

## Time on our hands

My apologies for the missing week, my Dad was admitted to hospital in Merseyside following a stroke. He is now in a re-hab unit in Clatterbridge Hospital and hoping to get home yesterday! (He's not a patient patient!)

Patience is a virtue, as my Mum reminded me most days, but it is a difficult one to cultivate. Julian of Norwich learnt to be patient when she was a patient suffering from what is thought to be the plague. Lying on her bed expecting to die she is given the last offices of the church and then she is given her Revelations. The visions that would bring her through her illness and sustain her for the rest of her life. The Revelations would be written down into a short book and after further years of reflection she would expand the book to the one we now know.

To read her book is to be led to understand how amazing is the love that God has for each one of us. The love of God who created everything is summed up in the simple picture of a hazelnut. Julian asks "what can this be?", and is told "it is all that is made". Imagine sitting and looking at a hazelnut in the palm of your hand and wondering about those two things, the immensity of all that is, and this small, insignificant nut. She is told "It lasts and always will last because God loves it." God holds creation and all that is, and the smallest nut within an immeasurable love. In her reflection she is given an understanding that can become a prayer mantra, repeated over and over, as we try and grasp the wonder of what she has had revealed:

God made it.  
God loves it.  
God keeps it.

Try changing it slightly:

God made me.  
God loves me.  
God keeps me.

The words enfold us in the immensity of a love that holds the creation, but I am important to God to be held by him. It gives a reassurance to us that, no matter what may befall us we are held in the palm of God's hand, like that hazelnut. In God's hand I am all that is! I last and always will last because God loves me. That is awesome.

It is why Julian is able to say, much later in the Revelations, "All shall be well. And all shall be well. And all manner of thing shall be well". When we rest in the immense love of God so much changes for us, we know we are held, we know he will never let go, we know that we will make mistakes and get things wrong, but he will go on loving us back to be the person he created us to be. Julian isn't saying that we can be complacent, we need to know ourselves as God knows us, but when we do we know that we are held, "come hell or high water" as is said. Julian went through hell and high water and to her was revealed the love in which she, and everything and everyone God created was held.

All shall be well. And all shall be well. And all manner of thing shall be well. Repeated slowly in prayer will bring us to that place.