

Day Four. Thursday 4th February: Noticing



Hazelnuts and Sugar Cubes: Meditation

In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
The sea is his, for he made it
and his hands formed the dry land. Psalm 95: 4-5

Julian of Norwich *Julian of Norwich was an English anchoress (a type of hermit) in the Middle Ages. She wrote a book 'Revelations of Divine Love' based on her experiences during an illness that brought her close to death and close to God. This book is the first written in English by a woman.*

*Julian writes about visions she has of meeting God. In one vision she sees something small, about the **size of a hazelnut** in her hand. It represents all that has been made. She recognises three things, **first that God made it, God loves it and that God preserves it.** She describes God as creator, lover and preserver.*

Amazingly, some centuries later we have found that atoms, that are not even the smallest building block of the universe, are indeed so small that 1 million atoms lined up side by side would be as thick as a human hair. Imagine that! Furthermore atoms are 99.9% space and if you were able to remove all the space in all the atoms of the universe - the universe would be as big as a sugar cube - or maybe a hazelnut!

Today we focus on a God who made us, who loves us and who keeps us.

Julian writes: *At the same time, our Lord showed me, in a spiritual manner, how intimately he loves us. I saw that he is everything that is good and supports us. He clothes us in his love, envelops us and embraces us. He wraps us round in his tender love and he will never abandon us. As I understand it, he is everything that is good. He also showed me a tiny thing in the palm of my hand, the size of a hazelnut. I looked at this with the eye of my soul and thought: 'What is this?' And this is the answer that came to me:*

'It is all that is made.'

I was astonished that it managed to survive: it was so small that I thought that it might disintegrate. And in my mind I heard this answer:

'It lives on and will live on forever because God loves it.'

So every single thing owes its existence to the love of God. I saw that this tiny thing had three properties that were essential to it. The first is that God made it; the second is that God loves it; the third, that God preserves it. But I cannot say what this Creator, Preserver and Lover is. Until I am united with him in my essential being, there will be no true happiness for me – by that I mean that until I am linked to him so closely that there is absolutely nothing between God and me.

'O God, of your goodness, give yourself to me: for you are enough for me and, if I want to be worthy of you, I cannot really ask for anything less. If I do ask for anything less, I shall remain in need. Only in you do I have everything.'

From: *The English Mystics* by Karen Armstrong

Holdng a Hazelnut in your hand: Meditation



Today we focus on God who made us, loves us and keeps us

1. *Find something to represent the hazelnut - maybe a pebble, marble or rolled up piece of paper.*
2. *Sit in a comfortable place.*
3. *Read or listen to Psalm 95*
4. *It may help to breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth as you relax.*
5. *Holding your 'hazelnut' imagine that it represents the entirety of creation.*

6. *Talk to God: thank God for making it, for loving it and for keeping it.*
7. *Now imagine that this precious thing represents someone. Again talk to God and thank God for making them, for loving them and for keeping them.*
8. *Imagine this precious thing represents you. Again talk to God and thank God for making you, for loving you and for keeping you.*
9. *It may help to use simple words 'made, loved, kept' saying them quietly or silently.*
10. *Finish by breathing again slowly*

Alternatively, sometimes I use a selection of small stones or pebbles to represent different people that I wish to pray for.

If you have a relationship with someone that you are struggling with - this can be a helpful prayer - they are made, loved and kept by God.

You could keep your 'hazelnut' in your pocket to help you remember this prayer during the day.

Psalm 95: The Message

1-2 Come, let's shout praises to God, raise the roof for the Rock who saved us!

Let's march into his presence singing praises, lifting the rafters with our hymns!

And why? Because God is the best, High King over all the gods.

In one hand he holds deep caves and caverns, in the other hand grasps the high mountains.

He made Ocean—he owns it!

His hands sculpted Earth!

So come, let us worship: bow before him, on your knees before God, who made us!

Oh yes, he's our God,

and we're the people he pastures, the flock he feeds.

Drop everything and listen, listen as he speaks:

"Don't turn a deaf ear as in the Bitter Uprising,

As on the day of the Wilderness Test,

when your ancestors turned and put me to the test.

For forty years they watched me at work among them,

as over and over they tried my patience.

And I was provoked—oh, was I provoked!

'Can't they keep their minds on God for five minutes?

Do they simply refuse to walk down my road?'

Exasperated, I exploded,

'They'll never get where they're headed, never be able to sit down and rest.'"

Psalm 95 NIV

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
 let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
 Let us come before him with thanksgiving
 and extol him with music and song.
 For the Lord is the great God,
 the great King above all gods.
 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
 and the mountain peaks belong to him.
 The sea is his, for he made it,
 and his hands formed the dry land.
 Come, let us bow down in worship,
 let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
 for he is our God
 and we are the people of his pasture,
 the flock under his care.

Today, if only you would hear his voice,
 “Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,^[a]
 as you did that day at Massah^[b] in the wilderness,
 where your ancestors tested me;
 they tried me, though they had seen what I did.
 For forty years I was angry with that generation;
 I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray,
 and they have not known my ways.’
 So I declared on oath in my anger,
 ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”