

**THE SOTERIOLOGY OF JULIAN OF NORWICH AND
VATICAN II: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

by

Josephine Maria Pace

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a comparative study of the soteriology of Julian of Norwich in fourteenth century England and that of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). It is my contention that the seeds of the soteriology of the Second Vatican Council are present in the writings of Julian of Norwich. In particular, her views on universal salvation, which were ahead of her time, are later confirmed in this twentieth century Council.

A comparative study of the positions taken on universal salvation in Showings and two particular documents of Vatican II ("The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" *Nostra Aetate*, 1965 and the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity" *Ad gentes divinitus*, 1965) will be the primary focus of this thesis. What one finds is that Julian's inclusivist revelations correspond to positions taken in Vatican II. In this respect, her theology is compatible with modern Church teaching. Each of the above primary sources affirm that salvation through Christ is offered to believers outside the pale of Christianity.

In fourteenth century England, Julian finds herself questioning the Church's teaching on the fate of Jews, the unbaptized, and heretics. Her revelations disclose nothing with regards to the fate of the above. She is left to believe that God's mercy would be extended to them. Salvation through Christ would be possible them. Vatican II supports the same view on universal salvation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL
(1962-65)**

- AG *Ad gentes divinitus*: Decree on the Church's
Missionary Activity**
- NA *Nostra Aetate*: Declaration on the Relationship of
the Church to Non-Christian Religions**

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INTRODUCTION

It is my contention that the seeds of the soteriology of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) are present in the soteriology of Julian of Norwich (ca. 1373). Similar to the vision of Vatican II, Julian's soteriology is rooted in a theology of hope and inclusivity. The mystery of universal salvation has been hotly debated throughout the centuries. This thesis will review insights pertaining to universal salvation offered in Showings, Julian's masterpiece written in fourteenth century England. Her inclusivist revelations correspond to positions taken in Vatican II.

A comparative study of the positions taken in Showings and two particular documents of Vatican II ("The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" *Nostra Aetate*, 1965 and "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity" *Ad gentes divinitus*, 1965) will be the focus of this thesis. Each work reflects the struggles of its time. In the course of our reflection the contributions of scripture scholars, theologians and other spiritual thinkers will be highlighted. We will see that Julian's theology is compatible with modern Church teaching. However, before such a claim can be made, I will provide an historical overview of Church teaching on salvation as a background to the thought of Julian and Vatican II. The section to follow will introduce her revelations on salvation. First, then let us

review the mystery of salvation as it has been understood by some Christian scholars throughout the centuries.

SECTION I

WHAT IS SOTERIOLOGY?

To begin, soteriology is a branch of theology which explores the salvific activity of Jesus Christ. It centres on the mystery of Christ as Redeemer and Mediator of humanity. Universal salvation through the person of Christ is the central feature of this branch of study. Many theologians throughout the centuries have concerned themselves with the mystery of salvation; Augustine, Aquinas, and Rahner, to name a few. Councils as well have offered their own interpretations of the term salvation. It is believed that "Jesus suffered and died on account of the sins of all of us and for our salvation".¹ This sacrifice offers grace to all people. All salvation is grounded in the person of Christ.² According to Karl Rahner, God offers the possibility of salvation to all people. However, this salvation is mediated through the person of Christ.³

¹John M. Oesterreicher, "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions". in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II. Vol. III. ed. Herbert Vorgrimler. Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967. p. 14.

²See Suso Brechter, "'Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity". in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II. Vol IV. ed. Herbert Vorgrimler. Montreal: Palm Publishing, 1967. p. 115.

³See Karl Rahner, "History of the World and Salvation-History". in Theological Investigations. Vol. V. Trans. Karl H. Kruger. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966. pp. 98-100.

Rahner notes that Christianity understands itself "as the absolute religion" intended for all people, "which cannot recognize any other religion, beside itself as of equal right".⁴ Moreover, the salvation offered through Christianity is a salvation

really intended for all those millions upon millions of people who lived perhaps a million years before Christ- and also for those who have lived after Christ- in nations, cultures and epochs of a very wide range which were still completely shut off from the viewpoint of those living in the light of the New Testament.⁵

In other words, Christianity holds a significant place in the history of salvation. Christ's role as mediator has placed Christianity in this position. After much reflection, the Church has been able to articulate Christ's role in Salvation-history. The role of the Church, on the other hand, has not been as easy to define. As theologians have struggled to define salvation they have participated in debates as to whether membership, i.e. faith and baptism, (Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5), in the Christian Church are requirements or guarantees of salvation.⁶ Let us turn to a brief overview of Church teaching on this subject. While it would be impossible to exhaust all available sources, I will offer a summary treatment of Church teaching followed by a review of the teachings circulating in Julian's time.

⁴Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions". in Theological Investigations. Vol V. Trans. Karl H. Kruger. Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966. p. 118.

⁵Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions". p. 123.

⁶Francis A. Sullivan, Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.

Normally today, a theology of salvation is discussed in terms of horizontal and vertical dimensions.⁷ The horizontal dimension is concerned with deliverance and liberation in the present. The vertical, on the other hand, is other-worldly- it is concerned with life after death. Francis A. Sullivan notes that salvation includes the ultimate restoration and fulfilment of humanity and all creation caused by God's activity in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, it is Christ's central function to mediate salvation for the world. The Trinity is and has always been active in bringing about this fulfilment. Salvation-history includes the process by which this condition is brought about.⁸ Hardon's understanding of salvation touches on these dimensions. In biblical language, salvation is

the deliverance from straitened circumstances or oppression by some evil to a state of freedom and security. As sin is the greatest evil, salvation is mainly liberation from sin and its consequences. This can be deliverance by way of preservation, or by offering the means for being delivered, or by removing the oppressive evil or difficulty, or by rewarding the effort spent in co-operating with grace in order to be delivered. All four aspects of salvation are found in the Scriptures and are taught by the Church. (Etym. salvare, to save.)⁹

Hardon understands salvation as being multi-dimensional. His definition is not limited to the other-world. Christ's sacrifice

⁷Ovey Mohammed, Lecture presented on views on salvation for "Christianity and Eastern Religions". Advanced Degree Seminar. Regis College. Toronto. 1997.

⁸Sullivan., see conclusion.

⁹John A. Hardon, Pocket Catholic Dictionary. New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1985, p. 392.

should bring liberation in the present as well as in the future. Hence, salvation consists of horizontal and vertical dimensions. It is not limited to the after-life. Both the living and the dead are included in the mystery of salvation. Let us see what other writers have offered to this study.

Karl Rahner, who has contributed much to the study of universal salvation, observed that faith marks a response to God. It offers the revelation necessary to attain salvation.¹⁰ Finally, it is the grace of Christ that makes salvation possible. His passion and resurrection offered victory over the consequences of sin and death. This grace offered by God coupled with an act of faith serve to bring everlasting life.

In brief, faith and love offer deliverance from sin, death, and error, (Mt 1:21, Jn 8:31-32, Jn 8:24, Jn 11:26). Nevertheless, salvation certainly has an ultimate dimension: "entrance into heaven" after this life, as Professor Harry McSorley remarks in class:

The ultimate dimension of salvation involves justification by faith (at least implicit faith). It also requires the love of God, at least implicitly through the love of neighbour: Lk 7:47 "The great love that she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven"; v. 50 "Your faith has saved you." 1Jn 4:7: "Whoever loves is born

¹⁰See Karl Rahner, "History of the World and Salvation-History", as well, Sullivan, ch. 10.

of God and knows God."¹¹

While faith and love are essential dimensions of salvation in this life, the Church affirms a future dimension as well. This dimension includes entrance into God's everlasting kingdom; one rises and dies with Christ. Ultimately, God desires the salvation of all, (1Tim 2:4). However, universal salvation depends on one mediator- Jesus Christ. The Church teaches that the salvation of all is possible through the person of Christ: "the one Christ is mediator and the way of salvation".¹²

Such statements have been problematic for some scholars.¹³ As a result, three approaches to universal salvation have evolved. To begin, Christian exclusivists insist that salvation is offered only to Christians.¹⁴ Inclusivists, such as Karl Rahner and other representatives of the Church's traditional position, allow that faithful Muslims, Hindus, etc., can be saved because they are included in the redemption of Christ.¹⁵ Pluralists, on the other hand, such as Paul Knitter and Diana Eck, acknowledge that people

¹¹Harry McSorley, professor Emeritus at the University of St. Michael's College, notes from seminar- Sept- '96- Dec '96.

¹²Documents of Vatican II, vol 1, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church", Lumen Gentium, 1964, no. 14.

¹³Writers such as John Hick, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Paul Knitter, Diana Eck, Raimundo Pannikar, among others, have critiqued this teaching.

¹⁴One finds that various traditions within Christianity are more exclusivist than others. In some cases they may limit salvation to their own tradition within Christianity to the exclusion of others. Fundamentalism, of both a scriptural and dogmatic kind, tends to breed such thinking.

¹⁵The section on Vatican II will explore this teaching in detail.

can be saved through a wide variety of religious traditions without being included in the work of any single religion or saviour.¹⁶

While one could write papers on any one of these positions, this thesis will focus on the inclusivist teachings of Julian of Norwich and Vatican II. The Church's position on salvation has had an interesting history. The teachings of Vatican II developed after centuries of debate and controversy. But, let us now go back to the early Church and follow the Church's teaching up to the time of Julian of Norwich. We will return to contemporary thought after an exploration of Julian's revolutionary insights of the fourteenth century.

