

Liturgy as Life in the Gospel of John – Session 2
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[*Text automatically prepared by Google Recorder.*]

Anything that leads us away from God and that makes us feel worse and we get more decompiled through our actions. That are whatever they are. We would consider that bad and leading unto death. So it's a matter of ontology for us, it's not moralism. That's a very low level of functioning ours is ontological, does it lead us towards community with God, or away from that?

And that's why we say certain activities are good, quote unquote, in certain are bad. Why? Because the either lead us towards God or away from God, it's very simple. We're not against anybody, but we are for life and we want everybody to have that life and to have that more abundantly.

And so if somebody believes that certain activities will lead them to life and to happiness, well we know from experience that, that's not always the case. So we speak from our own experience. I don't, I don't speak from, you know, books and moralism. It's my own a monastic is somebody who goes through the entirety of all of the different little crevices and cracks of hell and understands the very well.

So they can tell them to people how to avoid them, or how to get out of them, or how to get through them, or how to use them, so that they can actually find Christ because see, somewhere down the very, very bottom of it all. It's the spasms about the inverted pyramid about how Christ is at the very apex of this inverted pyramid.

In all of the way to the world is on him at the very bottom of this descent and it shows us the through his own life. He models that he who Didn't say Paul says but he who first descended descended from heaven and then descended down to the very bottom of the very bottom of hell so that he might as same basis as fill.

All things with himself. The same for us. If we if we want to follow Christ, guess what? From the cross into hell, But not so that we perish but that we find heaven, because those saints, it's strange. But like other Joseph and Saint solo. One had the same experience where they were at the very, very bottom of the very bottom of the berry, bottom of the very bottom of the very bottom of the very bottom hotel.

And they popped out on the other side of heaven, and that's when they saw the egg created light and everything became radiant. They accepted that graciously patiently, prayerfully that seeming unjust, kind of verdict of what we actually are all experiences to some extent, which is the great cataclysmic fall of, which is just a little tiny bit of it.

We understand and can experience and say, oh yeah, we're a fallen world. One person said, I don't know what's worse, not to believe in God or not to believe in the fall. Because the ball is very real and it's much more than just me and my personal fall however, good or bad.

That is, you know, my own struggle is whatever. It's a cataclysmic thing whereby, we're separated from God, all of us and we have to work for this reunification of this. This this reunion with God, on every level of our being every single day, working against the entropy of our own minds and of that greater fall.

And that's why the Saints went like the same are like weeping and saying, oh, I'm the greatest of all sinners. It's not because they necessarily had a personal fall themselves, which was catastrophic and terrible, but it was because they saw the totality of the fall and how far away we are from the way that God originally imagined us that perfect communion in that, really that rest, that's in God to this place of toil and labor, they see that rest.

And all they can do is weep and lament because they see just how far away that we are and how sad that is. Don't really think it could be any otherwise because when God made us we were like you know Adam is like an infant. And we we we also replicate that same process of Adam and his life in our own life to some degree.

You see this? Like when we are? Little kids, right? Little kids, they have so much faith. They're kind of like, Adam in the garden. The parents are like Jesus. And Mary, you know, they look at their mom and dad. They're like, don't like God kind of they, they listen.

If they obey them, it's always good. And and everything's right with the world. When they disobey, oh my gosh, look out. The wrath of God is upon them, right? They experience that same kind of little microcosm because really the family is an image of the trinity. That's why we always say that it's really important for people to have children if they can, if they're physically able to why.

Because it completes that that that group, you know, that trinitarian part. Like, look at this stand right here. See how stable this is? It has three things on the bottom. Imagine if it only had two, it might follow over at any time, right? But because the fact that as three wats actually can't remember this, the bad example.

If I moved by, Justin it would be much better, but you still see it that that right, that tripartite of the tripod is actually like the most stable thing that you can have. So adding a child into the mix of a spouse to spouses, it brings great stability into it and it also images forth in this world.

Like we said everything in this world is kind of a parable of spiritual reality said, images forth a spiritual reality, which is the family of God by the son of Holy Spirit that trying to in life of which we are called you. We also have a little bit of that trinitarian.

Reality in our own existence as well. Just me myself, right? I'm also trying hard type. I have my mind my word and my spirit Just like God has mind word and spirit. The mind is the father, the word is the son and the spirit, is that power whereby I can I can talk and stuff like that.

If I don't have any air, you know, if I have emphysema, I wouldn't be able to talk like this. So it's it's we all have these like spiritual imperables in this world of reality and to some degree, we have to replicate and understand adam in our own person. So that, you know, when we become 13, everything falls apart and we become like, you know, cast out of paradise.

Things become a little bit more difficult, we go from angels to demons sometimes. Like, I was very difficult on my parents, but nevertheless, I needed to understand the fall and it happened in my own person and how that restoration takes place. So that it's only through that kind of experience that we can actually help other people.

So people always say oh wise there's so much pain and suffering in the world. Well let's not let's not generalize that too much. Pain is a phenomenon is you know one of the same pain is God's megaphone to rouse the death world. But in my own life, my pain is become my greatest strength.

My affliction is become the progenitor. It's like my gymnasium right? If you go to the gym and you're just pumping a little too to a pound weights all the time, how strong you're gonna get and you'll look silly right? Imagine having like a big muscle shirt on and you got two pound weights and you're gonna, you know, just be awful.

Like, it would be so, so dumb. But that's how we really want our spiritual life to be sometimes too. Don't we? We just want the tube. Just give me the two pound weights. That's all I think I can bear, but the reality is as we need more, we need more so that we can get stronger and then we can grow and then we can understand and then I could be more empathetic for you.

I find that when I'm in my worst possible place. Often, I'm the most empathetic that I could possibly ever be towards someone else. I feel their pain, their thought, their existence on such a deep level. And it's only that moment that I can really offer them. A real drink of cold water, Because I myself have experienced it, know it and and I know what it is.

I can I can see that I could taste it and in that moment I can offer something in that person can be reduced through it. But like saying some, he says, oftentimes the most difficult times in our life will find will be the most fruitful on spiritual level. So we should never be afraid of this unfortunate aspect of Helena life.

Interesting. Fascinating facts about the Bible. 365 times. It says, don't be afraid one for every day of the year. 365 times in the Bible. Don't be afraid when Christ comes out of the tomb what does he say? It says two things. This is the great. You know, there's there's a pre crucifixion Holly that's very short and it's two words or three words and there are there's one post resurrection homony after the tomb and the cross and it's basically two things.

The one before the cross, you guess he says what I say to you all I say to all watch watch and pray. This is he casting. Before we accept the cross and say, okay, I'll lose my life. What is the preeminent necessity of me? Accepting the commandment to die for Christ's sake, in the sense of like my own selfishness.

My not just, you know, martyrdom or whatever. But I mean, just like following Christ in denying myself watching. Pray. How do I do that, watch and pray? That's how it begins. Watchfulness is nemesis, which is hesitasm watch and praise this. It's this intention be attentive. Pay attention, be away.

Be aware, don't sleep. You know, you can disciples are sleeping in that moment. He says, look

get up. Come on, watch and pray because this is the, this is the word before the cross. It empowers us in strengthens us to bear the cross and the cross is not unto death but it's unto life, it's unto renewal, it's under resurrection.

That's what the life of faith says that's what experience tells us. Cross. It's only through the cross that, you know, in the services says, through the cross choice come into all the world. So it's really joy making on some level being able to accept and go through the cross.

But it's not typically in the moment because I don't like it myself and I never will. And I never all of our, all of our existence is always kind of like, no, Like the cross comes like, oh, please study again. I have no, I'm no. I'm not here. Tell him, I'm not home.

You know, they're knocking at the door and it's like, no nobody's home. And I'm sorry that I do the cross. No, not today but so often, you know, the Saint exotic bridge, you know, says between the cross and the commandments are wonderful relationship. He says the commandments. Love your enemies, love your neighbor, all of those command love God.

That he says, there's a one of a relationship between them because the commandments lift the cross on my back and, and fix me to it, the commandments are across, they are the revelation of God's life in this world. And we need to voluntarily accept that and constantly have. That's why I said reading.

The gospel is a really big part of that because we're constantly interacting with them, then we're not just reading Facebook. We're not just, we're reading the gospel, the gospel has a power Saint syllabus, is behind every word, is a power of it behind. The gospel is an uncreated power.

