



Lil' Red Wagon

of the Servant of God Julia Greeley

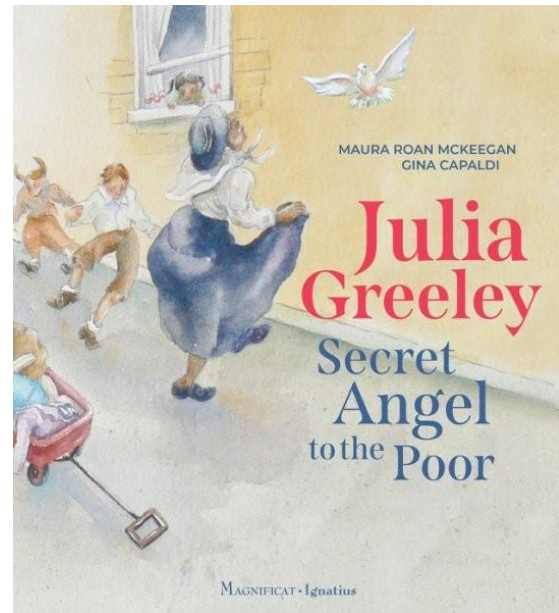
official newsletter of
The Julia Greeley Guild
 a ministry of
 the Cathedral Basilica of the
 Immaculate Conception, Denver
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Trio Meets to Plan the Writing of the Positio ♥

Postulator Waldery Hilgeman informed Vice Postulator David Uebbing on Sept. 13 that he and Dr. Cristiana Marinelli, hired last Nov. 11, 2021, to draft the *positio* for Julia's Cause, and Msgr. Maurizio Tagliaterri, appointed Feb. 16, 2022, by the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints to oversee the process on its behalf, hoped to meet during the week of Sept. 18-24 to lay plans for the actually beginning the process. If and when we hear what they agreed on, we'll pass it on.

The following review is reproduced with permission from the National Catholic Register's Blog Posting for Nov. 30, 2022. ♥

This Christmas, Introduce Your Family to Servant of God Julia Greeley (and Be Prepared for Miracles)



Book cover of 'Julia Greeley: Secret Angel of the Poor' (photo: Ignatius-Magnificat)

By Jean Torkelson

Maura Roan McKeegan's words, combined with Gina Capaldi's watercolors, tell the story of Servant of God Julia Greeley, the former slave who became 'Denver's Angel of Mercy.'

By all odds, the life of Julia Greeley should have been lost to history. Born into slavery in the 1840s, she came into the world with no last name and few prospects, and by all accounts, was poor all her life. Yet today she qualifies as a true heroic figure — the kind of real-life hero that parents would be eager to introduce to their kids.



Now, the accomplished essayist and writer of children's books, Maura Roan McKeegan, has done just that. Her latest

picture book, [*Julia Greeley: Secret Angel to the Poor*](#) (Ignatius-Magnificat, 2022) recounts the true — and truly heroic — story of a woman who overcame cruel racial oppression, physical disabilities and lifelong poverty to become celebrated even in her lifetime as “Denver’s Angel of Charity.” As befits a hero, her life story has not only endured but has grown stronger with time: Today, a century after her death in 1918, she holds the title Servant of God, and her cause for beatification and canonization is moving forward in Rome.

Yet Julia’s life has been much of a secret to most Catholics, including McKeegan. In a recent interview, she recalled the moment a friend asked her to pray for a dying relative through the intercession of Julia Greeley.

“I thought to myself, ‘Who is Julia Greeley?’ I had never heard of her before.” When her friend’s dying relative made an unexpected and full recovery, Keegan’s writer’s instincts went on full alert. By then, the former elementary and middle school teacher was well into her next career as an author specializing in children’s books, and a frequent essayist for a number of publications that include *Catholic Digest*, *Catholic Exchange*, *Franciscan Magazine* and *The Imaginative Conservative*. She is also a homeschooling mom with four children, ages 8 to 18.

Intrigued by the stunning recovery, McKeegan sought out Julia’s definitive biography by Father Blaine Burkey, a Capuchin priest based in Denver who writes

extensively on historical matters. Father Blaine has combed Denver’s official records and contemporary accounts to write a meticulously documented account of Julia Greeley’s life, [*In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart*](#), now in its third edition.

“I ordered Father Blaine’s book, and the more I read, the more I loved Julia and the graces surrounding her story,” McKeegan says. “I was deeply moved by her authenticity and her single-mindedness, and her incredible capacity for love. The way she stayed united with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, especially when she was treated so terribly, was a tremendous inspiration to me.”

She saw Julia’s story as a natural for her specialty, which is to write picture books designed for children, which are also a compelling read for adults.

“I felt a calling on my heart,” she says. “Picture books are my passion.” Through picture books, she tells stories to spark a child’s intelligence and wonder, while drawing them to a deeper understanding of God’s eternal truths. What’s more, through “the unity of art and words” that a picture book offers, the whole family can share the experience of reading a book and be challenged and inspired to learn together.