Throughout the ages, many Christian writers have asked "What happens to non-Christians when they die? Where do they go? Will they be saved?" In turn the Church has attempted to answer these questions, and the various answers have fuelled years of missionary activity throughout the world. While a complete history of Church teachings cannot be discussed here, a brief overview of some more well-known teachings will be included.

Baptism, observes Sullivan, was necessary for salvation in the Early Church. His review of Origen and Augustine affirms this

¹⁶See Paul Knitter, Jesus and Other Names. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996. See also Diana Eck, Encountering God. A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banares. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.

prerequisite.¹⁷ These early centuries hosted a variety of debates concerning the fate of the unbaptized. In brief, Origen taught that pagans were responsible for their own damnation because they refused to be baptized. Similarly, Augustine suggested that they chose to be on the outside. Moreover, he believed that grace was extended to them, but they did not accept it.¹⁸ Through the Church, God extended grace and the opportunity for baptism to all people. Those individuals who found themselves outside of these opportunities were considered to be outside the Church- hence outside the possibility for salvation. Augustine "was absolute in his conviction that once the gospel had been preached and the church had been established, there was no possibility of salvation without orthodox Christian faith and membership in the true church...:the world wide church in communion with Rome".¹⁹ In other words, **extra ecclesiam nulla salus**.

Over time, the axiom "**Extra ecclesiam nulla salus**", or outside the church no salvation, (which goes back to at least the second Century²⁰), continued to be developed theologically. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 concluded that all heretics, Jews, and

¹⁷Due to the limited length of this paper and the amount of research required, I relied on secondary sources for Church history and primary sources, namely Julian of Norwich and the documents of Vatican II, for my thesis. See Sullivan, ch. 3. for more details.

¹⁸See Sullivan, p. 30.

¹⁹Sullivan, p. 31.

²⁰See Sullivan, ch. 1.

schismatics would not be saved. In order to be saved, such people would have to repent and join the Church through baptism. They would have to accept the opportunity the church had extended to them.

In the same century, the writings of Thomas Aquinas would attempt to address these same issues. Sullivan highlights three points in the teaching of St. Thomas which pertain to the salvation of Christians and Non-Christians.²¹ These teachings proved helpful to Catholic theologians who were contemplating the fate of the inhabitants of far off continents during the age of discovery and exploration.²² The Church desired to extend the gospel message to these people- so that they would be able to choose their fate. Recall Augustine's position that those who are damned were offered the opportunity of salvation, but, they chose to reject it. Aquinas, on the other hand, offers a more advanced angle to the discussion. He raises the issues of culpable ignorance versus inculpable ignorance as well as the role of conscience.

Aquinas' first teaching suggests that faith in Christ is implicit in a general faith in God. This teaching is present in Hebrews 11:6. The second teaching includes a recognition of an implicit desire (*votum*) for baptism and the eucharist. Aquinas suggested that this desire was sufficient. The implicit desire was

²¹See Sullivan, ch. 4.

²²See Sullivan, p. 62.

an adequate substitute for the Sacraments which cannot be received in reality (in re). His third insight included a "teaching on justification through a person's first moral decision".²³ In other words, Aquinas posited the possibility of salvation for non-Christians based on moral character. A sincere conscience was recognized in the assessment. However, Aquinas and his followers continued to assert that non-Christians had enough contact with Christianity in order to be saved. According to Aquinas, only the "child in the wilderness" would not have had the opportunity extended to him in which case he was left to God's mercy. Nevertheless, even after Aquinas' contribution, several medieval theologians continued to affirm that "no one lacking the Christian faith and baptism could be saved...this was conditioned by the fact that their world was practically co-extensive with Christian Europe".²⁴

However, the next century would only continue the discussion, at which point we enter the century which gave birth to Julian's theology. It will be interesting to see the sources of conflict for Julian as she struggles with the mystery of universal salvation.

²³Ibid., p. 62.

²⁴Ibid., p. 63.

SECTION II

JULIAN'S THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT AND EMERGING SOTERIOLOGY

In 1302, before the discovery of America, a papal document-
The bull Unam Sanctum of Pope Boniface VIII was released. This
bull included a profession of faith which affirmed the oneness of
the Church; hence the title Unam Sanctum. Its basic impact on our
topic was to reinforce the axiom "extra ecclesiam nulla salus"
outside the Church no salvation:

We are obliged by our faith to believe and to hold that there is one holy, catholic and apostolic church; indeed, we firmly believe and sincerely confess this, and that outside of this church there is neither salvation nor the remission of sin...

This one and unique church, therefore, has not two heads, like a monster, but one body and one head, namely, Christ and his vicar, Peter's successor, for the Lord said to Peter personally, "Feed my sheep" (Jo 21:17). He said "my sheep" universally, not singly of these or those; hence it is understood that he entrusted all of his sheep to him. If therefore the Greeks or others say that they were not entrusted to Peter and his successors, they must necessarily confess that they are not among Christ's sheep...²⁵

These statements affirm the necessity of membership in the Catholic Church for salvation. A spirit of exclusivism permeated the soteriology of the Church. Such was the theological climate into which Julian was born. However, theological debates continued to resurface among various schools of thought. Just as Julian must have been pondering her own understanding, the Ockhamists and the

²⁵Unam Sanctum, as quoted in Sullivan, p. 64.

Augustinians were just two examples of schools of thinkers struggling with the mystery of salvation.

In Fourteenth century England, Julian's context, these two schools attempted to reach a compromise. Baker notes the "uneasy compromise in Augustine's theology between individual culpability and predestination".²⁶ Culpable ignorance versus inculpable ignorance proved to be problematic for these theologians. Before one reviews their differences of opinion, Baker observes that both sides "constrain the claim for universal salvation implicit in 1Tim 2:4".²⁷

The Ockhamists, observes Baker, advocated the role of human freedom:

Ockham, for example, argues that God predestines some for glory because he foresees that they will cooperate with grace. He contends that God gives all people the means to salvation but leaves it to them to take advantage of these means. If an individual freely pursues salvation, God cooperates to insure its achievement. Those who neglect the opportunity by failing to act meritoriously bring about their own eternal damnation. For Ockham, then, God's decision to elect certain persons rather than others depends on human freedom of choice; damnation results not from God's reprobation of sinners, but from their own refusal to use their abilities to gain salvation.²⁸

²⁶Denise Nowakowski Baker, Julian of Norwich's Showings. From Vision to Book, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 81.

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸*Ibid*. Baker does not address the issue of whether those considered to be damned by Ockham had been exposed to Christianity. Perhaps Ockham would conclude that those outside of Christianity were there because God knew that they would

The fourteenth-century Augustinians were not as flexible. Similar to Augustine himself, they limit their interpretation of 1 Tim 2:4- that all people will be saved, to the predestined. All those who will be saved are predestined for salvation. "Claiming conformity to the bishop of Hippo's authentic teachings, they insist that election is due to grace, not human merit."²⁹ In other words, grace is offered to the elect and withheld from the damned regardless of their merits. Ultimately, God is responsible for individual destinies. However, the Church, notes Baker, did not endorse the idea of double predestination: "God allowed but did not actively will the damnation of sinners".³⁰ Free will offered the possibility of salvation. Those who are saved chose to be saved.

Such ideas made it difficult to entertain the possibility of universal salvation. Neither the Ockhamists nor the Augustinians "considered the possibility of universal salvation".³¹ Moreover, each group posited that the number of damned would be greater than the number of elect. Julian's theology would challenge this position. Now that we have provided the foundation for her context, let us review her insights on the subject of

reject it anyway?

²⁹Ibid

³⁰Ibid

³¹Ibid

universal salvation.

Richard Chilson, among others, observes that little is known about Julian of Norwich. "We do not even know whether Julian was her name."³² Julian was an anchoress whose house was attached to the church of St. Julian in Norwich, England. She may have been named after the church. Kathleen A. Walsh notes that it was the custom that an anchoress adopt the name of the church with which she was associated.³³ From her one major work Showings, also referred to as Revelations of Divine Love, one learns a few historical details of her life. The vision which inspired this work took place in May 1373 when she was "thirty and a half years old". This vision inspired the shorter version of Showings. Some twenty years later Julian produced the long-text. I will be referring to the long-text since it expands on several theological points as well as includes new insights. Over twenty years Julian develops her thinking and knowledge of God. It is the long-text which includes the expanded insights necessary for this discussion.

To begin, she writes of her younger years when she had prayed for three things specifically. First, she asked for a vision of

³²Richard Chilson, All Will Be Well. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1996, p. 9.

³³See Kathleen A.. Walsh in The Life of the Soul. The Wisdom of Julian of Norwich, trans. and eds. Edmund Colledge, and James Walsh. New York: Paulist Press, 1996.

Christ's passion so that she might "have suffered with him as others did who loved him". Second, she asked for a severe illness that would be near fatal. This would serve to enhance her appreciation of lasting values and keep her focused on Christ. Lastly, she asked for three "wounds"; namely, "the wound of true contrition, the wound of loving compassion and the wound of longing with my will for God". She desired to understand Christ's passion. Her desires were met. While she did contract a serious illness, she survived and produced Showings. Throughout her work she refers to the illness as well as includes a description of a vision she receives of Christ's passion.

Julian was quite ill, to the point of death,³⁴ at the time that she received the revelations for Showings. The great moment consisted of fifteen visions, with a sixteenth received on the following day. The short text includes the initial versions of the visions. She dedicated the next twenty years expanding her insights. Both texts begin with an account of her illness as the source of the vision.

