



## 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

**Thirty-eighth Issue 2-16-2023**  
**Black History Month**

### Marvelous Opportunity:

## Greeley Bus Pilgrimage ♥

The events office at the Capuchin friars' provincial headquarters in LoHi is sponsoring a Lenten bus pilgrimage led by Capuchin Fr. Blaine Burkey, O.F.M.Cap., to some 17 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. Limited seatings on the commercial tour bus are already being booked for \$100 a person. For further info, contact Gina Francis at 303-564-9476. Reserve your seat at <https://cpma.ejoinme.org/juliagreeley>

### Amazing Discovery:

## Possibly The First Sight of Her Love, The Sacred Heart ♥

We know Julia Greeley joined the Catholic Church in 1880 at Sacred Heart Church at 28<sup>th</sup> and Larimer in Denver. Whether she had ever been in a Catholic Church before that is another thing we really don't know for sure.

Quite possibly, however, that was where she first saw an image of the Sacred Heart, to whom she dedicated her life, **but it was not the statue now atop the vintage altar rered.**

Just this past month, Father Eric Zegeer, the parish's new administrator, reached the far end of a huge storage room as part of his already massive effort to deal with a century's accumulation of "stuff" in the parish offices.



There he beheld the remains of what once was a beautiful painting of the Sacred Heart.

It was providential previous pastors had not found the painting, since the importance of Julia in the parish's history and the painting's relation to her, would have not yet come to light, and it well might have been discarded on a trash heap.

The painting Father found was a ageworn canvas on a nine by four and a half foot wooden frame, the lower left side of which was in a charred condition; and six or seven square feet of the canvas was missing, though none of its precious image. With the help of a light behind it, numerous holes in the canvas can be seen.



Turned upright, the painting presents the beautiful image of a handsome man carrying a huge wooden cross and pointing to his heart, which is exposed after the manner of other traditional images of the Sacred Heart.



Use of adjustment possibilities on a modern computers afforded some idea of the possible magnificent colors of the original painting.



In a parish magazine from 1912, Father Eric also found a black and white photo of the painting.

The January 1912 issue of *The Monitor* also carried a three page article titled "The Fire. Sacred Heart Church," which began: "Sunday, Nov. 26, 1911, was the most eventful date in the thirty-two years history of the Sacred Heart Church. For on that day, it came very near going down in



history as a thing of the past”

At 3 a.m., one of the Jesuit priests was awakened by the ringing of the church bells. Looking towards the church, he saw it brightly illuminated. He and the brother sacristan rushed to the church and found it afire. Within 10 minutes Fire Chief Terry Owens, Assistant Fire Chief John F. Healy and three companies of brave firefighters were there, and quickly had the fire extinguished.

Damage to the contents of the church was extensive, but the building itself was saved.

The furnace, gas pipes, and electric wires were found to be entire and intact. It was found later the fire started in the church’s basement chapel, where it short circuited wires controlling the ringing of the church bells. “Or else,” the reporter added, “angel hands must have touched the bells to save the church. At all events they could not have caused the fire. So, all we can say is ‘an enemy hath done this’.”

The very morning of the fire, a Sunday, the parishioners found the building locked with a notice posted that Mass would be held in the auditorium of the parish school – now the Juan Diego Center.

Another three-page article told of the grand celebration had for the reopening of the church on Jan. 21, 1912. It ended by saying Fr. Edward Barry spoke of the wonderful things the church had accomplished in its first 32 years, adding, “It deserves a nobler end than to be reduced to smoke and ashes by the dastardly hand of the midnight ‘fire-bug’.”

Fr. Zegeer has offered the huge painting to our Guild, since it is a second-class relic. Julia probably never touched it with her hands, but we are morally certain she touched it very affectionately with her own damaged eyes.

There would seem to be no way the Guild can restore the painting, but hopefully we can somehow preserve it for future veneration, especially when Julia’s cause moves further along.

## **Cause Now Moving ♥**

Vice-Postulator David Uebbing recently received word from Rome that work has begun on writing the Positio for Julia’s Cause, and that in deciding what would go into each section of the work, those working on it realized they needed more background information on African American life and slavery in the U.S., especially Colorado. Work on supplying such information is already well afoot.

## **The Sacred Heart Fire and Julia’s Ministry to Firefighters ♥**

As to exactly what effect the 1911 fire might have had on Julia, especially with reference to her apostolic ministry to the firefighters, we really don’t know.

We do know there was a terrible fire in 1895 in which the city’s only black fire company was wiped out by the fire. They were from the nearest fire station to Sacred Heart, at Five Points. Latterday members of the company probably were among those saving Sacred Heart Church in 1911.

We also know that Chief Terry Owens (who became fire chief already in 1903) and Asst. Chief John Healey (who followed him as chief in 1912) were active at the 1911 fire, and both had well-known connections with Julia.

What we really don’t know is when Julia began her apostolic work with the firemen.

It could well be following the 1911 fire, but it also could also have been after the 1895 fire, or at some other time.

We do know, however, why she went to the firemen. At some unknown time, she told Owens that the leaflets of the Apostleship of Prayer were not tickets to Sacred Heart parish raffles, but tickets to heaven.



**Black History Month Special:**

**Centenary of Fr. Stephen ♥**

This month we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the Servant of God Stephen Eckert. He was a contemporary of Julia Greeley. And while they probably never met in this life, we can imagine Julia welcomed him at the pearly gates on Feb. 16, 1923, just four years after her own passing.

