



Lil' Red Wagon

of the Servant of God Julia Greeley

official newsletter of
The Julia Greeley Guild
a ministry of
Curé d'Ars Parish, Denver

Twelvth Issue 5.11.2017

From the Vice Postulator's Office ►

Since the diocesan phase of the Servant of God **Julia Greeley's** cause was opened last December, there has been an exciting increase in those seeking favors through her intercession. It has been a true blessing to hear about men, women and children turning to Julia with their needs.

Vivian Imbruglia, the iconographer who wrote the sacred image of **Julia** that was unveiled during the Year of Mercy, recently told me that she was at a religious conference displaying her icons. One of those images was of **Julia**, whose unique appearance consistently piqued people's curiosity. People kept asking Vivian about **Julia's** story and the interest was so great that she sold all the **Julia Greeley** plaques she had with her.

Another group of people in the Columbus, Ohio, area is earnestly imploring **Julia** to

pray for Becky, a mother of seven children who has been diagnosed with stage-four liver cancer. They are circulating prayer cards, reading about **Julia** and requesting Masses to be said. These are just two stories about the many faithful turning to **Julia** with their urgent needs, particularly those involving children. It is truly inspiring to witness!

As vice postulator for **Julia's** cause, I ask that everyone continue to keep the diocesan phase of the cause in your prayers as we collect testimonies of her sanctity, engage in historical research about her life and virtues, and prepare to begin construction on her final resting place in the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Denver.

— David Uebbing, vice postulator

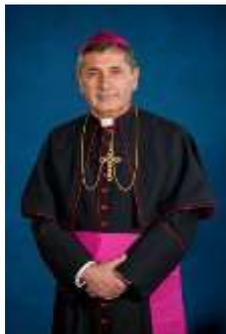
Julia's Body Examined ►

Julia Greeley's body has rested at Mt. Olivet Cemetery since her death in 1918. Toward the end of this month, the body will be exhumed and identified as part of the official cause. The event will give scientists an opportunity to determine more accurately her age at death and the cause thereof. The Roman postulator, Dr. Hilgeman, is expected to be present for the exhumation. After proper identification, **Julia's** body will be transferred to the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception on Colfax Street, where it will be more readily accessible to those devoted to her.



Save the Date: June 2, 2017 ►

Bishop Jorge Rodriguez will be the main celebrant and homilist for our annual Mass, which this year commemorates the 99th anniversary **Julia**'s death. The Mass will be Sacred Heart Church at 28th and Larimer



streets on Friday June 2 at 7 p.m. All of **Julia**'s Friends are encouraged to make every effort to attend and bring with them as many new friends as possible. Following the Mass, Guild members will sponsor a reception in the

church basement. Books, images of **Julia**, and other items will be available for purchase.

Music Celebrates Julia's Life ►

Sarah Perske, Denver-area composer, classical guitarist, and public relations director for the Nebula Ensemble presented her latest composition, "Voices of Colorado Women: **Julia Greeley**," during a student concert in Hamilton Recital Hall at D.U.'s Lamont School of Music, the evening of April 29. The concert was free and open to the general public, and Ms. Perske expected audio and video recordings of the concert will soon be available.

"As I learned more about **Julia**'s life in preparation for writing this piece," Ms. Perske wrote, "I was fascinated to discover that **Julia** also taught herself to play the piano when she was over 60 years old, giving at least one house concert at a friend's home where she played and sang the Gregorian Mass of the Angels.



"My piece attempts to tell **Julia**'s story from her perspective, and encapsulate the message of her life: that seemingly simple and everyday acts of love and forgiveness have an impact far beyond what we might imagine. **Julia** Greeley tells us that we can change the world, one heart at a time."

Holy Ghost Parish Meets Julia ►

by Joe and Debbie Nowak

On March 4, 2017, we gave a presentation on Servant of God **Julia Greeley**, for members of our parish, Holy Ghost, in Denver. We were invited by our pastor, Fr. Christopher Uhl, OMV, because we were the first people to tell him about **Julia Greeley**, shortly after he was installed as pastor. Being relatively new to Denver, Fr. Chris had not previously known about her, and when he heard the Archdiocese had officially opened her cause, he wanted to let his parishioners know more about her too; so he asked us to give a talk at a Faith Friday evening during Lent.