McKeegan teamed up with the noted illustrator Gina Capaldi on the Julia Greeley project — it’s their third collaboration — and found they both had the same

reaction to her life story. McKeegan’s words, combined with Capaldi’s lively yet dreamlike watercolors, capture both the



sweetness and hardships of Julia's earthly struggles.

"Gina is such a gift. As soon as she was introduced to Julia, she was captivated by her story just like I was," says McKeegan. "The feelings she pours into her illustrations portray the playfulness and childlikeness of Julia's character, while at the same time capturing the emotional and spiritual depth of her story."

McKeegan draws her themes from a longstanding interest in theology, which led to graduate courses in theology at Franciscan University of Steubenville. Her first book, [*The End of the Fiery Sword*](#) (Emmaus Road, 2014) was the launch of a series of books that revealed the link between cherished events of the Old Testament, and how each one has come to fulfillment in the New (for example, how the promise of Adam and Eve is fulfilled through Jesus and Mary).

Her most recent book (2022), [*Seven Clues: A Catholic Treasure Hunt*](#) (Loyola Press, 2022), is a collaboration with the best-selling author, speaker and theologian Scott Hahn, and takes young readers on a playful and exciting journey of discovery that helps reveal the mysteries of the Eucharist.

As for Julia Greeley? The deeper McKeegan dived into Father Burke's book, the more intrigued she became: "I tried to

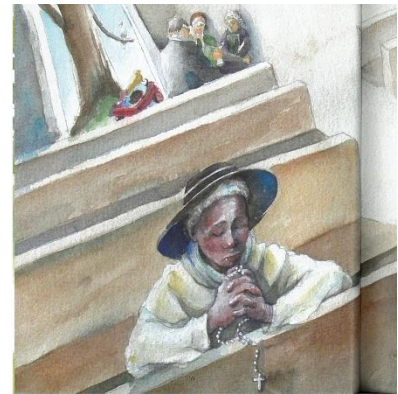


immerse myself in her world. There is such a tangible grace around her; she became a saint friend.

You're not just reading about somebody in the history books, she becomes a part of

your life. I felt a calling to write a children's book about her."

In fact, Julia's life story is a natural draw for kids. Despite her many crosses, Julia was known to break out in song as she worked. She loved to dance, and she boldly shared her faith with firefighters. She became known throughout Denver as the "angel" who often



worked in secret, assisting people even poorer than she. A Catholic convert and daily Mass goer, she also

faced the haughty racism of some members of her own parish. With her deft storyteller's touch, in a few words McKeegan turns that appalling lack of charity into a lesson of justice and mercy, finely told.

The key to writing meaningful, intelligent books for children? It helps to have a roster of editors and critics at home, McKeegan says, with a laugh.

"I need an audience in the age range, so my children are some of my best advisers on everything I write," she says. "They love picture books too, and we read hundreds of them a year." When one of Mom's books is in the works, the children are the first to read the early drafts; then, as they see the illustrations come in, they marvel at the artist's talent. When at last the published books arrive at the door, they open the box together and gather around to read the books aloud.

"Working on these books is a blessing and a joy for our whole family, from start to finish."

Julia's story — in essence, one person's triumph of good over evil — celebrates qualities that McKeegan agrees are not always valued today in children's entertainment.

"In the field of children's books there are weeds and wheat," McKeegan says, referencing the Gospel parable (Matthew 13:24-30). "You try to focus on the wheat, and let the good grow, and hopefully families will find the best books to give their children and try to contribute to the good."

Julia Greeley: Secret Angel to the Poor, a hardback 40-page picture book, is available at religious goods stores and on line from ignatius.com for \$14.39 plus shipping costs.

Makers of Julia's Red Box ♥

A recent *Denver Catholic* article on the Neitenbach family that made caskets for the 62 Sisters of Loretto who were moved from



Loretto Heights to Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Wheat Ridge, revealed that this was far from the first time Bryan and Luc Neitenbach "had been involved in a 'once-in-a-

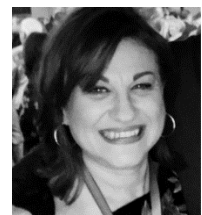
lifetime' project like this. The Neitenbachs were responsible for the construction of Servant of God Julia Greeley's reliquary box, which was solemnly placed in the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception downtown in 2018 [actually

2017]. This is certainly an interesting additional connection between the sisters and Julia, since the Servant of God was one of the only people allowed in the room as Mother Pancratia of the Sisters of Loretto was on her deathbed."

BlackCatholicHistory.com ♥

The Guild recently had the opportunity to help BlackCatholicHistory.com check the accuracy of its new enrichment programs on Julia Greeley for kindergarden-elementary and high school students.

Founded in 2013 by Kaye Crawford of Austin TX, a graduate of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans,



BlackCatholicHistory.com is an internationally taught enrichment program currently being used by more than 600 religion, history and literature teachers across the United States and in Uganda.

