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The Trinity and Moral Life :

Julian's Trinitarian Logic of Love and Contagion

> Though the three persons of the Trinity are all equal in themselves, my soul understood love in everything. And this is the knowledge of which we are most ignorant; for some of us believe that God is all mighty and has power to do everything, and that he is all wisdom and knows how to do everything, but that he is all love and is willing to do everything—there we stop. . . . [F]or just as through his generosity God forgives our sin when we repent, so he wants us to forget our sin of unreasonable depression and doubtful fear. (Julian, *Revelations of Divine Love*, Long Text, 73)

> Anticipated scenarios of the ravages of [communicable disease] stress the question of survival, turning the undercurrent of fear to an undertow of panic and making it ever more difficult to ask how we want to live. (Wald 2008: 269)

In his introduction to the 1998 Elizabeth Spearing translation of *Revelations* I will be using here, A. C. Spearing repeats Peter Dronke's description of *Women Writers of the Middle Age*: "There is, more often than in men's writing, a lack of *apriorism*, of predetermined postures: again and again we encounter attempts to cope with human problems in their singularity" (Julian 1998: xxvi). In the spirit of such writing, I will concentrate on one holy woman's moral-theological coping. As a visionary and author (c. 1342-1416) Julian of Norwich, England is compelling, and perplexing. She detects divine favor within the Trinity when divine discontent seems a more direct explanation of human misery, and she finds such profligate kindness by pulling all questions through the needle's eye of the cross. The crucified Jesus points her to the Trinity, and the Trinity is revealed in the copious blood. Her reading of God's joy is complete, taking in not only the Second Person of the Trinity, but the First and Third Persons as well. The crucifix presents to her the embodiment of God, Spirit and Son, and also the focal point of all time and space. This "poynte" is where grace and love are found, and where she seeks greater solidarity with Christ and with her kin. Such a vision of love shapes her sense of sin and safety, granting a unique perspective on the Trinity and the moral life. She reflected on these visions through a Short Text (hereafter ST) and a Long Text (LT). (Notations below indicate text and chapter number.)

Although some essays in this volume may remain above the fray of lived readers, as if outside of merely human time, the entry on "the moral life" cannot. Ethics is a vivified endeavor for the faithful, and so this essay must not only describe but also connect Julian's Christocentric Trinity to worship and discipleship. Julian's voice testifies to wellbeing in "Holy Church" over the dissonance of contagion and crisis in her own time. During plague, Julian, paradoxically, saw safety. Rather than seeking wellbeing through separation from those who suffer, Julian prays to receive a repetition of all human suffering, as it is compressed in Jesus. Through the cross, she receives a kind of redemptive contagion. Inasmuch as anxiety over pandemic still besets Christians, Julian's visions may be read as strong solace. Pulling together the two quotations above, we may see Julian's odd version of the Trinity as answering the "unreasonable depression and doubtful fear" brought on by a crisis of plague. Playing on Priscilla Wald's note above, this fourteenth century anchoress addresses an "undertow of panic," that makes it "ever more difficult to ask how we want to live." By attending to several features of her text and her context, readers may connect Julian's words of wellness today to ecclesial practices of lived, liturgical solidarity.

When Adam Fell

Julian sees "love in everything." This, she believes, in the "knowledge of which we are most ignorant." Through "generosity," God "is all love," and this is beyond the usual reckoning. Divine Omniscience, often

connected with the Third Person of the Trinity, and Divine Omnipotence, often referenced with the First Person, are both easier to comprehend than full-on Divine Love. However, living into Julian's *Revelations of Divine Love* is an invitation to live out past the "stop" of sin. Past this barrier, the faithful may "forget" "unreasonable depression and doubtful fear" and see the moral life differently (LT: 73).