The talk was well received and several new Guild members were added to the roles that evening. Here's what we did, and we encourage other Guild members to consider speaking to their parishes, as well.

We first heard about **Julia** over a decade ago, through the Catholic homeschooling community in Denver. We've attended all the Masses in her honor since they first began, and we've been praying many years for her cause to be opened. So, despite considering ourselves "friends" of **Julia** for over ten years, we were still surprised when Father asked us to give a presentation and we felt inadequate to the task. But, armed with Fr. Blaine Burkey's book, *In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart*, and the knowledge that **Julia** wouldn't have let feelings of inadequacy stand in her way, we decided to accept the invitation.

We did three things to prepare. We carefully read Fr. Blaine's book, staying close to the facts and the statements he collected. We also kept the talk lively by each of us speaking about those aspects of **Julia** that affected us personally. Finally, we asked Julia in our prayers to help us to do a good job – or at least lead others to Jesus through her, even if we were less than adequate.

The response was what you would expect from **Julia**. It was attended by over 50 people, all of whom asked questions, or sought us out after the talk, and all of whom were deeply impressed by her story. We distributed all our copies of her holy card and prayed the prayer for her intercession with the group. We sold all the copies of Fr. Blaine's book which we had brought, with requests for more. Five people signed up and paid to be Guild members, and Holy Ghost made a contribution to the Guild. It was a great event with parishioners responding enthusiastically to her story, her charity, and her practical goodness. Best of all, we had the honor, as Guild members, to introduce Julia to our fellow parishioners.

Northeast Deanery Also Hears ►

Fr. Blaine accepted a similar invitation from Fr. Tomsz Wikarski, dean of northeast Denver, and made a presentation at St. Augustine's Church, Brighton, on March 7 to the clergy of the deanery's eight parishes and many members of their parish staffs. One of those present was Bishop Jorge Rodriquez who was finishing his term as pastor of Holy Cross Church in Thornton.

Colo. Rockies Help Guild, You ►

The Guild offers you an opportunity to help it provide funds for the financial needs of the Cause. All you have to do is take your family out to the ball game! Over the next three months, it's offering **discounted** tickets to four Rockies games at Coors Field

on May 14, June 7, June 17, and July 8, and a portion of the proceeds will go back to the **Julia Greeley Guild's** funds to support the Cause. The tickets are \$20 for upper reserve and \$30 for infield. If you're planning on going to a baseball game or two this summer, why not help recognize a saint in the process? Contact Mary Leisring at mary.leisring@archden.org or 303.715.3165 to order tickets.

Julia Greeley's Gilpin Legacy ► **From "An Income for Life"** **to "She Gave Me My Faith"**

by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap.

The following front-page article in the secular press¹ only recently came to light.² It is a surprising, intriguing and valuable addition to the literature of the Servant of God **Julia Greeley**.

Among other things. It holds out hope that it may someday be the key that opens a path to Julia's origin and early years in Missouri.

Former Slave of Mrs. Gilpin, Left Annuity by Mistress, Uses Savings for a High Mass

When Julia Greeley, who used to be a slave of the late Mrs. William Gilpin, learned that her former mistress has left her an income for life she took her savings from a Denver bank and arranged for a solemn high mass in memory of Mrs. Gilpin at Sacred Heart church. The mass was held this morning, with the aged negress almost the only person in attendance.

Julia Greeley is so old that she has forgotten her own age. Her friends say she is more than 90 years old. Her father and mother were both slaves, and lived to such an age that they lost all track of the years. She entered the service of Mrs. Gilpin, widow of Colorado's former territorial governor, when Mrs. Gilpin was one of the society belles of St. Louis., several years before the civil war. Julia came west with Mrs. Gilpin after her marriage, and after slavery was abolished, remained in the family as a maid.

