

Father John Catoir

We Belong to God

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect gratefully on all that God has given us. Blessed Julian of Norwich used the symbol of a hazelnut to teach a magnificent spiritual lesson. She suggests that we can gain comfort and insight from imagining something exceedingly small to be the entire universe.



Most of us don't have access to a hazelnut, so why not try it with an apple seed. Hold it in the palm of your hand and imagine this tiny pit as a symbol of the world with all its allurements and fascinations. All that life has to offer is passing and insignificant.

Blessed Julian reasons, "Wouldn't it be foolish to seek satiety and satisfaction from something so small when everything in us cries out for the all (for God)."

In this exercise Julian teaches us that everything, including the entire human family is tiny in comparison to God who is all in all. Everything is made and supported by God's love, which keeps it from falling into nothingness. We are made, loved and preserved by God and even though we are not able to see Him, our Maker, our Lover and our Preserver — we can see His attributes reflected in Creation.

Julian explains that we are made in God's image, and therefore we reflect God's beauty. We embody His attributes. Julian explains that this is something like wearing the clothing of a great designer. We have His label on us. We belong to Him.

In our final state, in the Beatific Vision, we will not merely be reflecting God's attributes, we will be intimately

united with Him. Our Divine Savior loves us and preserves us in being precisely for one reason: to love us and to be loved by us for all eternity.

Let's face it, you and I are special creatures. "Our souls are restless until they rest in You, God." ("Confessions", St. Augustine) We are moving from our smallness to His greatness.

From the apple seed we learn about the insufficiency of our tiny being and the all important of God's sustaining power. And we learn the importance of gratitude. Without Him we are nothing.

This comparison of the human race to an apple seed is a bit abstract I admit, but we are speaking about the mystery of God's Creation. Even though we can learn the facts that surround this great mystery, we will never be able to comprehend the mystery itself.

Blessed Julian tells us, "When you truly become aware of God dwelling within you, you will no longer seek other creatures, you will long for the Beautiful One Who is your Maker."

The next time you hold an apple seed in your hand, think about your smallness and think about your own beauty as a reflection of God's beauty. But more interestingly, I recommend that you think about your destiny as an object of God's desire.

God enfolds you in the embrace of His unchanging, unconditional, love this very minute. You may not feel it or understand it, but it's true. Consider the apple seed and be grateful. God's presence in your life is more real, more powerful, than you realize.

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