

Thought for the Day – Margaret Tuffin November 2020

. Julian of Norwich

In 1373, Julian, aged 30, was gravely ill. She and her family thought she was dying. She had a series of 16 visions, which she referred to as her "Shewings" and which later became known as "The revelation of divine love". (This book is the best known surviving one in the English language and was the first to be written in English by a woman).

She became an anchoress, living in a cell attached to a church in Norwich from where she gave spiritual direction and lived a life of prayer. Her near death experience made her value the wonder and joy in each moment and the gift of life that God gives us.

Her writings shine through with compassion and love and unlike many of her time, she portrays God as a loving figure rather than the judgemental being that others had showed.

Her message speaks for us today and is as fresh as when it was written in the Middle Ages.

The following is a paraphrase from one of her meditations.

I saw that God was everything that is good and encouraging.

God is our clothing that wraps, clasps and encloses us so as never to leave us.

God showed me in my palm a little thing round as a ball about the size of a hazel nut.

I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and asked myself: "What is this thing?" And I was answered: "It is everything that is created."

I wondered how it could survive since it seemed so little it could suddenly disintegrate into nothing.

The answer came: "It endures and ever will endure, because God loves it."

And so everything has being because of God's love.

In these very difficult times when we face dark dull days and grim news, and colour seems to have disappeared from our lives, we need to remember the words of Jesus found in Luke chapter 2 verses 22-34. Where he tells us to consider the wild flowers.

I suggest that we do something similar, we may not have a hazel nut, but take a fir cone, or some seed heads, berries or a flower. Hold it in the palm of your hand - marvel at the beauty and intricacy of it. Look at the different shapes and colours. Smell it, feel it. Take your time. Really examine it. Be fully present. "It is everything that is created."

As we consider the beauty which God has created, may we each do our part in protecting the environment and value the gift of life which God gives us, as Julian did.

A little known hymn by Rae E. Whitney

A small thing like a hazel nut lay in my open hand.

And God disclosed three truths to me that I might understand:

God made it, God loves it, and God will always care.

God made it, God loves it, and God will always care for it.

I marvelled that this little thing reveals how God can be  
Our maker, lover, keeper now and for eternity!  
God made you, God loves you and God will always care;  
God made you, God loves you, and God will always care for you.

Until my heart is one with God, it's aching will not cease.  
And so I rest, held close by God these three truths bringing peace:  
God made me, God loves me, and God will always care;  
God made me, God loves me, and God will always care for me.

A prayer

Thank you God, Thanks for beauty,  
The twinkle in an older person's eye,  
a child's shout of laughter,  
Thanks for the bold dark trees against a winter sky,  
For parks and summer flower beds.  
Thanks for beauty  
Thank you God for abundance, for seeds and raindrops,  
For grains of sand and bright shining stars,  
for wriggling worms and dandelions.  
Thanks for abundance.  
Thanks for your world God, and for our part in it  
Thanks that you are a maker and that you made us makers too.  
Help us to love creation as you love it,  
to take risks and to value it as Jesus did  
and draw us into the wildness and wonder of your Holy Spirit today and every day.  
Amen