

## Readings for Thursday, May 8, 2025

### Julian of Norwich – *Mystic and Theologian, c. 1417*

#### Psalm 27:1-9

- 1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh—  
my adversaries and foes—  
they shall stumble and fall.
- 3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.
- 4 One thing I asked of the Lord,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord,  
and to inquire in his temple.
- 5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.
- 6 Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.
- 7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!
- 8 ‘Come,’ my heart says, ‘seek his face!’  
Your face, Lord, do I seek.
- 9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.

Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!

## **Hebrews 10:19-24**

Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds,

## **John 4:21-26**

Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

## **Collect:**

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.**

## 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."