The Long text includes a detailed theological commentary on a variety of spiritual questions. Her discussion includes thoughts on the nature of the soul, the relationship between God and

³⁴See Chilson, p. 10. Chilson, among others, note that very little is known about Julian leading up to her time in the anchorage. One reads that Julian was close to death during her illness; however, there are few details about the illness.

humanity, God's delight in creation, the Trinity's delight in the Incarnation, sin and suffering, and the motherhood of Christ. Moreover, the mystery of universal salvation is addressed throughout her work. She wrestles with the Church's teaching on the damned as she attempts to make sense of her insights. While Church teaching at her time acknowledged Christ's mercy, it did not deny the possibility of hell either: "The church merely affirms that there must be the possibility of hell to allow for human freedom. God will make no one enter the kingdom against their will".³⁵ As to whether anyone is in hell remains a mystery. Nevertheless, Julian's theological context was quite severe. As we have seen from the above discussion, there were many people who were excluded from the possibility of eternal bliss. This is why her theology challenged the teachings of her time. Julian wrestles with her concept of a loving, merciful God as opposed to the popular image of a judging wrathful God. Her theology of hope and mercy is reflected in her soteriology. Let us review her insights.

To begin, Julian is conscious of her constant struggle with the teaching of the Church; therefore, "in reading Showings, one is struck by the number of times Julian insists upon her faithfulness to the rites, customs, and teachings of the Church"³⁶:

I do not say that I need no more instruction,
for after he revealed this our Lord entrusted

³⁵Chilson, p. 20.

³⁶Joan M. Nuth, Wisdom's Daughter. The Theology of Julian of Norwich. New York: Crossroad, 1991, p. 16.

me to Holy Church, and I am hungry and thirsty and needy and sinful and frail, and willingly submit myself among all my fellow Christians to the teaching of Holy Church to the end of of my life.³⁷

It is obvious that she is dealing with several issues; namely, persecution³⁸, and the authority of Church teaching. Throughout Showings she attempts to reconcile her theology with Church authority. She struggles with her newly received insights and the tradition in which she was raised. While she acknowledges the role of tradition, she affirms the role of contrition, compassion, and, longing for God in one's salvation. Theological historians have observed that shame, sorrow, and fear of a judging God had penetrated Church teaching.³⁹ Julian, on the other hand, advocated a God of mercy and forgiveness. Salvation involved more than baptism and faith, it involved contrition and compassion:

And also God in his special grace visits whom he will with such great contrition, and also with compassion and true longing for him and from pain, and taken up into bliss and made equal with the saints. By contrition we are made clean, by compassion we are made ready, and by true longing for God we are made worthy. These are the three means, as I understand, through which all souls come to heaven, those,

³⁷Julian of Norwich: Showings, translated from the critical text with an introduction by Edmund Colledge, and James Walsh. Classics of Western Spirituality Series. New York/Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978. p. 148.

³⁸Throughout the long text, Julian is fearful of her new insights. She is afraid that the reader may suspect dissent; therefore, she is careful to admit that she remains a faithful follower of the Church. One can observe the same reaction in Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle. According to Sullivan, heretics were persecuted for dissent. Julian must have been aware of such practices.

³⁹See intro. to Showings, p. 70.

that is to say, who have been sinners on earth
and will be saved.⁴⁰

Contrition, compassion, and longing for God assist one in working out one's salvation. The working out of salvation, observes Julian, involves one's cooperation with Jesus' saving act on the cross. She affirms that "all mankind will be saved by the sweet Incarnation and the Passion of Christ".⁴¹ In chapter eighty, found within the sixteenth revelation, she encourages the reader to trust that Christ has performed all of the great work necessary for our salvation. However, she does not diminish the collaborative role of the individual: this partnership "begins with a renewed reflection on this last relationship of Christ with us as our saviour. The working out of this salvation involves us as it did him...".⁴² This relationship should be rooted in trust and in hope for human growth. Human growth involves the soul and the body growing together:

All the gifts which God can give to the creature he has given to his Son Jesus for us, which gifts he, dwelling in us, has enclosed in him until the time that we are fully grown, our soul together with our body and our body together with our soul.⁴³

Julian shows a great appreciation for creation; especially humanity. For her, there is no division between body and soul.

⁴⁰Showings, pp. 244, 245.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 276.

⁴²Ibid., p. 279.

⁴³Ibid., p. 287.

The body and soul work together. This unity is necessary for one's salvation. Human growth creates fulfilment and restoration. Salvation is about restoration. For Julian, salvation "is the restoration and the fulfilment of man's sensual soul, which, by virtue of its substance, participates in the endowment of his substantial spirit, but through the operation of mercy and grace".⁴⁴ Saved souls will experience this fulfilment:

This is the work which is constantly performed in every soul which will be saved, and this is the godly will mentioned before.⁴⁵

It is refreshing to read Julian's positive attitude towards body. Salvation includes the entire person. She has faith in the goodness of the individual person. Her hope in humanity is once again affirmed in the parable of the Lord and Servant, or Revelation XIV, found only in the Long Text. The parable supports her theology of hope and mercy. It tells of the sorrow of a sinner and the mercy of God. Even though the servant has sinned, he can still turn to God for comfort. In chapter LXII, Julian summarizes what she considers to be the three lessons of the parable. "First the servant was shown for Adam in his falling, secondly the servant was shown for God's Son with his power, wisdom and goodness, and thirdly it was shown that Jesus is our keeper in our time of

⁴⁴See intro. Showings, p. 84.

⁴⁵Showings, p. 293.

falling."⁴⁶ While the main theme of the parable is forgiveness, it does allude to the mystery of salvation through grace:

And all natures which he has made to flow out of him to work his will, they will be restored and brought back into him by the salvation of man by the operation of grace.⁴⁷

Forgiveness is central to this restoration; while we will sin, grace will be extended to us through forgiveness. Julian learns that sin is inevitable; however, Christ is ready to forgive:

Sin is necessary, but all will be well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.⁴⁸

Thus, Julian learns that all people will fall at some time in their lives. She did not learn of anyone who had not sinned. She goes on to develop a theology of sin and judgment. These are critical themes since they are linked to one's salvation. Julian expressed a great interest in knowing of the fate of others.

Nuth notes that several mystics of the past received "premonitions about the spiritual state of others, particularly sinners, and ways in which" they "may help them, along with visions of purgatory or hell".⁴⁹ Julian makes no mention of such visions in Showings. However, she does make a request to know about the

⁴⁶See Intro, Showings, p. 91.

⁴⁷Showings, pp. 302-303.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 225.

⁴⁹Nuth, p. 13.

salvation of someone she loves. She is told that "it is not for her to know".⁵⁰ Moreover, she asked to be given a vision of purgatory or hell; once again she is denied.⁵¹ Throughout her work, Julian speaks only of those to be saved. She can only speak of these because "God showed me no one else".⁵² Hence, she knows little of the fate of the dead. Her requests regarding the dead "may indicate her awareness of what other visionaries experienced" concerning visions of the afterlife.⁵³

Nonetheless, Julian remains concerned about maintaining orthodoxy, particularly with reference to sin and salvation. Julian is conscious of the boldness of her insights and proceeds with caution. She does not want the reader to think that her revelations are to replace Church teaching. Rather, she attempts to reconcile her insights with tradition. She is aware that her revelations may contradict Church teaching. Julian is especially concerned about the revelation that "all will be well". She acknowledges the effects of sin, hence, she cannot understand how "all will be well".⁵⁴ She turns to the parable for insights.

The parable of the Lord and the Servant affirms a loving and

⁵⁰Showings, p. 236.

⁵¹See Showings, p. 234.

⁵²Ibid., p. 192.

⁵³Nuth, p. 13.

⁵⁴See Nuth, p. 18, also Showings, p. 150.

merciful God: "God does not look upon sinners with wrath, ..., indeed, sin suffered becomes honour to the saved in heaven. Related to this is the doctrine that "all will be well;" which hints at universal salvation."⁵⁵ Nuth suggests that some readers may feel as though Julian disregards sinfulness; nonetheless, readers will be happy to read about forgiveness and compassion. Julian suggests that focusing too much on the sins of the past may not lead to restoration. Julian shifts away from wrath and judgment and focuses instead on reconciliation. While she questions Church teaching on several levels, she attempts to make her theology compatible:

In articulating her theology, she appropriates church tradition selectively, emphasizing those points of doctrine compatible with her own religious experience...She published her text as an effort to lead others, in a time preoccupied by the momentous questions of sin and salvation, to that same confidence in the great love of God which she had learned through her revelations, a love which promises, always and everywhere, 'all shall be well'.⁵⁶

'All will be well' suggests that God wills restoration for all people. God wills union with humanity. Recalling the messages of the parable, one learns that God looks upon us with love. However, Julian knows that "the Church teaches we are sinners and deserving of punishment". How does she reconcile her visions with Church teaching?

I cried within me with all my might, beseeching God for help, in this fashion: Ah, Lord Jesus,

⁵⁵Nuth, p. 18.

