

Liturgy as Life in the Gospel of John – Session 1
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[*Text automatically prepared by Google Recorder.*]

In the name of the father and of the son into the Holy Spirit. I'm in It's my distinct privilege to be with you this morning, I don't know. Is it okay if I don't use the microphone, if I have to stand in front of it, I definitely will have some difficulty one thing that I promised to do as well.

By the way, is to give a blog for for the same tip bookstore because for the service brought with him things from from the monastery, that is on a table back there, please take a look at that and purchase what you can. All the proceeds goes to the monastery and there are books, there is their coffee there.

I didn't even get a good look, everything that is there but but please take a look at that. And and by what you can, if you want to give an extra donations to the monastery, I'm sure they're not going to turn it away. So so be generous and yeah, thank you for So I am further argumentated Sturgis on the Abbot of Saint Tiguan's Monastery.

It is America's oldest orthodox monasterious founded in 1905 by Santikonamoscio. It's amazing that the Saints. He gone a Moscow. Actually, he was all over the place. All of these great American Saints that are where the early Saints of our church. They really, really traversed. The continent this continent back and forth several times.

I think, say, Rafael went back and forth over America, at least three times in it's, you know, thousands of thousands of miles. And as, you know, during that time, they didn't have a car. They didn't have a, you know, most of the time a train that was going to directly to where they were going.

So was by carriage on foot these great missionary saints that are of course associated with Saint Secon's monastery. Five, canonized Saints, live walk taught and we're at Saint Tikon's monastery. Santika on a Moscow, Saint Rockville and Brooklyn who consecrated our altar. See Nicolas. Icha who was our rector at the seminary?

Saying Alexis taught to single-handedly brought in at least under his direct supervision about 13,000 people into the orthodox church and through their descendants about 400,000 is called the Father of Orthodoxy in America. And of course also saying, Alexander Hodovitzky, who wrote the history of Saint Tikon's monastery. Later went back to Russia and was murdered under the Bolsheviks.

So these five things that are have been at Saints, he comes monster, you say Tikon's is kind of the epicenter of the early church in America. We know that the church was founded by those original eight Alaskan monks Saint Hermann of being one of them, Jewett, Saint Humanalee. And the other six months that we're from belong monastery, was quite a distance.

No small task in 1793 to leave the law monastery. That's in traverse that great distance all the

way to Alaska. They happen to stop in Saint Petersburg on their way there. Metropolitan Gabriel had just Printed the first copies in Russian of the Philharmonia. Now, we take for granted so often in our times, you know, you would go and you might find a book somewhere in the bookstore or back on my table only brought two books.

I brought my book which is acquiring the mind of Christ and then a new book by father's, which is called hesy chasm, which will talk to some degree about because if there's one word that I would say that could epitomize orthodox thought, theology, and what really makes us different is the word hesitans and just some degree were all called to be hesitans to some degree.

Which means being able to be quiet enough to listen to God. So we take for granted that the Phil Collita is just available over there, possibly over on that. In the bookstore over there, you might find a coffee. However, in when it was actually formulated, 17, I think in 1720s by saying the kiddiemas and Saint Marquis.

Nothing like that. It existed. Until that time, this is a compendium of all deep orthodox, thought and spirituality, in one place, and these fathers, they went all over monathos and various places to find the manuscripts of Saint Azeki. As the priest, Saint Isaiah, the solitary say, Peter of Damascus on and on and on all of these great fathers, these luminaries, they were the one that collected them found them collected them, codified them, and then offered them to the church.

So this great treasury of orthodox, theology. Great treasury of orthodox, spirituality didn't exist before. 1720 The fill of collect tradition and we know the word philucolia means a lover of beauty Kalia. Philos, you know, Philadelphia brother and sister city of brotherly. Love pillow kalia. It's the lover of beauty.

And really, a Saint John Christmas has said, what is more beautiful than a beautiful soul? And so this is the text of like, how to have a beautiful soul. What are the basic principles behind this beautification of our own souls before? God, which preeminently is Christ in us, who is really the epicenter of all beauty?

So saying Herman, he just happened to be passing by and God's supreme and divine. And exacting providence, just happened to be passing by through Saint Petersburg. And mentioned policing, Gabriel just happened in God's extreme and exacting providence. To have these new copies of the Philippian Russian. And those eight Russian monks from belong were given hot off the press eight copies of the filikalea, this full compendium, and you could still see Saint Herman's up in Kodiak today.

But it's not book, which speaks of the deeper part of orthodox spirituality, which makes us different than everybody else. And it's not, it's not a reactionary thing where it's like, this is how we're better. This is how we're, you know, triumphalistically kind of orthodox. No, it's just different. It's a very different way than Western Christian them as it evolved over the course of many, many centuries in the West, there was a great divergence of thought.

And I used to think when I was in school studying about this for many years, I would think what is it really? That is so different about us and Western Christianity. And as I begin to study it, the chasm only grew bigger and deeper and wider and farther, and it became so far that.

Now, I look, I used to think I was so close continentally speaking. It's like here and Europe for me. Now, after years and years of actually, looking at the text, looking at the problems looking at all these things in, it's not to say that it's bad, it's just different.

And we have a different way in orthodoxy and it is quite essentially tied to that word has, because of which is essentially, the psalmist's own words be still and no, Be still and know that I am. God. As you guys have just means stillness, so it's not silence. I'm not talking about silence like, you know, Buddhist monks or something like that.

It's a way of abiding in the heart and actually being able to listen to God and sometimes that can be a very difficult task for all of us. It's not like I'm I've reached someplace and, you know, I'm a great practitioner. No, it will always be a struggle. Saints of Rony says, it's easier to build skyscrapers than it is to pray properly and consistently all the time.

That's why they say that medieval monks, they kind of left the monastery in some regard, for other work, the building of of cultures and biology, and all the sciences. And all these things, there is a lot of the Western Christmas them that was built on many women asked the system as well, not a bad thing, but it's definitely not that higher form of life of which we speak of in prayer.

Saints and frowny Saint Sylla one and follows Zacharias are the living tradition that the monastery teaches and embraces and knows to be authentic. Was that garage was just at the monasteries probably his last time in America he is the direct air of father Saint Safari. Who is the direct error of Saint Siligon, who had that genuine and authentic vision of God, of which is the hallmark of all orthodox, life and culture, it is the epicenter of what it means to be a saint.

Someone who sees God, someone who knows, God, who sees and knows that Jesus Christ is God and has a direct. And unearing experience of him just like, Saint Paul did in Acts chapter 9, when he fell from his horse, and the great light was there, and he said, who art?

Thou? He says to the light. Who aren't you? Lord, who are you? Lord, and the light said to him, I'm Jesus whom you persecute all. That same light that was seen by the prophet Isaiah when he saw God seated high and upon his throne, the glory of the Lord around him was that same light that the prophet Ezekiel saw it in that light of the rainbow in that image of a man who sat upon the likeness of a throne and it was that same length that Moses experienced.

As he went out Mount Sinai and spoke to God as it says, as one would speak to a friend. This one in the same experience of the of the knowledge and the vision of God is what we have in orthodoxy today. And it is what we are ourselves. Must continue to strive for no matter our state.

No matter our context, no matter who we are and where we are that direct experience of God is ours, If we make a small effort, God will concurrently join to that effort. His own grace and multiply it. Interesting in the gospel. You always see that you know when when they need to feed the multitudes, what is Christ do he says, bring me what you have.

And they come and they say, well, we only have these five loaves. And these two fish, it's very interesting. Five loaves is an image of man, five being man, we have five fingers, five points.

One, two, three, four, five, which bread, you know, it's kind of like made out of the earth.

It's this image of man, you bring to God what you have and then the two fishes. Of course are Christ is two natures, the divinity and the humanity. We bring to Christ our five lives of whatever it is that we have. And he multiplies it. He makes it more.

It's the offering though that counts, which is so essential and necessary for us to to understand God, wants something from us, each one of us. And if we could say, what is God want from me, right? As if there was some megaphone that would be coming down and saying, Nancy, please give me that thing over there.