Just interacting with it. Raises me up, just interacting with it changes. My mind, just interacting with it, on a daily level after praying because preparation is needed. I can't just, you know, concise subject myself to the, to the words of the gospel. But I need to be rightly prepared.

Same servant, says, you know, light at candle, stand up, do some prayers, then read the gospel because it really is. This supreme power of incorruptibility the fact that those words have lasted for so long. They've been around for so long. They've lasted the test of time when everything else is fallen away.

The fact that we still sing the same words that we've been singing for Ever since the 700s, since the 800s obliged, some lives from the second century. How is it that those words are still here? If not, that staying power of that incorruptible grace, which are bides in those words, they have sticking power, they have stayed our and that power is transmitted to us so that we have staying power.

We have sticking power. We are able to endure the difficulty and the hell of our life and be not victims, but victors And so graciously and gracefully kind of saying, okay to the cross is we're really a big important thing. I mean, I I always tell people there's like four basic words that we can use for spiritual life that will kind of qualify everything and make helpless to make rapid progress the first word that we can say, is okay.

Your neighbor comes up to you says, hey, you're being a jerk, okay. Didn't know you should

have been done this that the other things like why were you saying oh I'm sorry. Okay. Being able to say okay to the cross to my neighbor to life and be non-reactive as things come against me very important.

It's a high level of functioning just to be able to accept things and say okay. On the cross comes you say, Lord, only by your strength. And I say, okay, Whatever be across of sickness across of a relationship failure, whatever it is. It's like we make the sign of the cross.

You see by your strength, the Lord, okay? The second word is forgiven. You know, there should always be on our list these few words. Forgive me, you know, always being able to save that to people and to, to be the first, you know, if I want to be a Christian, that I have to be the first to be able to love, to be able to be, kind to, be able to be merciful, and to be able to forgive Even if people wrong me, it's like a Christian is somebody that says forgive me anyways.

Why because there's something greater in, that's if I don't forgive God, can't forgive me. I bind myself through my lack of forgiveness. I don't bind the other person, they always say, lack of forgiveness, and resentment is like taking poison expecting the other person to die. See Yeah, I thought this was for you and killed myself.

Spiritually, I killed myself. So forgive me, as always in order of the day, I don't forget, I can't be forgiven. Even if like let's say we have a fight typically you know 10 to 90% is my fault. I'm never blameless, I'm sorry, that's just reality. I'm usually part of the problem because I am a problem.

I know I have a problem that deep sense of self-knowledge is really helpful to us in a way that makes us true. Because I know that, you know, not perfect. So I start with that and then I can always say forgive me because maybe it's the very least I made you lose your peace and therefore your communion with God.

Forgive me. The third word is. Thank you. You know, if we are not thankful to God, I don't know about you, but people with the monastery, if they're not thankful to me, I am very much less inclined to give them what they want if they're just complaining and complaining and complaining, more more and more, like I'm done.

That's it. I can't deal with you anymore. Why? Because nobody likes to complainer. And in the same way, with our relationship with God, we can't be complaining all the time. There's so much to be thankful for how many of you don't where are not wearing shoes right now because you don't have enough money to get shoes anybody because I'll buy you some If you don't have shoes, What is it?

The saying I I felt bad about not having shoes until I meant until I met a man who didn't have feet. You know, that's what my one. My one friend, he's a really old guy. He's, he lived in the depression and stuff. He always tells me that. Well, you know, You know, it's like and so I again puts it in perspective.

There's always something to be thankful for. There's always something to be grateful for. It's like the fact that we had lunch. Thank God. We had food. Half of the world doesn't have food today. And if everybody live like us in America, they said that it would take eight earths of

stuff.

Each with so much to be thankful for so much. I got new glasses because mine got washed away when I was at the beach. I'm thankful for my glasses, you know, when you lose your glasses and you realize you're really in trouble, you know, especially if you're in a far off land called the beach, which I don't really get to is like the person we've been to the beach.

In 20 years, I went out the water and there go my glasses. I was like, oh, that's right, you have to take off your glass. They go away. If you don't, if you're not holding on to things, you know. So I realized how thankful I was from my glasses and and and again on and on and on and on and on and on and thankful to see father a monster to be with all of you.

It's my honor to be here. It's like I love doing this. Like this is like I do this all the time. This, I this, you know, I'm my privilege to be able to be with you today and to do this, like it's not, you know, I'm not helping, I'm not, just helping you, you're helping me, you know what I mean?

And not only that. It's like, I need to tell you about the monastery. The monster I believe is like the most important place in America. It's the place that Saints loved and walked. And, and, and built with their own hands sainty. Got a moscow paid for half of the monastery himself.

We made priests, he's like my kid on some basic level. Like, We take, we know I'm always praying for for him and Matsus go all the time, you know? It's like a place. It's like the garden of Eden, you know? And that doesn't mean that my life is easy.

In fact, it makes it a lot harder. So just when we're talking about God, you know, I think oh well, my life should get better and easier. It's like, no, because God is a consuming fire. And really sometimes God is hell. You know what I mean? Sing Isaac. The Syrian says God is at one in the same time.

He says, heaven for the same and health for the sinner. If I am right. A wrongly related to God that fire, that's there, that's burning. So brightly there becomes for me, hellish and sometimes it's very difficult for me to be there. Why? Because God is a difficult God. It's not like, it's easy to follow God.

We all know that's a struggle, you know? But when you're faced with that presence on a daily basis, it's it's very it's very difficult, sometimes. I'm very painful but I believe it's like, well, like Saints are prone. He said he said, let the fire of God burn us. He says because you know, hell is God's presence.

It's just us wrongly related to it but the fire of God burn us, he says, because it will consume all that is corrupt and and and sinful within us. It's okay. He says that made me feel really good when I read that. I was like, oh I don't give me, I don't have to be afraid.

Don't meant to be afraid of God. It's like he still working for good in my life. He's still it's his love. That's burning me. It's not. His being always all mad at me. The rats of God is God's love, but I'm just wrongly related. You know, so How to gracefully and graciously accept the hell of life's of the turns into heaven.

The monastics it said they receive help and they they accept tells so that other people can have heaven. That's what they say for about. Going to a monastery. People always go. They're like Like heaven in the monks are like, oh my gosh melting up but I'll four like it's it's really that hard like it's so hard sometimes, but if there's any asset in in the American church it's the monastery that monastery because liturgy's been offered there every day for a hundred and twenty something years.

I mean we have no other place like that in America, it's like a thousand years. Those are their treasury, but our treasury is the monastery Saints. He got as adults. Why? Because that's where all the American Saints were. Serbian Greek Russian. All these people pass through. There were associated with their new of that place.

Love that place. And also two built that place and valued that place as the asset of America, it's where people have been putting that spiritual capital into the bank for as long as we have in America. Like, that's the place where we can take out you know, a deposit.

And I remember I asked father Anthony Father, Anthony Carbaugh. I asked him I was at his parish in Colorado and I said, you know he is this big Byzantine structure big. You know? Huge church. Very wonderful. Beautiful. Is this huge hall Byzantine looking home? I said, how did you do all of this, you know, because magnificent, you know, and he said with the blessing of saints, he comes monastery.

So just with a blessing, that's how I did it. Because there's capital there. It's like spiritual force, it's like spiritual power. We have to endure the unpleasantness of the the day to day but it's really God who gives the increase and where's our bank. The bank I've seen tegans I was looking at it like a bank, you know, people put in like let's say like somebody passed away a long time ago and they gave us their house, right?

They put money in the bank. And now they have a house in heaven. I'm I'm deeply convinced of it. I'm deeply convinced of it. Why? Because it was during a time. Remember back there, my secretary remember when we built the yellow house. The first house that I built At the monastery, the one when we did have anything at all and I built that that house, so we could have more room and more monks and stuff like that.

We didn't have anything and somebody gave their house. So I could build that house and I believe. Now they have a house and it's not made with hands and it's in the world, which is to come. I know it. I, you know, I know it, we got a house, they got a house, you only, you know, in spiritual life, whatever you give to God, there's no loss.

There's no loss, whatever you give to God. It always comes back, bigger better and greater If you give a lot of love to people for the sake of Christ and for your work and stuff like that, you'll get it back, much better new and improved. If you give money to build something like let's say you're new church or whatever.

It'll come back to you. I always find it like when the monastery is in financial trouble. I give more to people that are that have less and that somehow, it always works out in the end and we get it back in even more. So I never see loss in God and so never think.

