

Holy Image, Holy Blood

Dcn. Stephen Muse
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On Thursday, April 16, 2015, Dn. Stephen Muse gave a well-researched and thought-provoking presentation titled "Holy Image Holy Blood: What Forensic Studies of the Shroud Can Tell Us About the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus." The lecture was free of charge and open to the public.

Introduction by **Fr Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer)**, Abbot of St Tikhon's Monastery in Waymart PA:

Christ is risen!

Audience: Indeed he is risen!

Introduction: Thank you all for coming this evening. We are honored to have Dr. Dn. Stephen Muse with us this evening, and it's a wonderful blessing to have him with us. He gave a clergy retreat over in Olyphant today, and tomorrow he'll be giving a faculty retreat, and he'll be giving a personal retreat in Taylor [inaudible] on Saturday, a five-minute trip from Atlanta at that time. Dr. Dn. Stephen is a wonderful scholar and Orthodox theologian, being able to synthesize a lot of the seemingly disparate parts of modern culture, helping us to understand what's useful in our Orthodox life and how to utilize those things that we know in our society in an Orthodox context, and he does a very good job at synthesizing and helping us to understand how to look at certain principles and techniques in modern society and how to use them in an Orthodox way, which is very helpful for us, not only on a therapeutic level, but a spiritual level as well. So I would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Dn. Stephen. We're so glad to have you with us and hope you enjoy your stay right here. We're honored to have you with us. Thank you. Thank you for being here. Christ is risen!

Audience: Indeed he is risen!

Dr. Dn. Stephen Muse:



I'm very happy to be able to share this with us this evening. The Shroud is something I've been interested in since 1976. I discovered the Shroud of Turin while at Princeton, at seminary, a Protestant seminary, which was kind of a strange way to discover it, but when I looked at the face of the negative of the shroud, which I'll show you—you've probably all seen this part—the Shroud itself, the actual image—when you take a picture of it, the negative and the positive, this is one of the first five things. When I looked at that face, somehow I said this is the face of the human Christ. I never have let go of that, even when they did the carbon-dating of it. I had heard this, but I just couldn't believe it. Of course, that basically, the biochemist has been debunked, because strangely enough they took parts of the repaired Shroud and then carbon-dated two different ones.

I want to share with you what, over the years, this has expanded, and I promised Fr. Sergius I'd keep this to an hour, and I'll try very hard. The last time I did this it was a four-hour presentation. [Laughter] And people did not want to leave; they wanted to keep staying, but that's Georgia. [Laughter] So let's just start. I've added various things in because it just connects with a little bit of iconography and astronomy, so I'll share what I have. It'll be a little fast, but we'll have time for questions at the end. If you *really* want to stop me in the middle, just raise your hand, and we will pause.

Now, this wall-hanging depicts the healing of the paralytic, and it's the earliest-known representation of Jesus. This is excepting, of course, the tradition that says we have icons of the holy Mother going back to Luke. But extant, this would be the earliest representation. What do you notice about the figure of Jesus in the fresco here?

Audience: Are his arms folded?

Dn. Stephen: No, he's actually holding one out. He's rescuing the paralytic; this is the story of the paralytic. But what do you notice about how he looks?

Audience: He's got a muscular face. He is crucified.

Dn. Stephen: I hadn't seen that. I think he's often been crucified in our lives. Actually, he has his hand out like this. You're probably seeing a crack. That's what you're looking at right there.

Audience: It's hard to see.

Dn. Stephen: Okay. All right. Yes, it's a muddy picture. But if you look at it, he has a pallium on. It's basically a toga. He looks like a Roman figure, no different than any other paintings that you would find of Romans. So except for the fact that it's in a biblical picture and he's carrying his pallet—he's picked up his bed and he's walking—this is not a picture that we know from iconography. This is a picture of a Roman. It's a kind of cultural projection, which we do all the time. We have the hippie Jesus in America, so this is really not a whole lot different.

Here, to the right of the scene of the healing of the paralytic, is one of Christ stretching his arm out to Peter. This is saving him from the waves of the sea. This is in the same collection which is a very precious one from Dura-Europos. This was from a house church, from the third

century. It could hold about a hundred people, and it was preserved under mud in 258 during a Persian attack. Everything was buried, so it's sort of like Pompeii. All these pictures on the murals, the baptistry, was all preserved. These paintings date to around 235 AD, so let's keep in mind that St. Irenaeus dies in 202.