It's not like that at all. There's one in the same thing that God wants from every single person in this room and that is your heart, the center of you. That's the proverbs say, it's sun, give me thine heart. This is what God wants from us, because he actually created it for himself to some degree.

A place where he could abide a place that he could dwell, no, you not that year, the temple, the Holy Spirit in the spirit of God, dwells in you. So the heart is what God wants the heart is where God could dwell, we want him to be there because it really is the fulfillment of our life, just like gases to a car.

So as God to the heart, It is, it is the light and the power that gives the bulb, the energy to be what it is, which is a light bulb and give light to the world. And Christ even says that he says, you are the light of the world.

How is that possible? I thought Christ was the light of the world it's because Christ is in us, in that moment. He is the hope of glory in us who gives light to the world. So the heart is really the center of kind of our person. And really if we were to say a word that would define orthodoxy, that would be the word person person is ultimately something that is hard to define.

You could tell me. What are you, who are you as a person? What does that mean? And it's only in the face of Christ that we understand ourselves. It's only in his presence that we are actually gained the knowledge of our existence, why we're here and the meaning of our life.

And so we're going to talk today to some small degree about the gospel of Saint John. And as the flyer said, the liturgy of life or the life of the liturgy depending on how you want to couch it. But Saint John's gospel is something which is about. If we could say, one thing that qualifies in and kind of characterizes, John's gospel, it's the word life.

It is said in St, John's Gospel. Some people can replicate depending on how you wonder the Greek At least 38 times that word life. Which is rare, most of the other gospels only have four, five, six, seven, whatever. Saint John's gospel talks about it, at least 38 times since in some renderings up to 49 the word life, and it's always dealing with eternal life.

But life is a concept, is actually a very important one because In the Old Testament, God says to the people. He says, I I bear witness before you today, I've sent before you life and death blessing and curse and it's interesting because it says, I'd be seats you and some translations to choose life.

Interesting how the word blessing though? Is connected with life and curse is connected with death. In Orthodox understanding. The biggest problem with all of us is not the fact that we have sin. It's not the fact that we are. Have different failures and difficulties in our life. The real epicenter of the phenomenon is the fact that we have the congenital inheritance of death.

Then at some point, all of us will leave this life. And that is very difficult because even when a loved one dies, I vary people all the time. We have a very large cemetery. It's never something that you get used to. It's never something that you can say, oh, and this is okay.

It's never something that you can understand why? Because in the book of Syria, it tells us very clearly. It says, God does not delight in the death of the living, because God did not make death.

When do you want to know it or not, or believe it or not, or how it happened or where it happened or why it happened? The reality is, is that there was a first created, man. God made man in such a way that nothing else was like that. He was the kind of crown of creation.

The one thing we can say for certain is that God made this world, God made us how he made it. I am not going to speculate I am not a scientist. Nor am I an engineer on that level? I do like to do construction, but not like that. And if anything, you know, I remember when I was sending astronomy in college There was such a bent on kind of that atheistic, part of it, that it would always kind of lead me to this place of like despair.

Now, what I look as astronomy through kind of my current lens, I rejoice. I'm so glad to look at different pictures from the new James Hubble telescope. I get so excited. Seeing those images why God's been busy. He's been working really hard. He's out there. It's kind of like person, like, how I plant gardens at the monastery, he's planning new galaxies everywhere and doing new stars and has all this.

It's having a great time. I'm sure it's a very large scope of activity of what he's managing. All the things being balanced against each other. You know, if you take one of the things out of the picture like you know, a planet or a sun or something like that, you've mess up the whole balance of everything else.

And the fact that there are basically, you know, like a billion galaxies each with a billion stars and great. Let's go threat to my faith at all. In fact, it's just confirms it more deeply. I'm so glad that God is doing something exciting and having some fun. You know, because I would be probably doing the same thing, you know, if I if I was able to I mean that would be very exciting.

Don't you think so? What were we talking about? You see here? John's gospel life, what? So death is, the problem. Death is, you know, we have that difference in our, in our tradition between ancestral sin and original sent. Original sin is the western understanding, which basically says that And it comes from the lit.

The Latin, a faulty translation of Romans 5:12, I believe where it says in Adam all had sinned or that in that atom. All had sinned. It's a very slight discrepancy but since it's it's in Latin, it's in quote. But anybody wants to know but that word being slightly mistranslated makes it sound

like that in item?

Everybody's guilty in the Latin translation that in him everybody had sinned and actually got that culpability from it. We don't believe that thankfully because we have a different translation which is the original Greek, which says that In that all had sinned in Adam. Not because they received his Gilbert breeze because they got that thing called death, the congenital inheritance, which is called ancestral sin.

Everybody's got it now. If I decorate says that, if we accept that death as something that is natural, he says we will vanish in oblivion. However, he says, if we see it as the last enemy to be destroyed and the principle problem or of our existence of our kind of fight, he says, it's only then that we can begin to share in Christ's victory and his resurrection and actually becoming eternal ourselves because it's a fight against death.

And death itself as it is in me. Causes me to have difficulties and to have problems. And my mind sometimes is not well and I get to press and I get upset and I do things that I don't want to do. I sin? And I fail, and I fall, what is all of that in me?

As Saint Paul says, who will deliver me from this body of death? And before that the prep precursor to that he says I do what I don't want to do and the good that I want to do, I don't do. And he says who will deliver me from this body of death says thanks me to God who gives us life in Christ Jesus.

And very tellingly. Price comes and he says, I have come that they might have what, right? Not that. And the whole calendar of our entire Orthodox Church revolves around one pivotal thing. If there's one center of our universe, it's possible. Because that's the victory over death. So if there's a problem in this world, it's called death, it's not my neighbor, it's not people being bad, it's not people who are causing wars and all these kinds of things, it's the death in them, that is leading them towards entropy towards disintegration towards chaos towards destruction.

We do this, let's say I'm on the, on a personal level. Let's say we're a drug addict or an alcoholic, right? We are ourselves are the biggest problem in that death in us becomes like a black hole. That fight against death is real for all of us. And that's why confession is so important.

That's why prayer is so important. That's why the liturgy and the Eucharist is so important why? Because they often us a taste of life, Pho Zachariases. That hesitate is actually the antidote to death, very simply Father said that in the paradise when God created man in the beginning and even the fossil record bears out the fact that there was some new guy that appeared out of nowhere and there was all these other guys over there that were different from magdin men and cavemen and this man and that man, then there's us almost sapiens.

It's like there's this missing link, they call it and they just appeared out and nowhere about 8,000 years ago. I don't know how he dropped in or where he came from, but he definitely wasn't there before. And that man created by God and his image. And Saint Saffrony says, it's very important for us to understand orthodox anthropology because

How I what I believe will have a direct impact on how I act. If I believe and belief is something that's very powerful, you say, oh no, I have science. It's like well then you believe in science is

some degree because everything in our in our lives is not this great certainty.

Like we oftentimes think of it, you know, so many people have lived their lives with great certainty in the faith of whatever they have chosen and it's only death that will test it. When they're on their deathbed, when they got in the car accident, when they had this terrible tragedy in their life is then that their belief will be tested and shown to be, whatever it is true or not, authentic, or not solid or not.

But man's original state as he was created, was inconveniently God. Since everybody says that when God made man, he made nothing less than himself. That's our anthropology in a nutshell. How we think about Men and women, when God made us, The uncreated God, he made nothing less than himself in a created form.

That's how much dignity that's how much honor. That's how much the height of which God has placed us at as kind of the pinnacle of all of this created world. And the capacity in you to be able to receive God is based in you being a person person, as in the Greek hypotheses, the hypostatic principle in you, that person of principle personal principle in, you is precisely the thing that's able to receive God and that's the most precious thing on planet earth.

Why? Because that means that you are more value. One person is more value than the entire universe. Because the universe is, is is a thing, but the fact that we can receive God and that we were created to receive God not only to know God, but to share his life and for us to become eternal as well.