Oh, you know why should I give to God? Why should I give to the church? Well, number one is his anyways. He gave it to you. If you're worked, if you work God gave you the ability to work. He gave you the blessing to have it. And And an ultimate sense.

The only things that you're going to keep in this life of the things you give away.

If you want to keep it, give it away. Telling you. I lost my life a long time ago and I keep doing it all the time and it's not like it's just a one and done but I gave up my life and went to the monastery and I've only gotten back gotten back better.

Like let's say I was I, you know, I was a person who like to do music, you know, in the world over that is It's out there somewhere and you know I had a guitar and playing guitar. You guys, 20, you know, 20. I went to my room, it's 23.

I'm 500 years old now, so but I, I like to play guitar and, and I thought to myself, well, it's like I'm just gonna give all that to God. And, and I'm just gonna go do something, which I think I got to do. And then they, I got to the monster and they made me the choir director and I traveled all over the universe with the choir and I had the greatest time my life, like it was so fun.

I was, you know, I got it back. I got that musical part back and it was actually better safer because, you know, I heard lately that, you know, they don't even have a guitar solo anymore and anything. So I would have been on a job, like, we're with that, I've gotten me an ultimate sense, but I gave it to God.

And then I went, I saw the world like, like, directing the choir and doing that for Saints. Seminary. But I mean, I was in the monastery, but I was acquired director for the seminary too, and I had a great time. I had a blast, like, I can't even tell you, like, I got it back so much better and I it was painful for me to give it away, but it came back.

It came back. I'll tell you another story. This is really good. My I went with one of the bishops to Russia, 10 years ago or something, and it was the 710 anniversary of Saint Sturgis's birth. The patriarch invited us and I was part of the official delegation and you know, I kind of was like the little token guy, you know that went along with the bishop and I need an arc command right and token recommend, right?

Send them, you know, anyone got one. So yes you'll do. They always do that to me. So I went to Russia and you know, because I was with a bishop, we get the to get the better treatment, you know, you got to get in front of all the rides and stuff like that when you're into places.

So we were having a pretty good time in the patriarch game. I just told the story of Father, David's church. So if you heard the recordings, I apologize for repeating it but it's just a good story because it illustrates the point, but the patriarchy everybody across and the cross, I have this a different cross of the patriarch.

This is from father. Hillary who got this from patriarchy. The second in memory of the Bicentennial Orthodoxy American 1994

So anyway, so everybody got crossed, it was this really nice cross of Saint surges. It was it was a

wooden cross and it was encompassed with metal and gold, you know, I was like a gold plated cross there was like as metal around the outside. It's kind of cool.

It's very original and the bishop though. He got, he got one with a crown and a little dangle doodly thing, you know, like this. And I just had, I just got the regular one and I wanted the the one with the car I kept looking at his, I was like, I've been arguing right away, why can't I have one like that?

You know, of course, you know, I'm not gonna ask the patriarch. Guys, I thank you very much. I take the cross and I'm not gonna say anything, and he probably would understand me anyways, because, you know, he doesn't speak English pretty well actually could real speaks pretty good. English bangs.

Point. So, I looked at the dangly thing in the crown I said, okay so we went home and my friend One of the many, many numerous, father Johns in the world. Didn't have a nice gold cross. And he I think he was a word that the gold cross and he didn't really have a nice one as like, well, poor father, John.

He should probably get, you know, this one just because I don't I don't know what do I need with it. Anyways, I have stuff at home and doesn't matter. It's really nice crossbow. So I gave it to us at five had taken and five, John, probably wears it now and he's like, you know, I was like that's great because I like giving things that are like really nice that I like to other people because I want them to enjoy it and sharing it and have a nice time too.

So I gave them the cross and then that was I think like in the summertime or something like that and then around Christmas time, metropolitan comes. And he says, I have a present for you for Christmas. And I said, oh my gosh, I've never gotten a Christmas present from Metropolitan so I said, thank you so much.

I take that the box. I open it up and guess what? It is. It's that same cross with the dangly thing in the ground. I got it back. I gave it away and I didn't give it expecting, but I just, I just gave it freely, you know, and it came back.

Like I actually the one that I really actually wanted. No, this is not. It is the different one. This is by Hillary's, I stole this one. But just case in point, you can't out, give God in anything, you give always comes back better. I've never, ever, ever seen it otherwise, never, there's no loss in God.

Don't let anybody or any of your thoughts ever. Tell you that if you put in time to prayer, if you type put in time to caring for the people and loving people, there is no loss. You'll always get it back better. Guys have been talking for a while, and we haven't really been on point of maybe questions.

First before we actually go back to what we're supposed to be doing. You were going to say something about the three words after the resurrection. Oh, to the two words before? Yes, thank you. So Christ comes out of the tomb and what is he said? First thing he says, don't be afraid Because part of death is, is fear.

Saint Paul says, second chapter of Hebrews something like He part of our flesh. So that through

death, he might destroy him. Who had the power of death, which is the devil and free those who all their lifetime were subject to the bonnet of fear. That inferior somehow you know fear kind of drives us to do things to protect and to try to be secure.

So if we have love and there's always that idea in in just in psychology and in theology you live out of out of love or out of fear. We we generally tend to oscillate between those two places where I'm acting out of fear because I'm afraid of what you might do or that I might lose you or that I might say something or I'm acting kind of love which casts out that fear and makes me so that I can just kind of deal with it.

Was it regardless of what's happening? But love is always going to have to be a choice. Fear is something. That's just going to happens to be their oftentimes, but I can't let it be the motivating force in my life and I have to choose love over fear often, and essentially faith over fear.

You know, faith is a choice. Love is a choice and hope is a choice. I choose love and that means to do what's right to will the highest good for you. And to will, what I believe is God's will and do it always with the son of the cross knowing that without him, I can do nothing, you know?

And so I choose love and that means I'm gonna act out of, I don't care how I feel about, whatever's going on. I'm going to choose love, which means to do to will the highest good in that situation for the other? It's a choice. And so it's weird because we're so selfish on some level that what we feel about somebody or even think about somebody somehow we believe can determine how we act towards somebody.

But the reality is, if we do it with prayer, there's nothing fake about I do it and according to the command of Christ, it doesn't matter how I feel and through that, I table my own selfishness because just not about all me and about my feelings. No, what I think will, you know, that internal kind of gobbledygook, okay, just table that and really, that's all part of the reactivity.

Anyways, That model log inside, which is based in reactivity, we can kill us. The mind left by itself, can kill us all those crazy thoughts and stuff like that. That's precisely what the Jesus prayers about is about, instead of engaging with the monologue instead of gauging with reactivity and engage with the Jesus prayer, instead as a choice and I table the monologue.

And I table the reactivity and I come back to my self and then I have a choice of how I'm gonna proceed. So, it has to happen in real time. The other word is rejoice. Christ says to the Murderers rejoice. Again, I see rejoice All hail in the King James, but in the New King James its rejoice, and they grab his feet and they says any and they worship So, it's really important that we see that that post resurrection word.

Like be glad, you know what I mean? Might as well. I know life is tough but we can still smile. I know life is hard but we can still be kind. I don't life is hard and sometimes even like unbearable we can we'll make it. It's okay. Like we have to have something greater than ourselves to trust into believe it to open and to look towards and that's the Lord, the Lord of life, you know.

And that word of life is, is really like we're talking about the beginning. That sacramental word, Saint, John Christmas. What is the one thing that is necessary in a siting like this? He says it's

not only the, the, the capacity and and acumen and, you know, ability of the speaker, but also the good will.

And receptivity of the listener The more that you believe that when like let's say five Zachary says this, like when we're in church we should be praying for the choir. We should be praying for the priest. We should be praying for the reader. We should be praying for the person doing the homily because like when I come out to do this, I go out about once a month.

I've been going out for besides comment about, you know, 20 something years or so, I can tell when people are really open. And, and it just comes out of me, sometimes like a fire hose. Like, I've just, I'm just the the instrument and it's just kind of pouring out.

Like, oh my gosh, like, I can't stop this torrent. And other times, if you don't want it, I don't have it and that gets back to what saints are only meant to say about his, the back of the The iconostasis behind the alter is the mystical supper again, Saints and Frania.

Somebody who saw God. So he basically threw and that's kind of the other part of Iconography is it? It's the beginning in the pledge of the vision of God. When you see an icon of Christ and icon of the saints and so forth. It's the beginning of the vision of God and the pledge of the future vision of God.