⁵⁶Nuth, p. 22.

king of bliss, how shall I be comforted, who will tell me and teach me what I need to know, if I cannot at this time see it in you?⁵⁷

Julian is searching for answers. She knows that the contemporary church teaches the damnation of sinners. Yet, she is comforted by the passion of Christ. The passion and resurrection make all things well:

Even though he was equal to God in his divinity, he willingly took upon himself all human sinfulness, with no regard for himself or the pains he would suffer. Christ's humanity therefore includes all who will be saved by the incarnation and passion of Christ.⁵⁸

Since nothing was revealed to Julian concerning damnation, she concludes that Christ's passion assumes universal salvation. Nuth posits that her revelations seem to come close to preaching apocatastasis, or universal salvation, and that Julian does not see this as being compatible with Church teaching⁵⁹:

And one article of our faith is that many creatures will be damned, such as the angels who fell out of heaven because of pride, who now are devils, and many...upon earth who die out of the faith of Holy Church, that is to say those who are pagans and many who have received baptism and who live unchristian lives and so die out of God's love. All these will be eternally condemned to hell, as the Holy Church teaches me to believe.⁶⁰

The above statement reflects Julian's understanding of church

⁵⁷Showings, pp. 266-67.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 274-75.

⁵⁹See Nuth. p. 162.

⁶⁰Showings, p. 233.

teaching. The Holy Church had taught Julian to believe that many will die outside of God's grace. The following discussion will demonstrate Julian's struggle with such teachings.

In contrast to Church teaching, recall Unam Sanctum, Julian's vision advocates endless love and certainty of salvation. This message is conveyed in the teaching 'all will be well'. While Julian insists that she remains faithful to Church teaching⁶¹, she concludes that she was to rejoice in the revelation, so that she might "with the help of our Lord and his grace increase and rise to more heavenly knowledge and a higher loving".⁶² Nonetheless, Julian attempts to make sense of the teachings on damnation.

Julian, posits Nuth, sees these teachings as necessary. "Without them human beings would not realize the horror of sin, nor the value of sacramental life of grace within the Church,.."⁶³ Regardless of Julian's respect for authority, her tendency toward apocatastasis remains in conflict with tradition. While she understands the necessity for such teachings, she does not learn of anyone who has been damned. As we shall see, Julian finds it impossible to understand God's ways. She receives some consolation with regards to her inquiry with the words "what is impossible to you is not impossible to me. I shall preserve my word in

⁶¹Ibid., see pp. 258-59.

⁶²Ibid, p. 259.

⁶³Nuth, p. 167.

everything, and I shall make everything well".⁶⁴ While these words are reassuring, Julian does not limit her theology to members of her Christian tradition.

She reflects on the fate of those outside of the tradition. Julian's soteriology extends to these people as well. Moreover, one can appreciate her insights on baptism:

I understand that every creature who is of the devil's condition in this life and so dies is no more mentioned before God and all his saints than is the devil, notwithstanding that they belong to the human race, whether they have been baptized or not.⁶⁵

Baptism does not guarantee salvation. It appears as though Julian can accept the possibility of damnation for the evil, yet she questions this possibility with regards to the many people condemned by the Church. She expresses her concern for the Jews:

But I saw nothing so exactly specified concerning the Jews who put (Christ) to death; and nonetheless I knew in my faith that they were eternally accursed and condemned, except those who were converted by grace.⁶⁶

Once again Julian does not receive answers. She may have expected to see something with regards to the fate of the Jews, but, instead, she sees nothing. The salvation of the Jews remains a mystery. One may interpret the lack of a vision as an indication of the possibility of salvation outside the Church. Julian seems to

⁶⁴Showings, p. 233.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 234.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 234.

be questioning the axiom "extra ecclesiam nulla salus". Julian may have grown to conclude that salvation was not limited to the baptized Christian. This is certainly Nuth's understanding: "Julian's revelations lead to the conclusion that it is at least much more probable that everyone will be saved than that some will be damned."⁶⁷

Julian does not limit God's desire to save people. Neither vision nor institution can exhaust God's mystery and activity in the world. Julian's theology of salvation, suggests Nuth, is extended to "those outside the pale of Christianity and unacquainted with the gospel message of salvation, along with all the aspects of human history that do not appear consistent with Christian doctrine".⁶⁸ While Julian concludes that church teaching is God's word, she notes that God's ways remain mysterious. It is through this opening that she declines to limit God's activity to the Church.

At one point in her writing, Julian makes note of another insight which supports universal salvation. She refers to a deed that the Trinity will perform at the end time to make all things well. Baker and Nuth conclude that Julian is alluding to the promise of universal salvation:

There is a deed which the blessed trinity will

⁶⁷Nuth, p. 165.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 166.

perform on the last day, as I see it, and what the deed will be and how it will be performed is unknown to every creature who is inferior to Christ, and it will be until the deed is done... This is the great deed ordained by our Lord God from without beginning, treasured and hidden in his blessed breast, known only to himself, through which deed he will make all things well. For just as the blessed trinity created all things from nothing, just so will the same blessed trinity make everything well which is not well.⁶⁹

Nuth contends that Julian is referring to "some further salvific act" at the end of time, through which God will save those presently outside of Christianity. "God will effect the salvation even of those whom human judgment deems irrevocably lost."⁷⁰ Such an insight supports the idea of a generous and loving God.⁷¹ Moreover, Julian distinguishes between two ways of attaining salvation: one through love and trust, and the other through fear; however, she emphasizes the former:

It seemed to me that it was necessary to see and know that we are sinners and commit many evil deeds which we ought to forsake, and leave many good deeds undone which we ought to do, so that we deserve pain, blame and wrath. And despite all this, I saw truly that our Lord was never angry, and never will be... I saw in the same revelation that there are many hidden mysteries which can never be known until the time when God in his goodness made us worthy to see them.⁷²

One does not have to be a Christian in order to be saved.

⁶⁹Showings, p. 232-33.

⁷⁰Nuth, p. 168.

⁷¹See Nuth, p. 167.

⁷²Showings, p. 259.

Julian's theology extends to all faithful believers in God. Julian concentrates "on this manifest promise of salvation and provides a theodicy for all who will be saved".⁷³ Julian's insight on the final "deed" offers hope to those who are not predestined, in other words, those who do not satisfy the Church's requirements for salvation. Unlike the Augustinians and Ockhamists of her day, she stresses the "gratuitousness of salvation over the justice of damnation".⁷⁴

Julian's theodicy is hope-centred. She does not waste any time focusing on punishment, instead, she looks to a time when all will be well. While the Church consumes time and energy arguing over culpable ignorance versus inculpable ignorance, Julian turns to God's mercy and her conscience, the result- she condemns no one. "Her optimism about the large number of the elect and the possibility of salvation even for those not predestined contrasts with the far more distressing opinion of contemporary theologians that the great majority of humankind are damned."⁷⁵ Fortunately, Vatican II did not support such controversial views. Similar to Julian of Norwich, the Church affirms that universal salvation is possible through Christ's redemptive work. Let us continue our review of the past as we trace the Church's understanding of salvation.

⁷³Baker, p. 69.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 82.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 82.

SECTION III

THE SOTERIOLOGY OF VATICAN II

Before we enter the theological climate of Vatican II it would be helpful to backtrack a little. Recall Julian's era- the spirit of exclusivity which permeated the Church. The next century would maintain the same spirit. The following articles are extracted from the Decree for the Jacobites of the Council of Florence (1431-1445)⁷⁶:

(The holy Roman Church)...firmly believes, professes and preaches that no one outside the Catholic Church, neither pagans nor Jews nor heretics nor schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before the end of their life they are joined to it. For union with the body of the church is of so great importance that the sacraments of the church are of use toward salvation only for those remaining in it, and fasts, almsgiving, other works of piety and exercises of a militant Christian life bear eternal rewards for them alone. And no one can be saved, no matter how much he has given in alms, even if he sheds his blood for the name of Christ, unless he remains in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church.⁷⁷

⁷⁶The goal of this council was to encourage reunion with the separated eastern churches. Many decrees were enacted. The Decree for the Jacobites addressed members of several Coptic churches. The members of these churches were referred to as Jacobites.

⁷⁷Denzinger-Schonmetzer, Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum, declarationum, 34th ed., 1967, 1351, as quoted in Sullivan, p. 66. Previously, the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 affirmed these same teachings.

While the goodness of God was affirmed in this Council, Sullivan posits that the bishops at this Council must have believed that all pagans, Jews, heretics and schismatics were deserving of eternal punishment. Julian seemed constrained to believe the same thing. Once again the above articles stressed the necessity of membership in the Catholic Church for salvation. Over the next centuries theologians continued to debate over the issue of culpable ignorance versus inculpable ignorance.

Exploration, mission, and development were aimed at combatting inculpable ignorance in foreign worlds. Sullivan reports that this debate continued up until the First Vatican Council (1869- 1870).⁷⁸ It was not until Vatican II (1962-65) that a universalist position became strongly supported. Then the universal salvific will of God became the focus.

Brechter, commenting on Vatican II, says that "no council has ever so consciously emphasized...the church's pastoral work of salvation and its worldwide missionary function as Vatican II".⁷⁹ In brief, Vatican II affirmed that non-Christians could be saved; that God desired all to be saved; that God knows and loves all people; that there are elements of truth in other faiths; and that the Church continues to be an instrument of salvation. Let us review two documents produced at the Second Vatican Council;

⁷⁸See Sullivan, p. 119.

⁷⁹Brechter, "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity". p. 87.

namely, **Ad Gentes** or the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity", and **Nostra Aetate** or the "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions".

In keeping with the Church's conciliar tradition, the Second Vatican Council opened in response to the concerns of the modern world. Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), called this ecumenical Council three months after his election. He was convinced that the time had come for a total updating- an *aggiornamento*- of the Church. In 1963, Pope Paul VI took over and continued the work of the Council. Sixteen documents were produced which addressed issues related to Catholic faith, morality, Eucharistic liturgy, the ritual of the Sacraments, Christian community, and the Church's administrative structure.