This is the exceeding dignity and honor that God has given to us. So how we look at the world? And what we do is taking pictures, it's making me nervous. Anybody how close you are, right? Yeah, make me feel better. Just the fact that, you know, with how we look at each other orthodoxy gives us an entire world view to embrace and it's something that takes us decades to unfold unravel embrace and make our own It literally takes a minimum of 15 years of somebody was going to succeed, the uncreate light, like, Saint Silawon.

He saw God when he was a novice in the monastery at Saint Ponce. He went there. I think in 1896 Sometimes shortly after he was in church. He was at the iconostasis, he was praying, he was in a, I can't remember his state but The icon on the iconostasis became living and it was Christ himself who had manifested himself through the church and literally he was consumed in this vision.

And that light. So penetrated into he was one in the same with that light, that light became him and he became that light not in a way that's like where there was confusion. But total union, And then after that, he thought to himself, boy, I have had this great experience of the end created light.

What else do I need? And that's when he began the precipitous plunge, into the abyss struggling with pride, struggling with the passions struggling, with his own lack of self-knowledge that kept him there for 15 years. That is the minimum amount of time that it takes for somebody to really acquire the real mind of Christ than the mind of the church.

Had become a saint. For the rest of us. Well, it's going to be a lot longer And that's okay. I mean,

I don't, I don't mind that, you know, I've been in the monster for 25 years and I'm not there, but that it's good because it keeps me busy.

I'm working on it and I have something to do. You know, God always keeps this busy for following him. He keeps us like kind of, you know, we're just little twirl around here and he's like, okay, come over here and you open this door and go through it and then that one closes and we get all confused and, you know, it's just, it's kind of like life in God if you keep us connected in a way that's where just to struggle itself, helps us to kind of continue to to maintain our interests, you know, Oh, that was interesting.

Did it come from the icon or to come from? Is that a mint that just kind of flew out of this guy? Somebody maybe it's a pill. I guess it's like a altoid that was weird. But anyways, the main point is this is that Death is unnatural. That's where we're our church.

Answer is like what it in the west, they need to answer the problem of sin, and original sin, and this answer of guilt and everybody's guilty and everybody's sinful. And so even they're ontology of like or anthropology about how they look at men and women. Is different than ours.

Western Christianity says that in man, the image of God has been destroyed completely Disintegrated completely lost. In orthodoxy. We say it's been broken. It's been damaged. But that concept of like how we look at man, actually has a direct impact about how we're going to be able to do what we do and be able to work it out in our salvation.

So that positive view of man is very important for us to be able to look at each other and not see help. But to rather see heaven To be able to look at each other and find Christ. This is our opportunity is orthodox, Christians to, to make a difference in the world.

Why? Because when I go to Essex monastery in England, because my confessor is father, Zacharias. When I go there, they honor. Not only me but just everybody that goes there. So very much I'm almost in Paris like how much they loved me, how much they catered to me, how much they do for me.

And for everybody there, there's this very deep sense of honoring the other because it's Christ and through that you want to do better, you want to be inspired to hire things. You want to live the best life, you can and be who you want, who you're called to be in Christ.

It inspires us to do better things, it's the same thing in our own life, it's like in our lives with each other. If we can give the place to the other, if we can give the honor to the other. If we don't demand our own rights, our own, whatever there is a certain time in place to kind of make our needs known.

But if we can give place to the other, which is the essence of humility because by the Zechariah, says that the humility is best defined by giving all the space to the other. When I give you all the space, it gives you enough room to grow. It gives you enough room to be inspired to be what you need to be.

Any pressure on my part will only kind of frustrate this process. So children and their parents

spouses each other. The closer we are to people. The more difficult this is But I there's a concept that's really important, it's just to always see a person rather than a problem. Oh, what are they doing again?

Here they are. They're in front of me and they're doing this thing and I can't stand it. I'm I gonna do. That aspect or that perspective, only frustrates the situation that makes a bad situation worse. Ever read that book. Our thoughts, determine our lives It's great book. And so often though we are ourselves kind of make the situations that we dread and don't want because we think about it all the time that it's gonna be that way or that it should be that way or that it might be that way or what it, we almost create the situation ourselves and then we're in it.

And we say, I'll see, I told you it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy. We need to learn how to think different about our lives, not ourselves about each other, and it's a constant change, that's called repentance and repentance. Literally in the Greek is mesanoia, which means change your mind. So I'm always faced with this.

Inevitability of the difficulty of relationships. How in that moment when somebody is being reactive and sputtering in front of me and yelling in me and calling me names and doing whatever they're doing, you know, whoever it may be. They might be really close to me or not so close to me how in that moment to see a person and be responsive rather than reactive The only way that I can say that I really know how to do that is, by in the moment.

In real time, I start to pray for them. If I can if there's enough room but really I consistent life of prayer. It could be a very small amount of time like 15 minutes a day that consistent amount of prayer on a on a daily basis will actually give me the space to be more responsive.

So that when I come against these mildly catastrophic moments in my daily life, I will be able to realize I don't have to react. I don't have to fall into the pit, I don't have to immediately rush in and start fighting. I can step back because there's a little more space in me.

Because I've been praying on a consistent basis. There's a little more space to me to take a step back and say, how would I like to respond and the first way that I began with the response is I say Lord, Jesus Christ said, I'm God at mercy on us, Lord, Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy upon this person word, Jesus Christ, and of God.

Help us and grab us a way forward reconciliation, some kind of of help in that moment that I add. In that third part, I am kind of free of the tearing Of the moment of the tyranny of having to come in and start fighting and being whatever. In that moment, I have a choice.

So, John's gospel is really concerned about life.

You know, Saint John's gospel. Just so, you know, it's really important to understand what place it has. Put gospel. Do we read during pasta? We're talking about life, right? Past is about life. Prices risen from the dead trampling, down depth by death and upon those in the tunes, be sewing.

So what do we read on that night, where the great epicenter of our faith of our liturgical activity? What is that gospel that we read on past a night? John 1:1. We started the beginning.

And in the beginning was the word, the word word was with God. In the word was God.

The first verse of Saint John's gospel. It's hard to in this short amount of time to appreciate, just how long it took to be able to get humanity, to a point where all of the concepts and all the understanding and all of like the backstory of the gospel, the concept of logos, the concept of wisdom in the philosophers, how those two concepts could evolve over centuries to a place where they would actually become joined in the person of Jesus Christ and really the profundity.

You know, Christ himself says that he's a son of thunder. Why? Because never a man speak like this. In the beginning was the word. That concept of logos in our key and logo. That concept of logos took centuries to develop. We take it for granted. Oh yeah logo, sorry.

Yeah, I know what that is. It's like no people in the ancient times. Like in the time of Heraclitus it's like it was a different concept and it took a lot of like, working with like, what is actually true? What is our, how do we understand the world? How do we understand this concept of God?

What is this? It took time for it to become crystallized and clear. So that when that was spoken, those words by Saint John, that theologian. It was the perfect timing in the providential plan of the development of language and concepts. Why? Because we've fallen so far away from God.

We generally take for granted that, you know, our rational capacity is actually the light of God. And it's a gift. Your rational ability your ability to know that, I'm what I'm talking about right now that we're all not just going long, one of my law. It's like drooling, you know, that ability to be rational, to be normal and to be, you know, reasonable and thoughtful and all of these things are I kind of pride myself on as a person that's actually God's gift to me.

And when it's taken from me in the nursing home, when I have an accident in a car, or when I can't talk anymore, it's in that moment, I'll realize that was a gift that wasn't mine. That was something that God gave me because he eventually, he's gonna take it from us that some point in the future that ability to be reasonable.

Rational, thoughtful, careful, all of those things, it's God's gift to us. A great gift to us saying Gregory Paul and Mom says that just, as the sun, is to the visible world and visible objects that we see because there's light. He says, so also is God to the mind and it's rationality, it's ability to think and understand that light of God in the noetic world and in that spiritual world still, illumines us to some degree at a basic level.

