictions.



Hopefully others will do the same in the coming weeks. Now could be a good time to advertise that your Meeting exists - some people might find it very helpful in the present circumstances.

We have revised and up-dated our introductory leaflet 'Waiting on God in the silence'. This is ideal for giving to people, or leaving in your church etc. for people to see. The leaflets are free - we just ask you to pay the postage on them. These, and our booklets, posters and other publicity material are all detailed on the order form which is the centre-fold of this magazine. Do check to see if there are things that you or your Meeting members might find helpful. They can be bought direct from our website, or by using the order form.

The article on page 14 could be adapted to use in your own local church or village magazine. It would alert people to your existence and tell them something about how we began and what happens at a meeting.

People can only join a Meeting if they know about it!

We recently registered Meetings at:

Chessington

Greater London

Lechlade

Gloucestershire

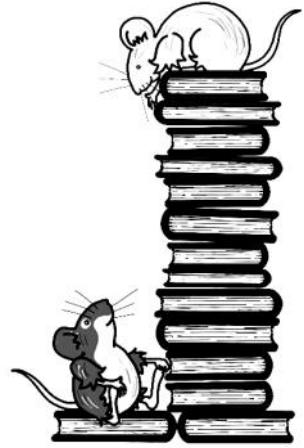
Winslow

Buckinghamshire

If you've read, or come across, any books on prayer, contemplation, meditation or spirituality that you think would be of interest to other people in the Julian Meetings, please could you e-mail the book details to Peter, our Reviews Editor, at:

bookreviews@thejulianmeetings.net

He is always pleased to hear about new books, or reprints of older books, that we might wish to review.



*Deep deep in heart's depths
the desert calls 'come'
Now is the moment for prayer
leaving your speaking
your doing
your thinking
for this one thing
prayer
wait
your heart stilled upon God
waiting
stilled
is the prayer*

© West Malling Abbey

The Holy Isle

What was the point of going there
except to be apart, to leave behind
the babble of voices that could never know
how many angels there were dancing on a pin.
This was beyond: a place where silence spoke -
a few fields scattered in between the rocks,
a well of water for the quenching of their thirst,
and beehive cells for shelter come the dark.
These were the simple things that made their lives.
What mattered more was breaking through
from out of solitude and quiet, now and then,
into somewhere else; a realm
where they could know the voice of God,
that took them from the ordinary
into a deeper light and out of time.

Kenneth Steven

from Out of the Ordinary, reviewed on page ...





LISTEN

When I ask you to listen to me, and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I should not feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, then you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen. Not talk or do – just hear me.

Advice is cheap: a few pence will get you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper.

I can do for myself: I am not helpless – maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless. When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.

But when you accept, as a simple fact, that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I quit trying to convince you and I can get down to understanding what is behind this irrational feeling.

And when that is clear, the answers are obvious and I do not need advice. Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what is behind them.

Perhaps that is why prayer works, sometimes, for some people. Because God is mute and he does not give advice or try to fix things. God just listens, and lets you work it out for yourself.

So, please listen and just hear me. And, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn and I will listen to you.

The Language of the Trees

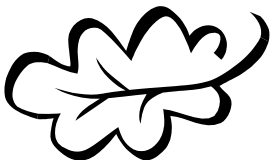
Stand below a tree and listen;
The trees speak to each other,
But we do not understand their language.
Our lives make so much noise we cannot
hear
What they are saying to one another.



To stand below a tree and listen is wonder;
What is the wind saying to the rustling leaves above?
To myriad creatures dwelling in their woodland home?
Sometimes it is so soft one can hardly hear a whisper;
But when autumn comes, what change of sound
When gales roar through branches bare and
Hurl spent leaves upon the ground.
We are deafened by its power and its sound.

There are still so many secrets nature keeps her own;
We cannot share because we cannot listen.

The trees were here long, long before man ever trod this
earth;
They will remain when man has gone with all his clamour.
Their roots are hidden deep, deep within the earth.
What strength and power are here;
We cannot understand because we do not listen.



We can touch their bark,
Pick up the sticks that fall;
We can uproot -
Do we really care at all?

They are rooted in God's created earth;
Their pointed tops are lifted up to heaven.

Help us, Lord of all creation, to listen and
To hear your voice in all of your creation.

Have pity on our ignorance, Lord,
For once man did enjoy in Eden all that you had made.
Commit to us, good Lord, your Peace,
And in your gift, to listen and to understand
The language of the trees.

