



Lil' Red Wagon

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

Ninth Issue 10-20-2016

The Long-Awaited Day Is Near ►

Julia's Cause is not yet open, but the door is somewhat ajar. On Aug. 6, Archbishop Aquila signed papers requesting permission to open the Cause; and shortly before that, the archdiocese hired Dr. Waldery Hilgeman, a doctor of both civil and canon law, as the Roman Postulator for her future Cause.

Meeting with the Guild that same day, Dr. Hilgeman's assistant, Br. Reginald Cruz, CFX, said that these actions were sufficient for us to start referring to Julia as a Servant of God.

Before fully opening the Cause, the Archbishop will ask for the endorsement of the American hierarchy at their meeting next month in Baltimore.

If the necessary approvals are obtained, the next step would be a Mass and formal ceremony to solemnly open Julia's Cause.

Dr. Hilgeman, who will steer **Julia's Cause** through its various phases, has many years of doing such work. He was the Postulator for St. Mary Ann Cope, the American Franciscan Sister who took over St. Damian's work with the lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Other

causes still in his care include those of two Blesseds from Tamil Nadu, India, and Germany; two Venerables from Italy; and 195 Servants of God, including 86 martyrs of the Florida missions; Sr. Mary Lange, foundress of Oblate Sisters of Providence; Sr. Mary Alphonsa Hawthorne, daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne; Chiara Lubich, foundress of the Focolare Movement; Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania; and Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen van Thuan.

Well Received at Curé d'Arts ► Since the Eighth Issue of the *Wagon* appeared in June, the Guild has been received with open arms by one of Denver's Afro-American parishes, as one of its own pastoral ministries.

The Guild asked the parish to accept it as such, so that the Guild's benefactors from far and wide could claim tax credit for larger gifts to the Guild in its non-profit mission of assisting **Julia's Cause**.

At all the Masses on the weekend of July 30-31, Guild Member Fr. Blaine Burkey spoke to the parish about its giving the Guild a home. That same day numerous parishioners signed up as Friends of **Julia** and purchased *In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart*, Fr. Blaine's documentary on **Julia's** life. More than half of those attending Guild meetings have been Curé d'Arts parishioners, and approximate half of the dues-paying Members of the Guild are from the parish.

For tax purposes all checks given to the Guild are payable to Curé d'Arts Church/**Julia Greeley** Guild, and all Guild funds are managed through the parish as a separate ministry thereof.

Julia's Fame Spread in Rome ►

A joint project of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Latin America and the Archdiocese of Denver, presented an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy symposium in Rome on Sept. 24, which featured presentations on **Julia Greeley** and three other "Witnesses of Mercy in the Americas."

About 75-100 people, half of them pilgrims from Colorado, attended the extremely well-received program at San Pio X Hall on the Via del Ospedale. Martha Reichert, president of

ENDOW, and 2014 recipient of her organization's **Julia Greeley** Award, spoke on behalf of Denver's Model of Mercy. Her presentation is an Appendix to this issue.

Martha placed 50 or 75 of the Guild's prayer cards on a table at the conference and all were taken by those in attendance.

While in Rome, Martha and her daughter Meghan stayed at Casa Santa Marta, just one floor below Pope Francis' apartment. At lunch she was at a neighboring table to the Pope; and when he walked by, she gave a Swiss Guard a program of the conference and one of the Guild's small prayer folders to give to the Pope. The guard instructed her to add her name and address, so perhaps some recognition from His Holiness may be forthcoming.

The other witnesses of mercy honored by the conference were Ven. Fr. Michael McGivney, 19th century founder of the Knights of Columbus; Ven. Fr. Anthony of Jesus Margil, 18th century Franciscan missionary in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Texas; and the Servant of God Fr. Eusebio Kino, 18th century Jesuit missionary in Mexico and Arizona.