As we function, as we drive our car, as we go into work, it's God. Who's the greater part of our lives and we don't see it. Why? Because he is so humble. He won't presume, he won't assume he will come in and take up room. Behold, he says, I stand at the door of the heart and I knock, if anyone hears my voice, let him open the door and I will come in and we will have communion.

We will sup together, he says, in the, in the King James, we will break bread and be in communion with one another. That fascinating, like, that 18th century picture of that. Jesus knocking on the door. Everybody seen that You know, outside there's no handle on the outside of that picture.

There's no handle the handles on the inside. His God is so humble, he will not presume to kind of barge into our lives and demanded command. Why? Because he gave us the gift of basically being like he is himself, completely free. Completely able to determine our lives to accept him, or to reject him, to do crazy things to do.

Wonderful things to do amazing things. That's God's gift to us. And what we do with that gift is our gift back to God. Hopefully

Saint, John, Christian, that first verse he wrote in of Saint John's Gospel. He wrote 20 pages for hommies on the first verse of Saint, John, it's gospel. 20 pages and you know, Saint John Chris system, right? Everything is incredibly complicated, deep and dense and like, you know, it's like a PhD right, 20 pages of that and it's small print, small times, you know, Just the first verse.

John's gospel. You know, if we look at like the pyramid of like how even even in the even in the context of like scripture, there's a hierarchy of scripture. Down to the bottom, we have the historical books. Numbers even you know aspects of person, second chronicles person, say Samuel terror and the penetrate right that foundational.

Thou shalt not do this, do that all this law, the due to an honor Deuteronomy is law and then you have the prophets, the psalms and wisdom. This is all the hierarchy kind of like what's important like on pasta night, we don't read numbers in church, errors 4,577 cattle and there was 5,000.

You know, we don't do that on pus tonight, right? Is it's at the bottom of the hierarchy. Then you go up and you're getting a little bit further into after the profits, then you get into the epistles. The actually the apostles. Then you get into the synoptic gospels, the three synoptic gospels.

Matthew, Mark and Luke And then the very pinnacle of the pinnacle the capstone of all of it is jogging. John is the most theologically dense, the most powerful kind of transmission of theology and the crystallogoly who Christ is who God is trinitarian theology Eucharistic theology. Liturgical theology salvation of the world Eschatology.

It's all in John. John is actually the oldest gospel that we have in its actual form from 125 AD just shortly after Saint John, wrote it in about the year, 100 and 110. We actually have a book, the Ryland Codex, 125 AD. That's when it's from. So if people ever say, oh, gospel is not a very reliable book.

They copy to a bunch of times and they got all messed up and everything like that. No, I'm sorry. Did not That's not true. It's the most reliable we'll come plan to do is actually, did you know that you can take it and put it back together from extent sources from everywhere else, I can find everything I need in everybody else's books and put it back together.

In the clear and precise and accurate way, that it is presented to us today. Why is that? Because the grace of God abides in it, it has staying power. The incorruptible kingdom of which things like this icon, are a part of And icons are not just some kind of, by the way statement about nice art that we really like to have in the church because we like pretty stuff.

Icons are an incredibly deep presentation and affirmation of an entire world view. How we look at the created world. That God still love that. He gave his only begotten son but whoever believes might have again that word life eternal. Icons are not, by the way, they're part of that incorruptible, kingdom, of which Christ came to bring through the incarnation.

And I was reading Saints commentary last night and I was blown away by one change of a word in his commentary because you know, the Greek how you translate a book from Greek or any other language to some degree. It's an interpretation. There's a, there's a balance between poetic and literate literal in any translation, and I have to make those decisions as a reductor, or as a translator and my inspiration in the sense of prayer.

And so forth is paramount to know what choice to make and with what words and so forth. So and therefore acts commentary. He says something really interesting about And the word was made flesh, the logos was made flesh. And it says, instead of 12 among us, he takes the actual more literal form of the Greek.

It says, in dwelt in us. In me and you through the incarnation Christ comes to live to tabernacle. There's this fascinating word in the Greek text which he tabernacled amongst us. In just, well, you like tabernacle. He like made a house and he and even says destroyed this temple.

And in three days, I'll build it up. So that idea of the tabernacle, which is very important in the old testament, God tabernacling living among the Israelites in the tabernacle, which was a pattern of heaven. The type of neck was given by divine inspiration of Moses. He says, Moses went up and he saw God, which is basically.

He said, he went to heaven. One of the same thing, right? See God being in heaven. It's like, you know, if you're in heaven and you see, God and vice versa. So, he saw heaven and that pattern of heaven was given to him. And that's what the tabernacle is, That pattern of, like, here are the three courts.

There's the holy of holies. Here's the holy place. And here's the place where the people stand The New Testament. That same three-fold form. We instead of being in the people's court, there's a people's court, because prescort, and then the extra special sacred place of the holy of holies court.

Everybody got bumped up in the New Testament, everybody got an upgrade. So now the catacombs are back where the, the people stand, at least interior the penitence, and then all the people got to go into the preschool. Why? Because we had the priesthood of believers. Now, the royal priesthood of Saint Peter says And then all of the priests they got to go into the holy of holies and be the image of Christ to comes out and brings life to all the people by offering himself.

We have that high priest to ministers, at that tabernacle, not made with hands Saint Paul says, in the book of Hebrews

So, this pattern, And this tabernacling of God in this pattern of how he lived and what his what heaven is like that's what the orthodox church is. To direct descendant of that thought and

paradigm. That reality the Christ himself tabernacles with us. He came and dwelt amongst us. It says, he tabernacled in the flesh but he dwelt in us, saint theoflexis.

I don't know if you know how important that concept is of Christ in us, in the sense of through the incarnation, he reaches the very deepest part of us. In the most profound possible way. And it's not just us. It's the entire world because we are, you know, the old song goes, we are the world.

Right, we are the fathers talking about this how it says. So it's still. The one was asked, I think, or Saints spicy or vice versa he says, oh no. He's I think it was insulin was as he says, When you're a deep in prayer, he says, do you forget the world and he says yes.

And he says, do you forget your body and he says, well what is the body? If not the world? So when you're lifted up into that place of paradise, you kind of go above yourself or beyond yourself to some degree, but that aspect of the world of which we are our bodies, are the world, we eat the world and consume the world.

There's this this interchange between us and the world is ongoing constant, and to some degree. Christ comes to save it all. He enthrone the world in his body on the throne of God at the ascension. So, in Christ, the basic thought is matter is assumed. The material world is assumed and saved.

Very important concept. That in Christ through the incarnation matter is sanctified. Matter is taken up into the Godhead as it were like an iron and the fire. And that's why our Eucharistic theology and helps us to make sense of it. It's like what it's happening in the liturgy. What is going on?

At the most basic level, we're taking the stuff of this world. The most basic thing bread. I remember seeing a greeting card. It was like, you know, all the different food allergies that we have now and like prices offering the bread in the low, you know, the, the lobes and the fish, everybody's like, I'm vegan and I'm gluten free, and there's always people in the ice.

If it's a card, like a birthday card, this is something, you know, I thought it was kind of funny, but I think food allergies are part of, you know, all of our crazy. There's so much crazy chemicals and stuff and everything. Anyways, slight divergence. You take bread. The most basic thing.

And we take wine which in the old world was equivalent to water, because you couldn't really have water that would stay without possibly poisoning you. So they put, you know, it was kind of watery to some degree but it was still a lot of times they would just drink wine.

Like, you know, French people how they drink wine all the time? It's a very ancient thing because it's how water could be preserved in a way that so won't kill you or cause you any kind of sickness or whatever. But we take this world, the most basic elements of this world foundational to life.

And we take them and we bring them. We prepare them as best we can and we put them on the altar. The priest then offers. That gift of this world up to God with Thanksgiving and prayers

Eucharists FHDL. Thank you.