We have a living link to St. Ignatius, St. Paul, the Apostle John, Jesus Christ. I mean, a clear 200 years, so we're very close to the living testimony of the first century, which I always like to tell folks: this nonsense about "did Jesus exist?" and all this stuff that gets our attention, you know, people take this seriously. We have a living, historical link, with so many different verifications, and I like to remind folks that this church, this active church, of a hundred people, with a baptistry, fully with icons, but not the kind we know, was very close to the first century. This existed—let's see; let me show you—here's the Good Shepherd. This is from the Dura-Europos house in 235. It is hard to see, but all of these are the same. This is from the baptistry.

Keep in mind that, at this place, there was a garbage dump, and they found parts of texts that were the same as the *Diatesseron* of Tatian, 120-180 AD, and also a eucharistic text that's so closely related to the late first and early [second] century *Didache* that they could actually fill in gaps. So this was from a garbage dump. We're very close to the beginnings of Christianity and know now that this literature which is so precious to us now was in the garbage dump.

Samaritan woman at the well. You can see how immensely colorful this was, what a beautiful parish church this was. And this is the baptistry, all covered with rich, intense color. The Samaritan woman at the well, that's the reconstruction of it. And now, this is an aerial view showing how Dura-Europos was laid out. This is 235 AD. What does it suggest to you, knowing that this is a picture of life in 235 AD, in a part of the Roman Empire that for about 60 years exited the Roman Empire, the Palmyran Empire? (Syria, Egypt, and that area, for about 50 years, was out of the Roman Empire.) What you see here—you may not be able to read it from here, but you have the temple of Zeus, Artemis, Christian house church, synagogue, praetorium, temple of Baal, Roman barracks, military temple. There were eight different languages in this city, confirmed. They had Greek, Latin, Aramiac, Hebrew, Parthian, Palmyran, and two dialects of Persian: Middle and Safaitic. We have an immensely multicultural city. 1800 years before we discovered multiculturalism in the United States. [Laughter] All of these different temples and different religions that were coexisting in one city: Jewish, Christian, Roman, and these languages. This is, in and of itself, a fascinating development to consider as Christianity began to take root, how it existed here without persecution in the Roman Empire and contemporaneous with all these other faiths.

Another source of early Christian art is in the catacombs in Rome, where we have miles and miles and miles of underground tunnels where the Christians were buried. Sometimes you hear that they had services here, and they may have, but I've seen some things that suggest this was overblown, more, I guess, in movie dramas. But they did have icons, and they were burial places. When you look in here, there's some 15 miles of these in Rome, several different ones. This is San Callisto. Now, what is this?

Audience: Loaves and fishes.

Dn. Stephen: Loaves and fishes, yes. Five loaves and the two fish, and, of course, we know that the “fish” in Greek is the letters of the name of Christ, Son of God. So it was a symbol that became a kind of sign of a Christian house.

Here from the catacombs, 250 AD, and would you know that was Jesus? Not really, because that is a shepherd boy, the lamb across his shoulders, and he still looks like a god of Apollo, transformed into the Good Shepherd. So we still have a cultural projection, not yet tempered by anything that would go back to a different image. These are all over the place. Here he is again: the Good Shepherd in a toga, catacomb of Priscilla; Domitilla, 350.

But even though those are the majority of images, there are a couple that start to be different. This is fourth century, discovered in 1905, in the catacomb of Commodilla, one of the earliest-known representations of Christ with a beard, alpha and omega here. You can see it’s dramatically changed from that. Here’s one, fourth century catacomb. So something started to happen.

So we just have in the background: why did it change?

Audience: [Inaudible.]

Dn. Stephen: Ah, but they still had pictures of Christ, but they showed him as a Roman. You’re suggesting that maybe they showed him as a Roman. Let’s stay with it. Interesting, interesting. Okay. Maybe they wouldn’t have known. I’m going to give you another possibility. Here, Father brought out the icon that you have of the Mandylion, and it shows you on the gate of Edessa, where the history of the face of the Shroud was from the start of the ninth century, and there are several historically extant pieces that let us know that was the case.