To learn how to become part of the BlackCatholicHistory.com family of schools, contact kayecrawford@blackcatholichistory.com

Julia in the Libraries ♥

The Guild has made no specific effort aimed at getting *In Secret Service* into libraries. A recent visit to Worldcat.org, however, showed the book has found its way into, not only the Denver Public Library, St. John Vianney Seminary Library, Regis University Library and St. Joseph Hospital Library, but also public libraries in Greeley and Colorado Springs, and libraries at Conception (MO) Seminary, the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Mt. St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, and Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus OH.. The little pamphlet, *A Hour with Julia Greeley*, travelled even farther: to

West Virginia University at Parkersburg and the University of Marburg, Germany.

If your library is not listed, maybe you could suggest a new acquisition

Julia Presentations♥

- ♥ American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Denver, Nov. 19, 2022, “Julia Greeley, Denver’s Angel of Charity,” Dr. Alexia Williams.
- ♥ Diversity Week at Regis Jesuit High School, Feb. 14, 2023, Mary Leisring and Essy Goffinett.
- ♥ Howard University, Washington DC, ZOOM, date TBD, Mary Leisring
- ♥ Julia Greeley Committee at St. Matthew the Apostle Church, Gahanna OH, ZOOM, date TBD, Mary Leisring.

Spring Bus Pilgrimage ♥

The events office at the Capuchin friars’ provincial headquarters in LoHi is offering a Lenten bus pilgrimage led by Capuchin Father Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., to some 20 or more sites connected with the life and death of Julia Greeley. The pilgrimage is scheduled for the morning and afternoon of Saturday, March 18, 2023. Seats on the bus are already being booked for \$100 a person. To reserve a seat, contact Gina Francis at 303-565-9476. Further details will be available closer to the event.

Favors Acknowledged ♥

I prayed through the intercession of Julia Greeley that a young patient (a mother with two small children) and very little family support would get the heart transplant that she desperately needed. Within a couple of months she received a heart transplant and was doing well. Praise the Lord! And Thank you Blessed Julia for your intercession.

--Margaret F.

I just wanted to let you know that I am in remission!!! Halllujah! Praise God! Thank you Julia Greeley for your intercessory prayers!

Ria visited me almost a year ago when I was first diagnosed. She brought me a Julia prayer card and told me that WHEN I was healed that I should let her know so that it could be documented how Miss Julia works and intercedes for us. So I have called Ria and informed her of this. She is so elated as I am!

--Veronica C.



Julia’s Canoe Masses ♥

Intentions placed in Julia’s Canoe, either by email or other forms of submission, are listed in a digital file constantly updated. In conjunction with the Guild, the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception celebrates monthly Masses for all in Julia’s Canoe.

These are on the First Fridays of the month. A member of the Guild leads a prayer for Julia’s intercession and the Litany of the Sacred Heart after the Mass near Julia’s tomb in the Sacred Heart Chapel. Upcoming Masses will be on:

Fri., January 6, 5:30 p.m.

Fri., February 3, 5:30 p.m.

Fri., March 3, 5:30 p.m.

Place yourself and your intentions in Julia’s Canoe at juliascanoe@gmail.com.

Welcome to Our Meetings ♥

All Guild Members and other Friends of Julia are welcome at our planning meetings. During the pandemic, we meet by ZOOM every Third Thursday of the month at 10:30 a.m. MT. The coming meetings in 2022 will be on Dec. 15, Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Mar. 16. If you have not previously been to a meeting, you will need to contact us at 720-352-4995 to obtain the meeting ID number and password. ZOOM meetings have allowed friends of Julia to join us from anywhere on the planet. We've already enjoyed having friends from Perrineville NJ, Austin TX, Duluth and Minneapolis MN, Jefferson City MO, Brooklyn NY, and LaVegas NV join the Colorado faithful.

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.

Our Officers ♥

Mary Leisring, President & Treasurer
Dustin Caldwell, Vice President
Kevin Knight, Secretary
Fr. Sam Morehead, Pastor
Fr. John James Arcidiacono, Guild Liaison to Cathedral Staff
Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., Consultant

Guild Contacts ♥

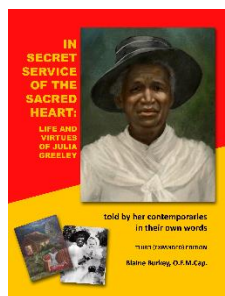
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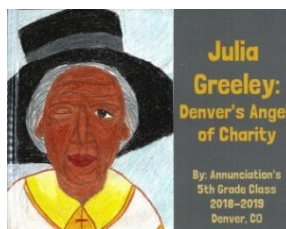
Greeley Guild Galleria

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 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-14 -- In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart: Remembering the Life and Virtues of Julia Greeley, 3rd edition, 168-page book by Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., bringing together everything of significance about Julia published between 1918 and 2021. -- \$22.00 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