In this vision of God's goodness, Julian weaves tightly the three persons of the Godhead, threading the entire Trinity through the needle of Christ's Passion. Early in the Short Text (ST), Julian explains that she "dared not" "look away from the cross," for, apart from the cross, she would perceive only "the ugliness of fiends." Through tightly focused vision, she deems she is "safe and sound" (ST: 10). With prayerful stitching over many years, Julian works on sin in relation to such safety, and she eventually comes to some clarity about a confusing parable of a Servant and a Lord. By the time of her Long Text (LT), Julian is definite that she knows the Trinity through Jesus, and she comes to recognize all of humanity by way of this Jesus-defined Trinity. One salient passage from the parable is worth quoting at length as we begin:

> In the servant is comprehended the second person of the Trinity, and in the servant is comprehended Adam, that is to say, all men. And therefore when I say 'the Son', it means the Godhead, which is equal with the Father, and when I say 'the servant', it means Christ's Humanity, which is truly Adam. The servant's nearness represents the Son, and his standing on the left side represents Adam. The lord is the Father, God; the servant is the Son, Christ Jesus. The Holy Ghost is the equal love which is in both of them. When Adam fell, God's son fell; because of the true union made in heaven, God's son could not leave Adam, for by Adam I understand all men. Adam fell from life to death into the valley of this wretched world, and after that into hell. God's son fell with Adam into the valley of the Virgin's womb (and she was the fairest daughter of Adam), in order to free Adam from guilt in heaven and in earth; and with his great power he fetched him out of hell. (LT: 51)

Julian sees the servant as comprehensively two distinct characters: the Second Person of the Trinity, and Adam. She further discerns that God knows all of humanity by way of uniting Adam and the Son. In the decades between the composition of the Short Text and the Long Text, Julian finds that God perceives humanity through this unity of Jesus and Adam, without remainder. There is no aspect of residual anger in God's perception of miserable humanity, fetched out of hell. In his introduction to his translation of Julian's texts, A. C. Spearing reads her parable as allowing her "to see reality as God sees it":

> The orthodox solution to the problem of predestination and free will was that for God, who exists in eternity, past and future coexist in an eternal present to which the 'present of this brief and fleeting moment' is the nearest human equivalent. In the parable Julian apprehends this divine vision of reality not as theory but as experience. (Julian 1998: xxxi)

Thus, in what is arguably the most complicated vision of the text, Julian closely entangles Jesus with Adam so that they can no longer be seen apart from one another. She further identifies the Trinity through the divine sacrifice that accomplishes atonement. The parable narrates, as if in time, a truth that Julian perceived by compressing time, through prayerful concentration on the cross.

This aspect of Julian's vision has been a scandal. By one reading, the parable reflects Julian's inability to reckon with human responsibility for the horror we inflict upon one another. If I read him correctly, this is how David Aers judges her in his *Salvation and Sin*. By collapsing "the will to sin, the choices against divine grace, are assimilated into the language of 'payne,' of suffering, for which there is no 'blame.'" Aers is concerned "that the strategy here systematically diminishes human responsibility for evil and, equally systematically, banishes the discourse of divine justice as though this might be in conflict with divine love" (Aers 2009: 161). Julian may seem to be hopelessly and uncritically naïve—all shall be well, no worries—but her vision is in fact a full-blooded one, in more than one sense. For if God took within the Trinity not only humanity, but humanity in the form of the fallen servant, then this bleeds people together, blurring bloodlines

by which the Host was to be parceled in the Body of Christ, the Holy Church. When Frederick Bauerschmidt astutely observes that Holy Communion in the fourteenth century church was "a complex rite that depended on the participants properly performing their distinct functions" (Bauerschmidt 1999: 18-19)—which included details such as a strictly hierarchical reception of the body and the restriction of the blood to the clergy—he presents us with a medieval picture of a fractured world that Julian would have seen and which her revelations could heal. For instead of shoring up the division within society and among its people, the amity within the Trinity spills out abundant, floor-soaking blood from the brow and side of Christ, marking all without distinction.

Aers, nevertheless, reads *Revelations* as impotent to rectify the misery humans inflict upon one another in an ongoing struggle for power: "Julian's theology does not, probably cannot, address collective life and its domination by will and power alienated from God and the covenants. It cannot address the stuff of the earthly city" (Aers 2009: 170). Therefore, in Aers' opinion, Julian's view is anemic, inasmuch as the sins of "collective life" are driven by "domination." Yet sins of "collective life" may also result from humiliation and shame. Julian may be read as countering the vices that collect on the underside of a society driven by domination. Put in different imagery, there is a gnarled knot of vice that tangles up with anxiety and self-protective conformity. During times of social unrest, the pressure to cohere and conform tightens.