Fr. Stephen was not a black man; but he is known to history as the servant and apostle of African Americans.

Born in Canada, Stephen joined the American Capuchins, was ordained in 1896, and quickly sent to Yonkers NY, where he fell in love with African Americans and felt a desire to minister to their spiritual needs, something rarely heard of in America at the time.

In 1903 he asked to be assigned as a missionary among the Blacks in the South. Instead he was named the first resident pastor of St. Benedict the Moor parish in Milwaukee, in the heart of an African American community.

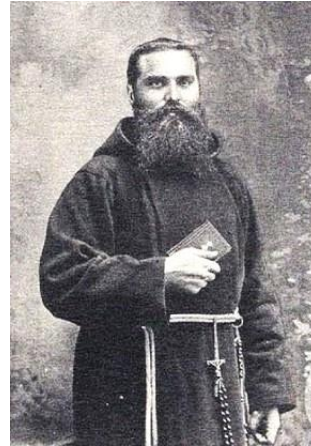
There he heroically labored among the city's Black underclass. He didn't ask whether they were Catholic. He simply gave them Jesus's love.

His missionary pastoral approach was unique. Within two months, he had contacted 450 people, going from house to house. No one had ever dared do as much. Thus, when he opened a school, he immediately gathered about 40 children, half of whom lived far away."

He was one of the first U.S. Catholic priests to dedicate all of his energy to the service of "the colored race.

Active in the local community, Eckert fought for basic human rights and equality, something far ahead of his time. "To do something for the Blacks," he said, "we must first convert the Whites to their cause."

After a preaching trip to raise funds for his work with the Blacks, Stephen



contracted pneumonia and died at the age of 53. He is buried on the grounds of St. Benedict's, where his simple tombstone reads, "The Apostle and Champion of the Colored Race."

Stephen's great holiness and ministry prompted the archdiocese to begin his cause for canonization, which was active until 1985, but is not likely to go forward in the near future. The Black Catholic community in Milwaukee is presently more interested in the cause of Ven. Augustus Tolton, the first known African-American ordained a priest; and the literally poor Capuchins, seeing their own Blessed Solanus Casey's superior fame for sanctity, have prioritized his cause to receive their support.

An interesting back story to all this: Blessed Solanus lived and worked with Stephen in Yonkers, and was so impressed with his holiness that he worked to promote Stephen's cause. He personally testified at the archdiocesan tribunal, and he drove from Detroit with three other friars to witness the unveiling of the large marble statue that marks Stephen's grave.

## Favors Received ♥

The first time I heard about Julia Greeley was when a friend requested prayers for his sister-in-law, who was critically ill.

*"Could you please pray for my sister-in-law?" my friend wrote. "She is in the hospital, she is in an induced coma with liver failure. They are talking about removing her life support and they are doubtful she will survive. ...It was very sudden...she thought she was going in for gall bladder surgery when the infection spread to her pancreas and liver. We are praying for the intercession of Julia Greeley."*

"Who is Julia Greeley? I thought to myself. I looked her up and was immediately captivated by her story.

Soon after, I received an update from my friend with miraculous news about his sister-in-law.

*"It's been an amazing couple of days," he wrote. "Saturday morning I was just going online to figure out flights for what I imagined would be a Tuesday/Wednesday funeral when I got the news that her numbers had improved slightly. That afternoon she was opening her eyes and they reduced her sedation. Sunday she was able to sit up for a bit and was responding to questions. She is still having problems with her liver function and is still on dialysis--so it may still be a long haul before she is well, but we are not thinking about funerals anymore!"*

The medical team had been talking about taking her off life support, but then a new doctor came in and wanted to try one last thing, and she began to improve. Days later, she was sent home, where she continued to improve. Several years have passed since her hospitalization, and her health has remained stable.

This miracle was the beginning of my friendship with Julia Greeley, whose intercession I now ask daily, for many

different intentions. She always comes through!

--Maura M.

## Julia Presentations ♥

- ♥ Diversity Week at Regis Jesuit High School, Feb. 14, 2023, Mary Leisring and Essy Goffinett.
- ♥ Knights & Ladies of St. Peter Claver, Smtar NC, ZOOM meeting, Feb. 26, Mary Leisring
- ♥ 4<sup>th</sup> grade class, Nativity Faith and Reason Catholic School, Broomfield CO, March date TBD
- ♥ 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.



## 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., March 3, 5:30 p.m.  
Fri., April 7, 5:30 p.m.  
Fri., May 5, 5:30 p.m.  
Fri., June 2, 5:30 p.m.

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

## Welcome to Our Meetings ♥

All Guild Members and other Friends of Julia are welcome at our planning meetings. We meet by ZOOM every Third Thursday of the month at 10:30 a.m. MT. The coming meetings in 2023 will be on Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 20, May 18. 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.

## 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 ♥

**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)



## Greeley Guild Galleria

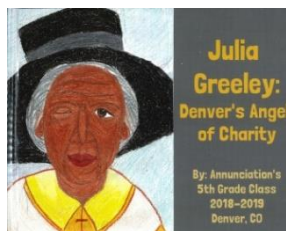
The Guild has a number of items available for purchase at its office at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, 1525 N. Logan St., Denver CO 80203-1913. A check made out to "Cathedral Basilica" in the amount of the price of the item(s) wanted and the name and address, phone number, and email 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

