

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Praying as the world goes by

Dear Friends,

Last month, in the Church of England's daily prayers cycle, we remembered Julian of Norwich. Julian, who lived 1342 – c. 1416, was an English anchoress, mystic and theologian. She wrote the *Revelations of Divine Love*, which was the first book in the English language known to have been written by a woman. Julian became a spiritual authority within her community, where she also served as a counsellor and advisor.



As an anchorite, her cell was joined to the wall of St Julian's Church in Norwich (possibly from where she derives her name). This cell/room would have had a window to the church, a window to the community and a window onto the street. Julian would have joined in mass from her cell, be fed by the community through the community window and people who passed by along

the streets of Norwich would have sought her counsel and her prayers through the street window.

I think that the image of Julian praying for the world as it passes by is an amazing and inspiring one and may help us to reflect when we participate in the daily prayer of "Thy Kingdom Come" from Ascension to Pentecost and hopefully continue with us to inspire our ongoing prayer life. We are part of that world as it goes by but we also as Christians stand in God's kingdom and are able to pray for all those who need our prayers. It is suggested that each day we pray for five people at five pm: "Five at five"

Julian believed that God sees us as perfect and waits for the day when human souls mature so that evil and sin will no longer hinder us. Her phrase was that "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well", and was also taken up by TS Eliot in *Little Gidding* in the *Four Quartets*. Julian believed that "God is the ground of our beseeching" therefore that through prayer and through God all would be ultimately made well.

Julian through her prayers for everyone who passed by and her intercessions for those who requested her prayers found that prayer works. So let's join in the wave of prayer across all the nation's churches and beyond, and hold in prayer five people that we feel are in need of our prayers so that "All Shall be well" and God's Kingdom will come!

Love, Jo

Ed. More information at <http://juliancentre.org/>
Julian's prayer will be sung at Choral Evensong on June 11th.

The General Election: Have you decided who to vote for?

Our faith has a central role to play in politics and this general election, the Archbishops said. They encourage us to set aside "apathy and cynicism" and draw new inspiration from the ancient Christian virtues of "love, trust and hope".

Britain has such an amazing Christian history and heritage which we need to value and yet we also need to have a concern for future generations and God's creation when it comes to making our decision.

Despite the divisions of recent years, we do need reconciliation based on our shared British values of cohesion, courage and stability. Marriage, family and households, they remind us, are the building blocks of society which should be "nurtured and supported" as a "blessing".

At a time when political differences may be felt more intensely than ever, the Archbishops insist that our "first obligation" during the election and beyond is to pray for those standing for office and recognise the personal costs and burdens carried by those in political life and by their families.

We also have a duty to play an active part in the process. They hope that there will be space for faith in political debate and that politicians must be free to speak openly about their own beliefs and convictions and treated fairly for doing so.



"This election is being contested against the backdrop of deep and profound questions of identity," they say.

"Opportunities to renew and reimagine our shared values as a country and a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland only come around every few

generations. We are in such a time." "Our Christian heritage, our current choices and our obligations to future generations and to God's world will all play a shaping role."

"If our shared British values are to carry the weight of where we now stand and the challenges ahead of us, they must have at their core cohesion, courage and stability."

The Archbishops also highlight major concerns over poverty, housing and the dangers of "crushing" debt, among other issues. They call for a generous and hospitable welcome to refugees and migrants but also warn against being "deaf to the legitimate concerns" about the scale of migration into some communities. They also single out the importance of standing up for those suffering persecution on grounds of faith around the world.

Faith, they argue, has a unique role to play in preventing extremism and religiously motivated violence. "Contemporary politics needs to re-evaluate the importance of religious belief," they insist. "The assumptions of secularism are not a reliable guide to the way the world works, nor will they enable us to understand the place of faith in other people's lives.

Parishes' and chaplaincies' "contribution and that of other denominations and faiths to the well-being of the nation is immense - schools, food banks, social support, childcare among many others - and is freely offered. But the role of faith in society is not just measured in terms of service delivery.The new Parliament, if it is to take religious freedom seriously, must treat as an essential task the improvement of religious literacy."

"Political responses to the problems of religiously-motivated violence and extremism, at home and overseas, must also recognise that solutions will not be found simply in further secularisation of the public realm."

You can read the full text at https://www.churchofengland.org/media/3977056/electionletter_text.pdf