Of course, we had the icon not-made-with-human-hands. Was it the icon of Veronica here, pressed on the face for a moment, or was it the Shroud? According to Jerome, who was quoting the Gospel to the Hebrews, Jesus gave his linen shroud to the high priest’s servant after the Resurrection, and then appeared to James the Righteous, who was one of his family. This is interesting, because James, according to the gospel, didn’t believe during Jesus’ lifetime, and of course it’s very powerful and sudden when he does afterwards.

Church historian Eusebius gives us a different picture. In an early fourth century translated letter from the Syriac of a first-century king named Abgar, who is depicted here, the document says that [there was] a disciple who was named Thaddeus, one of the Seventy, whose feast day is commemorated August 21—not to be confused with St. Jude, who is also called Thaddeus, one of the Twelve. He was a Hebrew, born in the city of Edessa, and spread the gospels throughout Syria, and is responsible for converting King Abgar to Christianity. Thaddeus brought to the city of Edessa a cloth on which the image of Jesus’ actual facial features appeared. This is the earliest mention of such an image or icon of Jesus’ face in the historical writings of the Church that we have. It’s said that the king was miraculously healed when he received it.

Evagrius Scholasticus confirms in his *Ecclesiastical History* from the sixth century that the city of Edessa was protected by a divinely-wrought poetry, an image not made with human hands, sent by Jesus to King Abgar. And there may be a reference to this in the Hymn of the Pearl, which is a document which dates from about 216 AD. It's attributed by the scholars to the Gnostic poet Bardaisan, from Edessa, interestingly, same place where the face was.

And this speaks of Jesus' burial garment—this is interesting—of having a front and back image, so we have a 216 AD reference from the city in whose history this was placed. It's not just being a face: whole body. One question that's enormously interesting is just who in the Christian Church became aware that such an image existed since we had no cell phones and all that stuff and it took a long time to get somewhere, so how did this cross the Roman Empire and actually be seen and discovered?

There also were no images of God in Judaism, although I forgot to tell you, in that city that I showed you, where the [house-church] was, the synagogue had pictures of animals and all kinds of stuff, so it wasn't following what we usually think of in Judaism as having no pictures. Typically, there would not be any, but for the Christians who believe that Jesus is God and human, now the very body of the Lord and his image become significant, along with the transfiguration of the body and the soul during life. So if we didn't represent the face—and this is the whole iconoclast controversy that confirms this —we are in a way denying that the face of Jesus Christ could show us the glory of God, through the noetic illumination of the heart and see this in a human being, so both human and divine.

So the Shroud seems to have remained hidden in the city of Edessa for the first thousand years, but it came out every once in a while. Now here you see the typical representation of the Mandylion, the Image-not-made-with-human-hands, and then this is the positive image of the Shroud, not the negative, so that's what it looks like if you look at the linen.

In Ian Wilson's book on the holy Shroud, he suggests that the object venerated by the Mandylion is the Shroud. That was his suggestion. One reason for this is that the STURP [Shroud of Turin Research Project] that started to investigate the Shroud in 1978 used a special type of photography which confirmed that the holes in the Shroud showed it had been folded up for years and years so that only the face would show. So it confirms that if you had a blood-stained burial shroud which was unclean to the Jews and holy to the Christians, the only way to keep it is to have only the face showing, set it in a frame or something so that it couldn't be detected that that's what it was.

The blood on it would have made it forbidden among Judaism, and of course when you see *The Passion of [the] Christ* and you see the women mopping the floor very hard, they were getting up every trace of blood because that could not be left. This will be significant, too, when we look at what happens at the end from the forensic studies of the blood and albumin on the Shroud, what it can tell us.

Now, 550 A.D., one of the most important icons that exists, and one of the earliest, at St. Catherine's. Of course, I'm not saying that this is what they were doing by any means, but I think

it's very interesting because this is a theological picture, but—the left side of the brain controls the right side of the body; the right side of the brain controls the left side. We know that dogs look into the left eye. Why do they look into the left eye?

Audience: So they can see the right brain.

