

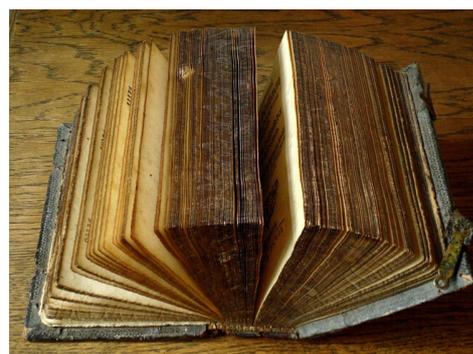
INSPIRING MORNINGS

FROM THE REVEREND'S DESK

A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING

With the Easter mysteries waiting for us just around the corner, the 3rd meditation offered by Dame Julian seems very appropriate. Raised in the church, the yearly liturgical cycle has taught me that there must be a season or time for every spiritual experience (these experiences affirm our faith – in times of joy and affirmation, in times of doubt and struggle, in the experience of birth and new life - and also in our experience of death). The liturgical seasons help us to journey through these experiences - we affirm our experience of birth when we celebrate Christmas, the baptism of our Lord and Pentecost. And, of course, we celebrate our experience of growth during Epiphany, Lent and Easter. (While the themes of these seasons are different, the outcomes seem to be very similar – growth through the various seasons of our lives.) We celebrate times of challenge, waiting, hardship and even death in the seasons of Advent and Lent. Holy Week, in particular, seems to highlight the importance of these experiences.

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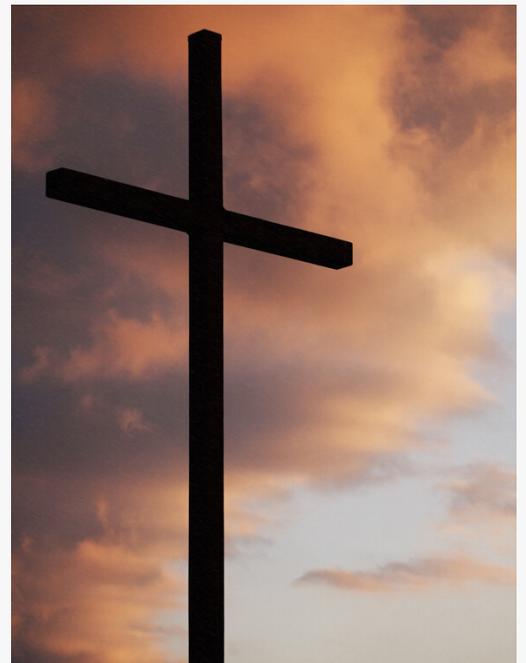
Dame Julian highlights the connections between these experiences when she talks about her understanding of the cross. In particular, she presents the cross as the foundation for her experience of God's unending love – which she describes as the joy of heaven.

“...At this time I wanted to look away from the cross, but I did not dare, for I knew well that whilst I contemplated the cross I was secure and safe... Then there came a suggestion, seemingly said in a friendly manner, to my reason: Look up to heaven to his Father... I answered inwardly with all the power of my soul, and said: No, I cannot, for you are my heaven. I said this because I did not want to look up, for I would rather have remained in that pain until judgement day than have come to heaven any other way than by him... So was I taught to choose Jesus for my heaven, whom I saw only in pain at that time. No other heaven was pleasing to me than Jesus, who will be my bliss when I am there...”

Dame Julian's meditation seems appropriate for any who experience the seemingly conflicting sensations of pain (or loss) and the glory of God's love. In these difficult days, as we struggle with so many unknowns - as we struggle with the loss that we see around us, we are reminded that these experiences can ultimately affirm the beliefs and truths that define our lives. The loss that we experience can remind us of the grace that we have shared – the suffering of the vulnerable can remind us of the care and concern of the strong and

healthy – the experience of death and loss can point the way to renewal and resurrection.

Ultimately, the cross reminds us that our loving God shares these experiences with us – together, they become part of the foundation of our living faith.



Prayer:

O God, you are my refuge and my secure dwelling place. Thank you for your presence in my places of suffering. Amen

Rev Chris