



**MERCY  
GLOBAL  
PRESENCE**

# Reflective Prayer: Presence of/with/to God

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## **Introduction**

This has been an unusual year.

A year when for many of us there have been months of Eucharistic fast. Yet an opportunity to recognise God's presence.



One British woman whose life revolved around God's presence and who experienced serious illness was Saint Julian of Norwich (1342-1420).

Julian sees her entire life as a response to God's love and when she thinks she is dying she wants to live, so as to love God more.

Julian lived at the time of the Plague and in 1373 was taken seriously ill. She received the Sacrament of the Sick. During this time she had what are known as her 'Showings'. She became an anchoress and spent the next 15-20 years reflecting and praying about the meaning of these 'Showings', leading to 'Revelations of Divine Love.' This is the first book known to be written by a woman in English.

She wrote carefully in a context so as not to upset the powers that be; taken out of context her words could have easily caused some surprise and disagreement.

Julian of Norwich (window in Norwich Cathedral) Amitchell125 [CC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

## Prayer

### Opening prayer

Awareness of the presence of God fills Julian of Norwich with joy, desire, hope and love. Lord, we pray that, seeking wisdom from her we may make your presence in our daily lives more conscious and vibrant so that we may be responsive to the graces, blessings and opportunities you offer at each moment of the day.

**Hymn** – Be Still My Soul: <https://youtu.be/5UJFw3p76d8>

### Scripture – John 20:11-16

Meanwhile Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ ‘They have taken my Lord away’ she replied ‘and I don’t know where they have put him.’ As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. Jesus said, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, ‘Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him.’ Jesus said, ‘Mary!’ She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbuni!’ – which means Teacher.

### Time for Reflection

We live in a time of instant gratification which we can sometimes expect in prayer. Julian teaches us the wonder of the unfolding of the answer to our prayer.

We know God’s timing is not always ours. But we also know God’s timing is always right, and that God wants good for us.

Jeremiah 29:11 - <sup>11</sup> For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Take time now with the quotes from Julian of Norwich and Pope Francis, either in text or using the video

**Reflection Video** – Presence of/with/to God: <https://youtu.be/CqG43h89YI>

All shall be well  
and all shall be well  
and all manner of things shall be well.

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 27*

God of your goodness give me yourself,  
for you are sufficient for me. ...  
In you alone do I have all.

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 5*

Easter summons us and invites us to remember His presence,  
which is discreet and respectful, generous and reconciling,  
capable of neither breaking the cracked reed  
nor extinguishing the wick that burns weakly (cf. Is 42:2-3);  
so that the new life that He wants to give us all, might pulsate.

*Pope Francis - Page 46*

In this little thing I saw three truths.  
The first is that God made it;  
the second is that God loves it;  
and the third is that God sustains it.

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 5*

You would know our Lord's meaning in this thing?  
Know it well.  
Love was his meaning.  
Who showed it to you? Love.  
What did he show you? Only love.  
Why did he show it? For love.  
Hold on to this and you will know and understand love more and more.

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 86*

I came to realize that there were three ways of looking at God's motherhood:  
the first is based on the fact that our nature is made;  
the second is found in the assumption of that nature –  
    there begins the motherhood of grace;  
the third is the motherhood of work which flows out over all by the same grace –  
    the length and breadth and height and depth of it is everlasting.  
And so is his love.

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 59*

May we find within us the necessary antibodies of justice, charity and solidarity.  
We must not be afraid to live the alternative – the civilization of love.

*Pope Francis - Page 49*

“He did not say,  
'You will never have a rough passage,  
you will never be over-strained,  
you will never feel uncomfortable',  
But he did say,  
'You will never be overcome.'”

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 68*

The present pandemic, however,  
reminds us that there are no differences or borders between those who suffer.  
We are all frail, all equal, all precious.  
May we be profoundly shaken by what is happening all around us:  
the time has come to eliminate in-equalities,  
to heal the injustice that is under-mining the health of the entire human family!

*Pope Francis - Page 52*

For in us is he (Jesus) completely at home, and has his eternal dwelling.

*Julian of Norwich - Chapter 67*

**Questions for Reflection**

How are you aware of God's presence in your life at this time?

Which quote from Julian or Pope Francis stays with you?

How does it reflect God's presence in your life at this time?

**Closing Blessing**

We ask a blessing on our troubled world;

we pray for those suffering in different ways from the COVID-19 pandemic,

for those enduring the effects of war and conflict,

for the powerless and the little people of our world.

Be present, Lord, to all who need you so badly.

Help us all in the good and the bad moments of our lives to remember that because of the Resurrection, ultimately, all will be well.

We make this prayer in trust and in confidence.

Mother of Mercy, pray for us.

Sources:

Quotes have been taken from

*Revelations of Divine Love*, Julian of Norwich, Penguin Classics series, Baltimore: Penguin books (1966)

*Life After the Pandemic*, Pope Francis, Libreria Editrice Vaticana (June 10, 2020)