Margaret Dickens

Silence

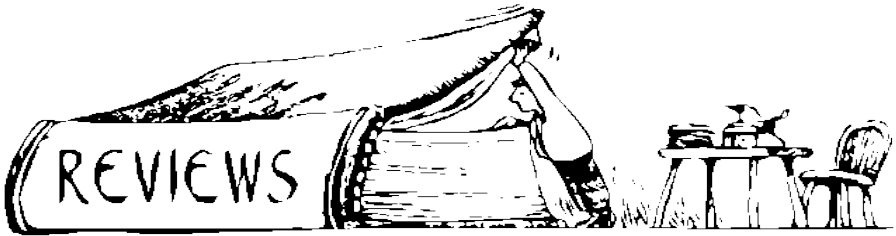
Silence
has a great hole
at its centre
through which
we enter;

nothing is asked of us,
no words spoken;
we find ourselves
as we always were
before living
got in the way.

Pauline Hawkesworth

God is great, and therefore He will be sought.

God is good, and therefore He will be found.



**THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST,
Part Two, Volume 1, Chapters 1 – 57.
Ludolph of Saxony, Carthusian,
translated and introduced by Milton T. Walsh.**

Cistercian Publications (CS 2683, pub. the Liturgical Press, 2021).
Hardback ISBN 978-0-87907-283-4; US\$79.95.
eBook: ISBN 978-0-87907-683-2; US\$44.99

In our August 2020 issue I reviewed, briefly, the first volumes of a new translation of the *Vita Iesu Christi* (Life of Jesus Christ) by a 14th century Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony. The third volume (of a projected four) has been published and, as I promised last year, here is a short review.

This first half of the second part of Ludolph's most influential work begins with Peter's Confession of Faith (Matt 16:13-23; Mark 8:27-33) and concludes with Christ's Discourse and Prayer at the Last Supper (John 13-16). The turning point in the narrative, for Ludolph, is Peter's confession of faith, which is followed by our Lord's first prediction of his passion. As is written in the translator's preface:

The shift in Jesus' ministry from that of an itinerant teacher and healer in Galilee to the fulfilment of his mission in Jerusalem is underscored most dramatically in the Gospel of Luke: 'When the days drew near for him to be received up (analempseos), he set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9:5). The Greek word means 'taking up', and biblical scholars observe that it can refer to Christ's going up to Jerusalem, his being lifted up on the cross, or his ascending to heaven. All of these themes are treated in Part Two of the Life of Jesus Christ.

In this third volume of this translation, 860 pages are of Ludolph himself. In all the volumes, additional pages cover

introductions, appendices and other material usual in works of scholarship. I mention this in case the price seems high. It really is not that much when you realise how many powerful words appear in every page of this mystic's great work, a paragraph or two of which invariably lead me to silence and prayer.

Peter Rowe

DAVID'S CROWN – Sounding the Psalms

Malcolm Guite

Canterbury Press 2021 £12.99

ISBN 978-1-78622-306-7

Malcolm Guite set himself a considerable challenge in his latest work – and has fulfilled it admirably.

The Psalms cover the whole range of human experience, and vary in length from 2 verses (Psalm 117) to 176 verses (Psalm 119). Each poem, based on one psalm, consists of 15 lines, with a metrical form which reflects the typical nature of the Psalms. And, to complete the challenge, each poem begins with the last line of the previous one (with occasional minor tweaks), and to complete the crown, the last line of the last poem forms the first line of the first.

And, as if this is not sufficient, there is an introduction by Paula Gooder which helps set the scenes of the origin of the Psalms.

The emotional passage we observe in the psalms is kept and, if anything, made more explicit in the poems, but always in the light of the New Testament to which they pointed; the hope they expressed is named and celebrated. It will prove a valuable resource, both to individuals and to groups seeking fresh insights. Indeed, if there is any criticism of this publication, it must be that it is in paperback; it may well struggle to survive the use to which it is likely to be put!

Brian Morris

See page 13 for a poem from this book

DWELLING IN THE PSALMS: A healing journey

Pat Marsh

Kevin Mayhew 2020

Paperback ISBN 978-1-83858-028-5 Price £12.99

Like many people, I am familiar with some psalms but had never read them all. For each psalm Pat Marsh provides a few verses from the psalm, in a modern translation (mostly NIV or NLT); her own interpretation of the psalm; a reflection on it; and a prayer. I chose to read a psalm a day, and to start each day by reading the whole psalm from the Book of Common Prayer, being familiar with them from Evensong. In this way I put the extract verses into context, and could appreciate the fresh perspective of the modern translation.

Over the days I began to appreciate how much emotion the psalms expressed directly to God. They are cries from the heart. Cries of despair, pain, anger and vengeance from people in deep emotional, physical and spiritual pain. But also paeans of praise and trust in God – often in the same psalm. Our prayers are often polite requests, whereas the psalmist hurls the full force his feelings, good and bad, at God. Pat Marsh acknowledges this, and how difficult we may find it.

