Reflection on the hazelnut

Take the Hazelnut you have been given and place it in the palm of your hand, outstretched before you.

Look at it as it rests there.

Julian of Norwich was a female anchorite who lived in a small room on the side of St Julian’s Church in Norwich. If you are wondering why a woman was called Julian, that was not her name. we don’t know what her name was so she is named after the church where she lived in that tiny room praying.

She lived in the 14th century which was a time when many people died of plague and in 1373 at the age of 30 Julian became very ill and almost died. Whilst ill she received a series of visions from God. She recovered and lived another 33 years. During this time, she wrote down her visions known as the ‘revelations of divine love’. We have these today as the oldest book written by a woman in the English language. Here is her vision of a hazelnut.

As you listen to this, keep looking at the hazelnut in the palm of your hand.

Reading – *Julian of Norwich, ‘Revelations of Divine Love’, chapter V, Westminster MS*

And in this he showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, it seemed, and it was as round as any ball. I looked thereupon with the eye of my understanding, and I thought, 'What may this be?' And it was answered generally thus: 'It is all that is made.' I wondered how it could last, for I thought it might suddenly fall to nothing for little cause. And I was answered in my understanding: 'It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it; and so everything has its beginning by the love of God.' In this little thing I saw three properties; the first is that God made it; the second is that God loves it; and the third is that God keeps it.

Like Julian we have been living through a time of illness that has affected the world. We think of those who have lost their lives, who have been seriously ill, whose livelihoods have been affected, whose lives altered, and relationships disrupted. We may sometimes wonder where God is when such things happen.

Keep looking at the hazelnut in the palm of your hand and imagine God’s hand holding you gently in love. Your life held by God.

Now imagine it is your family and friends, held in God’s hand. Supported by God’s love.

Now imagine it is our local communities, farms, shops, churches, schools, houses and all who live here, human and non-human, resting in God’s hand. Supported by God’s love

Now imagine our whole nation with all its diversity of people, creatures and landscapes is held in God’s hand. Supported by God’s love.

Now imagine that tiny Hazelnut is the whole world, small in the vastness of space, yet God made it, God loves it, and God keeps it.

God gave a message of trust to Julian

‘all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well’

As we look at the hazelnut in the palm of our hand let us say those words, offering ourselves and those we love into God’s care.

Repeat each line after me

All shall be well

And all shall be well

And all manner of things shall be well.