¹ *Denver Post* (Denver CO) Jan. 4, 1913, page 1

² Located Feb. 24, 2017, by a search engine of Genealogy Bank

The aged negress had not been able to work for Mrs. Gilpin during the last few years. She had saved some money, however, and was not in want. When the will of Mrs. Gilpin, who died recently, was opened, it was found that the former governor's wife had left a substantial income to her old maid.

As soon as Julia Greeley was told of this provision of Mrs. Gilpin's will she asked to be taken to the bank, where she withdrew practically all of her savings. Then she went to Sacred Heart church and arranged with Father Edward Barry for solemn high mass in memory of Mrs. Gilpin. She said she wanted the affair made just as elaborate as the amount of her savings would permit.

"I want to spend all this money," said the aged negress, "because I won't have to worry about my living. Mrs. Gilpin has fixed all that."

Julia attended the mass this morning. She was almost the only person in the church. She devoutly participated in the entire service.

The aged negress remembers that she was born on the plantation of Samuel Carwell, who once had the largest plantation in Missouri. As a child she was sold into the house of Gen. Bernard Pratt of St. Louis, father of Mrs. Gilpin. She never knew what became of her father and mother, who were very old people before she was taken away from them.

Julia says Mrs. Gilpin was one of the most beautiful young women in St. Louis, and the whole town mourned when she married William Gilpin and came to Colorado to live.

Unfortunately much of the background material included by the anonymous journalist is filled with easily recognized inaccuracies.

Item 1: Julia Greeley was a former slave, but her employment by Mrs. Gilpin was as a free woman. Also she was probably not owned by the Pratte family before the Civil War, which began in 1861. In sworn testimony in her 1887 divorce trial, Mrs. Gilpin said she had known **Julia Greeley** for about 12 or 14 years³ – thus not before the Civil War, and not as a slave.

Mrs. Gilpin's mother testified at the same time that he had known **Miss Greeley** for only 13 years.⁴ Mrs. Pratte also said she had checked with the colored people in St.



Louis, who said they had known Julia for 18 years.⁵ This would seem to indicate **Julia Greeley** might have been in St. Louis no earlier than 1869.

Item 2: This article, written five years before Julia's death, has her more than 90 years old, which would mean she was over 95 at the time of her death and born before 1823, ten years earlier than any of the other guesses on record. The best guess, it seems to me is the earliest one on file. The U.S. Census for 1880 spoke of Julia being 40 years old. This would make her born in 1840 and 78 at the time of her death.

At the time the 1887 divorce trial, **Julia's** fellow domestic Mary Larson thought **Julia** was about 30 years of age.⁶ Presuming she was speaking of when **Julia** was still in the Gilpin's hire (1881), this would make her born about 1851. Another domestic at the

³ Folio 1475

⁴ Folio 2765

⁵ Folio 2764

⁶ Folio 1261

same time placed **Julia** between 30 and 40⁷ – thus born between 1841 and 1851.

All other guesses were made 27 to 38 years later, when the birthdate was placed anywhere between 1833 and 1850.

Item 3: **Julia Greeley** did not come west with Mrs. Gilpin in 1874, but rather by herself, probably in the winter of 1878-79.⁸ She herself testified to this as did Mrs. Gilpin.

Item 4: The article also said Julia had not been able to work for Mrs. Gilpin “during the last few years.” Actually she last worked for the Gilpin’s in 1881,⁹ which was 32 years before this article was written.

Item 5: The last misinformation in the article revolves around the main thrust of the article. Mrs. Gilpin did indeed mention **Julia Greeley** in her will, but actually gave her nothing materially.

In her will, Julia Gilpin said that if her own sister Lina Robinson’s estate had not yet been settled by the time Mrs. Gilpin’s own death, then \$100 of what would be coming to Mrs. Gilpin’s estate should be given to **Julia Greeley**. The will, written three years before Mrs. Gilpin’s death on Dec. 21, 1912, was read shortly thereafter, and on Dec. 30, a deputy sheriff personally notified the Servant of God that she had been remembered in the will.