One moral theological task during the fourteenth century was to give an account for senseless loss during a crisis of plague and the failure of last rites. (We will discuss this further below.) Answers from the topside involved God's wrath and God's reinforced order, but Julian answers with a total game change. By this reading, she radically digs into the root of dread over the state of one's own soul and the souls of those who appear lost. This is one way to read Bauerschmidt's interpretation so that it answers Aers's concern. In Grace Jantzen's words, Julian wishes for "the passion of Christ and its costly transformation of life, so that her subsequent life would be more closely identified with the values represented by the dying Christ" (Jantzen 1988: 59). Her singular focus on the Second Person of the Trinity, and her identity of God's will with the work of Jesus on the cross, may be her perceptive, scene-shifting answer to a moral crisis of her time. She compresses time and categories for a reason.

Proper Time

If Julian is known to the general reader, it is likely not so much for her understanding of the Trinity, but for the refrain running through both the Short Text and the Long Text of her *Revelations* that "All shall be well." I submit that Julian's vision of "well" is connected to her tightly woven take on temporality and locality. Early in the Short Text, Julian perceives God "in an instant" (ST 8). A footnote in Elizabeth Spearing's translation clarifies, "the word used by Julian, *poynte*, can mean a point of space or of time" (Julian 1998: 181). The corresponding passage in the Long Text reads:

> I saw God in an instant [or *poynte*], that is to say, in my understanding, and in seeing this I saw that he is in everything. I looked attentively, seeing and recognizing what I observed with quiet awe, and I thought, 'What is sin:' For I saw truly that God does everything, no matter how small. And I saw that truly nothing happens by accident or luck, but everything by God's wise providence. (LT: 11)

Most of Julian's visions are disconcertingly non-narrative, occurring as if on a *poynte.* As A. C. Spearing puts it, her perspective "abolishes temporal extension" (Julian 1998: xxxi). In the passage above, "God's wise providence" is not an affirmation pulled along toward resolution through a series of victories, whether minute or remarkable. "Accident," from Julian's perspective, is eliminated not through episodes wherein loss (tragic or slight) brings forth blessing (profound or precious). Through this prism of thought, God does not move temporality from time A to B to C. Neither does God move a set of characters from location 1 to 2 to 3. Julian perceives "God's wise providence" in an eye-blink or, as in another of her visions, compressed into the form of a small nut. Poet Denise Levertov has suggested that Julian "ask[s] us to turn our gaze inside out," to see "a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, held safe in God's pierced palm" (Levertov 1988: 75).

Spearing's note and Levertov's images may also guide a reading of Julian on the Trinity, through a reconfiguring of temporality. As Julian receives divine love, the crucified Jesus points her to the Trinity, and the Trinity is revealed in the copious blood of Jesus. This cruciform emphasis on "the whole Trinity" is formally akin to Julian's explanation that she understands God "in an instant," or within small completion (as in a hazelnut). Julian writes: "Jesus wishes us to consider the delight which the Holy Trinity feels in our salvation . . . The whole Trinity took part in the Passion of Christ, dispensing an abundance of virtues and fullness of grace to us through him" (LT: 23). The "dispensing an abundance of virtues" is related to the "fullness of grace" that allows for a sense of plenty, and this plenty emerges from her concentrated focus on God's will of love. Julian suggests Jesus prompted her, and now prompts her readers, to focus in on the joy of the entire Trinity in the work of salvation wrought through the Passion.

Why focus so intently on God's joy? What might appear to be a muddled collapse of categories may also be read as Julian's refusal to succumb to despair. Julian suggests readers consider their world not from the vantage point of exacting righteousness – that is, with due judgment and penalty – but from the perspective of a Godhead who perceives humans through the Passion of Christ. Time, space, and the souls who inhabit both, may be rightly regarded only through the Passion, through the work that God performs on time, space, and souls.