And so like it says in the canon of the thing it's 787 it says if someone doesn't venerate the icon of Christ, let it not see his face at the second coming. So on that back wall, there's Christ in the middle and and the apostles. And then Judas is going out of the back door on the another right of the left side.

He's going out and he see his like single profile kind of going like this and Saints are frowny, says the Christ could not give that farewell discourse of of John 13:32, you know Christ is now the son of man is glorified and if God be glorified you know if God be glorified, God will be glorified in him.

That beginning of the holy Thursday, 12 gospel sequence. Seems to probably says Christ could not give that word till Judas left the resistance, made it impossible for him to offer that tremendously, profound prophetic word, just that little resistance alone, whether bigger small the resistance alone made it. So it wasn't possible.

How much more in our own lives that resistance to God, that resistance to church, that resistance to confession the priest? All those sacramental actions will only be thwarted by our own resistance and disposition. So our disposition is incredibly important in a situation like this in a homily and confession in our own life of prayer.

Our disposition makes up the bigger part according to your faith, be a done unto you prayer as community if I go into it, understanding it like that. Like this prayer is like a way towards a mean storage union with God. Things begin to open up and change differently. Be my paradigm dictates how I actually kind of what I experience it to.

What degree I can actually enter into the true reality, which the church presents to us. Other questions or thoughts before we move along to other things. And the back. So before when Part.

I guess my questions would be. How? To. How can you tell when you're coming back to the hearts and not focusing on?

How does that have you tried to do that? Well, I think it's based on on my thoughts, the more, the thoughts, quite down and the more, the Jesus prayers meant to be the tool to kind of unite all of my powers into one little point so that I can direct that point to God and it's almost like a magnifying glass that starts to catch.

It gets like hot fire. Like it burns. It's something that creates a combustion as it were and Sing Gregory poem much talks about this about how turning it the mind turning towards itself, which is basically the mind training towards a heart, is it begins to affect he calls it.

The reconvergence of all of our powers and Father Zechariah says, it's it's in this that the big bang of the heart is possible. So that we pull everything back together and all that pressure starts to be created so that eventually the heart opens and that's when we can actually come to a sensibility of grace.

And sometimes it's, you know, for some people, it's very profound as in say, Peter says until the you do well, to, to give heat to our word until the day start of dawn in your own heart. It's that same one in the same vision of that one, in the same experience of all the same and all of the church, it's a dogmatic visionary consciousness that everybody enters into that's like the same thing.

Same experience is the same God diving degrees though. So when the thoughts begin to quiet down, and I use that the Jesus That tool after us, you know, typically, like it's the Lord's awards. I mean, if you want to know it's like, after about mmm, if you do consistently, like Christ says, could you not watch with me one hour?

The benchmark for a priest or a monastic or somebody who is driving for like deeper of the heart is about one hour. It's after that, if you do that consistently year, after you're the heart does open and we become sensitive sensible to grace. And like the fathers, say, we live by this divine and spiritual sensation, which abides in the heart, we become sensitized to it aware of it and it doesn't necessarily think we always carrying it around.

But it does in prayer start to kind of become palpable. And it's really important because it's a deeper place in the heart, it's a deeper place of of sensitivity to the fact that God is there and so on. I But when the thoughts quite sometimes in that still place, that's going to be when we start to have a sense of the heart and the minor kind of coming back together a little bit.

Tears are also another way that that that the heart and the mind are joined because we can't really have two thoughts and be weeping before God and asking him to help us. So in that place, you know, tears can become very effective in that. Mmm, reconvergence of the heart and the mind.

But really, it's only divine grace that actualizes it in its ultimate form whereby the square hole is filled with the round peg or vice versa through kind of the action of God which oftentimes is affliction that somehow it gets sanded down so that it can both fit back together.

It's the cross working in our life in a very real way but it's it's ironic because you know we talk about I'm not talking about when we say you know to graciously accept kind of the hell of our life in. Receive heaven. It's not morose at all. There's a joy in the cross when we accept it willingly.

And we understand that all things work for the greater good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose, with that kind of pre-free preemptive faith. You know, we can go through almost anything and come out, amazingly better. And hindsight is always 20/20. So, we look in our past we say, God is worked in the past.

I gone through difficult things that he's brought about renewal through them, and he's going to do the same today. It's that faith. That informs kind of the narrative, which is so important, but the heart and the mind, you know, again, it's it's grace and it's also the keeping of the commandments when we try to keep the commandments and live.

According to them, especially love of enemy style of one says that the love of enemies is not only in the, the main thing by which we understand that the Christian religion is true because only God would ask us to do that. And only God could help us to do that.

Because that's the way God lives. No other religion has this love of enemies and I think for me that shows that it's, it's the true one because that's how God lives. God loves all. He's like the son, shiny, just beams on everybody. Doesn't matter. That love is for everyone.

And for everything, there's no exception. But, From that perspective, we have to become like God and it's not just enough to be in his image and it's not just to enough to be even quote. In communion with God, we have to be like God, we have to move from the image to the likeness.

This is our salvation so that if you if you come up and you know there's the good story, you know, the monk he selling baskets in Alexandria and he says to the to the Well, one of the one of the people who always is buying baskets from, he says, you have to come and heal my daughter.

She's she's demon possessed. I don't know what to do. He's like, no, no, I can't go, I can't go. I can't go. No, you have to go. He comes, he buys like all of his baskets. He says you come to my house and I'll give you the money. So you got it by a ruse, You know, they always call it a pious.

I never somebody steals something in the church. By a pious ruse. Nicolas was moved to Paris. You know, it's like I think it was stolen. It's a nice way of softening anything, you know. So the the monk he was to his house to get the money for the baskets, you know?

Because the guy took all his baskets and he opened and and he knocks on the door and the door opens and it's the daughter who's demon possessed and she just rails back and she just clocks them, right? The face. How And the amount just turns the other chick like this and doesn't do anything.

He you know going the gut gospel commandment and the girl just falls back on the floor in the demon leisure. Mean. Just by keeping the commandment, not only do we actualize the life of Christ, but we also it empowers us and it gives us a different state in this fallen world.

So that even we get those, you know, kind of the obedience of the world as it were through this, keeping the commandment by our descent, by our humility by our Christ likeness, that's what gives us power. Real power is in serving other people. It's not in being served, real power is giving to other people and not always expecting to be, you know, compensated and get in return.

Real power is in real humility because it takes extreme power. Not to react in the face of injustice in the face of violence in the face of people, persecuting us actively Incredible power and is needed in, that's only from God, you know, The other question, who was it? Yeah.

You had mentioned there were forwards to make progress in the spirit. Oh the fourth one is very high. Picky stuff. Oh no, I didn't know we got, we got okay. Thank you and forgive me. So I gave you the three basic ones, but the fourth one is very advanced.

I don't know if I should give it to you. Everybody. I love you. You have to take it to the right way, though. Okay, you have to be right spirited. Rightly, you know, a good good disposition with this, but whatever. If it's actually all right. Whatever you're smiling. It's okay.

You're not bitter. You're not cynical. You're not doing because you're upset and you didn't get your way but just people. Come along things happen. Okay whatever. It's a very high level. Because you have to do it dispassionately in a way, you have to be good to have a good disposition and do it, but it frees us from the tyranny of all that other stuff.

Oh, you know your car just got in a terrible crash, the one that you just purchased, okay? Whatever, you know. I mean like it's that approach to life and it's not you're not disengaged. You just accept it's this radical acceptance. Really of reality. As it comes knowing that God is is really the the author of our salvation and through everything.

He's going to work it out, you know but life can be, you know there's there's an aspect of spiritual life which is terrifying. But you really get into deeper spiritual life. It's not a fun things sometimes, but how to gracious gracefully and graciously kind of accept the difficulty as Saint Isaac.

The Syrian says he says, you know, what spiritual life is qualified by, or what the actual definition of spiritual life is according to Saint Isaac. The Syrian you love this. You ready? Multifaceted forms of unpleasantness He says, that's what spiritual life is typified by. But why is that, is that just so we could just be annoyed all the time?

No, that's the way to just passion. Do you want to get better therapy? Have you ever been to physical therapy? What are they doing? When you go there? Have you broken anything lately? Have you broken anything? I remember this one time. I was with this physical, this one lady who went to physical therapy.

She had this Austrian or Hungarian physical therapist, right? Just a brutal lady. And she was, she's one of the faithful of this parish on the east coast and she's really sweet lady. And she said that she was never going to walk again. But she went to this lady for physical therapy and she was brutal.