Ad Gentes was completed on December 7, 1965. The preface introduces the main theme of the document- "the Church has been sent to the nations to be a universal sacrament of salvation".⁸⁰ The Word of God, or "seeds of the Word" - *logos spermatikos*, is to be preached throughout the world so that "the kingdom of God is proclaimed and established throughout the world".⁸¹ The Church is to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ. Moreover, the Church is missionary in nature. The salvation of the world

⁸⁰AG borrowed from Lumen Gentium, 48.

⁸¹AG, preface.

depends on the fulfilment of the missionary command.⁸² God pours out God's goodness; therefore, God desires that we share this goodness with others. Most importantly, God desires to save all people (1 Tim 2:4). Hence, "dialogue with non-Christians must be substantially promoted".⁸³

While the human race seeks God through various traditions, Jesus brings salvation to the world because he serves as the only mediator. The Holy Spirit assists the Father and the Son as the Church spreads itself out bringing "seeds of the Word" to the world. Recall Julian's insights on the work of the Trinity in salvation-history.⁸⁴ Through mission the Church can plant "seeds" and "churches". However, the document returns to the issue of free will. Culpable ignorance is addressed once again; "those men cannot be saved, who though aware that God through Jesus Christ, founded the Church as something necessary, still do not wish to enter it or persevere in it".⁸⁵ Hence, those people who are aware of the Church, and see its necessity, but, do not respond faithfully, cannot be saved. On the other hand, those who do not know Christ should have the Gospel message extended to them. One could view a non-Christian tradition as a "preparation for the

⁸²See Brechter, p. 96.

⁸³Brechter, p. 104.

⁸⁴Showings, 232.

⁸⁵AG, p. 468.

gospel".⁸⁶ Therefore, the missionary can build on such a foundation as he or she transmits the gospel to non-Christians. This can be difficult for the millions of people throughout the world who know God through their own tradition. The Church has attempted to respond to this issue through missionary activity:

God is glorified through missionary activity-
If properly implemented- missionary activity
should communicate that Christ is the source
of redeemed humanity- he transcends all race
and culture.⁸⁷

Christian charity should reach out to all regardless of race, creed, or social condition.⁸⁸ It is Christ who saves souls; therefore, Christians should work to make him known to others. Julian affirmed his mediation as well: "Christ's humanity therefore includes all who will be saved by the incarnation and passion of Christ". It is for this reason that missionary activity is the "greatest and holiest task of the Church".⁸⁹ AG asserts that the Kingdom of God should be spread everywhere. But, one may ask "What did the Council have to say about Non-Christians who are happy in their own traditions? Do they not know God as well?" The next document attempts to offer a brief yet interesting response.

Once again, in the "Declaration on the Relation of the Church

⁸⁶See AG, article three.

⁸⁷AG, p. 468.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 473, 13.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 494.

to Non-Christian Religions" - Nostra Aetate (1965), the Church emphasizes Christ's redemptive activity in the world. While the declaration considers the impact of exploration, mass communication, travel, and the stronger ties between different cultures, it teaches that: "One is the community of all people, one is their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth".⁹⁰ The document suggests that throughout the ages many cultures have recognized some form of a Supreme being - "perhaps God the Father". These religions, argues the Church, are products of a struggle, a struggle which searches for meaning in life. These struggles become systems of religious belief. The Church reviews some of these systems.

Just as Julian expressed concern for the Jews; the people who were "eternally accursed and condemned" as the Holy Church taught her to believe, the Church as well, finally, readdressed this issue. The Church's conscience, as did Julian's in the fourteenth century, reconsiders past teachings. The Church acknowledges the presence of "seeds" in other traditions. To begin, the Church assesses Hinduism, in which:

men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or

⁹⁰NA, p. 255.

profound mediation or a flight to God with love and trust."¹

Buddhism, on the other hand

realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways", comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites.

In dealing with the pluralism of religions, the Church "rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions".² Karl Rahner addressed this topic in 1966 when he suggested the possibility that non-Christian religions:

contain elements of a natural knowledge of God, moreover, ...supernatural elements arising out of the grace which is given to people as a gratuitous gift on account of Christ. For this reason a non-Christian religion can be recognized as a lawful religion...it is a priori quite possible to suppose that there are supernatural, grace-filled elements in non-Christian religions.³

In other words, Rahner posits that all people are exposed to elements of the divine within their own religious traditions.

¹NA, 256.

²Ibid., p. 256.

³Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions", p. 121. Rahner defines a lawful religion as "an institutional religion whose "use" by man at a certain period can be regarded on the whole as a positive means of gaining the right relationship to God and thus for the attaining of salvation, a means which is therefore positively included in God's plan of salvation." p. 125.

Nostra Aetate affirmed such insights. Similar to Rahner's thinking, the Church encourages Christians to "recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these people."⁹⁴ Finally, the declaration addresses the other semitic religions; namely, Judaism and Islam, as religions rooted in biblical revelation. Recall that for centuries the Church professed and preached that no one outside of the Catholic Church, "neither pagans, nor Jews nor heretics nor schismatics" could become partakers in eternal life. Instead, they were condemned to the eternal fires of hell "prepared for the devil and his angels" unless before their "life they are joined" to the Church. Julian, on the other hand, hoped that salvation transcended all religions and cultures. She hoped that all would be well for earth's inhabitants. The Church did not express such a positive spirit until 1965 when it acknowledged the goodness of other faiths, among which were included the Moslems and Jews.

The Moslems "adore the one God, living and subsisting in himself, merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth..."⁹⁵ In Judaism, the Church recognizes the "beginnings of her faith...among the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets..."⁹⁶ Perhaps, the most enlightening insights are included in the Church's stand, late, but nevertheless appreciated, against anti-

⁹⁴NA, p. 256.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 256.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 257.

semitism. The very Church who blamed the jews for the crucifixion and considered them "eternally accursed" was now changing its tune. In NA, the Jews are not blamed for the death of Christ: "Christ underwent his passion and death freely because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation...The Church...decries hatred, persecution, displays of anti-semitism, directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone".⁹⁷ Hence, discrimination is not part of the Gospel message.

We learn from Oesterreicher's commentary that many recommendations were made from both Christians and Jews before the final draft of this document was released.⁹⁸ Jules Isaac, a representative of the Jewish faith, requested a brief addressing the problem of anti-semitism within the Church. The brief would include:

the correction of false and indeed unjust statements about Israel in Christian teaching. As an example, the theological myth that the scattering of Israel was a punishment inflicted by God on the people for the crucifixion of Jesus. An extract from the catechism of Trent which in its treatment of the Passion emphasized the guilt of all sinners as the fundamental cause of Christ's death upon the cross, and thus proves that the accusation of deicide raised against the Jews did not belong to the true tradition of the Church.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 259.

⁹⁸See Oesterreicher, p. 2-44.

⁹⁹See Oesterreicher, p. 2.

In addition to such amendments, John XXIII removed all "hurtful phrases from liturgical texts".¹⁰⁰ More importantly, the value of the Hebrew scriptures was emphasized.¹⁰¹ It was clearly stated that any form of anti-semitism contradicted "the doctrine of faith that every person is created in the image of God".¹⁰² The racist denies "the fact that at the Incarnation the eternal Son of God was made son of David and son of Abraham (Mt 1:1)".¹⁰³ In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26). Salvation transcends all types of barriers.

Further, it is outrageous to blame the death of Christ on one faith group. Oesterreicher puts it simply:

Jesus suffered and died on account of the sins of all of us and for our salvation. No one stands outside the solidarity of sin, no one is excluded from the grace of salvation...What made one an accomplice of Christ's enemies and executioners was not one's nationality or religion, but simply and solely sin, the rejection of grace.¹⁰⁴

Many Christians forget that the "Jews were the first to accept Jesus".¹⁰⁵ The time had come for reconciliation and renewed hope.

¹⁰⁰Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁰¹Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁰²Ibid, p. 28.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵Ibid, p. 43.

While the Declaration includes many positive insights, it did not escape criticism. Ovey Mohammed examines the structure of the Declaration:

The Declaration...is only five pages in length. These five pages are made up of 178 lines, of which seventy-two deal with Judaism, nineteen with Islam, six with Hinduism, six with Buddhism, and four with all the other religions of the world. This proportion is puzzling when we call to mind that there are about fifteen million Jews in the world, that the religion of the Muslims, who number about 800 million, is the fastest growing religion today, and that the population of Asia which numbers over two and one half billion, is predominantly Hindu and Buddhist.¹⁰⁶

Moreover, Mohammed charges that the Church ranks the religions in "relation to the Church". A hierarchy among religions is presented in descending order with the Christians at the top, followed by Judaism and Islam, then Hinduism, Buddhism, and miscellaneous. Mohammed posits that such triumphalism creates feelings of inadequacy. Non-Christians are made to feel as unequal partners in the realm of inter-faith dialogue. Yet at the same time, he acknowledges the Church's refreshing position on anti-semitism. However, he charges that it was long overdue. He believes that such statements would have been more appreciated by the Jewish community had they been offered to the world before WWII.

¹⁰⁶Ovey Mohammed, "Commentary on the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" *Nostra Aetate*, in The Church Renewed. The Documents of Vatican II Reconsidered, ed. George Schner, Lanham: University Press of America, 1986, pp. 135-142.

Overall, Mohammed suggests that the document was not as effective as it could have been. However, he keeps in mind that some scholars may be fearful of entering into debates pertaining to universal salvation. They may resist publishing criticisms for fear of being charged with dissent, among other possible problems. Interreligious dialogue is a challenging enterprise. It can be difficult for some to adhere to one's own tradition while maintaining respect and openness for another's religious affirmations. One may be torn between praise and criticism for one's own tradition with regards to inter-faith dialogue.