And through that interaction of prayers and thanksgiving being offered up to God on this altar, They become for us, the very body, and blood of Jesus Christ. We kind of take it for granted, But Christ says, in John's gospel, it's like the most explicit Eucharistic discourse on planet earth and I don't know how you could get it wrong when you read it except you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

When you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have life eternal. This is my flesh is really food, it's real food, my blood is really drink so drink it. Eat it have eternal life. It becomes for us 11 which in parts to us the spirit of God and that flesh, that grace bearing flesh, of Christ becomes for us, the means of which we become part of his body.

Really as Saint Paul says his real flesh. Is real flesh and bones. It's a real thing. If you're in the art that Ox church. Today, you are actually part of Christ's body for real. It's a continuing movement of Christ into this world through us. The continuing incarnation, as it were of, which I can agree and in which all of the matter and created things in the church are a part of because in the incarnation Matter is assumed and saved God.

So loved the cosmos that he gave his only begotten son. He didn't just love father Andreas's soul, her father, and gracious, spiritual heart or father, Andreas is even just his body. He still loved the cosmos. He loved everything in the created world that he gave his only begotten son.

This very large kind of shift that can that needs to happen in our paradigm. Is he essential for us? Because we realized just how far reaching this stuff is Let me give you a location point. This is a miracle working icon. Okay. How? It's a miracle working icon. I don't know.

It went Murph for five years from her eyes. She cried a lot. She still smells really good. Sometimes more, sometimes less, we don't put any oil on or anything like that once in a while she weeps. And to be honest with you, I'm glad that she doesn't weep all the time because I be very, very busy when I'm already very, very busy.

So be a lot more people that would come. And I don't think I have a hard time then they, you know, then she cried even more. But Saint Ann is Jesus's grandmother, She's the larger figure. Marries a smaller figure marries the mother of God in a small as a small child before she went to the temple.

So many miracles happen through this icon, And our Eucharistic theology, our Eucharistic understanding of how this world becomes a place of communion and union for us. It happens on all levels in the church. It's the idea that a sacrament classically understood or the mysteries of the church. A sacrament, is matter that conveys to us, the life and energy and grace of God, the waters of baptism which convey to us the life.

And the grace and the mercy of God, the will of Christian which all throughout the Old Testament, carried the spirit of God in a material form. The stole of a priest as we go to confession.

And things like this whereby matter is used by God to reach us. The icon reminds me that it's in

my personal life today that God can meet me. And the most closest and nearest point that you're going to find God is not necessarily in the church per se. That's only just a means of helping us towards that, but it's in the heart.

If you want to find God, you know, if I Jerome one of the monsters is to say because he lived he lived in Jerusalem for why I said if you can't find Jesus in your heart you're not going to find him in Jerusalem. We tend to have this idea that we need to go somehow far away to find God like Star Trek, right?

If you get far enough into the galaxy, maybe God's out there. Think Star Trek six, they found him. But even then he was a frog. Some guy I think I camera what his name was. There was just a center of the universe, whatever. Like they got far enough away like things started.

Turning into like thought and stuff like that. And things got really kind of less material. It's a very iriscillion idea for us, the, it's the opposite in the spiritual in the material world. The spiritual world is present in the material world, the spiritual, and the material Cohen here. There's a spiritual aspect to every material phenomenon.

Very important. Your heart is not only a physical heart, but it's a spiritual heart as well. They're one in the same. The Eucharist is also bread and wine, but it's also the body and blood of Christ into one in the same as a physical part. There's a spiritual part.

You of course mission. It's not only the spirit of God abiding that opens also oil as well. It's one in the same and that phenomenon plays out on every single level of planet earth. That God created everything Saint Nicholas says as a parable of a spiritual reality, the sun in the sky.

They for example, right. Everything is telling us about something higher. If we have the ICC, if we're available to know, if we want to understand the sign of the sky is speaking to us about how God is that he is everywhere, present feeling all things, giving light to everything and yet he's circumscribed in the incarnation he's actually in one place the yet he feels everything but he's in one place but he's also in everything and he gives light and light and warmth to the entire world and there's different parts of light that are very you know complicated and and very mysterious that we don't even understand.

But there's warmth there's energy and then there's actually the physical sun so The spiritual care, a spiritual parable from a physical phenomena. Sometimes these icons. They actually are to some degree indestructible. I'll give you a story. Maybe I told you this one last time I was here but I have a bunch of these.

It's long enough you can you can tell. Yeah I have a bunch of these stories because it's not just like one time you know the lion is I'll tell you this one. So Cicero, Chicago, there is an icon of the mother of God on the iconistas and started weeping burn.

She started crying as well. The icon web for, I don't know, a few months, there was television crews there, a lot of like hoopla. And then the icon,

Stop weeping and everybody went home. About a year later the church burned to the ground. Four alarm fire, I remember it. Complete destruction totaled, destination of everything there.

Not a nothing left. When they went there in the morning as the smoke was still kind of, you know, like kind of it rises, it's in the morning, the fires out but they're still a lot of smoldering.

As they go to the church. Everything is gone. The entire block is like a nuclear bomb went off and there without damage and without any Any kind of problems is that icon of the mother of God. Everything else is gone that icon is still there and they took that icon and they put it into the new church and you can still go see it today.

It's that grace of the incorruptible kingdom of which also the Saints participate as well, you know, Saint John maximum of education, point, death did not get him. He didn't die. And in fact, he still undergassed down in San Francisco. With his fingernails, his beard his hair. They can comb his hair.

They put new clothes on him. This incorruptibility of grace makes this world to some degree. I mean, sure if somebody came in and really tried to, you know, even then sometimes it doesn't work but it makes it indestructible on some basic level because it's the incorruptible kingdom that's abiding in that materiality.

It's the same with this, it's the same with the cursed crude icon in world war two. So often the house that the cursed icon was in everybody else's house, got bombed and destroyed and either the room where the icon was or the house itself would not be touched. And we go and even the places that it would leave would not fall prey to the bombing as well.

Saying a father John the Archbishop John of Chicago, he had the tequin icon Tiki and icon is probably one of the oldest icons that we know of. It's probably they say, it's from Saint Luke's time. I don't know that for sure, but it's a goes back. At least to the fifth century.

For sure, that Vikon visited the monastery, Saint John's monster and then went back to Russia. One million people came to greet that icon and when it came back streets, were poured, pouring out all these people they were all closed. Millions of people came to see this icon of the chief of an icon of the mother of God and when Archbishop John of Chicago was taking it out of Latvia as they were leaving with his son.

Sergey because I remember, father, Hillary told me the story and then he recounted to me himself as the boat was leaving bombs were falling on. It was world war two. All the bombs are falling on to the city. Everything is being destroyed and the boat is leaving and literally bombs are coming down.

To the boat and going like this into the water and Archbishop John. Swore on his on his grave, that this is these, we're just going like this, they would just come to the boat and go like that and not in the boat left. With the tequin icon, the mother of God, and the city was destroyed.

Version of Guadalupe, it's a miraculous image. It was kind of more or less kind of accepted by the diocese of the south. They have tried to blow it up, many times terrorists, and the, and the bomb goes that way the bomb goes that way. The bomb goes that way, but it never goes that way.

Never goes the right way. What is that a sign of? If not this incorruptible, kingdom of which the

church is the air, the keeper and of which us we as orthodox Christians in the church partake of think of Christ his body up on Mount Tabor Shining like the sun.

The disciples couldn't bear it. That's what you just received it. The liturgy. That same light that same life that same unbearable unadmirable reality, the more that we prepare to receive that the more we'll receive in the sense of actually reciprocate and and internalize ourselves.

And that's why prayer is such an important thing. If I was to say one thing, like, okay, in my book, like because we don't have a lot of time, you know, But in my book, I you know, I wrote this book in response to people asking if Paris is just tell us what to do.

We want to know how to pray but we just can't you know a prayer book sometimes is it just enough for us. So what do we do? So there's a prayer role in here, there's sermons, there's different articles about orthodox, thought and so forth. But if you were consistent at doing a per roll, that's like prescribed in this book and all it basically that I'm asking you to do on a, some basic level is to try to use the Jesus prayer as a tool, not as a mantra.

