

Enfolded in Love

This Retreat in June was on the theme being “Enfolded in Love”, a Day with Julian of Norwich. It was indeed a day to remember.

Julian was a theologian, mystic and anchoress of the late 14th Century and is known for the revelations she received over a period of time relating to God’s Love. Her writings, yes she was a woman, are the earliest surviving English language works by a woman. In her first revelation she is shown a vision of a hazelnut in the palm of her hand (see picture).

A hazelnut of itself is a small insignificant item, however at that time they were well known, and commonly used in food recipes. On asking “*What may this be?*” she is told, “*It is all that is made*”. From this came further revelations that all things from the smallest and most inconsequential in God’s Creation are made by the Love of God, and that all have a purpose in His Creation.



During the Retreat we were invited to take a walk out onto the adjacent Common and to take our time to look in detail at the many small items of wildlife that we would find there. This was very rewarding as we found small unusual plants and flowers, in various stages of growth, and the insects, bugs and beetles living on and around them. There were varieties of butterflies, wasps and bees feeding on the flowers and pollinating them (see picture). I noted that the detail designs on each of the many flowers of the foxgloves were individually unique (see picture)!

We also had the pleasure of listening to the birdsongs around us in the peace of their natural environment without any distractions. There were many species that I did not recognise calling to one another, or simply taking pleasure in their songs. We were fortunate that one of the leaders had an App on her mobile phone that enabled her to record the birdsongs, download them and name the bird with a photo. This she shared with us giving us a greater understanding of the variety of birds present and their songs. For the bird lover this App is a great asset.



What we were seeing and hearing was a living natural ecology from its very foundation, in action all around us, and it reinforced our understanding that there was a purpose for all this! God Loves His Creation! He made it for the benefit of all aspects of Creation, including ourselves, so that we can all live together in harmony. To quote again Julian of Norwich,

“God made everything for love, and by love all things are sustained and protected, and ever shall be.”

Clearly there is very much more of God’s Creation that we do not fully understand. We know this already from watching recent episodes of Springwatch on BBC 2!

To find out more about Julian’s writings, read “*The Showings*”, a contemporary translation by Mirabai Starr.