



“All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well”

Words of Julian of Norwich in the 14th century. But, how CAN we maintain such hopeful expectation when we really don't know what the future holds? People sometimes try to comfort someone in distress by saying such things as "it will all work out in the end".

Such platitudes are no comfort to the one who is suffering. Julian was not speaking mere platitudes. She wrote at a most tumultuous time in history. Life was tough.

Julian's writings are of a series of revelations given her by the Lord, when she was critically ill, aged 30.

Miraculously she recovered and began her life as an anchoress, faithfully recording His words. Her visions were of a loving Christ who in everything He does "love is His meaning". She writes "He did not say you will not be troubled, but He said, you will not be overcome"

I am reminded of Jesus's words "In this world you will have trouble but take heart! I have overcome the world".

Suffering is inevitable and no one is exempt. But it doesn't have the last word! Problems can so easily get on top of us, but nothing and no one is beyond the reach of God's love -- if we can be open and receive it.

When Jesus commands us "Do not be afraid", He regards that as a choice we CAN make. We cannot choose how we feel but we can choose what we think about. It has been said "a person's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be cultivated or allowed to run wild". How we think affects our emotions, our attitudes, and the choices we make. Hebrews 12 exhorts us to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily besets us" and Paul exhorts us to think about "whatever is good, true, noble..."(Phil 4:8). If we ask God's Holy Spirit to "help us in our weakness"(Romans 8:26), He will, and so prompt us when our thoughts are unhelpful.

Of course, we need to know what is going on and face the reality of suffering, but THEN, to turn our thoughts away from problems and fix

our eyes on Jesus, in whom lies our true hope. Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer encapsulates this --"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference".

The bible is full of God's promises that we can count on, for He is truth. God is omniscient, sees all, so knows just what we're going through...He is omnipresent, so with us at every moment, and omnipotent, so He can and will carry us through all trials.

However far we've drifted, we can always return to our loving God, His arms always outstretched to welcome us. Recall some of the great promises in the bible, and look around at His 1st bible= Creation, and so fill our minds with all that is good and pure...

The Lord IS our shepherd, we need not be in want. And though we may walk through a valley of shadows, we need fear no evil, for God IS with us, and His goodness and mercy will always follow us.

Let us pray for courage to trust and to be more able to receive His light that will shine through any darkness. For, "All shall be well". Amen

Nona Harrison