Dn. Stephen: And why do they want to know what's going on in your right brain? Because they want to know how you feel. They want to know if you're safe and if you love them. Watch their eyes. Okay, so this has been studied. I imagine there could be some people who have this brain a little mixed up, maybe left-handers, I don't know, but that could confuse the dogs, if you think about that—[Laughter]—but normally the left side. And you can ask yourself, too, where do you look, usually, when you're looking at a person; which eye do you tend to focus on?

This is a whole 'nother area in terms of limbic resonance, what a baby does when it looks at its mother and how you can video the mother's face and show it to the baby in a life-like way —[Snap]—the baby will go into distress within a second, because it realizes there is not the call-and-response that lets it know it's in contact. The liturgy begins very early. The liturgy for the baby is alive, and it's getting a limbic resonance which lets it know it's welcome. If it doesn't get that back, it goes into distress.

Which side, let me ask you—we'll speed this up and I'll show you something—which one of these would you want to confess to? [Laughter] Now, what this photographer's done is has doubled each side to show you what you were seeing *here*, which is very powerful and hits you in a couple of different ways, because it is touching both mercy and compassion and welcome, and judgment and dispassionate regard. So to see exactly how that is, take that and double it over here and this is what you get. *This* man is very different from this one. I suppose this is the bishop. [Laughter] And this one, it seems to be Jesus "meek and mild," who loves everyone and we need not worry about the things that we worry about all the time; he'll just welcome everybody and all will be well. Actually, this one's not— he's fierce, but he's not repellant. There's a great beauty there, too, yet, alone, these are probably heresy, because they do not have the fully-God, fully-human, in one person theological accuracy. So this one is extremely important because it is living representation of the mystery of Christianity and its revelation.

And the question is: Why did that suddenly appear in 550 with such incredible theological purport and detail? Well, something happened six years before that. In 544, a cloth bearing an image of Jesus was "discovered" in a protected portion of the gate above the Edessa city walls, and it came to be known in the larger Roman Empire. Apparently, this cloth was kept hidden so well in Edessa that it was rarely brought out, but at this point it became known. Now, Justinian—his reign was there—so as it made its way, this must have been the most significant relic in all of the Byzantine Empire, and surely it would have had an influence in how the face of Christ was represented. So within six years that image appears, and when you play around with how—this is the negative image, of course; they wouldn't have had that, but, still, you see proportionally, somebody did a pretty amazing job of looking at what that face looked like. And after that, all

over the empire and all over the world, the face of Christ changes, and now we see the mix of those two elements.

In Hagia Sophia you see it's not as strong as in the Sinai, but you can see there, and that's also sixth century. I put that in for folks who haven't been introduced to Orthodoxy. I like to tell them that this was the world's largest cathedral until 1520, and when they were serving, there were 60 priests, 140 deacons (and 40 were women), 90 subdeacons, 110 readers, and it took 10,000 workers to build it, and it took five years, and the ceiling was overlaid with pure gold that reflected on the mantle of the iconostasis, which was also... it must have been a truly magnificent structure. The dome is 100 feet in diameter, 182 feet high, sitting on arches that were an architectural marvel that was just discovered. Instead of using buttressing, this was the first time that triangles were used in between the arches to channel the weight down through the columns. And the nave of Hagia Sophia is three times larger than any Gothic cathedral in the world. It's about the length of an entire football field.

Justinian had the Roman Empire at its peak, so this was huge and united before it had started to be invaded. Around this time, *this* started happening, so now the image is on a coin of Caesar—692 here. And this begins to flow through the Byzantine Empire. So you have... This is from John I, Constantinople, and you see you have Jesus Christ, King of kings, on one side, on the other... One of my students who was stationed in Turkey sent me a wonderful gift, and that's this coin, so I'll send that around and let you... I love it. This is 1100 years old, and I have it in the plastic so we don't get our fingers all over it. I'll be asking for a report at the end here. [Laughter]

Now this is... Someone has studied all the details of these icons to see, now, what is it that goes to the Shroud? So here you see a bunch of them that start to be common on all the icons. Interestingly, a raised accent below the nose and large left nostril—some of this may well be from the distortions of the beating the person took, so there's swelling and different things that we'll talk about forensically, but what got copied over may well be some distortions in the face.

