

This morning I began my day of study by sitting in the church of St. Julian in Norwich, England, gazing at the archway that bids one enter the cell of Dane Julian of Norwich. Specifically I gaze at the carving at the apex of the archway of the cell as it is re-constructed in the early 1950's. This cell is larger than the original cell and has a door that invites pilgrims to enter, not part of the original construction. These days the cell is a chapel of prayer and a place for week-day low mass to be said for a small congregation.

The archway is not part of the historic St. Julian Church; it is from St. Michael at Thorn Church, one of the 52 churches that for a time served the people of Norwich. On the 27th of June 1942 an enemy bombing raid destroyed St. Michael at Thorn and all that was left standing was a Norman Arch from the 12 century. St Julian Church was also damaged in the raid; it was determined because of their most famous resident, that the church would be restored. When plans were made to reconstruct the cell of the anchoress Julian, the lovely carved archway from the wreckage of St. Michael at Thorn Church was acquired.

I passed through that arch several times during my sojourn in Norwich. I noted it's lines, the columns on each side with their regal caps, the same lovely carving that I have seen in so many other churches and cathedrals that I have stepped inside during my time here in England. But I did not see the carving at the apex of the arch until yesterday. No doubt I would not have seen it, if it had not been for the artists who met in the Julian Center with Professor Brian Thorne, the Chair of the Friends of Julian.

The artists had taken several pictures of the arch and had discovered a carving. As they poured over the picture of the carving, Professor Thorne turned to me and asked, "Do you know anything about symbols?" Before I could respond he said, "tell me what you think this is and what you make of it?" I took my time - but I was sure of what I saw immediately - it was a cock and above it an empty cross.

I had been musing over Julian's understanding of the Trinity and how the notion of the Trinity had not been a part of her Shorter Text; it had played an important role in her Longer Text which she penned twenty years later. I was most interested in the role of each person in the Trinity. The First person was attributed with Power, the Second person - whom she called Mother-Jesus, was attributed with knowledge, wisdom and the divine leadership, and the Third person was attributed with divine goodness. (Longer Text, Chapter 58) I was struck immediately by the image of the cock and recalled the trilogy of Peter's denial of Jesus. The cock is traditionally the

image of turning from God. Of sin. I recalled how by the seaside, the Risen Christ gave Peter the opportunity to be redeemed. Three times Jesus asks - "Do you love me?" When Peter replies in the affirmative, Jesus gave him instruction for his life and mission. (John 21:15-22) A trilogy of forgiveness and redemption and a way, a path, instruction for how to begin again.

So this symbol above the door of Dane Julian's cell - a reminder of Peter's 3 denials of Jesus and the ways we all deny the One we say we serve. And above the cock the cross - the empty cross - the way, the path, the instruction to begin again.

I said something like that at the moment when asked to offer my "wisdom" or maybe just my best guess about the symbol above the door.

I confessed that I had not noticed the symbol and Professor Thorne affirmed that neither had he. But I assured him that I would not be able to miss the carving now. I knew that I would see it each time I entered. For once something is brought to our awareness and we have sought it's wisdom, it can no longer escape our acknowledgment.

Proverbs 18:15

**"The intelligent acquire knowledge
But the wise listen, seeking knowledge." (NRSV)**

For those who are intentional, those who make a choice to come to a place that is off the beaten path, a place that is not a part of the route of their daily life, for those who take a detour and invest time to sort some things out in their life, who comes seeking wisdom. Lady Wisdom herself is present to listen and offer the desire of the seeker.

If one such seeker came to Dane Julian's window, she would listen with compassion, perhaps reflect back what she had heard, telling the seeker what she heard, in essence holding up a mirror to the one seeking wisdom and offering words of encouragement. Perhaps even the words that are well remembered and are a trilogy or a Trinitarian statement:

"All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."