Carl Anderson, K.C. supreme knight, who was scheduled to speak about Fr. McGivney, was called to testify before Congress on behalf of persecuted Christians in the Middle East. David Uebbing, Friend of **Julia** and archdiocesan chancellor, read Anderson's talk in his stead..

“A Gift Off Her Back” ► is a 12x16” acrylic scene painted by Guild Member Fr. Blaine Burkey as his “friar project” for the Capuchins' Brown Robe Benefit gala on Oct. 29. It joins the extremely small, but slowly growing set of artistic images of Denver's



Servant of God.

The original will be auctioned off, with half of the proceeds going to the Guild for support of **Julia**'s cause for beatification.

The painting catches **Julia** on one of her nighttime missions of mercy, delivering a mattress to needy neighbors.

The Capuchins are selling only the original acrylic, but not the artistic concept and reproduction rights, thus enabling the Guild to make print copies available to our Members.

Friends of **Julia** wishing to bid on the original acrylic painting can contact Gina Francis for particulars at events@capuchins.org or at 303.433.0296.

Excerpt from *In Secret Service* ►

“A feature of **Julia**'s charity was that she always dispensed it at night. She knew the white folks pride—knew it would be hurt if the neighbors saw an old black woman bringing a basket of food, or carrying a mattress on her back to them. Father McDonnell tells of her calling him out of bed at midnight to carry a bucket of coal and a basket of food to a destitute family in the neighborhood.”

From *Rocky Mountain News* obituary

Julia on Catholic Radio ► Capuchin Fathers Blaine Burkey and Regis Scanlon have both recently spoken on Denver's Catholic Radio (AM 1040) about the former slave from Missouri.

Fr. Blaine was there on July 14, speaking on behalf of the Guild and **Julia**'s Cause for beatification; and Fr. Regis was there on Sept. 30, speaking on behalf of the **Julia Greeley** Home for single homeless women, which he is struggling to bring to maturity.

Holy Cards Now Available ► The Guild recently printed two cards remembering **Julia**. One contains **Julia**'s photograph, a short biography, and the prayer for her intercession; the other has the new icon by Vivian Imbruglia and the prayer. One copy of each will be sent gratis to anyone sending the Guild a **self-addressed self-stamped** envelope. Multiple copies of either can be obtained for a small cost by special arrangement with the Guild.



Fireman's Museum Display ►

Through the intercession of Guild Member Amy Wagner, the Denver Firefighters' Museum is currently offering its patrons a display on Julia Greeley. The display was researched and put together by Sarah Crocker, museum education and exhibits coordinator. The museum at 1326 Tremont Place is open Monday through Saturday from 10 till 4 p.m. Admission: adults \$7, children and seniors \$5

Julia Greeley Home Happenings ►

Straight A's ! That's what one of **Julia's** "graduates" is achieving this year as she moves toward her licensed practical nursing degree in Denver. Thanks to the Home's partnership with the Ward Family Foundation of Alexandria VA., "Sheree" won a full scholarship to attend LPN school. "Sheree", who is in her 40's, is in awe that she is able to look ahead to the first career she has ever had. She's aced every course since she began the course in June, and she is in enrollment process for the final push which begins in January. That means she's just a year away from the career she always wanted: to be able to offer help and compassion to the sick and elderly. Just eight months ago, she was working through a heartbreaking family estrangement and had nowhere to go until she came to the **Julia Greeley Home**. Beginning with her time there, her family life has been healed and her entire life changed.

Fifteen terrific teenagers, all seniors at Faith Bible Chapel's pre-school through 12th grade roared onto **Julia's** grounds on Sept. 30 to do a full day of cleaning, sprucing up and weed

pulling all over the house and grounds. This annual clean-up event happens thanks to **Julia's** shared ministry, Shannon's Hope, which has worked with Faith Bible Chapel for many years. The young people are being taught to be faithful Christians and to bring their faith into the world.