Just like you know she would scream and the lady. Like yes, huh, she's screaming again and he's like good and like you know and she at the time, really thought that it was, you know, quite, you know, Yeah, like, what is going on here? You know, but she said, you want to walk again and she says, yeah.

She says, if you want to be like that guy right there, he says he can't take the pain. He says, he's never gonna get better. He says you can do this. You can get better as he keeps screaming and, you know, the process continued, and she's walking. Now, this woman is walking.

Why? Because she went through that difficulty of therapy, which was awful for her, but it made her able to walk and function again and be better. It's like that for for us in spiritual life. It's just a lot of times we get some unpleasant stuff, but it actually taking with patient, prayerful kind of perseverance.

It makes us better. It heals that which is lacking in us and that which is infirmed. They complete that, which is lacking and heals that which is infirmed. That's a prayer for ordination. But in all into some degree, all of us, ordained for heaven as it were. And it's a grace divine, that always heals that which is infirmly completes that, which is wanting, but sometimes it's through unpleasantness, but it's kind of like, sandpaper, you know, if you want something smooth, you got sand it down, you got those big power tools, you know what I mean?

Anybody do woodwork You know, it's just it's the way it is. It's we can't expect it to be different spiritual life, how to accept that? Okay, thank you for giving me. This is a short way and just another kind of three-fold kind of system for you spiritual life. You know, seems in front.

He has a three-fold thing that we can always keep coming back to these things and find inspiration. And renewal, he says, the Jesus prayer, the divine liturgy and the scriptures. There are three things that we can always keep coming back to and keep digging into and finding more in the liturgy itself is actually perfect prayer.

If we, if we're looking for perfect prayer, like let's say the same, right? They have perfect prayer, perfect type of static prayer. There's a prayer that exists in embraces, all things, even God and it is like in its highest forming us. This is a high school prayers, God himself in us saying Greg aside, I says But it's this prayer for all people in all places and all times and it's in the heart, this heart becomes so expanded.

And so enlarged through this activity of grace. And through the Senate life, that these people literally embrace the entire universe in their own heart and they offer it up to God as like a priest as it were of creation and kind of bring order into chaos. These are the great saints who bring this incredible benediction down upon the world and keep everything actually kind of oh that's where the outsides came from.

I knew they were coming from somewhere here. The case popped out this time I was like that altoid come from but it's their prayers. That actually kind of like this is a thought in Judaism that seven prayers, seven, righteous men's prayers upheld the entire universe. It's the same thing in Christianity that that Like seeing someone says, when real prayer ceases, this kind of deep hypohetic prayer.

It's like it is in all encompassing prayer where these people are praying for the entire world to God would preserve it and help it since. When a real prayer sees the same silence says, then the end of the world will come. So prayers the way that we work out our salvation and our union with God, if it stops then there's really no more reason for the party to continue.

The whole purpose is just kind of it's a mood point at that at that point. So, This hypothetic prayer, that's perfect prayer. That the Saints have these great Saints have that, we might not be able to understand or even, but we can actually enter into that perfect prayer, which is actually in the liturgy.

The liturgy is perfect prayer. It's actually a slightly higher form of presence, a saint would have. It's the perfect prayer of the church and it's ours, the more that we open to it, just personally to some small degree like in our own personal life of having a consistent life of prayer, the more we actually understand what's going on in the literature.

The more we actually gain from the energy and the more we enter into the literary, which is that perfect prayer So, the liturgy is itself, life, it's life itself, it's life eternal. It's the school whereby, we are initiated into the mystery of eternity by the Zechariah says, it's a school.

And same activist as it. Just going to liturgy. Takes us from a lower spot ontologically to a higher place to a better place just going there. Just being present, he says, takes us from a lower spot to a better spot. And that's that whole aspect of just showing up and being available, just show up, you know, how do we not make progress by not showing up?

How do you make progress by showing up doing your prayers going church? Helping out being being there, you know, and it's amazing. But in your patients, you possess your soul and if we endure till the end, we will be saved. This is the gospel. What was your question? Oh, the third.

That was the fourth one, right? Okay, I'm glad we got back to that. Okay, good, good. I would also offer though with like a threefold, you know, five. So funny has this. Jesus prayer scripture and literary, we can always go back to for inspiration. I would offer my own is basically prayer, confession, and communion Confession is a miracle.

I don't know if you know, Do you know Have you heard lately? Confession is I, you know, I've gone there and I thought I was gonna die and I came out like I'm fine. Everything's okay, God's on this drone and everything's fine with me. I thought literally if I died then I would be totally fine.

Like I just felt so at peace. And really all you have to do is just go up there and you just say the thing you don't want to say. Because that That's the easy way of how to make a good confession. What's the one thing? You don't want anybody to know what's the one thing that you would never say?

That's what you're gonna say. And if you do that, you'll be free because it really doesn't matter. Anyways, nobody's gonna know. The priest is gonna forget, I don't remember anything anymore. People, tell me things all the time and confession, you remember. Father, when I told

you this as like no, Tell me, I don't remember.

It's like I don't want to I was like okay fine. But it's, it's really a sleepers progress. All you have if we confess our sins he's faithful and gestimal. Forgive us and cleans us from all and righteousness, it is so simple on some level and yet, so hard. I ask why?

This echoes one time I said, do you ever still have problems going to confession? He said all the time, Because it's just that one thing that you don't want to say. Of really being rigorously, honest with somebody else. But in that moment, when I opened to the presa actually opened to God, And that pedicuresis of that communion or inner penetration of life of my life with God's life, it only happens when I open up to somebody else.

That that opens the door to Jesus who's knocking. It has to be real, it has to be real. And I can tell you though, if you haven't made a life confession ever, it's the greatest thing you could possibly ever do. And if you haven't been rigorously honest about some of the things that still bother you, it's the best thing you could possibly do for yourself.

Nobody will know. Nobody will remember, but you'll be free. Confession, like I have thought I was literally, like, I crawled into church and barely there. I don't think I'm gonna be able to do this anymore. I go to confession. I go to community and I go out to church, I'm fine.

I've seen people literally who have gone to confession and communion and who were like in the hospital and I'm gonna die. And then they went home, I have seen people in the hospital who are going to die and they got baptism and then they went home. Because the sacraments are life, they are life.

Creating they give life not only eternal life but also temporal life too because it's one of the same you know it's only there's like this thing was like oh I have life but I wanted eternal life it's like well you're already kind of on the right road. If you're already like pro-life, you know, that sets it like looking for life, you know, but I had a friend just recently This guy had terrible cancer.

Camera. What kind he's in the hospital. The doctor said you are going to die in a matter of days. Figure out some kind of preacher something to call because, you know, that would be a good thing right now is dad had been orthodox. He was a, I think he was Korean or something, his dad, they were in the embassy in Hong Kong or I don't know Shanghai and he became orthodox at the cathedral there a long time ago like in the 50s or 60s and So he said well I should I should probably call the local priest that the Russian priest so you can come baptize me because I think I've always wanted to do that I think I'll try to do that now because you know I got days to live.

So, my friend comes, He baptizes the man. It's like a Friday. The guy went home on Monday, No joke. And they couldn't figure out what happened. They said, what did the priest give you this? I don't know. As like, you know, they were jumped dumbfounded, this happened. Just like it like a month ago.

Like that's normal. I've seen that, like, I there was one girl, who was, she tried to commit suicide? Her mom was my personal, she wasn't baptized but the mom said come, please right now my daughter's dying. She just took all these pills. She's gonna die, they say she's gonna die said okay well bring my stuff come in there.

I said what do you want me to do? She says can you baptize her? I said, I guess so. You know she's unconscious. So we did a death bed, baptism, and she went home like two weeks later. Why. Because Christ says, I am the resurrection and I am the life of anyone comes to me.

I will know means casting out because I live you will live also. These are the promises of life. The liturgy is life. The sacraments are life Christ himself is life. The words that he speaks to us our life. It's all about life. The gospel is life. It's the words of the words.

I speak to you there spirit and they are a life we need life, we are in a fight against death. We need to be pro-life for ourselves in the sense of everything that we do needs to be oriented towards this thing of communion with life. And John's gospel is that is the easiest way, you know, if you haven't been reading the gospel, I mean, I remember a friend, he would always just say when people come in the church, they're coming from different places and he didn't have a lot of time to categorize, you.

