

Daily Meditation 05/03/2023

Julian of Norwich on Joy

Good morning.

We are continuing our meditations on the subject of joy. And we're turning now to Julian of Norwich, who had so much to say about joy. And she's really standing on the shoulders of Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart, both of whom preceded her.

But Aquinas says that "Joy is a human's noblest act."

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I think it's so interesting that he talks about joy as an act, not just a feeling. It's not just temperament, being joyful and optimistic. It is an act. And that means a choice, a path, a direction that one chooses to take.

And Julian very much fits into that mode, because, as I point out, she lived through a very, very disturbing, perilous time: the bubonic plague was spreading everywhere. One out of two and one out of three Europeans were killed by this plague, and they had no inkling of what the cause was, not having the science that we have today to examine viruses and plagues.

So everything she has to say about joy, and we're going to be sharing some of her teachings, not only in today's meditation but also in subsequent ones.

But I think what she has to say about joy...think of it in terms of an act, a human's noblest act, in Aquinas' terms, that she is reaching out and reaching deep, to find the joy that is not present on the surface.

Now she begins with her reflections on divinity: God rejoices that God is Father. God rejoices that God is Mother, God rejoices to be our Beloved. And Christ rejoices to be our brother and so forth.

So in the divine reality and in the reality of Christ Jesus, there is rejoicing going on. Just as Aquinas has said, "Sheer joy is God's, and this demands companionship."

So in the depth of things and the depth of creation, there is joy. That is what she is calling us to participate in, and to act on, become active about finding the joy and letting it find us.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.