



# **Lil' Red Wagon**

**of the Servant of God Julia Greeley**

**official newsletter of  
The Julia Greeley Guild  
a ministry of  
the Cathedral Basilica of the  
Immaculate Conception, Denver**

**Twenty-Fourth Issue 8-1-2020**

**Nineth Anniversary of the  
Founding of the Guild**

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## **We Need Julia Greeley, Denver's Saint in the Making ♥**

By Dr. R. Jared Staudt

Almost exactly a hundred years ago, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus 1918, a woman, a former slave, died in Denver. This apostle of the Sacred Heart, spreading devotion across the city, was the first lay Catholic to lie in state as hundreds visited her body to honor her works of charity. Friends had to help bury her, because she had given away her burial plot to a poor man. This woman is now on her way to

becoming a canonized saint, with the first steps of the process complete and sent to the Vatican. I hope you know already her, but, if you don't, it's a good time to meet Servant of God Julia Greeley! She is now buried in the Cathedral so that we can venerate her relics.

Julia has a compelling and deeply moving story. Born a slave in Missouri, she lost her vision in one eye when her mother was being whipped for caring for young Julia while she was sick, rather than working in the fields. After gaining her freedom she worked as a cook and nanny before coming to Denver about 1878. Shortly after her arrival and through the witness of her employer, Julia Gilpin, she became a Catholic. And not only that, she entered the Third Order Franciscans, became a key parishioner of Sacred Heart parish and the main proponent of its devotion to Jesus' heart, especially by bringing badges and pamphlets to every firehouse in Denver each first Friday of the month, and a key fixture of the newly established Catholic community (this was the time of Bishop Machebeuf, Mother Cabrini's work, and the martyrdom of Fr. Leo Heinrichs). Most importantly, she became known as an "angel of charity," and truly beloved to the city of Denver by Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Julia certainly experienced discrimination, especially since she lived at a time when the KKK was rising to ascendancy in Denver politics. Even in the Church, she occasionally experienced derogatory comments and some complaints about her prominent pew in the front row of Sacred Heart Church. Because of that, she provides an even more powerful image of God's grace: a former slave, with face disfigured with almost no money of her own, traveled the streets of Denver at night and served needy white people! She didn't leave us any

written treatises on the spiritual life, but her life itself serves as an icon of holiness. She shows us the meaning of peace. Her actions teach us what charity and true forgiveness look like. She could not evaporate racial discrimination, but she surely transcended it. Clergy, police, firefighters, and ordinary people all gave her money and goods to disperse amongst Denver's poorest.

We need Julia's witness right now. She has a lot to teach us about living as a Catholic in the modern city with love and respect for everyone in need. Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., a local Capuchin friar, has done much to promote Julia's cause for canonization. His recent pamphlet sized book, *An Hour with Julia Greeley* (Liguorian Publications, 2020), provides an excellent brief and accessible overview of Julia's life and witness. Although written before recent events, Fr. Burkey is clear on how Julia can guide us now: "Whatever was thrown at her, Julia kept her good eye on her lover nailed to a cross and chose to follow his lead in not fighting back, while sharing his love to all. Thus in a world, where so much racial vitriol still abounds, Julia gives all a sterling example of respecting the dignity of all our brothers and sisters." Julia shows that charity, more than anything else, can change hearts and transform the world through personal encounter.

Fr. Burkey has a longer work on Julia's life that gathers together the testimony of those who knew her. *In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart: Remembering the Life and Virtues of Denver's Angel of Charity, Julia Greeley, O.F.S.* (Julia Greeley Guild, 2012) provides a wealth of information and moving anecdotes. She had an infectious sense of humor and loved children, giving them presents, taking them on trips through the city, and organizing wholesome dances for girls (including providing dresses when they needed them). Her saintliness can be



seen in her extreme generosity, wearing rags and fasting while giving all that she had to others: "Poor, old, alone, far from her native home, Julia Greeley did not ask charity or sympathy; she gave both in unstinted measure, and according to her giving she received the good will of those whose lives touched hers" (6). Pulling her red wagon around at night, "she had even been seen going thru the streets at night with a mattress on her back. Many and many a times when was seen carrying coal and groceries" (11). Her death on the feast of the Sacred Heart summarized her life: "This surely was one of the secrets of her own spirituality: to place all of her day's activities into the secret service of the Sacred Heart" (21).