And not asking anybody to be mantra about this or any kind of like, you know, vain repetitions, you know, repetition, it didn't say, is bad in the gospel since vain repetitions between, I'm not paying attention. Use the Jesus prayer. Try it for like 10, 15 minutes. Read the gospel.

A chapter a day. Interact with those those words because in John's gospel crisis, the words that I speak to you they are spirit and they are life. As a message of life, John's gospel wins. Saint John the Evangelist here. He was the closest one to Christ. It says he leaned on the Muslim of Jesus at the last supper He was right there next to his heart.

He could probably hear the heart of Jesus beating bump bump bump Jesus, right? I mean Our Lord. He's right there like The closest person on planet earth to the Lord was John, the Evangelist. And it's he that tells us of this wondrous mystery of the Godhead incarnate, God appeared in the flesh.

Seen by angels justified in the spirit received up in the glory, God was manifested in the flesh. It's John's gospel that gives us this word of life, you know. It says even in John's epistle, he says, I that which we've heard that, which we have handled. That's what we have.

Seen concerning the word of life, the word of life, we speak to you. It's in the gospel. Read the gospel. Please, please, please, please, please, please. I come to you from a far, land. I beg of you. Try to learn how to pray. It's not like you're going to be able to, to learn how to do it, unless you just do it.

Saint John? Klimica says, you can't know the sweetness of honey, unless you taste it and they can't do the sweetness of prayer, unless you just do it. And he says, prayer has a teacher all of its own. It's God. I can't, I can tell you about all the mechanics about prayer, but if you don't do it, you'll never know.

And the only way for us to know, God is to learn how to pray the most foundational and basic definition of prayer is given by Saint John Clinic as he says, prayer is converse and union with God. It's our conversation with God that affects our union with God. It's such an important

understanding of what prayer is.

It's not just blah, blah, blah. No, no, no, no. There are three different kinds of prayer. Prayer of the mouth, which is called verbal prayer. Prayer of the mind which is a little deeper in there. I'm actually focused and I'm doing it. I'm saying, I'm there mean it some level, there's prayer the heart.

That's what I'm talking about. There is a deeper form of prayer, which if we are consistent in our activity, in our practice of prayer, it will open to us. And it's essential that it opens to us, why? Because prayer is union with God, and what is salvation in the orthodox perspective, union with God.

It's not about dramatical. You come to the thing and yes, in them and that. So yet that sin, okay, not guilty. And then say, go be saved. Go to heaven. That's not it. That's not how we think. His salvation is predicated on his union and our capacity for you Union.

Saint Gregory Polamus is says as a soul is to the body. So is God to the saint. Is that close? It's that real. It's that like this. Right? We don't become God in the sense of like the confusion happens but we're so bound with him that we become one with them that I may be in them and thou and me that they may be made perfect in one Christ's own discourse.

In John 17 tells us this is eternal life they may know you knowledge. Know you like as you actually are not just like oh yeah it's Jesus but like deep inside. No. That they may know you the eternal God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. This is eternal life.

No to know. We have to know God and be still and what. No, it's the only way. But trying to do that with the Jesus prayer and allowing for stillness to be the better part that would say God is in the pause. To allow for some silence in my prayer and just quiet.

Not necessarily like Nirvana. Just like not saying anything and just allowing me to be present and watchful and there. Because reality is God, is everywhere. He's ever, present, filling all things. And I just need to tune into that frequency and, and actually catch it, and understand that, oh, he's here.

Sometimes when people are saying that Jesus prayer that to stop, Because it becomes too much and they realize, just exactly who they're invoking and who it is that they're talking to and they get freaked out because it's too powerful and they become like that. Stop. Because it is that real in the Old Testament, you couldn't say the name of God.

It was too. Holy. Don't do it, right? It was just like a four letter word. We noticed Yahweh. But it was just. Why? WHY? Or W? By WHW something? It was like, just, you know, but don't say it. Now, and we always know that don't take the name of the Lord in vain, you know, people do that all the time.

They say bad words, they take the name of the Lord Jesus in, you know, in a bad way, it's terrible. Because that is actually the name of God. It's a phenomenon in our own lives that when I myself became a Christian like there was really no hope for me to be honest with you, I have been a terrible person, you know, most of my young adult life I got kicked out of high school.

Right. But I'm telling you this, because when I was 18, my brother started going to church and they started praying for me. There's a protestant church just down the street. 10 people were praying for me every day. How long do you think it took me to get to church?

Thought maybe six months, it worked, It's not amazing. I was literally like going to be lost more or less but those 10 people's prayers to God. It's not because they were some great sanctity or even that they had like, the right and perfect faith, but because they were earnest and they asked God, and they trusted, and they believed and God, heard their prayers.

And here I am today. My mom prayed a lot for me too but that's another story. Well I don't need to go there and mom. You're listening. I love you. This you know recording good talking she listens to Facebook and so she's in Utah. Point being though, 10 people were praying for me, I became Christian it was a long process for me, took a couple years, a couple two, three years, that's what we call it in my party neighbor.

It's nephew talk, it's I'm from Northeastern Pennsylvania, you won't get that anyways, it's just a dialect. It's a regional thing. But it took me a few years and it was it was at some point that God revealed himself to me. And basically, you know, I had the thought I was coming down, I was on a hike or something.

I thought, I think I want to go back to church and I I was Catholic race Catholic and I went, I got I pulled into the Catholic church and was such a chaos going on. There was like, no, I can't go here. This is too busy and crazy. So I went back to the where my brother was at the Protestant church, and that's how I started kind of going back to church, and it's some point I realized This is God.

There was some moment in my life for God. Kind of just breathed on me. And my eye was open and I said, wow, like Jesus is Lord, he is actually God and there's this process that we can identify in In spiritual progression. If you like trying to talk to somebody about God, or want to talk to them about the church, don't tell them about the church.

If they don't even believe in God. Start with God, there is a God. That's the first level. And most basically there's a God and it's not me because if I believe that there's no God then guess who's God? I win. I'm all powerful. Why? Because, you know, we're made in the image of God, we can easily mistake.

This is this tendency towards self-divinization that started in the garden, God, being God without God. That's what the serpent's thing was. He said you're gonna be God, could be like God, you can know what God knows. I can't I could And then out we go, we're outside and we say, what happened, right?

But this tendency towards self-divenization is, is innate in us because we are God's image. We are made in God's image, so we can mistake the fact that we think that we're eternal. The soul is not eternal, it's created immortal, but it was had a beginning in time when I got Second one is that Jesus is God that's the second level of like revelation about this whole thing about what is actually true in this world, Jesus Christ is Lord No, man can see that except by the Holy Spirit Saint.

Paul says And then the third step that the church is his body is actual body, flesh and bones of Saint Paul says Say it fuzzy, right? Says we should never discount and and minimize that time when God revealed himself to us, that when we knew, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and he was God, and the Lord of our life.

So wonderful gift to us we're sitting here today we should rejoice. I mean like I should be glad about that. Say someone says it's no small thing to be called a Christian. It's God's activity in our life that actually makes it possible for us to continue to do this.

Otherwise we would just follow away. But instead incorruptible kingdom. That's keeping us here. It's not me and you it's just us, being willing us being open and available spiritual life, is not being great and all powerful people. It's about being willing, people, it's about being faithful people, it's about being prayerful people.

And that's why I say to you, it's like just try the Jesus prayer for like 10 minutes. You're if you're a morning person doing the morning, if you're needing person to anami, just do it involved. The body use a prayer room. I, you know, I asked them to send me some with with me some prayers and they give me these little tiny people.

Once they're tiny people, prayer ropes, but they still will work. But what is a prayer rope? It's just not in your involving the body in the work of prayer, which is really important because we're a body, we're not a brain, we're not a mind, we're not all those are parts of us, but the body is also a deeper part and the kingdom of heaven is within the body.