In autumn 2020 my right hand was painful, almost useless, for 2-3 months: a trial for a keen crafter, cook and gardener. My daily reading from Pat's book anchored me in that time of pain, deprivation and gradual improvement. I came to appreciate how I might approach God in prayer, as the psalmist did, with absolute honesty, and *dwell in* the psalms.

This book can be used in other ways, as people wish – but it can certainly help to enrich your prayer life, however you choose to use it.

Deidre Morris

We review Malcolm Guite's 'Sounding the Psalms' on page 25 and in April reviewed John Bell's book 'Living with the Psalms'. Both give other insights into this amazing resource in the Old Testament.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Kenneth Steven

St Andrew Press 2020 £10.99

ISBN 978-1-80083-005-9

George Bernard Shaw said, "You see things as they are and ask, 'Why?' I dream things as they never were and ask, 'Why not?'" In this collection of poems, Kenneth Steven does both. He takes us into his everyday landscape of northwest Scotland, and into an inner world in which new meaning is revealed through the familiar. He takes us to places – some well-known, others more general, and of no apparent importance - and invests them with a new significance.

He also takes events from the church's year, and explores those, sometimes from an unexpected viewpoint – the innkeeper's wife at Christmas, Good Friday as seen by Judas – that take us into the heart of situations we have come to see from a distance.

Each poem is an invitation to pause; to reflect on the scene or activity portrayed; to take part in it; and discover, through our reactions, new meaning and depth. The title is an example of how this will work. Be prepared to leave the ordinary behind, and see the world in a new light.

Brian Morris

See page 20 for a poem from this book.

LEARNING TO PRAY. A guide for everyone.

James Martin, SJ.

HarperCollins Imprint William Collins. 2021.

Hardback: ISBN 978-0008447052. Price: £16.99.

eBook: ISBN 978-0008447069. Price: £7.99.

Also available in Kindle from Amazon £7.99.

Available from 2022 in paperback. ISBN 978-0008447083.

This very attractively written and truly practical book by a well-known American Jesuit will likely become a spiritual

classic in due course. It does what so many books on spirituality do not do, which is to take seriously the feelings that most of us who are drawn to prayer feel deep down: are we doing it right; should we be experiencing something that we are not; why does God seem so silent and far away; is there any point in all this; and so on?

There is no wrong way to pray, which will come as a relief to those who have never prayed but are curious about prayer; to those who used to pray but no longer do; and to those who are serious about prayer but still feel that they are floundering. There is encouragement here for all, couched in simple, even homely, language and from which gentle humour is never far. This book helps you to experience a God who has been near you all along.

The 18 chapters include an introduction which assures the reader that everyone can pray. Childhood prayer is considered, as are common reasons for wanting to pray. Examples of praying without even knowing it lead on to a few definitions of prayer. The beginning of prayer is a friendship with God, and the value of praying for others, which many find rather odd, is treated with compassion: everyone needs help. Formal and rote prayers are valued, and then Father Martin considers the 'examen' or 'examination of conscience'. This is essentially a review of the day, which helps you see where God is active in your daily life. St Ignatius (founder of the Jesuits) did not invent this practice, long used as a preparation for confession, but moved the emphasis away from sin to seeing where God is present. Noticing God is such a great help in prayer!

The book goes on to consider what happens when you pray; how you know if God is there; the use of imagination in prayer; and praying with sacred texts. Centering prayer (for some, akin to contemplation) and discovering God in creation are both dealt with in strikingly helpful ways, and the book ends with chapters on retreats and related matters, the ups

and downs of spiritual life, and finally a chapter about moving from prayer to action. What difference will prayer make in your life? 'You have a lifetime to answer. And the answer is your life.'

Full notes follow the last chapter, and then there is a very useful guide to further reading for those who want to go deeper into a particular topic.

I really cannot commend this book too highly. You will be greatly blessed as you read it.

Peter Rowe

NOURISHING CONNECTIONS

Graham Kings

Canterbury Press 2020 £10.99
ISBN 978-1-78622-277-0

Both art and poetry are used in this book, and both can offer new insights into things we have come to accept as commonplace. When we pause, and say 'I've never thought of it that way before', we are being fed in a way that helps us to grow.

Some of the starting points here will be familiar: key times of the church calendar; people who have made a significant contribution to the life of the church; points in Luke's gospel. Others will be less so, in particular a series linked to portraits of women in the Bible.