Christ in the City is a new partner with the **Julia Greeley Home!** This powerful urban ministry sends young people into the streets of Denver, armed with their faith and a passion to share it with everyone they meet. Starting this fall, they will be coming to the **Julia Greeley Home** on Friday nights to have dinner and bring their love for Christ to the residents by enjoying a great meal, laughing together, and opening up meaningful conversations that build bridges between people.

A Calendar of Anniversaries ►

- Jan. 23: Unveiling of Vivian Imbruglia's Con (2016).
- Feb. 24: **Julia** received into the Secular Franciscans as Sr. Elizabeth (1901).
- Mar. 28: "In Secret Service..." published (2012).
- Apr. 5: Sr. Prudence Allen told an Archbishop's lecture audience **Julia Greeley** should be canonized (2011).
- Jun. 7: **Julia** died (1918).
- Jun. 26: **Julia** joined Catholic Church (1880).
- Jul. 30; Guild welcomed to Curé d'Ars Parish (2016)
- Aug. 1: First meeting of **JG** Guild (2011).
- Aug. 2: **Julia** annually gained Portiuncula Indulgences at St. Elizabeth Church.
- Aug. 6: Archbishop Aquila asked for permission to open the Cause (2016).
- Nov. 17: **Julia's** nameday as Secular Franciscan (Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary)
- Nov. 17: First issue of Lil' Red Wagon (2014)

Volunteer Possibilities ► The Guild really could use help in accomplishing its mission. Here are some things volunteers could do to help **Julia's** Cause, when it is opened.

Someone could work at nominating **Julia Greeley** for the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame <<http://www.cogreatwomen.org>>

Someone could work at replacing, where possible, postal addresses with email addresses, thereby reducing our mailing costs.

Someone could translate our web site and other literature into Spanish

Someone could design and print cards, fliers, leaflets, etc.

Someone could volunteer to greet people at Guild events.

Someone could plan and work at increasing our paid Membership.

Someone could work at finding new vendors for our book.

Someone could help keep our book vendors supplied.

Someone could think of their own ways to make **Julia** better known.

Someone could work at growing our mailing list.

Book Vendors ►

Besides the Guild's own web site at www.juliagreeley.org and the Capuchins' site at www.capuchins.org, one can also find the book on sale at the following locations:

- Archdiocesan Black Catholic Ministry Office
- The Book Bar, Tennyson St., Denver
- Cabrini Shrine, Golden
- Capuchin Provincial Offices, Denver
- Curé d'Ars Parish Office, Denver
- Gerkens Religious Goods, Denver
- John Ergers Religious Goods, Denver
- Josephite Pastoral Center, Baltimore
- Thomas More Parish Gift Shop, Centennial

Best Deal Is With Our Vendors ►

A friend of the Capuchins asked to borrow *In Secret Service* at a Colorado library and was told it wouldn't be possible, as the book is rare and

out of date. So he went to Amazon and bought a used copy for over \$70.

Our own research showed nine used book dealers offering copies of the book. Two were for \$19.93, and the others for \$27.54, \$27.55, \$30.10, \$31.02, \$58.44, \$58.60, and \$58.95, for an average of \$36.90.

The book is not out-of-print! It sells for \$19.95 at our venues.

Put on Your Thinkin' Cap ► It is now only 20 months 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.

Coming Meetings ► All Guild Members and other Friend of **Julia** are invited to our planning meetings at the Curé D'Ars pastoral center, 4701 Martin Luther King Blvd. Next meetings: Nov. 17, 2016, and Jan. 19, 2017.

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 in writing to the Guild. Having these on file will one day enable archdiocesan authorities to know there is a real interest in her cause.