For more information on Julia's life and cause for canonization, please visit the Julia Greeley Guild's website: <http://juliagreeley.org/>. This is also where you can buy Fr. Burkey's book. Julia's presence in our Archdiocese is a huge blessing for the Church. Those she served would call her "Aunt Julia." It would be wonderful if we could continue this expression. We certainly could use an aunt.

*(Reprinted from Denver Catholic. June 21, 2020, p. 19. Dr. Staudt was the censor librorum for "In Secret Service" in 2012.)*

## Spreading the GoodNews♥

At the invitation of Dr. Tom Jensen, Guild President Mary Leiring spoke to a ZOOM meeting of the Denver Guild of the Catholic Medical Association on June 16, on her experience as a Black American in accessing the health care system. While her own experience with Kaiser Permanente has been a blessed one, she admitted that other Black persons were not so fortunate due to lack of insurance and fears that their problems would not be understood and treated properly. A video about Julia was shown, and Mary told the doctors that Greeley was known for attending to the needs of others and should inspire today's Christians to be attuned to the health care needs of those they meet, helping them access the health care system.

*[Editorial comment: It probably should be mentioned here that Julia Greeley was admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital and treated by Dr. Martin Currigan. In the hospital records, no mention was made of diagnosis, race, or payment. Over 50 years later, Mrs. Honeywell wrote (ISS p. 60): "I think Julia was first black person admitted to St. Joe's Hospital. Was it Fr. McDonnell or Fr. Lonergan who got her in?"]*

Back on Nov. 2, Srs. Marion Weinsapfel and Mary Kay Cottonstette gave a presentation on Julia at St. Joan of Arc parish in Arvada to a group of parishioners of St. Gianna Berreta Molla Parish of Green Valley Ranch.

We only recently came across a beautiful 10-minute podcast, "Julia Greeley: American Catholic History" made by Tom and Noëlle Crowe in 2017 and posted at <https://www.sqpn.com/podcasts/american-catholic-history/> Scroll down to "Search for Show" (on right) and enter *Julia Greeley*.



## Think About It ♥

*Jesus's 11<sup>th</sup> Promise to St. Margaret Mary:* "Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart never to be blotted out."

*Sacred Heart Church & School Monitor:* "Old 'colored' Julia...died a beautiful death on the Feast of the Sacred Heart—a fitting close to forty years of untiring labor as an apostle of the Sacred Heart."



## Greeley Canoe Masses ♥

Intentions placed in Julia's Canoe, either by email or other forms of submission, are listed in a digital file constantly updated by Brigid Demko. In conjunction with the Guild, the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception is celebrating a series of monthly

Masses for all in Julia's Canoe. Upcoming Masses will be on:

**Thu., August 20, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Sun., September 13, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Thu., October 15, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Thu., November 12, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Thu., December 17, 5:30 p.m.**

Place yourself and your intentions in Julia's Canoe at [juliagreeleyscanoe@gmail.com](mailto:juliagreeleyscanoe@gmail.com)

## **NEW Julia Uniforms**

### **For Public Meetings ♥**

Handmade "Julia Greeley Stoles" for use at public guild affairs are now available. Designed for use over red blouses or shirts at public meetings the over-the-shoulder stoles were designed and fabricated by Patricia Taylor. The stole has an emblem of the Sacred Heart on the front side and one of a little red wagon on the back. There are two models, one with red trim, and the other with black trim.

