

# Guided Meditation: Encountering the Depths

## Passage

On [one] occasion my thoughts were led down to the seabed, where I saw green hills and valleys covered with seaweed and sand like moss. I understood this to mean that even if a man or woman were under deep water they would be safe in soul and body and would come to no harm if they saw that God was with them all the time. Moreover, they would have greater comfort and strength than this world could ever speak of. For it is God's will that we see him continually with the eyes of faith, even though we have very little direct revelation. As we trust him in this way, we grow in grace. For it is God's will that we see him and search for him, it is his will that we wait for him and trust him.

Julian of Norwich *Revelations of Divine Love*

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## Meditation

Take up a posture that is comfortable and close your eyes. This meditation is a response to Julian of Norwich's vision of the sea bed, in Chapter 10 of the *Revelations of Divine Love*. If you are uncomfortable with this imagery, please do use your imagination in other ways.

[read the passage]

Now become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as it ebbs and flows into and out of your nostrils and lungs . . .

Do not control your breathing. Do not try to deepen it or change its rhythm. Simply observe your breathing, in and out, in and out . . .

Now imagine you can see the sea, and let your thoughts be led down beneath the restless driven waves at the surface into the depths, to the seabed.

What do you see in your mind's eye?

Take time to imagine the scene as vividly as possible, its hills and valleys, any plant life, fish swimming, all the colours . . .

What is the quality of the light? How much is filtering down? How far can you see? . . .

Compose yourself in the place . . .

What are your thoughts as you survey the scene? What are your feelings? . . .

Now imagine that the ocean is God and you are like a sponge, permeated through and through with God. Existing in God is your natural state of being. You are completely safe in soul and body and will come to no harm.

Simply rest in God's presence for a time, in God's grace . . .

If your attention becomes distracted, become aware of your breathing again and then gently return to the scene . . .

Now return gradually to an awareness of your breathing and your posture . . .

When you are ready, open your eyes.

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## Notes

This is one of a series of meditations responding to *Encountering the Depths* by Mother Mary Clare SLG, one of the books which the Slow Book Group at Exeter Cathedral has been reading. The book is divided into five chapters, for reflection over the five months May, June, July, September and October 2023, with a final session in November considering the whole book.

The style of the meditation is based on the "unsuspected and untapped source of power and life in our fantasy" as presented by Anthony de Mello in [\*Sadhana: A Way to God, Christian Exercises in Eastern Form\*](#) (pdf). He writes:

"Fantasies, like dreams, are useful tools for learning about yourself because you project your true self into your fantasies... Fantasies do not only give you insight into yourself. In some mysterious way they also change you! You sometimes come out of a fantasy feeling changed without quite knowing how or why the change has occurred. It is quite likely that... you find that your relationship with God has deepened, though you cannot explain why. Do not be satisfied with doing these fantasies just once. To get the full profit from them you must do them again and again. Then give vent to your creative instinct and invent your own symbolic fantasies."

*Clare Bryden*

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