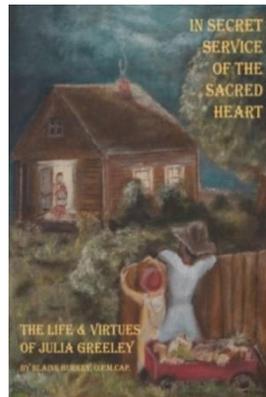
Information ► For more on **Julia** and her fame, visit the Guild's web site at <http://www.juliagreeley.org>. View also the archdiocese's video of "Julia Greeley: Our Model of Mercy" at <https://vimeo.com/151101683>

To Contact the Guild ►

Julia Greeley Guild
c/o Curé d'Ars Parish
4701 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Denver CO 80207
(303) 558-6685
juliagreeleyguild@gmail.com

Guild Officers ►

Mary Leising, President
Kevin Knight, Secretary



Linda Chase, Treasurer
Fr. Simon Kalonga , Pastor
Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., Consultant

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

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>

Friends of Julia

On our mailing lists – 10.14.16

388

Guild Members

Dues paying – 10.14.2016

17

Appendix

Servant of God Julia Greeley and the Year of Mercy

by Martha Reichert, President of ENDOW

My purpose today is to examine the life of Julia Greeley and to relate it to this great Year of Mercy. What a blessing it is for me to do so. Most of this is based on information that was expertly archives by Capuchin Franciscan Fr. Blaine Burkey. Father has taken great pains to bring together everything that is presently known about JG. I should note that he has become a personal friend and someone I admire very much.

Let me begin by reading some excerpts from a lengthy obituary of Julia that better summarizes parts of her life and her character than I can. This is from a very early issue of the *Denver Catholic Register*, written by one of the most celebrated Catholic journalists of his day, Matthew Smith. The language of the day is evidenced in the many-tiered headline

Highest Honor Ever Paid to Dead Laic Here Goes to Negress. Miss Julia Greeley, a Former Slave, Most Wonderful Apostle of the Sacred Heart. Years of Heroic Piety Bring Old Colored Woman the Privilege of Dying on Her Loved Patron's Feast Day. Body Lies in State Five Hours Before Altar While Throngs Pay Her Honor.

The highest honor that has ever been paid to a Colorado Catholic layman immediately following death has been given within the last week to a negress, Julia Greeley, an aged woman who died in poverty in the Sacred Heart parish, but who is declared by the Jesuit Fathers of that church to have been the most zealous apostle of the Sacred Heart they have ever known. And she died on the feast of the Sacred Heart. Her end came unexpectedly. She received the full rites of the Church. The time of her death, considering the work she did in life, makes it look as if the very finger of God was present.

She has the distinction of being the only Catholic layman in the history of Denver whose dead body lay in state in a Catholic church. From 3 until 8 o'clock on Sunday, her remains reposed in Loyola chapel, where they were viewed by a constant stream of people. There had been no great write-ups in the daily papers. How in the world all the people learned of her death and of the fact that she was to lie in state is astonishing. The fact that the news spread so quickly, without the assistance of the printed word, is proof of the great love which the Denver public had for this quaint and saintly old character.

Her charity was so great that only God knows its extent. She was constantly visiting the poor and giving them assistance from her own slender means. When she found their needs so great that she could not help them with her own goods, she begged for them.

Her charity was as delicate as it was great. She realized that white people, no matter how poor, might feel sensitive in receiving assistance from an old colored woman, so she went at night to their homes to deliver the goods she had begged,

in order to keep the neighbors from seeing her. She had even been seen going through the streets at night with a mattress on her back. Many times she was seen carrying coal and groceries. Yet she was so poor herself that the city charity department had been furnishing her with fuel and groceries.

Her life reads like that of a canonized saint. (Was this prophetic of Msgr. Smith?) She was somewhere between 76 and 80 years old and was born in slavery, having been freed in the Civil War. She did not remember a great deal about her earlier life, but she lived at one time in Wisconsin. She was brought West from St. Louis by Mrs. Dickerson, a widow, a member of the family that led the social life of St. Louis. Mrs. Dickerson married Governor Gilpin, the pioneer Governor of Colorado. Mrs. Dickerson was a devout Catholic, and it was due to her influence, under God, that Julia Greeley became a Catholic.

