



## **Advent Daily Reflections** **December 23, 2024**

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### **Today's reading is from Julian of Norwich:**

And with the same mirth and joy he looked down to his right and brought to my mind the place where our Lady was standing during the time of his Passion; and he said, "Would you like to see her?" And I answered and said, 'Yes, my good Lord, thank you, if it is your will.' I had prayed for this repeatedly and I thought I would see her in bodily likeness, but I did not do so. And with these words Jesus showed me a spiritual vision of her; just as I had seen her low and humble before, he now showed her to me high, noble and glorious, and more pleasing to him than any other creature. And he wants it to be known that all those who rejoice in him should rejoice in her and in the joy that he has in her and she in him. And in these words that Jesus said, 'Would you like to see her?', it seemed to me I had the greatest pleasure that he could have given me, with the spiritual vision of her; for our Lord gave me no special revelation except of our Lady Saint Mary, and he showed her to me three times: the first when she conceived, the second as if she were in her sorrow under the cross and the third as she is now, in delight, honor and joy.

And after this our Lord showed himself to me in even greater glory, it seemed to me, than when I saw him before, and from this revelation I learned that each contemplative soul to whom it is given to look for God and seek him, shall see her and pass on to God through contemplation.

### **Today's Reflection is by Zach Parkman:**

What really jumps out at me from this reading is the number three. Three different visions of Mary that were revealed to Julian. Obviously, the number three has special significance in the Christian faith and tradition. The Trinity, the Godhead, one God in three persons. The resurrection of Christ on the third day. In this instance, Julian is being shown three significant moments in Mary's life. Three points on a linear trajectory. A throughline that charts out the direction and form that life takes. Mary isn't just an idealized figure in a painting, an icon to have projections of piety heaped upon her. She is a real person, a woman that felt joy and pain and heartbreak and elation and fear and doubt.

I think too often I use a snapshot of a person's life to hold up as a measure of who they are on a moral or ethical scale. As if the present moment of who they appear to be should be used to judge their value to me, whether or not they are worthy to be taken seriously. As if the future doesn't even exist. As if they too aren't on the same tragically comic journey as me, revolving around the sun for an unknown and untold number of days. As if they will even be the same person in three days, three years, three decades. (As if I will even be the same.) As if the same redemption that was freely given to me is not also afforded to them. As if...

This reading reminds me that we too are three persons (maybe more) walking around in one body. Our past selves, our present selves and our future selves. Are any of them more "real" or authentically us. I realize that we must, for practical purposes, live in the present moment (the "now"), but is the "now" me the defining version of my being? The snapshot that I will be measured by? I certainly pray that that isn't the case.



Zach is a proud father and husband. He lives in Kensington, Brooklyn with his family, Addie, Gideon, Kim & Izzy the Cat. Zach serves on the vestry and has attended Holy Apostles since 2018ish. He has a beard and likes to sing and play 80s sitcom theme songs on his ukulele.