Julian is a classic example of such a struggle. Scholars can become impatient with the Church. The search for truth is rewarding yet painful. Today, as in the past, scholars attempt to balance their own insights with tradition. Julian herself was in constant struggle with the teaching of the Church. While she attempts to be faithful to the Church in maintaining orthodoxy, she does not want to compromise any of the revelations offered to her.

What was she to do with revelations that contradicted tradition? Today one is able to look back and affirm her insights. Had it been understood by the Church, Julian's positive regard for non-Christians and sinners alike could have made an impact on interreligious relations. Why did the Church fail to see or experience what Julian did? Sheard posits that the Church was too

busy focusing on conversion:

For much of its history, Christianity has been a missionary religious movement geared towards persuading non-Christians to becoming followers of Jesus Christ by being baptized in his name, thereby becoming members of the Christian Church.¹⁰⁷

With this in mind, mission activity continues to be assessed today. While some Christians support the idea of mission, others remain uncertain. Some past attempts have not been effective. Sheard posits that lack of respect throughout the years has accounted for such disappointments. Thus he suggests that respect should be the foundation for dialogue:

This is not an attitude that has been too apparent in the religious history of humankind, especially in the West. One can seriously raise the question as to whether the movement towards dialogue reflects only the attitude of a few, while the majority of the followers of the religions of the world remain largely unconcerned.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, the Catholic Church does not have a good track record when it comes to dealing with difference. Starkloff suggests that the Church had largely attempted to spread the Kingdom of Western Europe as opposed to the Kingdom of God. The Vatican II documents, observes Starkloff, are very western in that

¹⁰⁷ Robert B. Sheard, Interreligious Dialogue in the Catholic Church Since Vatican II. An Historical and Theological Study. Toronto Studies in Theology, Vol. 31. Lewiston: The Edwin Mallen Press, 1987, 283.

¹⁰⁸ Sheard, p. 286.

they are derivatives of "European culture".¹⁰⁹ The Church has offered a very Western approach to mission activity. This indicates "the deep problem of ethnocentrism in Euro-North American thinking".¹¹⁰ Karl Rahner has wrestled with the same issue:

The West is no longer shut up in itself; it can no longer regard itself simply as the centre of the history of the world and as the centre of culture, with a religion which even from this point of view could appear as the obvious and indeed sole way of honouring God to be thought of for a European.¹¹¹

It appears as though the Church has been guilty of both ethnocentrism and ecclesiocentrism. Julian's era demonstrated the height of such triumphalism. Fortunately, her writing offers a great gift to those of us who have been disappointed with the Church's activity in the past. In her humanity she is open to the certainty of salvation for all people. Similar to writers today, such as Haddon, she supported the ideas of fulfilment and restoration as opposed to sin and judgment. Her theology was a light in a time of limitations and severe judgment. Many of us can learn from her openness.

Similar to Julian, today, Sheard calls for a theology of religions which is rooted in hope and equality. Far too often, people make negative statements about the unknown; the uncertain.

¹⁰⁹See Carl Starkloff, "Commentary on the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity", in Schnier, pp. 125-134.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹¹Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions". p. 116.

Ultimately, salvation remains mystical and mysterious. Nonetheless, it was helpful to read in AG that God is "working salvifically" in other religious traditions. The Church has matured in its treatment of difference. Its soteriology has shifted from a spirit of exclusivity to one of inclusivity. While we have observed the Tradition's treatment of soteriology throughout the years let us now turn to scripture for one last perspective. Is not the gospel message inclusive? Did the Church fail in its interpretation of scripture? Can one find Julian's insights in scripture?

Scripture and Salvation: A brief overview

In his book, Salvation and Damnation, Dalton asks "Is there any evidence in the New Testament to suggest that God not only wishes to save all people but that he will actually do so?" Does this sound familiar? Julian's question resurfaces once again. Compare the following scriptural passage to the writings of Julian found in this paper:

For he has made known to us in wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things to him, things in heaven and things on earth. Eph 1:10

Similarly, Julian writes "For just as the blessed Trinity created all things from nothing, just so will the same blessed

Trinity make everything well which is not well". Both passages support the idea of a loving and generous God. 1 Tim 2:4 suggests that God really wills the salvation of all. The salvation of all is the ultimate dimension of salvation; however, this dimension involves justification by faith; at least implicit faith. For Paul, "salvation is a free gift of God- all people receive from God this salvation in its fullest and final sense"¹¹²:

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law...the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rom 3: 21-24)

Faith marks a response to God. Individuals choose freely to respond to God through faith. While salvation is a free gift of God, "God respects human freedom," hence "salvation also depends on the free co-operation of the individual person".¹¹³ God's omnipotence allows for free will. Dalton, as we will see below, posits that it is difficult to determine how God is limited by free will. Texts such as Eph 1:10 and 1 Tim 2:4 offer the hope of restoration.

Recall Julian's insight that fulfilment is the "reason for our existence". Christ tells her that regardless of sin "all will be

¹¹²William J. Dalton, Salvation and Damnation. Theology Today No. 41. Butler, Wisconsin: Clergy Book Service, 1977, p. 24.

¹¹³Dalton, p. 24.

well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well". Similar to Dalton, Julian cannot understand how God is not limited by sin. How can God "unite all things to God" and make all well when people continues to sin? Moreover, how do Christians make sense of other traditions? Both Julian and Dalton are hopeful. To them the mystery of salvation is extended to all religions, cultures, and races. "Have we any right to limit God's saving action to those alone who profess the Christian faith and are baptized? Ought we not extend this salvation to all people whom God, by the very fact of creating them, destined for final union with Godself?"¹¹⁴ Donald Guthrie, a New Testament scholar, agrees that God desires the reconciliation of the created order.¹¹⁵

However, not all people share such charitable thoughts. Earlier in this thesis Mohammed reminds us that there are fifteen million Jews in the world, that the religion of the Muslims, numbers about 800 million, and that the population of Hindu-Buddhist Asia numbers over two and one half billion". Is it fair to limit God's grace to Christians? Vatican II answers no. Julian of Norwich answers no. Nevertheless, other issues need to be addressed. Interfaith scholars discuss the issue of Christ's mediation. While both Julian and the Church affirm universal salvation through the redemptive work of Christ, others struggle

¹¹⁴Dalton, p. 32.

¹¹⁵Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology. Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1981, p. 509.

with this idea. One writer who has struggled, both as an orthodox Christian and a theologian, is S. Mark Heim. He has attempted to alleviate this tension with a new approach to inclusivism presented in his book Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion.

S. Mark Heim: A contemporary approach to soteriology

In his critique of recent efforts to understand universal salvation, Heim suggests that most parties to the discussion of universal salvation have assumed erroneously that one religious fulfilment awaits devout practitioners of all paths.¹¹⁶ He himself however explores the idea of a diversity of salvations offered by different religious traditions. He argues that members of one tradition can recognize legitimate and genuine values in the very different ideals of another path while continuing to regard their own tradition as "normative and definitive". Hence, he refers to salvation in the plural, "salvations", because salvation in the singular has been so problematic. The singular use of the term easily leads to exclusivism. Metaphysically, Heim posits that there is no reason why diverse religious fulfilments could not continue into the next world as well.

Heim begins his study with critiques of the major representatives of the pluralist camp; namely, John Hick, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, and Paul Knitter. While Heim appreciates the contributions made by each of the above writers, he continues to

¹¹⁶ S. Mark Heim, Salvations: Truth and Difference in religion. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995.

critique their approaches to salvation. He charges that pluralist thought itself tends to smack of exclusivism! He fears that pluralists may be tempted to make their Western approaches normative for the rest of humanity:

The primary challenge to pluralistic theories is to make explicit their case for the global normativity of the Western critical principles that determine their univocal definitions of religion. These are serious arguments to be made for the universal application of these culturally particular notions.¹¹⁷

Lefebure offers the same critique; pluralists, he charges:

seek to abstract from particularity in shaping a metatheory of religions; but the premises of modern Western critique of religion inevitably shape the principles of the pluralists, leaving them closer to inclusivist and even exclusivist positions than they acknowledge.¹¹⁸

Hence, pluralists may become what they want to avoid the most: the extreme of exclusivity. Heim attempts to avoid such tendencies. Instead, he proposes a new position which would allow for diversity among and uniqueness within traditions. Further, he maintains both the finality of Christ and the validity of other religious paths. He names this option inclusivistic pluralism or orientational pluralism, a term he borrowed from philosopher Nicholas Rescher. Orientational pluralism, observes Heim, offers a more pluralistic hypothesis than other pluralists: "there can be

¹¹⁷Heim., p. 123.

¹¹⁸Leo D. Lefebure, "Many paths, many destinations". in Christian Century. 113:236-237 F 28 1996.

a variety of actual but different religious fulfilments,"¹¹⁹ hence the term "salvations".