Julia Greeley was born into slavery sometime between 1833 and 1848. She did not know her own age. She had no given last name and knew her parents as only George and Cerilda. She had only one eye, having lost the other because of a beating by her slave owner. She owned no property. She had no husband. She earned around \$120 per year – the equivalent of less than \$3,000 per year in today's dollars. She spent her days in western cities like Denver CO, Laramie WY, and Cimarron NM serving wealthy whites. Her mornings and evenings, and often her nights, were spent begging on behalf of the poor, distributing the proceeds to them. She loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it is beautiful to think of a woman who by her own admission could barely read tirelessly distributing pamphlets promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart.

All of this is evidence of a beautiful life. All of this is evidence of a Saintly life. But what is so striking to me, particularly now, are the connections between Julia and this great Year of Mercy. I want to draw out three of these. First, as I'm sure you all know, in the United States the Year of Mercy has been marked by racial tensions and even violence. Some of this violence surfaced, ironically, in Missouri, where Julia was probably born. Being a border state between the north and the south puts Missouri at the heart of this country's racial tensions. I am



speaking of the unrest in Ferguson and the protest at the University of Missouri.

In light of this, consider how beautiful is the Mercy shown by Julia Greeley to her white counterparts during her life. Julia is not an icon of the civil rights movement. Indeed, she lived long before it. Rather, she draws our attention to something much more powerful and much deeper than “civil rights.” She speaks to us of the enduring power of Mercy. Here we have an impoverished black woman who joyfully gave her widow's mite to minister to the poor whites of her time. This is Christ's Mercy from black to white in an almost unbelievable way. It is an example to us of the loving of would-be enemies – of love and mercy shown to the members of a formerly enslaving race by a former slave.

Julia loved Sacred Heart parish in Denver. In fact, back in the day, churches used to rent pews and Julia used some of her paltry salary to rent the front left pew at Sacred Heart. Today, a few blocks from JG's beloved Sacred Heart church in Denver stands a 450 bed homeless shelter. If you stand at the front doors of the shelter, one

can almost make out the steeple of Sacred Heart church. I had the privilege of being a volunteer at that shelter for 4 years. Every Monday night I would invite women at the shelter to experience the teachings of the Catholic Church, with a special emphasis on the nature and dignity of women.

One night in the winter of 2014 I met a woman named Carrie. Carrie had been beaten by her boyfriend who proceeded to drop her, unconscious, in the parking lot of the shelter.

By the time Carrie came to class one Monday evening, she was on the road to recovery in body and soul. She described to me something she had done the prior week. Carrie drove to her former abusive boyfriend's apartment. When she knocked on his door a woman with a black eye answered – obviously the cycle of abuse continued – Carrie's boyfriend came to the door. I'll never forget the following words she said to someone who almost took her life. Carrie said, "You have changed me forever. I will always be afraid of the dark because that's when you used to beat me. But I want you to know that I forgive you." Then she got in her car and drove away a free woman, because she freely chose to be merciful to her enemy. I often think how the spirit of JG is alive and well in Denver when I think of women like Carrie.

The second connection between Julia Greeley and the Year of Mercy has to do with the way in which Julia went about showing mercy. Not only did Julia minister to whites, but she did it in the dead of night when no one was looking so as not to wound their pride! I love this in particular, because it highlights a particular characteristic of Julia Greeley – namely her feminine genius. I head an organization called ENDOW, which is dedicated to the recovery of a proper understanding of the nature and dignity of women. My organization frequently speaks of the "feminine genius" – a particular

manifestation of which is mercy! Think, then, of Julia's very feminine genius in ministering to whites in particular. She understood that her ministry would be less beautiful if the unfortunate pride of her white counterparts was wounded by it. She responded in that particularly feminine, and particularly merciful, way. She ministered quietly, and anonymously. How truly beautiful. This is a mercy on top of a mercy!