There is an urgency to the poems in this collection; if your response to a question is, 'It all depends on what you mean by ...', you will find that there are very few fences to sit on! They are driven by an understanding that what is important is not the words, but the Word. If we think of the church as God's garden, we need to remember that 'gardens are not made / By singing:--"Oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade'. These poems are an invitation to develop our gardening skills as we work to build God's kingdom.

Brian Morris

Receiving the Magazine regularly

We have 3 issues a year, in April, August and December

You can join our mailing list for the JM Magazine:

- * online at www.thejulianmeetings.net
- * download a form at www.thejulianmeetings.net
- * send your full name, address, telephone no. and e-mail address (if you have one) to:

Ian Bailey, 28, Old Hospital Lawn, Stroud,
Gloucestershire GL5 4GA

If you have an e-mail address you will automatically also receive a PDF electronic version and, if you wish, you may opt out of receiving a paper copy.

We welcome articles, short meditations, stories, poems or artwork for the Magazine, We may not be able to include them. and may edit them before inclusion. Book reviews (300 words max) to include title, author, ISBN, publisher, year published, hard- or paperback, price.



Please send items for the DECEMBER 2021 issue

By 25th September 2021

Please post hard copy to Deidre Morris at
263 Park Lodge Lane, Wakefield, WF1 4HY

Contributions by e-mail, in Word, are most welcome.

Send to: **editor@thejulianmeetings.net**

*At the heart of the Julian Meetings
is each individual group of people
which meets regularly to share silent prayer together.*

The Julian Meetings try to keep life simple

We have no paid staff and no offices: our volunteers work from home across the country, using e-mail a lot. We usually have two overnight meetings a year.

Our website and Magazine are the main ways by which the JM network keeps in touch. Social media are also helpful in engaging with people, including those not aware that we exist.

Please Donate

Meetings pay £12 for their annual registration, which includes a magazine for their members to share. We do not charge individuals who receive the magazine, as we want what we offer to be as freely available as possible.

However, it does cost a lot to: print the magazine; print our publications; maintain our website, media platforms and database; support the individual Julian Meetings and pay our volunteers' expenses. So we invite readers who enjoy the



magazine, or value our promotion of contemplative prayer, to donate towards our costs. A minimum of £3 per issue would be much appreciated but anything less, or more, would still be gratefully received. You can:

- * Donate on our website: www.thejulianmeetings.net
- * Use the QR code on this page (both this and the website include a Paypal option)
- * Pay direct to our bank: Lloyds. Account Name: The Julian Meetings. Sort Code: 77-15-17 Account Number: 12791468
- * Send a cheque (payable to 'The Julian Meetings') to
Ian Bailey, 28, Old Hospital Lawn, Stroud, Glos. GL5 4GA
(GBP / £ sterling only for these last two options, please)

Contacting the Julian Meetings

Website: www.thejulianmeetings.net

There are Julian members in many countries of the world.

JM is run entirely by volunteers, working from home, who do the jobs necessary to maintain JM worldwide. They include:

JM CO-ORDINATOR

(to whom all general correspondence should be sent)

Deidre Morris, e-mail: nat.coordinator@thejulianmeetings.net or write to: 263 Park Lodge Lane, Wakefield, W. Yorks WF1 4HY

INFORMATION about MEETINGS

Sheana Barby, e-mail: meetingsinfo@thejulianmeetings.net or write to: 2 Margaret St, Derby, DE1 3FE

Sheana gives contact information for Julian Meetings worldwide

REGISTRATION of your GB Julian Meeting

if ANY of the information about your own Meeting, or contacts, changes, please update the details via our website or inform *Ann Moran*, 20 Farrants Way, Hornsea, East Riding, HU18 1DG e-mail: it@thejulianmeetings.net

PUBLICATIONS

Pat Robinson, Rustling Pines, Foxwood Lane, Woodborough, Notts NG14 6ED e-mail: shop@thejulianmeetings.net

All our publications can be ordered from our website or facebook page from anywhere in the world. In the UK postage area the paper form in this magazine can be used.

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Join via our website or contact *Ian Bailey*, 28 Old Hospital Lawn, Stroud, Glos. GL5 4GA e-mail: mailings@thejulianmeetings.net

THE JULIAN MEETINGS MAGAZINE

Editor: *Deidre Morris*, details above

Please send her your articles, thoughts, comments, reports etc.

SAFEGUARDING

If you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding in connection with Julian Meetings, please contact our Safeguarding Officer *Sue Derbyshire* e-mail: safeguarding@thejulianmeetings.net or write to: 31, Nelson Close, Romsey, Hants SO51 7DA.

At our website:
www.thejulianmeetings.net

You can:

- * find out more about Christian Meditation & Contemplative Prayer
- * find information about the Julian Meetings
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- * contact our administrators
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- * view an events diary
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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

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