This may be one way to read Julian's passage on "two different ways" of envisioning "things":

> We should not on the one hand fall too low, inclining to despair, nor on the other hand be too reckless, as if we did not care, but should recognize our own weakness without concealment, knowing that we cannot stand even for the twinkling of an eye unless we are protected by grace. We should cling reverently to God, trusting in him alone; for man and God regard things in two quite different ways; it is proper for man humbly to accuse himself, and it is proper for God in his natural goodness kindly to excuse man. (LT: 52)

"We" are to perceive that existence is "protected by grace." Without such protection, "we cannot stand even for the twinkling of an eye." This is connected to Julian's counsel that one "recognize" "weakness without concealment." This section is replete with visual metaphors. Perceiving that God regards humans with an intent of gracious protection, Julian suggests that her readers observe themselves "without concealment," that is, without barring God's view. To put this without Julian's eloquence, a Christian should not fear God's gaze, because God perceives with grace. There is no hidden aspect of Holy Trinity that harbors accusation. The Trinity, perceived through the Passion, invites trust, because Jesus' blood is more than sufficient to allow for open and honest self-accusation. Perceiving oneself with God's perception in mind may allow even the shamed to "cling reverently to God."

It may help some readers to gain their bearings by way of Thomas Aquinas here. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Question 113, in the First Part of the Second Part, regarding the effects of grace, Thomas asks two questions that are apropos to Julian's *Revelations*. In Article 7, Thomas asks "Whether the justification of the ungodly takes place in an instant or successively?" and, in Article 8, "Whether the infusion of grace is naturally the first of the things required for the justification of the ungodly?" Here Thomas considers different ways of perceiving grace, depending on one's position in relation to time. In the Reply to objection 5 of Article 7, he goes on to explain that "the succession of opposites in the same subject must be looked at differently in the things that are subject to time and in those that are above time." For "those that are above time," there is no "continuous time," or, "no continuity of time." Human understanding is "subject to time" and therefore "understands with continuity and time," even though, as "justified," "the human mind is, in itself, above time." As temporal beings, humans perceive even timeless things within time. Thomas's examination of grace and time then continues as he discusses the order of "the justification of the ungodly." Using metaphor, he explains that "the removal of darkness" and "illumination" are, technically, "simultaneous in time," as with "the forgiveness of sin" and the "obtaining of justice." The question of timing comes into play only in regard

to human perception. The sense of sequence depends on whether the perceiver is the person to be justified or the source (or "agent") of justification:

> And since the infusion of grace and the remission of sin regard God Who justifies, hence in the order of nature the infusion of grace is prior to the freeing from sin. But if we look at what is on the part of the man justified, it is the other way about, since in the order of nature the being freed from sin is prior to the obtaining of justifying grace. (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II q.113 a.8, reply to objection 1)

Given that God is timeless, God knows the activity of justification as "simultaneous." But, the person of faith sees herself as forgiven first, and made righteous second. Thomas also suggests here that a person of faith might rightly view God as forgiving subsequent to her movement toward righteousness.

Julian seems to be stitching and unraveling right along the same seam, with a blood-red thread. She is trying to discern what difference it makes for the faithful to know that God perceives humans by way of the cross. Much of the form and content of Julian's texts, both the shorter and the longer, affirm a temporal collapse whereby faithful perception regards each "small, humble, and simple" little thing through the cross. In this characteristic passage, Julian is concerned about the import of her visions for the apparently insignificant "things" (or, I shall suggest below, people) who might appear to be "forgotten":

> At one time our good Lord said, 'All manner of things shall be well'; and at another time he said, 'You shall see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well'; and the soul understood these two sayings differently. On the one hand he wants us to know that he does not only concern himself with great and noble things, but also with small, humble, and simple things, with both one and the other; and this is what he means when he says, 'All manner of things shall be well'; for he wants us to know that the smallest things shall not be forgotten. (LT: 32)

She continues, connecting the plight of the apparently lost with the horror of human suffering. When "our good Lord" affirms that "all manner of things shall be well," this includes specifically "deeds" that are "so evil" that they appear as void. The "things" that seem to be so small as to be nothing, and the terror that seems to disintegrate all meaning, may be perceived as "treasured up and hidden in his blessed breast" (LT: 32). And here Julian makes a definitive move: "for just as the Holy Trinity made all things from nothing, so the Holy Trinity shall make all well that is not well" (LT: 32). The Holy Trinity needed neither time nor matter to create space and temporality. The Holy Trinity has the power again to make goodness out of small things that may appear to us almost invisible and out of events that seem stripped on meaning. God *wills* to make goodness out of human non-sense.