So just read John, start with John. They would reach on and they just their brain would start changing and reordering and start being kind of Turned around for good because John is so powerful. John's Gospel. Just the first 18 verses the prologue. It's called The whole thing, you know, they about John's Gospel just as a side they used to think like the Johns gospel was kind of like, and literal, literally literaries, like, literary level of John.

They thought it was kind of low like that doesn't really make sense. You know, they got this thing and then he's all of a sudden over here and there's obviously some of this Batman there. So they thought you know, in there all their profundity that they were just so smart.

And the Johns gospel was just, you know, down here but it wasn't until the mid early 1900s that a man came along and found out that John's gospel was actually one of the most complicated literary pieces of the complicated literary pieces that's ever been written on planet Earth. It's obviously divine inspiration, it's written in something called chiestic structure and kiasic structure is where everything kind of links up almost like a menorah or something.

So you have a b, c d and then see be a, the ideas correspond. The first idea to the last idea of the second idea to the second of the last idea there, I did to the third elastic and then you have a center point of like, like a full component of a center of a thought, like here's the, the critical thought.

So the first 18 verses of John just as an example in it's it goes all throughout John. It's not like there's just some parts of it. It's like chapter one matches with chapter the end of chapter three you see? Like the Baptist in both of them Saint John's, in the end of three, the chapter three talking about, you know, if any men doesn't believe the sun, then the rap of God, it binds on him, he's talking at the end of It is also talking in one.

There's all this character from Beginning the end all over the place and the complexity is maddening. It only could be by divine origin. There's no way for somebody to figure this out. It doesn't it doesn't. It was too, it's too complicated. But in 18, those first 18 verses You see one?

How one is in the beginning was the word, the word was God, where he was God. And then

that 18 is a, let's see. Chapter verse of 18. And we be held to score. The only begotten of the father for for through. Moses came the law, but through Jesus Christ, grace and truth.

The penultimate, or that's the center point piece of the of the of the chiasm is verse 12. So as many as received into them, he gave power to become sons of God. That's the center point of that chiasm that goes back and forth and all of it is perfect.

It's so perfect. Like you could you could talk about the first 18 verses for your entire life and not get done with everything. I wrote, I didn't a whole paper like just page after page after page on the first 18 versus John, I couldn't get through it all.

And there's a whole book, you know, and it's funny because it's one of the only gospels that actually has like a major like like point. It says and said to you are are these things written so that believing you might have life in his name. It's like this certain sense of like why is John doing this?

You know, there's so many beautiful things in John. Like, remember like, you know, the Protestant idea of like Jesus that ever virginity of, of the mother of God, how Protestants, and some people even in the Orthodox Church bulk at that. Guess what, John proves that the married didn't have any other kids?

There were other children with Joseph, except Jesus, you know, I know. Because on the cross that detail is given to us about. Mary behold your mother John behold, it was a married, behold, your son, John behold your mother that would have never happened in Judaism. If there was any other children never it was like, it would be forbidden, like it would be like, major faux pasa terrible sin.

Don't ever say that it shows. There were no other children because John was actually his nephew. It's the closest kid. So guess what? John gets the mother of God. And mother of God goes to live with John and Ephesus and that's where she passes her days. But that detail.

That's small little detail is some critical importance to the whole thing because it shows that Joseph didn't actually know Mary quote, unquote, after she was after Jesus was born and in that biblical context, just because Matthew says, until Jesus was born that you know, Joseph didn't know her until Jesus was born, it doesn't mean that after he did.

It in a biblical sense like you know that that verse that Protestant sometimes uses LC Joseph, had other children with her. It's like in the biblical context that way, that that is actually said, it doesn't mean anything to that to that degree. It means that It doesn't mean what it actually sounds like from a biblical set.

Like the Lord will reign forever and tell he's enemies, get put under his feet. So does that mean that the Lord is going to stop raining? After his enemies get put under his feet because it says Joseph didn't know, Mary and tell Joseph until Jesus was born. So there's there's all that subtlety in the scripture.

The echo understand but John proves it. It's like that is a credit incredibly important detail, as well as That the naysayers to say, well, Jesus actually didn't die on the cross. Number one Christ

gave up his own life. He says, no man takes it from me. I laid down of myself.

Right, he himself. It was like kind of perfect like it was all perfectly time. I'm just I'm always. I'm always amazed to just how cohesive all of the scriptures are this. Crucifixion was foretold and graphic detail from like five, six, seven, 10 centuries before it happened. Perfect detail. Perfect.

All of the details are in the Old Testament. Exactly. And everyone of in Christ comes and perfectly fulfills. Every single one of them. The lamp was always slain at 12 o'clock. On on that holy Friday. That's when Jesus goes on the cross. At three o'clock Christ gives up the ghost.

It says he lays down his own life and the soldier comes in pierces, his side with the spear, And that shows this massive hemorrhage that had taken place in the heart and with water coming out with the blood, it's only the confirmation of this, major hemorrhage of the heart.

And it fulfills that prophecy from Zechariah and they shall look upon him. Whom they have pierced and he who saw a record were witnessed in his witnesses. True it says so John's like I'm not kidding around here everybody. I saw it. You know if you want believe me that's like it's fine but this is these are the facts.

We have an I witness was like through the whole thing that's funny because you know in our in our life so often we'll be on the cross and basically all the disciples in our life are gonna abandon this and they'll be like one or two people with us and that is the norm.

That is the norm, I'm sorry. They had to go to a party. I don't know. They had to go somewhere, but they were with us, but it's so normative. When you see, like Christ in the middle, the mother of God and Saint John, those are the only people that are left.

But it was enough and in the same way with us, when we're on our cross, God will send us a Saint John or a mother of God and it will be sufficient. It will be enough. We don't need a whole bunch of people there. Anyways just wanted to close people is really like God will provide he won't abandon us you know it won't always be like we wanted to be in and don't want to always look like we wanted to look and then won't even be seemingly enough of what we need but it will be sufficient for us to get through.

John's gospel does just it's exceedingly complicated. So exceedingly, amazing, the main theme is life and that much more. Abundantly, we are pro-life in the sense of like not just about, you know, abortion or I think. But just all across the board, we do what leads us to life. It's so essential for us, prayers, the first and foremost activity.

Having a right disposition and trying to constantly, ask God, to bless the things that we're doing, and to bless the people we're with and to bless our lives. And and how it's going because that bad disposition. Sometimes that we create it only frustrates the process because all of us get this, don't we, you get all commercially grumpy, they call it unhappy dissatisfied for me, all that kind of stuff.

But we don't realize so often that we could change that narrative with a bit of prayer and that if we did change that narrative, things might change as well. Sometimes we are cells, are our greatest sort of most Greatest problem, you know, for ourselves is me What is they say?

I bet the enemy and the enemies me. You heard that saying, love your friends, sorry, love your enemies because you made them you know it's it's that aspect of of our lives where we can change the way. We think about things, we can change the narrative and it always starts with the sign of cross knowing that God can.

But I can't You know, I can't fight all those thoughts, but I can pray I can't, you know, love people. But I can try to intentionally bless them and do the right thing and try to act in the right way with the signing process and God to help me and bless what I'm doing.

And the easiest way to make progress and to have a good life and to make things work out, is to constantly ask God to help us and to bless us. And to be with us that constant invocation of the aid of God will beget and bring down the aid of God into our lives.

We have not because we ask not, but if we see socially asked, we would, ceaselessly have, It's up to us. It's really that simple. Say why can't remember go the time? I'm very busy. Well, how about do what you can? Do it as often as you can. You'll see it's especially when you're backed against the wall and things are totally impossible.

That's when we say, oh God, please bless the situation. To help it to work out and guess what? Miraculously it does. Whoever hoped in him, says the prophet and was put to shame. Other questions and comments thoughts.

Remember the question you want to ask is typically the one that other people need to know and/or will bring about some kind of you know, Help for somebody. Yes. So you were talking about monastics, monastics and their unique experience that their experience of held is that Anastasis in versus like the other path.

Like, I don't understand similarities between But is that the particular device either way, we're going to get crucifixion, right? If you're in marriage, it's it's, it's, it's, it's, it's inevitable. That you'll have to You know, compromise. But in Manassas, isn't it? Just because they're such a one-pointed focus on the spiritual life, that there's really nothing else going on so you don't have a lot of distraction to make it so you you could find a way out some some other way and kind of get away from it.

Just always there in front of you. There is no escape as it were To some degree and when you sign up for it as it were and kind of commit to that and he says it's a good code, good or bad come hell or high water. I'm in it.