What is that kingdom inside of us? If not what was given at baptism? Saint Anoka's photos. He talks about this, how the grace of baptism is buried in the heart. And it's up to us through prayer and repentance in the life of virtue to uncover it, and to make it to blow on it and to make it brighter and burn more light.

And to become a force inside of us. It's already there though. That's the great thing about it. We already have the download. You have the hardware already installed to operating system of heaven? All you need to do is activate it. And how do we do that? The quintessential Catholic movement is based in that dialogue with God.

But how do I accomplish that? I become like the prodigal son and I come to myself. And from that point, I go back to God, that's the movement back to paradise. That's the movement back to heaven. And what is it? The same Gregory. Paul says, he says it's the mind turning towards itself.

There's so much to talk about. There's a little time. I mean, I'm sorry if I'm just giving you too much, you know, we can postpone investors investors. No no no. I'll come for a week. The quintessential problem with man, is we keep going out from ourselves? This is the fall Saint Gregorian, Palmas talks about this movement away from ourselves.

We're over here, we're shopping online now. We're worried about this, we're constantly moving towards the created world away from ourselves where the kingdom is. If there's any place that we're going to find God, it's the heart. The orthodox understanding of prayer of how to praise. I

need to put my attention.

Back into my physical heart and from there only, then to speak to God. Otherwise as well as echoey says the greatest tragedy in our time is that we live think, act move, and even pray outside of our heart, which is the father's house. It's this image of the prodigal son.

He's out in the prodigal land. He's gone away from himself essentially. We get dissociated and we get all sorts of mental illness. We get dissociated from ourselves and we're so distracted by all of the smartphones and all of this stuff, I have a smartphone, I'm always extracted, but it's the beginning of the end of that regard of like, I need to know how to counteract it.

The counteracting is me coming back to myself turning towards myself, then to God. And then speaking at that point and every time I go to pray, as I'm saying that Jesus prayer, I am doing this each time, it's a constant return back to self unto God, back to self unto God.

Because it's almost like the news, which is the attention, which is part of the mind. It, it actually, the home is actually supposed to be in the heart. It's house is actually there. That's, it's address. You're think about it. After the fall, those things were broken, mining, the heart, don't function together.

Our heart feels one thing, our mind thinks another we're all confused, everything's kind of topsy-turby, we don't understand. The tasks for us is to take that part of the mind, which is based in the attention and put it back in its house and keep putting it back there and tell the grace of God.

Actually fuses them together and makes them one again because they're separate right now. That's what the fall is in part, the mind in the heart, don't work together anymore, but they're actually supposed to be one entity on some level because we're one being, we're one person, thou shalt love the Lord that God with all my mind, with all, they soul with all, they strength with all that heart.

So, this activity of prayer is the only thing that kind of glues us back together. As the grace of God, that is the effect of force that it actually enables it to happen in real time, but it has to be a daily effort. 10, 15 minutes and Jesus prayer, you could do a couple prayers in the prayer book.

If you want or from heart, whatever. Read it chapter the gospel, and just a paragraph of something like hesitasm from phosphilla on the athenator just something very small. 15, 20 minutes, but if you do that, consistently thinks change the heart, begins to open. And that aperture of the heart is, is more receptive to what's going on in liturgy and to what's going on in other people.

And I start seeing the world differently because grace becomes the act of principle my being and that is like gas to the car like electricity to the light bulb. That's what we're made for. It's our it's our home, it's our destination. In fact, one of the fires said, you know, not only are is God our home but we're his home as well.

Any questions or comments, or thoughts or things somebody Wondering about yes. So you you mentioned the hearts several times and I was wondering if you can speak a little bit about what

we mean in the orthodox, tradition about the heart. Because one of the things that I run into many times is, you know, I can say that.

And then when I say, keep talking what I hear people kind of give it back to me. I know that they've heard something very different that I want to try to communicate because the understanding of the heart being emotions. Yeah. Or desire. Yeah. Right. People say, you know, well, with the heart means, I have a lot of feeling in it who are follow your heart, which means follow what I desire, right?

And there was a tradition, this is not what we're talking about. So would you talk a little bit about one? Mean, what we mean by the mind of the heart? What is the heart? Okay, so the first, if we're talking about person, right person defines orthodoxy because the person of Christ He's why we're a person and really we're only person potential.

It's only in the light of Christ that our personhood are put our potential to be a person is actually kind of actualized and what is a person. It means to be somebody who's fully alive in God, fully in God, fully with God and kind of united to God. That's what actualizes our personhood.

It's like a seed is to a flower. The light is God, the water is you know the spirit. But the center of the person is the heart. It is the deeper seat of feeling but those emotions which often times. Mmm, hijack, us for lack of a better words. Like we just get all crazy sometimes, right?

Everybody has this out of sorts. Anybody been there. I sometimes live there but it's that place where the emotions kind of take over. Unfortunately, that's part of the fall. And unfortunately, that is not what we're talking about. Fortunately that's not where talk about because those emotions need to be refined into spiritual feeling.

So it is the center of kind of our ability to fill, but even more. So it's the center of our person. And the center of the heart is the news, which is the attention, and that's where it lives. But it actually is kind of part of the mind and it's the mind needs to come down into the heart.

Those that activity of putting the mind in the heart before the face of God, is the thing that starts to bring about healing in our lives. It rightly orders, all of this disorder. That is so predominant in our thoughts, and in our heart. They're not working together. So this sense of like, what are we are?

We are desire, are we are emotions? Are we? This are we? That it's like only when the mind comes into the heart, in the grace of God starts to plaster, it all up that we begin to function. Normally we understand what we are, who we are and how it's all ordered.

Rightly

You know, same ocarus has a great quote about what the heart is. Play read it to you.

I have all these wonderful. I on my phone, I put all these scriptures on on from John, you know, those 39 scriptures. I just thinking I just there's so wonderful. I'll all of that scriptures about life. And about how in the Old Testament, life is connected with blessing. And again, the principal problem is death and so Christ is the antidote to death.

He is, you know, Saint Ignatius says, the Eucharist is the medicine of immortality and the antidote of death. So we have the answer. We just need to take the medicine and the heretic perspective of like phosphorus said, when we take, when Pesachism is the also the antidote to death.

It's the activity of like how we can internalize the medicine, how we open to it, how we make it our own. Same occurs as this wonderful quote about the heart, because at the very Center of this whole thing. If the center of the person is the heart. And person by definition is mystery, you can't define it.

The person of Christ. We know that it's hypostatic in the sense of like it's some kind of, it's substantive, but what it is, we can't really identify. It's, it's life in, its in, its ontology, is a sacred. Your life is sacred that gift of life, that gift of rationale, that gift of being able to be who you are and what you are, especially unto God, that's a gift and it's a mystery too.

How did we get here? You know, we just kind of appeared here, right? I don't know, you know I didn't I didn't do this. But my response to my life is kind of my opportunity to make it my own especially when I offer back my life with thanksgiving. It's funny that in the in the scriptures there's very few things and say here's the will of God people.

Listen up. Very few things like that. One of them is that God wills the salvation of all men. We know that's God's will for us to be saved. Isn't that nice makes me happy because I have a lot of troubles and problems, but to know that God's on my side, for everybody, doesn't matter.

Christian or not. That God wants us to be safe, everybody. That's great because it seems antithetical to some of the, you know, more modern thought, especially in Christendom that. Some people are predestined for hell, it sounds awful. And we don't believe that thankfully You know, is that I was going to do, I like to do t-shirts and bumper stickers, I had a t-shirt made, as it's drive to be predestined.

It was really nice. It had an arch on it. Somebody actually made it from me. I was down in Florida, somebody made it for me. Yeah, the same tea cons arch on the back. And the front, it said, strive to be predestined. I have lots of different t-shirts that I like to make ideas for t-shirts.

I don't make them myself too bad. No one is ever gonna see them. I have it at home. Yeah, underneath here. Well, I usually wear a Superman shirt. Or or like something that's like, you know, something that's black but I have a black supermature. I've told them But it surgeons, it's not superman, it searches because when you know it's s right Superman.