This particular mode of mercy reminds me of Edna, another beautiful soul I met at the homeless shelter. Edna exemplified the feminine genius in her ability to be the spiritual mama to many lost children- young and old- on the streets of Denver.

One particularly frigid evening in February, Edna took her food stamps, left the shelter at night because she was hungry and headed to the local convenience store down the street. She came across a homeless person slumped over near the entryway of the food store. She noticed the man and thought how cold he must be sleeping outside on this frigid night. Edna bent over and asked the man, "How long has it been since you've had a sandwich?" The reply was, "It's been a while."

"Come with me." Edna said. The homeless woman bought the homeless man a sandwich with her food stamps and walked home with an empty stomach but a heart full of love and mercy. The spirit of Julia Greeley lives on in Denver.

Third, I want to try to make what is perhaps a tenuous connection between Julia and the Year of Mercy. Julia Greeley was received into the Secular Franciscan Order on February 24, 1901. She was, very fittingly and not surprisingly, attracted to the humble Saint Francis of Assisi. Now, can you think of the connection? Who else do we know that is attracted to the man of Assisi, and what is his connection to the Year of Mercy? I think we all know the answer!

St. Francis said "The Lord himself led me among the lepers and used mercy with them." Recently, Father Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M.Cap., Preacher to the Papal Household, commented on this. He said that "Mercy was the first fruit of St. Francis drawing close to the Lord."



He went on to say, “There have been some (for instance, in times close to us, Simone Weil) who came to Christ from love of the poor and there have been others that have come to the poor from the love of Christ. St. Francis belongs to the latter. But this reflects the profound order that exists between works and grace. St. Francis first experienced God’s mercy to him, mercy as a free gift, and it is this that spurred him and gave him the strength to have mercy for the leper and the poor.”

From what I know of Julia Greeley, she is particularly Franciscan in that she was herself extremely poor, and yet ministered to the poor from her poverty. Thus, she not only came to the poor because of love for Christ, but as a poor black woman herself she loved the poor deeply and thus came to Christ from this love as well.

This calls to mind the words of our newly canonized sister in Christ, St. Teresa of Calcutta. If you have not watched this mighty woman’s 1979 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, it is 19 minutes of your life you will never regret. In this speech, St. Teresa sums up the call that Julia responded so well to, the call that each one of us should hear from Jesus every day. St. Teresa looked at the crowd that included the King of Norway among other dignitaries and challenged each of them. She gives the same challenge to you and me today.

St. Teresa looked at the people and said, “Be somebody to somebody.” This is what I take away from the example of Julia Greeley. Julia did not wait for someone else who was wiser or wealthier or more beautiful or more educated – she was somebody to somebody every day. That’s the memory of Julia Greeley that lives on in the streets of Denver, CO.

I want to read the following passage from the Gospel of Matthew, which epitomizes Julia and epitomizes mercy.

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.

They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.

When in Denver, you can visit the grave of Julia Greeley. It is a bit hard to find at Mount Olivet cemetery, but one must assume that Julia would have wanted it that way. It is a borrowed grave with a simple headstone sunk into the ground. Julia had put aside some money to pay for her own burial expenses and a burial plot. However, before she needed her place of rest, she gave her burial plot away to a deceased pauper, known as Uncle Ambrose. When Julia heard that his remains were headed for the potter’s field, she insisted that he be buried in her plot. Julia gave everything she had.

In conclusion, I would like to read from a document you all are very familiar with, the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Year of Mercy:

Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever, despite our sinfulness. At times we are called to gaze ever more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives.

Julia loved and lived a beautiful life. She is remembered not because of great deeds but because of small deeds done with her whole heart. May each of us embrace the mercy of God as this poor, black former slave woman did a century ago as she walked the streets of Denver, CO.