And hell and high water come and you like, oh, what did I do? But they were just gonna happens like that too, though. You know, I remember my friend telling me, I woke up one morning. I said, who is this lady in my bed? It's like, that's my wife.

You know, you don't, you don't really realize what you're doing until you get into. And then you're like, oh my gosh, what did I do? But it's precisely in that moment that if we can Remains faithful and do the work that really the fruit comes and it's really important for us to to experience a bit of help.

One of the same define says, A sole and tried by sorrow was good, for nothing. You know, so I I don't think that, you know, always having it our way and always getting what we want and always, you know, not having really a lot of troubles and being really, you know, comfort is always kind of the enemy of the crossing.

I think. The series says he says, no man accented to heaven on as through the means of comfort. So often we try to comfort ourselves and it's not necessarily a bad thing, but it can be excessive we have to kind of moderate everything but really that radical acceptance of our situation, whether it's in marriage or monasticism, either way we're going to be crucified.

We're called to the cross to carry the cross and we work it out in a community. Manassas communities. Like it's my family. Like I'm the dad and the mom. I'm a single parent. I have a mortgage and I got a bunch of kids at home that I'm worried about right now.

I'm wondering what they're doing right now. It's like I look at, at the clock all the time. I'm saying, right? It's six eleven right now. They're having dinner. I hope that person got that food out. I'm thinking about that, like I know right now they're all, they just got out of church and I'm thinking about them all the time, all the time.

Like I'm the guy that takes the light bill. I'm the guy that makes sure there's food in them. In the fridge. I'm the guy that when that cook can't cook, I go in there, I cook. You know, it's out. It's like, oh, dad the fish, I don't think is done.

It's like oh you know and then you know, we're all everyone's late and it's crying and, you know, it's You know, it's the same thing. I have my little family and it's, it's hard. You know what I mean? It's hard to make the bills. It's hard to to be a single parent, single dad.

It's hard to to do what we do, but we we got help. We do it and he sends the help that we need and in a marriage. It's it's no different. It's it's the same thing. We need community, the community, the church. We can't be saved by ourselves. Like you're the better part of my life.

You're always going to give me what I don't have, but that is it mean it's more. Oftentimes, you have to show it in me but the church is salvation. So whether I like it or not, I mean, God doesn't call us to like people, he calls us to love everybody.

It's so it's really different. It's not about like being picky and me like, oh well, you know, I really identify with this person because they have the same hobbies or they're just it makes us more universal in our capacity to love and receive because if I can receive you, I'll be able to receive God.

If I can't receive you, I can't receive God. Was that Christ, says if there's just there's a not a place of if there's a place in my heart for just not one person. If one person can't be there, then that means God can't be there. So if I kick you out I can't forgive you.

I understand me here, right? I'm gonna, you know, bottle of, you know, you're terrible person. It's like, I'm black balling. You. It's like, well, guess what? I have made myself a stranger to grace. I'm punishing myself. And I, you know, sometimes I I, I've been tempted to do that in the past, but it always works against you.

And it doesn't mean that you don't protect yourself from people and doesn't mean that you never tell them what you think, or feel, or want or really need. But it means that you have a certain sense of responsibility where you don't always have to be compelled because of your passions to kind of do that.

You do it when you because, you know, it's either going to help the situation or help you. Sometimes we don't help ourselves because we're just so reacting. We just start kind of sputtering and we end up hurting other people on ourselves in the process. So, community, life is exceptionally important and manuss it's just experience spiritual life on a deeper level, it's, you know, there is no real difference between monastics and married marriage life, married life.

It's differing degrees of the same phenomena. There's only one way price is the way, there's only one example are in one kind of prototype, Christ's himself. He didn't have a hot house, he didn't have a wife. He didn't have a bank account. He didn't have, you know, he had basically, he was a monastic, but we're all kind of trending towards that.

That anyways, like in pious orthodox countries so often a lot of people end up once the children are are grown up and everybody's gone, they often sometimes they go to the monasteries themselves. You know, there is a certain degree of chastity and obedience and poverty that we all need to practice.

Married or not and I look at my Godfather he's in the nursing home now. You know it's 97 years old and I think to myself We're all kind of going to be monastics, one day. Anyways, we're all going to be alone to some degree because I know, like, I go to see them all the time.

But most people in the nursing homes, they only get like one visit a year on average. Like that's like the statistical average of people in the nursing home. They're going to be alone. They're not going to be thinking about relationships, but they're really going to be faced with themselves.

And so at some point or another, we're all going to kind of be there. And so we might as well try to kind of streamline now in the sense of not necessarily Whether you're married or not, it's it's the same phenomenon. It's like we have to become serious about our spiritual life.

Why? Because everything's going to pass away. And the only thing that I'm going to keep is the things that I've given to God. And to other people, my love my time, my resources, and even to some degree. You know. My heart. God, you know, I remember one month he is always say he said, you know, doesn't matter when you're in the patriarch or whether you're the baker or whether you're the the bum.

He says when you come before God everybody you know just gonna say one thing I said, what is in your heart? That's all he will ask you. Because that's a little be left. As it is an interesting that I think it's the what is it the night they when is it that the heart?

He's a 40th day of the hardest, like one of the last things to decompose. I think it's the 484-yard day and that's why that for you is like when God kind of places you where you're gonna finally be as a fore taste in the world to come up, either the good part of the bad part but it's takes a long time for the heart to actually finally kind of deep, you know, decomposed to be gone

because it's the most central part of where grace abides in men.

So there's a lot of incorruptibles, though. I know that I've seen a ton of incorruptibles in my life, I was looking at. I was wondering where saint theodora was and I remember I saw a saint Theodora, she's an incorruptible. Did you know that she's in Corfu But she's in corrupt.

I was in I was in Barrie and I went to see Saint Nicholas and there was like this downstairs. I they have these cripp chapels. That's where Nicolas is. They went over to the next church next door and I went down to the Crip chapel and I saw this lady over there, she was kind of like, you know, where that temple is over there as icon.

I was like looking at some of the other things in this lady, she's wearing a dress and she was kind of up on a bench and she was like looking out the window and I was like oh you know she's got interest. I felt this presence like somebody was in the room with me.

So I'm looking around at all the paintings and things that are in the room and I come around to the front of the table and I realized this lady's under glass and she's got her head has been cut off and been put back on and she's incorrupted in there.

She is. She's a second century mortar. Oh, but it was like this sense like there was somebody there and like that she's in corrupt, she's just there kind of hanging out and but she's one of those people that's like, you know, that it's a saint and she's just in on, you know, in a rel Like whoa.

No That it just blew my mind because the whole phenomenon was like of a living person and then when you actually get around to the front, I was like her head has been split from its not on her body. Is that open your rounder just so many every so many years?

No, it's open all time. You know, in corrupt, Saint, Saint, Joe, Chinese still warm. He's 500 years old, he's still body temperature. Yeah, they open up a little thing on on his. There's a, there's a little door and you can kiss his hand and hold his hand. And he's warm Saint Mary.

Magdalene foot still warm she'sn't seen Anaskeep upon Manitos, Still warm, lots of saints is still warm to still, like there, you know what I mean? So it's this sign that we weren't made. We didn't work created for death, that we were created for life and that in Christ's life.

And that we're somehow restored to that life, which is paradise. And that even though we die, we don't die. We still live. We live in Christ. We're still wearing out their shoes. Well, that's Saint spirit on. Corfu each big changes shoes, every couple months, because they're dirty. Yeah, he's out and about I don't know where he's going and I don't know when he's doing but I see him.

I saw him in Corfu. Yeah. And they give his shoes away because you know, they're like kind of it keepsake for people. But he's from the fourth century's incorrect, still? Yeah. There's a lot of us that

I've Common with That's why the church is so important. That's your community. Because, Children's grandchildren. But then God has given God children, right? Wait, yeah, it's it's the church community. That's still always the larger context. So we should never try to to alienate

our social them. And, you know, if we're looking for an excuse, it's always easy to find one out of a relationship, whether the church or a marriage or a monastery.

I've had people demonstrate because I've been there so long. It's like that. They really wanted to find. They're always looking for an excuse to leave. I'm just like, oh, don't you don't even need one. Just going on, why? Because they're just, they kind of become disgruntled, you know what I mean?

And if we want to really find a reason to leave the church, we'll find one. But if it's really the, the witness of our more, our own martyrdom, that witnesses to the life of Christ to that sense of like, if any man wishes to come after me, let him take up his cross, he saves his life.