Costly and Precious Redemption

Does Julian lose more than she gains with this idiosyncratic take on the Trinity? By focusing on the cross, and by compressing human history (great events or small people) into a "poynte" within God's atemporality, does Julian misplace human meaning? Grace Jantzen suggests that Julian's "desire for unity with God in Christ is not an escape from social responsibility." Rather, the "Christ-centeredness of her spirituality" is a sign of her desire to unite with Jesus' "self-giving love: a compassion which extended to all of humankind." Jantzen links this desire to Julian's initial request for wounds, a request that brings forth her visions. By this reading, Julian is seeking "greater solidarity with suffering humanity, identifying simultaneously with the suffering of Christ and of humankind, and thus able to mediate his compassion" (Jantzen 1988: 61).

I have already suggested in passing that a rich, connective way to read Julian's impulse is in relation to the perils of her time, especially the plague, the inescapable tragedy of fourteenth century England. As Jantzen explains:

> People died, horribly and suddenly and in great numbers. It was so contagious that one contemporary witness describes how anyone who touched the sick or the dead immediately caught the disease and died himself, so that priests who ministered to the dying were flung into the same grave with their penitents. It was impossible for the clergy to keep up with all those who required last rites, and to die unshriven was seen as a catastrophe of eternal proportions. Nor could the people who died be buried with dignity . . . The psychological impact on the survivors was incalculable, made worse in subsequent years by the further outbreaks which occurred at unpredictable intervals. (Jantzen 1988: 8)

The estimate is that in Norwich itself "probably more than a third of the population succumbed," and "at least fifty percent of Norwich clergy perished." Julian's determination to see the Holy Trinity through the bleeding Christ may be her unflinching meditation on the horror of this loss, rather than her escape from it. The body of Christ was to provide liturgical protection against the eternal meaninglessness of human loss, writ in the life of a loved one and in the life of a people. Yet, during this period, there appeared to be not only insufficient earthly food (with repeated, widespread famine) but insufficient access to Jesus' body. Mass graves would have signified not only loss of life, but loss of liturgical meaning. This contrast also matters: Julian envisioned the Trinity by way of the Body during a time when the sacrament of the Body appeared to have failed.

It may be useful again to relate Julian to Thomas Aquinas, specifically his discussion of mercy in relation to grief, from the *Summa* (Second Part of the Second Part, Question 30, Article 2). He explains, "one grieves or sorrows for another's distress in so far as one looks upon another's distress as one's own." This can happen by way of a "union of the affections, which is the effect of love," or "through real union, for instance when another's evil comes near to us, so as to pass to us from him." Thomas goes on to explain that mercy born of wisdom is the contrary to "false godliness." False godliness assumes that freedom from suffering is due to virtue. Julian may be read, through Thomas, as seeking a veritable godliness. She prays to receive a "union of the affections," or, to connect several strands of meaning here, Julian prays to receive a redemptive repetition of contagion. As one who has survived human misery, she avoids the sensible path of relief and instead seeks costly, Christ-formed solidarity. Her visions grant her a duplication of suffering, through connection to the cross, which resolves unimaginable suffering with compassion.

I would suggest that Julian's bodily focus on the cross avoids false godliness in favor of wise mercy. She envisions a path away from three versions of vice that attend grave suffering. By perceiving a Triune God who pulls all time and meaning into the cross, Julian avoids despair over the fate of those who seem eternally lost. By envisioning a Triune God who wills to re-create goodness out of horror, Julian avoids insensibility to the abiding, incarnate goodness of God's creation. By receiving a bodily gift of holy contagion, Julian eschews the false pride that would secure the order of God's goodness by way of a morbid tally of divine justice. And to pull together Julian with the two passages from Thomas (on illumination and on mercy), she perceives that "by his own gracious light," God "wants us to understand" even in a time of horror, "our noble and excellent creation," "our costly and precious redemption," and the gifts God "sustains out of love for us" (LT: 42).

His Loved Bride

In order to appreciate the flow of *Revelations*, we should note that Julian's Long Text and her actual life culminate in the Holy Church. Her visions have been read (and celebrated or condemned) as universalist. This universalism is set within God's embodied reassurance that Holy Church is continually bound together, and wound up with Holy Trinity, through the love of Christ. She perceives unity at a time of fractures within the church, from Lollards and peasants to rulers and papacies. The last sections of her Long Text circle around the at-one-ing work (pardon the conceit) of the Trinity, inasmuch as God is "a real and true bridegroom," who says to the Church, as to "a bride with whom he is never displeased," "I love you and you love me, and our love shall never be divided" (LT: 58).