During the next four days **Julia** visited the pastor of Sacred Heart parish and reportedly used much of her life’s savings to have a Solemn High Mass said.¹⁰

Fifteen months later, however, the executor of the Gilpin estate informed the probate court that Mrs. Robinson’s estate had been settled before Mrs. Gilpin’s death, and thus the will provided exactly nothing for **Julia Greeley**.

We have here, ironically, an example of how misinformation brought misfortune into **Julia**’s life, and at the same time proved the depth of her friendship and gratitude towards Mrs. Gilpin. She spent what little savings she had doing a work of mercy for Mrs. Gilpin, thinking the latter had taken care of her for life; when in reality Mrs. Gilpin had given her nothing materially.

This may well have occasioned **Julia Greeley**’s well-known telling her friends that Mrs. Gilpin had given her more than money. “She gave me my faith.”

Calendar of Julie’s Cause ►

These are the important recent events leading up to the Official Opening:

- Aug. 4, 2016 – The Archbishop hired Dr. Waldery Hilgeman, J.U.D., to be Roman Postulator for the Cause.
- Aug. 6, 2016 – Archbishop Samuel Aquila asked the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for the decree *nihil obstat* (nothing stands in the way) for opening **Julia**’s Cause. **Julia** is thereby entitled to be called Servant of God.
- Oct. 22, 2016 – The Congregation of Causes of Saints published its decree *nihil obstat*.
- Nov. 14, 2016 – The U.S.C.C.B. endorsed Archbishop Aquila’s decision to open the Cause.
- Nov. 30, 2016 – Archbishop Aquila issued an edict asking participation in the Cause which he was about to open.
- Dec. 18, 2016 – Archbishop Aquila officially opened the Cause at Immaculate Conception Cathedral Basilica during the 8:30 Mass.
- Feb. 21, 2017 – Second Session of the Tribunal.

⁷ Folio 1329

⁸ According to Mrs. Gilpin, folio 1836.

⁹ According to Mrs. Gilpin, folio 1836.

¹⁰ How much this might have been is unknown. The usual offering for a Mass in the U.S. at that time was \$1 (Charles Augustine, O.S.B., A Commentary on the New Code of Canon Law, New York: B. Herder, 1921, v. 4, p. 190). Surely more than this was expected for a solemn high Mass, however, which involved three priests, and probably an organist.

Testimonials Needed ► The Guild is anxious to have on file reports of any favors people feel they have received through **Julia's** intercession! Lest any details be forgotten, please submit them to the Guild in written form.. Having these on file will one day enable the Cause to show the power of her intercession.

Coming Meetings ► All Guild Members and other Friends of **Julia** are invited to our planning meetings at the Curé d'Ars pastoral center, 4701 Martin Luther King Blvd. The Guild meets every third Thursday of the month, at 10:30 a.m. Next meetings: May 18, June 15, July 20. Any last minute changes will be listed on the Guild's web site: www.juliagreeley.org.

Memberships ► Help us build our Guild **paid** membership by joining the **Julia Greeley Guild** and inviting others to join. A membership application form can be printed at <http://www.juliagreeley.org/guild.html> Dues are \$20 a year or \$50 for three years. Married couples are enrolled for a single fee.

Friends of Julia

On our mailing lists – 5-5-2017

511

which includes

Guild Members

Dues paying – 5-5-2017

51

Remembering Fellow Friends ►

We commend to Julia's intercession the eternal happiness of her deceased Friends.

Geraldine Magnie

Elaine Massie

Hanna Nevin

Ginger Perkins

Wilmetta Ann Roth

Put on Your Thinkin' Cap ► It is now only a little more than a year till the centennial celebration of **Julia's** death on June 7, 1918. Suggestions on how to celebrate this great event will be welcomed by the Guild officers.

