

SHORT REFLECTION.

The first of a number of short reflections from Rev'd Diane Smith inspired by the writings of Julian of Norwich.

During lockdown we have been enjoying more than ever programmes like “Gardeners World”. Many of you may have in your gardens ornamental bird baths, perhaps even with these famous words inscribed.

“The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
One is nearer God’s heart in a garden
Then anywhere else on earth.”

The words were written by Dorothy Francis Bloomfield who was born on the 4th of October 1858.

She wrote two volumes of verse in her life time and a devotional book called “A little book of Quiet,” but she is most famous for the poem above simply called; “God’s Garden”.

So much of salvation history takes place in a garden. Creation, Jesus’ arrest and the Resurrection to cite just three examples. The Bible begins and ends in a garden.

Our local saint, Julian of Norwich has so much to teach us in these days of social distancing, living the life of an anchorite. Folk would come from near and far and speak to her through her small cell window.

In Chapter 51 of her famous book “The Showings” she speaks of “treasure in the earth, which the Lord loves”. Below is a prayer inspired by the words of Julian of Norwich.

O Lord, you alone are the sower and reaper
May we be your seed, the treasure in the earth that you love.
Help us to grow deep in you and bear fruit for you in and out of season.
O Lord, you alone are the true gardener, the vine dresser of our souls.
We praise your Holy name.

Amen.

Julian of Norwich, was an English anchorite of the Middle Ages. She wrote the earliest surviving book in the English language to be written by a woman, *Revelations of Divine Love*.

She lived practically her whole life in the city of Norwich. In 1373, aged thirty and so seriously ill she thought she was on her deathbed, Julian received a series of visions of the Passion of Christ. She recovered from her illness and wrote two versions of her experiences, the earlier one being completed soon after her recovery, and a much longer version, known as the *Long Text*, being written many years later.

For much of her life, Julian lived in permanent seclusion in her cell, which was attached to St. Julian’s Church, Norwich. Though not canonised she is widely referred to as “Saint”, “Lady” and “Mother”.