Layering images of intimate love, Julian also turns to the vocation of mothering. Her maternal language for the Godhead is connected to her sense that Holy Church is the place where one "find[s] our dearest Mother" and "the comfort of true understanding with the whole blessed community" (LT: 61). During schism, plague, and famine, the Church is, for Julian, *Home*. Within the Holy Church, "Jesus can feed us with himself, and he does so most generously and most tenderly with the holy sacrament which is the precious food of life itself" (LT: 60). This revelation connects back to one of her first (and most vibrant) visions:

> The beauty and vividness of the blood are like nothing but itself. It is as plentiful as the drops of water which fall from the eaves after a heavy shower of rain, drops which fall so thickly that no human mind can number them . . . This showing was alive and vivid, horrifying and awe-inspiring, sweet and lovely. And what comforted me most in the vision was that our God and Lord, who is so holy and awe-inspiring, is also so familiar and courteous. And this was what gave me most happiness and the strongest sense of spiritual safety. (LT: 7)

Julian affirms safety in the blood that flows, immeasurable, given to her in God's vision and through the "holy sacrament" by which God's loved ones are sustained. Note here that God's will for wellness is located in blood, at a time when the body of Jesus was distributed either with stultifying attention to class hierarchy or not given at all, as priests and parishioners were being thrown into the same mass graves. (It is worth noting that the blood is technically not in play, as the laity do not receive.) Further, the outward manifestation of the Body was being torn by violent divisions. Here, in the mix of this mess, Julian affirms that the Church is Mother. Within a swirl of sin and misery, God draws God's people together. Her focus on "Holy Church" may be an attempt to avoid heresy. But it is also an affirmation that God had not abandoned the body of Christ: "for a single person may often feel broken, but the whole body of Holy Church has never been broken, nor ever shall be, for all eternity" (LT: 61). This need not, necessarily, mean compliance with the willed sin of the men ostensibly in charge. It may be a call to remain within Holy Church, trusting that the sacrament of Christ's Body, within the Body of Holy Church is salvific in spite of the men in power.

This reading of Holy Church connects to Julian's sense of an absence of anger within the Trinity. Julian envisions safety in Holy Church at a time when a sensible soul might turn in dismay (or run in fear) from a deity who would allow such suffering. She sees God's love evident in a broken body at a time when broken bodies were strewn, burned, and lost. Read in this way, there is tension in her suggestion that "if God could even be slightly angry we could never have any life or place or being" (LT: 49). Julian's Christological account of the Trinity is to turn the gaze of the faithful away from what could be read in the fourteenth century as God's rage toward some and toward what seems impossibly hidden—that is, God's favor for all. Julian thus sorts out God's showing, "in these gracious words, 'I hold you quite safely'" (LT: 61). To those who have apparently survived God's wrath, Julian announces that a theological explanation of plague by way of divine wrath is nonsense. There is no divine wrath, for, if there were, there would be no survivors.

Christianity with Christ

Spearing writes about the puzzle of translating Julian's medieval English, in particular the sections on the Servant and the Lord, as the parable "has a meaning that stands outside time" (Julian 1998: 185). I recommend a slight variation on Spearing's helpful note. Julian sees in a way that is not so much "outside time," as it is set within the liturgical time of Holy Church. The vision is atemporal for a purpose. Sacramental temporality is, seen from one vantage, "outside time," but Julian's temporality involves a kind of Christological looping, pulling time backward and forward through the central focal point of the cross. This reading creates problems of "tense" for Julian's readers today, as it is so drastically unlike the default sense of time for Christians in the progressive, Darwinian West. The default marking of time for Christians in the one/third world involves the upward movement of progress, from point A to B to C. Time is not only linear, but ascends through human initiative and ingenuity. A liturgical marking of time requires turning one's perspective "inside out," to use again Denise Levertov's phrase. People whose lives involve cyclical patterns of memory appear, from the vantage point of modernity, "backward" (to use a colloquialism). Yet Julian's

vision of the Trinity loops each individual, generation, and era (even a "forward' era) *back* through the loving work of Jesus on the cross. She affirms "that the love of God unites us to such an extent that when we are truly aware of it, no man can separate himself from another" (LT: 65). Her perspective brings together as kin the unshriven and the survivors, peasants and papacy, yesterday and today, compressing space and time.