We'll lose who evolution his life. Will save it. There's a certain aspect to where we just trust in the God, who raises the dead. Into his hands and then we just kind of stick it out. And that stain power in the church are in a marriage or in a, in a monastery.

Sure there might be dysfunction and so forth. That doesn't mean that we don't protect ourselves but more often than not like most of it's tolerable, you know? It's in that prayerful patient endurance in that community context, that we work out our salvation and it's not going to be easy and it's not going to be perfect and it's not going to be great all the time but really it's necessary when we're left alone.

You know, that's why they says it's good for a man not to be alone. It's not just talking about marriages just talking about in general. We become weird, we get all sorts of crazy ideas in our head and we become very unsociable. And unless we bump against people, we don't get our chips taken off and, and have the opportunity to grow and to become patient and become tolerant and kind and loving one of the fathers again.

Saint, Isaac says it says, if we flee temptation, we flee virtue. Because only through temptation and difficulty that we acquire virtue, there's no easy way. Let me tell you a story. I love stories, you know.

True story happened just a little while ago. One of my Godfather's friends came to the monasteries, very pious man. And he says to me says, father says, if you could ask God for one thing, what would you ask him for? I thought to myself my goodness, I don't really think about this anymore.

Like I don't even, you know, think to ask God about anything, he said paying the bills and kind of, you know, making sure everything kind of comes together and keeps moving, you know, that's my only focus because I'm the habit. So it's this, my job take care of the monks.

It's a father. If you could ask for one thing for yourself, what would you ask for and I said, hmm, think about that. I was on the spot. There's like mmm, you know, it's like kind of like when you're like genie or something like that, you know. It's like what would you ask for?

I have no idea. So I said, well, I guess I would only ask for strength to keep doing what I'm doing is God would give me, you know, more strength and there's always that that thought in patristic life. Be careful what you ask for, because you might get it and it will never be what you

think it is.

Never never you, you ask for sure that God grant me patience and then somebody comes up and pushes you or, you know, starts yelling at you or, you know, give me humility and somebody starts. Persecuting you in church, don't ask for anything, except God's mercy on some basic levels.

It's real important because you could get, you know, Get in trouble. Anyway, so I said like it dummy. I pray for more strength. Okay, I will pray for you that God grants you that. So, so about a couple months later and I just told Montescape about the story the other day, my Godfather got really sick.

It's 97. So, you know, And he wasn't eating. And so home health was coming and I was trying to manage the situation. I'm running the entire monastery. It's it's the like two weeks before great lead, so the church will cycles going crazy. It's really weird the week before great land of monastery because you test out all the gears in the lengthened cycle.

You have this weird conglomerate services that kind of shift in and out of lent. It's very complicated. So unless I'm there I not sure if it's really going to happen that. Well, it's just, it's, it's dangerous to these gears anyways. So there's a couple weeks before letting he starts getting sick like oh gosh, what am I gonna do?

So I call call home health and home health. Like, yeah. Well, you know, he said, you know, obviously when you put them on hospice. So it's like, okay, put them on hospice and so I don't hear from them for, like seven days and I'm there by myself, trying to manage a situation that I have no idea how to do, you know?

He's not eating, he's not drinking starting to shut down. Trying to take care of him. And it gets worse and it gets worse, and it gets worse and again, worse and worse. And finally hospice shows up seven days later and I'm basically up all night taking care of him and doing, you know, the the nurse thing diapers and everything.

You know, is very complicated and unfortunate but it's just, you know, just he's like my dad. And just got worse and worse. So hospice comes and I'm still, they give me all these new medicines and it makes it way worse. It makes it so much worse because he's on drugs now.

And I don't know what to do. I'm just, you know, here have this I guess squeeze that there and try to give them some. I don't know, like I don't know what I'm doing. Okay. I I build buildings and you know clean. I'm a janitor, I'm a construction person.

I'm not nurse, right? I could try. But I just it's too late. So now he's on drugs and he's getting weird and then nurses only coming like, you know, every other day or something. And I'm like, I just can't do this anymore than there's some drama with the, with his other family and it took a while before I could get him in the nursing home.

And it's basically just breaking me, you know, I'm just like, I'm at a breaking point. It's, it's the first week of great length and he's telling me crazy things because of these drugs, you know, it's like, hella doll and morphine and stuff like that. I mean, he's telling me weird things and it's like

late at night and I'm like, oh my gosh.

Like and and I started to scare me, you know what I mean? And I'm like, I got The nursing home because it's way past my capacity and, you know, everything takes time. So, just to get into a nursing home with able to do this, you have to sign off on that.

So, finally, three weeks later, I get into the nursing home, still in the nursing home. Now, he's doing, you know, it's good days and bad days, but and it was a nightmare and so I call it, he called his friend. And the one that originally came and was asking me, you know, what did I want from God?

And his friend came and we we got him to the my Godfather to the nursing home together. We we figured it out and got them there and then one we were done with it. All we came back to my house and he said, father, he said you remember what you prayed for you prayed for strength and now you have it.

Just case in point of like, the way to virtue is through oftentimes, very unpleasant means. But it's through that that we're expanded in large and become more able to just deal with, you know, the difficulties of our life saying, take on a Moscow was said that he was in house arrest for like two years and remember how long it was, but he was being completely, like psychologically tormented and tortured by the bullshits.

And when he came out of house, arrest the commentator said he would very happy. And his eyes were kind of limming. He had a little bit of, like, humor in his eyes and he's smiling. And he was perfect, like, he'd gone through hell, he's a patriarch of all the universe, the entire Russian empire was collapsing around him.

It was the worst possible Armageddon that you've ever seen ever on planet earth. And this man is okay. Why? Because he knows how to pray, he knows who Christ is. And he has that faith that overcomes the world. So it's only through those difficulties that we can manifest that we can kind of realize that we can make it our own that we can become stronger and better through the difficulties of our life and to be able to say, okay with that sign of the cross with sake, okay?

Lord, but only be my strength. This is the way we trust in God, we don't do it ourselves and we know that God will send angels to help us if needed, you know, necessarily that the spiritual ones. But just friends, neighbors, priests deacons. Whoever it is, God will be there for us when we need it, because we were always there for God.

And if we're always with God, God will always be with us. That's the message of spiritual life. If you want God to be with you, just be with God, he's waiting. He wants it, but we are so distracted. We can't always remember to do that. So that means to be our constant kind of return.

And we're talking about this earlier about prayer. There is no like a rival in prayer. It's a constant return every time I'm distracted. I just come right back to it. I never expect that. I'm not going to be without distraction, it's rare, it's rare because there's so much going on in the world, but I can constantly return.

That's the relativity. I constantly come back to self unto God, put my actual attention into my physical heart. And from there, speak to God, Well, it's been my unique privilege enjoyed a be with you. Please note, the monks always praying for you. If you want to visit us online Saints, he comes monastery.org.

You can always put in prayer requests for Saint Anna, for liturgy or people who have departed, Please sign up on the mail list if you can. Please remember the monastery? It is a very important place. It's, there's no place like it in America. I wouldn't still be there. If I didn't think it was the most important place on planet Earth.

Nobody does what we do. At least in English. You know, I mean for the English speaking people like like this man right here, right? It's like to be able to, to help to form and be the context for somebody to to be able to serve the church in a way.

That's, it's deeply orthodox. It's deeply and cultured into American culture and the right way. And then has some soundness to it. I mean, it really is a special place in that regard, and I just, I love it with all my heart mind's own strength. I would definitely like die a thousand times if I had to and I've almost been near death several times but made it through because God it got the bus, you know, but we have to be willing to to lose our life in order to find it.

And really what, when we when we are willing to lose it it just gets better. It just gets better, there's no loss. There's no loss. I come here as one almost from the dead several times. It's like it's fine. Be happy rejoice. Don't be afraid. Choose faith. Choose love.

Always pray, confess your sins. Well and thoroughly even the ones you don't want to say. It's fine, nobody cares, and just keep falling in Christ. It really is. Our church is the authentic vision, the authentic experience of real life in God, and if we persevere in it, we won't be disappointed.

We will not be disappointed but just know that the monastery always welcome to visit. And there were always praying for the church and for the world and really that is the main principle work that we do is that work of prayer for the world and for you so God bless you.

And thank you so much for having us and we'll look forward to being with you tonight and tomorrow. Took a bus.