For orientational pluralism the diversity of views about religious diversity is, like religious diversity itself, rationally justified and therefore reasonable and enduring...Orientational pluralism combines a more thoroughgoing commitment to the warranted justifiability of pluralism in religion with a more positive view toward the actual practice of witness on the part of believers commending their visions to others. It is highly sceptical of readiness to attribute others' differing religious attitudes to pure irrationality, immorality, or bad faith.¹²⁰

In brief, orientational pluralism suggests that there are multiple religious ends or salvations. It represents one approach to pluralism. Heim recognizes the possible value of other religious paths without trying to place them into one grand theory. However, herein lies the controversy. Being an orthodox Christian, Heim posits that while Christians can and should make a judgment, they must add that such alternate non-Christian ends are "subordinate to the Christian end finally to be encompassed by it". It is in this point that his faith view is similar to that of Julian and Vatican II. Salvation through Christ is the most perfect fulfilment:

The fundamental challenge of my proposal for Christians is to reflect on the possibility of the providential provision of a diversity of religious ends for human beings...On the other hand, the alternativeness of these ends to Christian aims allows and even requires a judgment from the Christian perspective that subordinates them to the consummation of the

¹¹⁹Heim, p. 131.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 143.

Christian life. To realize something other than communion with the triune God and with others in the continuing relationship of created being is to achieve a lesser good.¹²¹

Consequently, Heim finds it necessary to rank religious fulfilments. As did Julian and the Church, he has struggled with the mystery of universal salvation while remaining faithful to his understanding of the Christian faith. In their attempts to address the fate of non-Christians they had not lost their sense of orthodoxy. Lefebure appreciates Heim's serious appraisal of the different goals of religions. Heim's contention that different religious fulfilments await devout practitioners of all paths is of particular interest to him. Such thinking encourages the ranking of religions. Lefebure comments: "If all religious paths lead to the same salvation, there is no reason for accepting one religion rather than another, and the concrete specifications of different traditions lose their importance and interest".¹²² Some Christian scholars find this problematic.

My interpretation of Julian's and Vatican II's Christology is that Christ's redemptive work is for the whole world. For both sources, salvations are not subordinated; however, one may charge that the Church subordinates the redemptive work of these traditions in that they need Christ's work for fulfilment. All

¹²¹Ibid., p. 160.

¹²²Lefebure, p. 236.

people, regardless of religious path, will experience the same salvation through Christ.¹²³ For Julian and the Church, Christ's salvation transcends all boundaries. One salvation awaits all. Heim, on the other hand, thinks differently. He ranks the fulfilments, but, he does suggest that in the end the Christian fulfilment will consume all. It is this very part of his theory that causes confusion. If these salvations need Christ's work for ultimate fulfilment how do they maintain their uniqueness? Nevertheless, similar to the Church, Heim has had to deal with the voice of critics who pose very challenging questions.

While Lefebure is content with Heim's ability to balance his fidelity to his tradition with his openness to the "legitimacy of other perspectives", he remains uncertain about a few issues:

Questions remain about the coherence of the result, especially concerning eschatological pluralism. Left to the sideline, for example, is the question of reincarnation. Would those who have followed paths based on the assumption of reincarnation return? Would a Tibetan Buddhist go through the process described in The Book of the Dead, while a Catholic would encounter the world of Dante's Divine Comedy? What would become of those who practice a religious tradition while remaining sceptical and suspending judgment concerning the afterlife?¹²⁴

¹²³Pontifical Council for Interreligious dialogue. Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. "Dialogue and Proclamation". 1991. addresses the issue of salvation through Christ: "From the mystery of unity it follows that all men and women who are saved, share, though differently, in the same mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ through his Spirit. Christians know this through their faith, while other remain unaware that Jesus Christ is the source of their salvation." in The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church. ed. Jacques Dupuis. New York: Alba House, 1995, p. 417-418.

¹²⁴Lefebure, p. 237.

Lefebure, as myself, would like to see more work done in this area. The afterlife remains unknown territory; therefore, it is difficult to address it adequately in interfaith dialogue. It remains a faith view. Nevertheless, Lefebure considered Heim's work an important contribution to the debate. Paul J. Griffiths is supportive of this work as well.

Griffiths appreciates Heim's response to religious plurality:

in reaffirming the unsurpassability of Christ and of the salvation offered by him; in arguing for fundamental religious difference; in claiming not only that non-Christian religions do make a similar claim about the unsurpassability of what they offer, but also that they have the right and the duty to do so...¹²⁵

Thus Griffiths argues for the compatibility of multiple salvations while still retaining the unsurpassability of Christ. He affirms the possibility of salvations which are unique to various traditions. Nevertheless, it is "okay" to admit the unsurpassability of Christ. Orthodoxy demands that one do so. However, one may recall that what Julian affirmed in the fourteenth century was not considered orthodox until the twentieth century. Many of the insights offered today may later be affirmed by the same Church that rejected them. The following and final section will review some of the material covered in this paper. A commentary on the study of salvation will proceed the review.

¹²⁵Paul J. Griffiths, "Beyond Pluralism", in First Things. no. 59:50-52 January 1996, p. 52.

SECTION IV

SUMMARY

To begin, let us review how the Church's response to non-Christians has developed throughout the centuries. In the first three centuries, the axiom "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" referred to those Christians who separated themselves from the main core, the Catholica. Those separated from the Catholica were not offered the opportunity of salvation. By the end of the fourth century, when Christianity became an official religion, the fathers of the Church extended an identical teaching to pagans and Jews. Now the black list consisted of heretics, schismatics, pagans and Jews. They were guilty of refusing to join the Christian community. The Council of Florence continues to condemn them all to hell in 1442. Sullivan lists several factors contributing to such exclusivity.

First, Christians believed that the world of these dissenters was identical with the world of Christian Europe. Everyone had had ample opportunity to join the Christian community. They had been exposed to it in some way or another. Since the discussion precluded the age of exploration and the opening of European consciousness beyond its own realm, they did not consider the other peoples of the earth with any immediacy. Hence those who rejected the gospel message were Europeans "guilty of sinning against the truth". Theirs was a case of culpable ignorance. Aquinas's

attempt to open the categories would not apply to them. Implicit faith and good moral behaviour could only save the "child in the wilderness". "These limits of the geographical and psychological horizons of medieval Christians are historical factors which profoundly conditioned their expression of the doctrine of the necessity of the church for salvation."¹²⁶ Such beliefs coupled with a vast increase of communication between continents fuelled the necessity of mission activity in foreign lands. However, a positive attitude began to develop closer to the dawn of Vatican II. Several factors contributed to such a development.

The Council founded its soteriology on the truth that God wills the salvation of all. "To attribute to the universal salvific will of God the first place in a hierarchy of truths means giving a subordinate place to the necessity of such means of salvation as baptism and membership in the church."¹²⁷ Baptism and membership were critical prerequisites in the past. Moreover, Catholic scholars had begun to appreciate the values of other cultures and religious traditions. Not that some had not done this before, but, the Church now approved of various forms of theological and biblical inquiry. The Ecumenical movement has also improved relations with other Christian traditions. Further, interfaith dialogue has encouraged partnership and inclusivity. Of course Christian writers have struggled with these issues for many,

¹²⁶Sullivan, p. 201.

¹²⁷Sullivan, p. 202.

many centuries. Julian of Norwich, to name one, expressed her struggles in Showings produced in the fourteenth century: a time of persecution and exclusivity.

How is Julian similar to the thinkers of today? To begin, she did not allow the Church to think for her in all aspects of her faith life. Fearful of persecution, she nevertheless asked questions of authority. In 1373 she received a series of revelations which would challenge her faith for the next twenty years. To begin, she affirmed the goodness of humanity. The body and soul constitute one unit. Human fulfilment requires that the body and soul grow together. Too often our mental and spiritual age is much younger than our biological age. Salvation is for the living and the dead. Julian hinted that this restoration must take place in every soul. Today, theologians are writing about the same things. Salvation, observes Sullivan, includes the restoration and fulfilment of humanity and all creation. Salvation begins in one's earthly existence. The body and soul cooperate in bringing this about. Julian's soteriology is not limited to the other-world. Moreover, Julian's image of God contradicted the popular image of God as being judgmental, stern, and angry.

"Jesus is our keeper in our time of falling." Through grace the sinner is forgiven. Mercy and forgiveness are foundational for Julian's theology of sin. While human beings continue to sin, Christ assures Julian that "all will be well". Christ, as our

mother and father, is aware of our strengths and weaknesses and is gentle with us. Further she receives no visions pertaining to purgatory or hell.

She felt compelled to believe that many will die out "of the faith of the Holy Church". These people "will die out of God's love and be eternally condemned to hell". The revelation that "all will be well" taught Julian otherwise. She knew that what was impossible for humanity was not impossible with God. That revelation gave her hope to believe, through God's mercy and love, that the mystery of salvation is extended to those outside the Holy Church. Further, she saw "nothing so exactly specified concerning the Jews". Once again she held that God's ways are beyond human understanding- perhaps even beyond the Church. Not only does Julian have hope for sinners, she has hope for non-Christians as well.

She was reassured that the Trinity will perform a great "deed" that will make all things well. Several scholars posit that this great deed refers to universal salvation. Julian hoped that God's grace will "effect the salvation even of those whom human judgment deems irrevocably lost".¹²⁸ Julian was a pioneer in the areas of soteriology, interfaith dialogue and theology of sin. Only in this century have Christians been exposed to so much development in these areas. This thesis reviewed some scripture passages that

¹²⁸Nuth, p. 168.

support Julian's insights. Similarly, the Church has turned to these uplifting texts in its quest for truth. Moreover the Church is joined by many scholars, for example S. Mark Heim, in this journey. There are many scholars, working in community, contributing to this field throughout the world of theology. The next section includes some of my own reflections on this topic.