Such a compressed perspective may re-narrate faith and contagion. The resolution in *Revelations* requires entering into the suffering Jesus, in bodily solidarity with the lost souls in question. Julian's answer to the apparent loss of God's favor in Jesus's body is reentry, past the "stop" of "doubtful fear." Inasmuch as Western Christians remain anxious over liturgical legitimacy in the face of human suffering, this fourteenth century anchoress is pedagogically powerful. This retelling requires that her readers note a basic contrast. The medieval mechanism of redemptive meaning was liturgical, not medical-scientific. For Julian's modern readers in the West, the default mechanism of human meaning in the midst of bodily chaos is not so much liturgy, as medical science. Arguably, institutions like the World Health Organization have replaced Holy Church as sites for recovering redemptive meaning in times of inexplicable loss. Human ingenuity, combined with increased intelligence, is supposed to allow each generation of Westerners to move away from the primordial loss of meaning that haunts deadly contagion. With knowledge and diligence, time is supposed to ascend, away from suffering itself.

Julian's Trinitarian logic is vital for solidarity during contagion. By modern, Western logic, otherwise Westernized Christians who live into ecclesial kinship with non-Western Christians already risk, in non-contagious time, a sort of shame. They appear as if to be slipping down the slope of social evolution and scientific progress, inasmuch as the crucifix attests to a non-progressive logic of time and meaning – seeming not only foolish in a Pauline sense, but atavistic, or even primitive. Pandemic both blurs and accentuates the boundaries between peoples presumed to be at point A and those presumed to be at point C up the arc of social and scientific progress. As disease criss-crossed distinctions of class and of clergy during the fourteenth century, communicable disease today makes our common mortality conspicuous, even while Western images present non-Western carriers as less socially evolved. Peoples from the two-third world represent social devolution, and for Westerners to worship in common a bleeding Jesus is, in multiple ways, an offense.

Here I am drawing on Priscilla Wald's trenchant analysis in *Contagious*, as she explains that immigrants from areas other than Western-Europe have variously appeared in the North American context (for example) as "a distinct danger to the reproduction of white America" (Wald 2008: 113-114). Coverage of HIV/AIDS across the U.S. and Western Europe played on a register of social-Darwinian shame, suggesting the one-third world was, through contagion, at risk of "thirdworldization." The rhetorical backdrop involves the risk of "return" to "the medical primitivism of the pre-antibiotic world" marking "the failure of science, civilization, and modernity" (Wald 2008: 238). During 2009, coverage in the United States of H1N1 played repeatedly on such anxieties, depicting Latino-Catholic worshipers as carriers of cultural and actual contagion – as sources of what Harvard historian Samuel Huntington calls "hispanization." By his (tragically influential) reading, the Jesus-centered liturgy of Latino-Catholic worship represents an affront to the civic, vaguely deist faith in progress that Huntington terms "Christianity without Christ" (Huntington 2004: 106).

Julian's Long Text closes with her suggestion that her visions are "not yet completed," but still to be lived out (LT, 86). Her Catholic perspective on Trinity is a timely source of safety:

> And I received no other answer in showing from our Lord God but this: 'What is impossible to you is not impossible to me. I shall keep my word in all things and I shall make all things well.' (LT: 32)

Her showing defies a modern, deist logic of separation in favor of solidarity, even during times of plague. As noted in this modern call by Pope John Paul II, bloody kinship requires no less:

> In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the

place where illegal immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. (John Paul II 1996)

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Suggested Reading:

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Abstract:

Julian of Norwich detects divine favor within the Trinity when divine discontent seems a more direct explanation of plague, and she finds such profligate kindness by pulling all questions through the needle's eye of the cross. The crucifix presents to her the embodiment of God, Spirit and Son, and also the focal point of all time and space. This "poynte" is where grace and love are found. Such a vision of love shapes Julian's sense of sin and safety, granting a unique perspective on the Trinity and the moral life. Inasmuch as anxiety over pandemic still besets Christians, Julian's visions may be read as strong solace. Readers may connect Julian's words of wellness to ecclesial practices of lived, liturgical solidarity.

Key words:

Julian of Norwich, Trinity, Cross, Plague, Solidarity, Liturgy