It's my name searches anyways. So, if the center of the person is the heart and really person is a mystery, like what we are like, what me and you are Can you define it? Can you put your finger on only when you've turned the mind towards itself in prayer, you start to look at it, you're like, oh here I am.

And there's God and you think God, what is going on here? And it's this mystery begins to unfold through prayer because everything takes us out of ourselves to go. Look at something else to buy something else to find fulfillment in something else outside of myself. When the

reality is all of the answers are in you.

It's all in there somewhere. I don't know where, but that's the journey like that. None, you know, the open up the door and there's just not interested in a chair. And they said, what are you doing mother? She says I'm on a journey, then they close the door. Like, that's that sort that our life.

Like it's in you, the kingdom of heaven is actually inside. You doesn't mean we don't need each other. No, we don't need the church. It just means that ultimately what you're looking for is inside of yourselves. We long for it, another people all the time. Oh, I've only people would love me.

Oh, if only people would take care of me, oh, only people would give me what I need and what I want. How about you give you what you need? Find it in yourself because you will never find it another people until you give it to yourself. It's weird thing.

I can't explain it. Certainly, we need love from other people. Certainly, we need to affirmation, certainly, we need those basic things but there's a certain core thing that if I don't find it in myself, I probably won't find it in you either. But the most part because if anything you're gonna show me, you are gonna show me me.

You're like a mirror and I see myself more often times than I actually see you sometimes because I'm dealing with myself, it's an inside job. It's something that's very complicated but the community life basically we can say community life is the mirror in which we see ourselves. If you if you know the old saying is you spotted it, you got it.

I don't like that in that person, we'll guess what? Okay, so we've got that. There's so great guess. What? Why are they taking all that food over there? Don't they know when there's other people guess what? You know, I mean, like, I'm being honest because I know how it I'm not.

I'm not immune from any of this stuff. I got the same problems. It's like, but I need to know where the episode of the problem lies. It's not in you. It's in me. I got to work it out with me. The unholy trinity me myself and I So the heart, this is the same as the heart governs and reigns over the whole bodily organism.

And when grace possesses the ranges of the ranges of the heart, it rules over all of the members, and all of our thoughts. Within your heart are unfathomable depths. There in your heart are reception, rooms and bed, chambers doors and porches, offices, and passages in your heart, is the workshop of righteousness.

And of wickedness in the heart is death, and in, your heart is life, your heart is Christ's palace. And there in your heart Christ, the king wants to come to take his rest with all the angels, the spirits of the saints and he dwells there in your heart walking within it and placing his kingdom there.

Your heart is what a small vessel in yet. Dragons and lions are there. Poison is creatures. And all the treasuries of wickedness, rough uneven, paths and gaping chasms. But they're likewise is God. There are the angels, their life, and the kingdom, their light and the apostles, the heavenly

cities and all the treasures of grace for all things are in your heart.

It's a mystery. It's a mystery but it is the center of me. And it's a center of me, being able to feel and know and understand and be present. And the most important thing for me to do is on a daily basis is to put my mind which is all scattered and crazy back into my heart and just speak to God.

Same thing of on the classic textbook definition a prayer standing with the mind in the heart before the face of God. So I come back to myself and only then do I open my mouth and I say, Lord Jesus Christ, son of God. Have mercy on me. I pause, I come back to myself.

On constant return. Lord Jesus Christ and of God I mercy for me because it just pops right out. It's broken. It doesn't know how to fit in there. It's a square peg and around hole, it can't and only by the grace of God does not think somehow get smooth out and worked in there.

Other questions. Comments problems. I know it's a lot. I'm sorry. I don't mean no overwhelming, I'm a seminary teacher at, you know, that's my day job. So I like to do this. Yeah. You focus much on this breathing issue. You hear a lot of people only in your science so that science or this no, well depends on how distracted you are.

But you can easily just read, you know, sometimes I'm walking around and I want to come back to myself and my body and I do it one in the same time, I breathe in Lord, Jesus Christ, son of God, I breathe out, have mercy upon me, it kind of brings me back to myself, you know?

I mean, so I'm just using it as a tool to kind of come together, but there's no way that that's going to be like an end point for me. Like, if I don't do that, I'm not going to be saved or something weird like that you know as much as it helps, doesn't matter what it is, do it, if it doesn't help, don't do it.

While the basic rule of thumb. So I just spent the week in Chicago at a retreat and the topic of it was the Jesus prayer and the prayer of the heart. And I one of the things that are speaking for the maximus Constant said was I can't remember who he quoted research.

You know, sometimes we can obsess over techniques and things like that, you know, that if I do this then that you know, when to become a, you know, just in that and worked this, if this then that right? And and he said, if you seek techniques, that techniques is what you go into find.

If you see God, then God is what you go to find, right? So sometimes this can become kind of an obstacle rather than a help to the degree that it helps. It is good. It is there in our tradition, right? But, when we separate that, as becoming kind of a technique to which will somehow inevitably lead us to deeper spiritual depth than then, we have kind of divorced it from from was supposed to be and and and our aim is software missing the more as it were and as we all know, missing the market, it's not a good thing for us, right.

But in that perspective it's so essential to understand what elderly knows does prayer as communion like that prayer of the heart like more towards talking about. It's it's it's communion. There's, there's a saying in the desert fires, some people when they go to communion, don't actually receive commune and some people that are church that are not

community are actually communing.

It's, it's a matter of the heart. So understanding prayer, as converse and union or communion with God, is a major paradigm shift about what we're not just talking about the most superficial form of verbal prayer. We're talking about that deep form of prayer by which I know, God, I come to know God through that communion that they may know the, the only true God and Jesus Christ will now set.

This is eternal life. Yeah, can I hear from you later? The the quote that you read to us on the heart? Oh sure. Okay I'll send you a picture of it because they took a picture of it on my phone. I don't bring any handouts anymore because I just put them all on my phone if I really need them.

You know it's like everybody else. Yeah. Now this takes it to you. Yeah but a lot of this stuff of what we're talking about is in my book. It's I designed it again just to be like the answer to all these questions you come out of these kinds of encounters where I'm talking with people, if you haven't read it, it's it's okay.

It's pretty good, but I it's like 15 bucks. I did, I made it small, I made the cover shirt. I mean, everything has been thought about even every single word in it. I sat around I was around table of every word for like three months. We talked about every single word in this book and how it was turned.

So that's what theology is. It's just looking at words and understanding the real deep nuance. That's it's that's in them and how they convey that meaning in life of God to the world. But yeah, so but also Christ's new book on hesitasm. I think it's also a very good book to end the coffee.

We made coffee so that will help you to pray. You know, I didn't fashion island. They had like one of their brands. It's called all night, vigil Yeah cool. What time do our lunch at noon? So we'll come back, we'll talk more about you know John John's gospel because there's so much to talk about just there.

But I really I was really struck by that you know the word became fleshed well in us. He's in us in that deep ontological way where he came and met humanity and went inside of it. And really he fulfilled the ontology of what we were created for man was created in the sense of like crisis the protoman.

He's like the archetypal man. He's not to some kind of oh man fill away from God. So let's send somebody and help them out. It's like they the incarnation was kind of the end point of all things long before. Anything was created that God would unite everything to himself in his own person.

That's what salvation is. That's what heaven is that God shares his life with us forever. That is our ontology. That was from before the foundation of the world Christ, it says was slain lamb. Slain ordained to be slain, why? Because this mystery of union was ultimate endpoint of all things, God with us.

God wants to be with us. Just, we have to be willing open able in a sense of like just available a spiritual life, just happens if we keep trying to press into it, trying to show up, trying to be available. It's very simple on some level. We just have to do it, whether it's prayer church services, a little bit of reading the gospel, just just do it.

The mystery will open in front of us. We don't have to be great starts and great, kind of luminaries. We just have to be available and listen. Try to listen to God, Maybe