### **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 enable the Cause to show the power of her intercession.

### **Guild Forebearers♥**

*honored posthumously*

**Msgr. Matthew Smith**  
**Agnes Rooney Urquhart**  
**Marjorie Ann Urquhart Simpson**  
**Fr. Eugene Murphy, S.J.**  
**Eleanor Pavella Castellan**  
**Theodora O'Donnell Arnold**  
**Fr. Pacificus Kennedy, O.F.M.**

## **Honorary Life Members ♥**

*honored while with us*

**Fr. Marcus Medrano**  
**Mary Frances O'Sullivan**  
**Sr. Mary Prudence Allen, R.S.M.**  
**Fr. Gene Emrisek, O.F.M.Cap.**  
**Linda Marie Skidmore Chase**

## **Deceased 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**  
**Fr. Marcus Medrano**

## **Official Guild Statistics ♥**

### **Friends of Julia**

*On our mailing lists – 7-25-2020*

**983**

*which includes*

### **Guild Members**

*Dues paying –07-25-2020*

**191**

## **Paid Memberships ♥**

Help us build our **paid** membership by joining the **Julia Greeley Guild** and inviting others to join. A membership application form can be found and printed at our web site, <http://www.juliagreeley.org/guild.html>  
**Dues are \$20 a year or \$50 for three years. Married couples are enrolled for a single fee.** All checks sent to the Guild should be made payable to "Cathedral Basilica," with the notation on the memo line "for Julia Greeley Guild"



## More Information ♥

**Guild official web site:**

<http://www.juliagreeley.org>.

**“Julia Greeley: Our Model of Mercy”**

<https://vimeo.com/151101683>

**PowerPoint by Mary Leisring**

<https://youtu.be/RjK4SdAOP41>

## Guild Contacts ♥

**Julia Greeley Guild**

c/o Cathedral Basilica

1535 N. Logan St.

Denver CO 80203-1913

[juliagreeleyguild@gmail.com](mailto:juliagreeleyguild@gmail.com)

(303) 558-6685

[www.juliagreeley.org](http://www.juliagreeley.org)

## Guild Officers ♥

Mary Leisring, President & Treasurer

Kevin Knight, Secretary

Fr. Ron Cattany, Pastor

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

## Other Guild Officers ♥

Frankie Rachell-Bruce, phone secretary

Sharon Doerflinger, membership secretary

Dustin Caldwell, recording secretary

Minnie Cassell, associate secretary

Essy Goffinett, associate secretary

Ria de Dios, associate secretary

## Wagoneers ♥

Fr. Blaine Burkey, pro tem editor; Mary

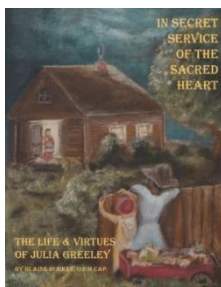
Leisring, president & circulation manager.



## Greeley Guild Galleria

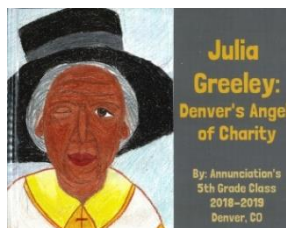
The Guild has a number of items available for purchase at its office at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, 1525 N. Logan St., Denver CO 80203-1913. A check made out to “Cathedral Basilica” in the amount of the price of the item(s) wanted and the name and address, phone number, and email address of the purchaser should be accompanied by the item number(s) and number of copies desired. Domestic shipping and sales tax will be paid for by the Guild. Quantity discounts and foreign shipping should be discussed ahead of time with the Guild at 720-352-4995.

Unless told otherwise, the Guild will subscribe free of charge all purchasers to *Julia’s Lil Red Wagon*, the Guild’s free newsletter you have in hand.



**Item JG-11 -- In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart: Remembering the Life and Virtues of Denver’s Angel of Charity, Julia Greeley, O.F.S.,** a 156-page book by Fr. Blaine Burkey,

O.F.M.Cap., bringing together everything of significance about Julia published between 1918 and 2012. -- \$20.00 a copy.



**Item JG-12 – Julia Greeley: Denver’s Angel of Charity,** a full-color children-illustrated 17-page book, produced by Annunciation grade

school’s fifth-grade class, now in its second printing. -- \$15.00 a copy.



**Item JG-13 – An Hour with Julia Greeley,** a 24-page pamphlet by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., provides an excellent brief and accessible overview of Julia’s life and witness. -- \$2.00 a copy