Salvation for the living and the dead

Let us revisit the two dimensions of salvation; namely, the vertical and the horizontal. The vertical dimension is other-worldly whereas the horizontal dimension centres on deliverance and liberation in the present; liberation from sin and its effects, oppression and falsehood. Julian emphasized that salvation offers new life to us in the present. Salvation brings mercy and freedom to the sinner in the present. Julian's theology does not focus on the judgment of the future. Instead, she suggests that sinners should forget about sins of the past. Focusing on the past can only lead to anxiety and guilt. God's love and mercy and love in the present should be the primary focus. When one's soteriology is predominantly other-worldly one can risk forgetting to live in the moment. One may become obsessed with the future without appreciation for the present. Moreover one can overlook many of the injustices committed throughout the world. Freedom in the present would work against such oppression.

Another valuable insight includes Julian's openness to spiritual knowledge. How many times is the Spirit limited due to fear and ignorance? She did not limit God's activity to the Holy Church. She went beyond rules and categories and looked forward to hope. She did not restrict herself to doctrine. She asked questions and developed her writing based on the answers or lack thereof. She did not limit her theology to the first draft of Showings. She continued to reflect and learn as she developed as a theologian. She wrestled with serious issues and documented them in her writing.

One can conclude that Julian's soteriology is centred on the work of the Trinity through the person of Christ: "the purpose of the divine Trinitarian operation in the Incarnation is that all who are saved" will be saved by the "power of Christ and by the grace and operation of the Holy Spirit".¹²⁹ Jesus provides the link between the Trinity and the salvation of humankind. It is on this point that she is true to Church teaching. On the other hand, other revelations required several centuries before they were compatible with tradition. They opened up possibilities for Christ's redemptive work. His deeds would effect those outside of Christianity. All people are called to fulfilment and restoration in this life as preparation for the next. Restoration involves the fight against suffering and injustice. Salvation in the present calls for conversion. Even the sinner in the parable of the Lord

¹²⁹Showings, p. 295.

and Servant is greeted by a merciful God who desires his salvation. That she received no visions pertaining to purgatory or hell indicates that she was to focus on the possibility of salvation for a great number of souls.

Her time was plagued with themes of guilt and punishment. Fear of punishment through eternal damnation held Christians as emotional hostages. Many were forced to be focused on the other-world without appreciating the goodness of the present. Julian's revelations offered hope to such a sin-centred system of belief. There were "seeds" of goodness in non-Christians as well as Christians. As *Ad Gentes* affirmed in 1965, "seeds of the word" are present in other cultures. The document confirmed Julian's revelations of the fourteenth century. No longer would baptism and membership in the "Holy Church" be the central prerequisites for salvation. God's kingdom is greater than the kingdom of Western Europe. A passage from the gospel of Matthew speaks clearly on the issue of membership in the family of God:

While he was speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." But to the one who had told him this Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (Mt 12: 46-50)

Benedict T. Viviano interprets "whoever does the will of my

Father" as those who "obey God and act out their faith".¹³⁰ Moreover Jesus affirms the importance of ties with the wider community. He does not limit his sense of family to his biological ties. The faith of the centurion (Mt 8:5- 13) is another example of such inclusivity:

I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.(Mt 8:11-13)

Similarly, Julian insists on the goodness of character regardless of baptism or membership, recall this revelation:

I understand that every creature who is of the devil's condition in this life and so dies is no more mentioned before God and all his saints than is the devil, notwithstanding that they belong to the human race, whether they have been baptized or not.

Those who seek to do God's will, regardless of race, gender, religious tradition, and culture, will attain everlasting life. The Book of Genesis teaches that God is the source of creation and that it "was good". If, inspired by faith, one believes that God is the source of such diversity, acts such as racism and anti-semitism can only serve to offend God.

Over the centuries, scholars have attempted to make sense of

¹³⁰Benedict T. Viviano, "The Gospel According to Matthew". in The New Jerome Biblical Commentary. eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990, p. 655.

the diversity that exists throughout the world. Who does God love more? Which tradition most fully experiences God? When plagued with such thoughts Julian surrenders her curiosity to God. She then listens to the voice of her heart and her conscience. No dogma can limit God's communication with the individual soul. Many people have been hurt by such limitations.

Scholars, such as John Dominic Crossan, author of Who Killed Jesus?¹³¹ have not been satisfied with the Church's response to the centuries of anti-semitism that have destroyed the lives of millions. For centuries Christians have inflicted guilt and punishment for the crucifixion of Jesus on the Jews. Such hatred had even closed the gates of heaven to them. Recall that they were condemned to the eternal flames of hell. Julian, on the other hand, saw nothing pertaining to the fate of the Jews. A mystic of the fourteenth century was questioning Church teaching on this matter. All would be well concerning the Jews as well as the Christians. Through faith, believers have been reassured of everlasting life; however, the details of this afterlife remain a mystery. No matter how detailed or attractive theories become, they will never exhaust all of the possibilities.

Believers all over the world can look to Julian and find inspiration and hope. Her questions encourage us to assess our

¹³¹John Dominic Crossan, Who Killed Jesus? HarperSanFrancisco: Harper Collins, 1995.

presuppositions and prejudices, and our life experiences. Her vision is very close to Crossan's interpretation of Jesus' ministry:

Jesus lived, against the systemic injustice and structural evil...a life of open healing and shared eating, of radical itinerancy and fundamental egalitarianism, of human contact without discrimination and divine contact without hierarchy. That, he said, was how God would run the world if God, not Caesar, sat on its imperial throne. That was how God's will was to be done on earth- as in heaven.¹³²

The above statements pose quite a challenge to all Christians. Further, the Church cannot escape such challenges. If the Church is to be the extension of Christ's ministry, a ministry of empowerment, it should, as did Julian, seek to organize and manage itself in a way that is accountable and responsible for past and present teachings. Inspired by faith, it should desire to "make everything well which is not well".

Salvation brings life to the living and the dead. A reader of Julian of Norwich will discover that one must seek this fulfilment with one's entire being. She attained union with God through her will, love, and knowledge. Her salvation began in the present. Perhaps our preoccupation with the other-world has robbed us of our appreciation for the present. It is my hope that the Church will affirm liberation and deliverance in the present as preparation for peace in the future.

¹³²Crossan, p. 211.

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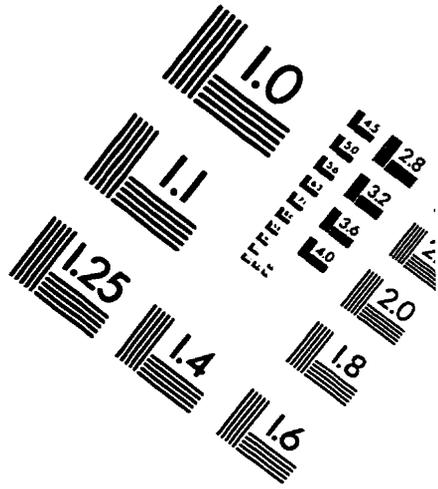
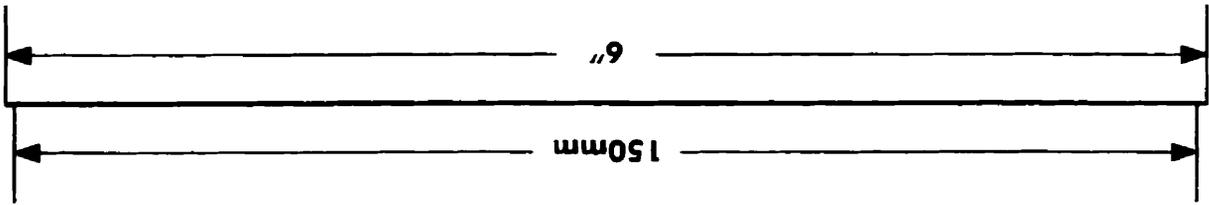
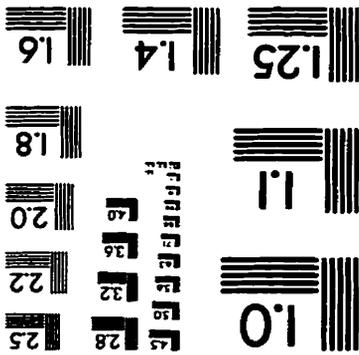
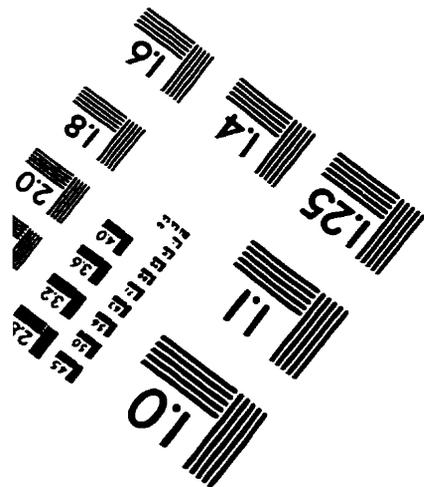
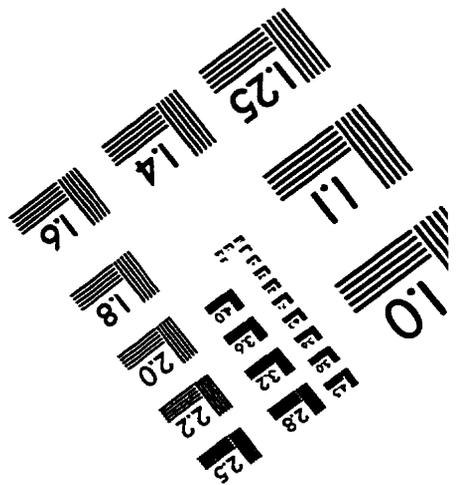
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