More Information ► For more on **Julia** and her fame, visit the Guild's web site at <http://www.juliagreeley.org>. View also the archdiocese's video of "**Julia Greeley: Our Model of Mercy**" at <https://vimeo.com/151101683>

To Contact the Guild ►

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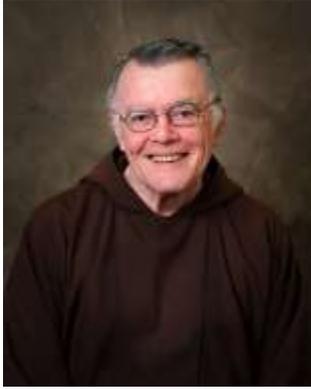
Wagoneers ► Fr. Blaine Burkey, pro-tem editor; Kate Springs, apprentice editor; Mary Leisring, president & circulation manager.

Appendix

A Visit to Julia's Home ►

*Fr. Regis Scanlon, O.F.M.Cap., founder of the **Julia Greeley Home**, "a program for formerly homeless women seeking self sufficiency," wrote the following after visiting there in early April:*

Marriage, Family, Forgiveness — every topic was on the table when I met with the women of



the **Julia Greeley Home** in early April. The group of 17 women also included the young mothers from Shannon's Hope, the Christian ministry which shares the residence with us. It's the first of many monthly

visits I'm planning to make. I want each woman who enters this beautiful home to know she is valued and loved, and that our Christian faith supports her in her goal to achieve self sufficiency.

I also wanted each woman to understand that the **Julia Greeley Home** is built on the foundation of Catholic Christianity, which is my faith, which gave me my vocation as a Capuchin priest, and inspired me to found **Julia's** three and a half years ago.

It was a special evening too, because we were able to celebrate the fact that two **Julia Greeley** women, Camille and "Trudi," have recently achieved self sufficiency. Each of them received a simple necklace-cross from **Julia's**, which we hope will always remind them of what they have accomplished.

Camille's story shows how even educated, smart, professional women can quickly lose everything in this harsh world. But Camille fought her way back! We are proud to say that she is using her many managerial skills on our staff, and is inspiring new **Julia Greeley** residents to reach their goals, too. "Trudi" wishes to remain anonymous, so we've given her another name. Let me just say she has bravely moved onward after many setbacks, and we are happy to know she has found an apartment, a job, and a new life.

So I am very grateful to God for His constant help to women in trauma and crisis. Before the **Julia Greeley Home**, when I counseled women to help them move past homelessness, so many would say, "But Father, I have nowhere to go!"

Now, thanks be to God, they do.

I suspected that few of the women had never met a friar-priest in brown robes before, and they might be curious. I was right! But as a

former high school math teacher, I enjoy getting tough questions from a crowd.

"Ask me anything," I said as the evening began. The questions were so deep and thoughtful, that at one point I kidded, "Wow, I thought we wouldn't get to these kind of questions 'til the 3rd or 4th time!"

To give you an idea of our conversation:

"*What is a true friend?* A friend always supports you, right?" Not necessarily, because if they're supporting you to do something wrong, that is not a true friend.

"*What if you can't forgive God for something? Am I a bad person if I can't forgive? How can I forgive when I don't even feel like it?*" You don't have to feel like forgiving, I said.

Forgiveness is not a feeling. It's an act of the will. Allow yourself the chance to forgive, even if you don't feel like it, and let God do the rest.

"*Why did you want to be a priest?*" I did my best to explain how a tough kid from Pittsburgh started to hear God's call breaking through the exciting, late '50s teenage world of parties, girls and college plans. But that kind of happiness didn't feel like it would hold up forever. But giving my life to God? That felt like a permanent happiness, and after 40-plus years of priesthood, it's turned out to be true!

"*What is a good marriage? Is it OK to get out of a bad marriage? What is an annulment?*" We were heading out into deep waters there, and after some serious back and forth we all agreed it was a good topic to pick up next month.

My thanks to Glenda Bolin, who gave up teaching her Bible class that Monday night, so I could be there. Thanks also to Terri Nalty and her son, Emilio, for providing volunteer support staff that night (Terri is from the same Denver chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order that **Julia Greeley** herself belonged to a century ago). And thanks also to our on-site director, Leslie Collins-Pottebaum, who emailed some very kind words the next day that she thought the evening was Holy Spirit-inspired, "and that only adds to the Home's environment, and to our motivation to continue to do a good job." I am grateful for their work and commitment.