

Morning Prayer

The Fifth Saturday of Easter

Saturday, May 8, 2021

Dame Julian of Norwich, *Mystic and Theologian, c.1417*

Psalms Appointed

Psalms 75 & 76

Readings

A period of silence will follow each reading.

First Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 19:1-8,18-22

A Reading from the book of Wisdom.

The ungodly were assailed to the end by pitiless anger, for God knew in advance even their future actions: how, though they themselves had permitted your people to depart and hastily sent them out, they would change their minds and pursue them. For while they were still engaged in mourning, and were lamenting at the graves of their dead, they reached another foolish decision, and pursued as fugitives those whom they had begged and compelled to leave. For the fate they deserved drew them on to this end, and made them forget what had happened, in order that they might fill up the punishment that their torments still lacked, and that your people might experience an incredible journey, but they themselves might meet a strange death. For the whole creation in its nature was fashioned anew, complying with your commands, so that your children might be kept unharmed. The cloud was seen overshadowing the camp, and dry land emerging where water had stood before, an unhindered way out of the Red Sea, and a grassy plain out of the raging waves, where those protected by your hand passed through as one nation, after gazing on marvelous wonders. For the elements changed place with one another, as on a harp the notes vary the nature of the rhythm, while each note remains the same. This may be clearly inferred from the sight of what took place. For land animals were transformed into water creatures, and creatures that swim moved over to the land. Fire even in water retained its normal power, and water forgot its fire-quenishing nature. Flames, on the contrary, failed to consume the flesh of perishable creatures that walked among them, nor did they melt the crystalline, quick-melting kind of heavenly food. For in everything, O Lord, you have exalted and glorified your people, and you have not neglected to help them at all times and in all places.

Gospel Reading

Luke 9:1-17

A Reading from Luke.

Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere. Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had

appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. Herod said, “John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he tried to see him. On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured. The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.” But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” They did so and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

A Reading from The Church Fathers

Please remain seated.

Julian of Norwich Mystic and Theologian, c.1417

Collect of the Day

The Officiant then says

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Dame Julian

Triune God, Father and Mother to us all, who showed your servant Julian revelations of your nurturing and sustaining love: Move our hearts, like hers, to seek you above all things, for in giving us yourself you give us all. *Amen.*

Prayers of the People

A Prayer in Time of Great Sickness and Mortality

O most mighty and merciful God, in this time of grievous sickness, we flee unto thee for succor. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; prosper the means made use of for their cure; and grant that, perceiving how frail and uncertain our life is, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leadeth to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Oppressed

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal

protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Julian of Norwich, Mystic and Theologian, c.1417

Of Julian's early life we know little, only the probable date of her birth (1342). Her own writings in her Revelations of Divine Love are concerned only with her visions, or "showings," that she experienced when she was thirty years old rather than with the details of her biography.

Julian had been gravely ill and was given last rites. Suddenly, on the seventh day, all pain left her, and she had fifteen visions of Christ's Passion. These brought her great peace and joy. "From that time I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord's meaning," she wrote, "and fifteen years after I was answered in spiritual understanding: 'Would you learn the Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well. Love was his meaning. Who showed it you? Love. What did he show you? Love. Why did he show it? For Love.'"

Julian had long desired three gifts from God: "the mind of his passion, bodily sickness in youth, and three wounds—of contrition, of compassion, of will-full longing toward God." Her illness brought her the first two wounds, which then passed from her mind. The third, "will-full longing" (divinely inspired longing), never left her.

She became a recluse, an anchoress, at Norwich soon after her recovery from illness, living in a small dwelling attached to the parish church. Even in her lifetime, she was famed as a mystic and spiritual counselor and was frequently visited by clergy and lay persons, including the mystic Margery Kempe. Kempe says of Julian: "This anchoress was expert in knowledge of our Lord and could give good counsel. I spent much time with her talking of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Julian understood that God was both Father and Mother to us, and understood Christ as exemplifying this maternal face of God. "Thus Jesus Christ, who does good against evil, is our very Mother. We have our being in him, where the ground of motherhood begins ... As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother."

Julian's book is a tender and beautiful exposition of God's eternal and all-embracing love, showing how his charity toward human beings is exhibited in the Passion. Again and again Julian referred to Christ as "our courteous Lord." Many have found strength in the words that the Lord had given her: "I can make all things well; I will make all things well; I shall make all things well; and you can see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well."