One further interesting detail worth mentioning in connection with iconography is related to the fact that the figure in the lower legs, hands, and torso of the image in the Shroud is a well-muscled person who was tall for his time, about 5'11", 185 lbs., and some things have been made about how his arms seem to be a little big longer, proportionately, than his body, and that normally they don't go down quite so far when you're [lying] down like that, but you have to keep in mind that when he was on the cross, his arms were dislocated and he was stretched, so this makes perfect sense in terms of how the arms would have been lengthened.

In the sixth century in Spain, a *Typikon* for worship existed which was called the Mozarabic Rite, and one of the readings used during Pascha concerned the finding of the empty tomb. It states that Peter and John ran to the empty tomb and "saw the recent imprints of the dead and risen man on the linens." The word translated as "imprints of the dead" suggests yet

another connection with the liturgical life of the Church and its historical memory of the Shroud.

Now St. John Damascene in 730, he mentions—this is really, except for some other oblique references, the first definite historical reference that the Shroud was the whole body. He does this [in] *On Holy Images*, he describes a long grave-cloth that he had experienced personally with—and this may be its first mention. Pope Stephen III in 752, not long after that, writes that Christ had

spread out his entire body on a linen cloth that was as white as snow. On this cloth, marvelous as it is to see... the glorious image of the Lord's face, and the length of his entire most-noble body, has been divinely transferred.

In 1201, Nicholas Mesarites, the sacristan of the parish chapel where the image of Edessa was kept, described the ceremony in which he says:

Here he rises again and the *sindon* or shroud is clear proof: still smelling fragrant of perfumes, defying corruption because they wrapped the mysterious naked body from head to feet.

I doubt that the perfumes on the Shroud, 1200 years later, were myrrh or anything else they put on there. It was the holy relic, and so there is a different fragrance that was there.

This is Edessa, modern-day Turkey. In 944, the Byzantine emperor removed the Shroud by military force and took it to Constantinople. This was Romanos I, and he had to have an army to do it, and it remained in Constantinople for the next 250 years. Now this is modern Syria, and the town was inhabited since 2000 B.C. It may well have been associated with Abraham and Urfa, Abraham's birthplace: Urhai, Ur, there's some question about that.

Recently discovered ancient Greek documents at the Vatican tell us about the arrival of the cloth in Constantinople after its removal from Edessa, and describes it [as] a full-length image with bloodstains and a side wound, so it's pretty clear historically that it's real. So for the next 300 years, it's there, but then the empire gets in trouble. In 1053 the bishop of Rome, you know, sent the emissaries to Constantinople wanting recognition of the pope's universal jurisdiction over Christendom and military help to fight the invading Normans. When Patriarch Michael [Cerularius] refused both of these—military help as well as the recognition—the pope's legates excommunicated him. Of course, the pope was dead, so they had no official authority, but it didn't stop anything, and Michael [Cerularius], the Byzantine, excommunicated the Romans, so it begins.

After this Great Schism, the division began to lead to changes in the two churches, but we want to keep in mind in 1182... We say, well, before the Fourth Crusade went in and ransacked Constantinople—before we get self-righteous about that, we have to realize that in 1182, 60,000 Roman Catholics [who] were in Constantinople who controlled most of the maritime trade were killed by the Byzantines. There was a Hatfield-McCoy feud that was going on. It took a while for one payback to hit the other. When the Crusades, when the French knights in 1204 came back 22 years later, for payback, they attacked and looted Constantinople and took all

kinds of relics, including the Shroud, back to Europe. Theodore Doukas Angelos writes, “The Venetians partitioned the treasures of gold, silver, and ivory. The French did the same with the relics of the saints, and the most sacred of all: the linen in which our Lord Jesus Christ was wrapped after his death and before the Resurrection.” So we have a historical date for that.

Do we have any Presbyterians in the audience? Okay. John Calvin was a very logical man. [Laughter] He began to write the—what’s his thing?—Calvin’s *Institutes* when he was 21. When you’re 21 you know how the world should be if you follow reason. [Laughter] But he says that either John, St. John is a liar, or else anyone who promotes such a shroud is convicted of falsehood and deceit, because you need more than one witness. Well, we have more than one witness. Of course, he was fighting in 1543. The Shroud was making its way around in Europe, and the Protestants were trying to beat the battle, and the Shroud was quite a piece of something within Catholicism that could be an objection. So relics and all that, including the Shroud, had to be pushed away.

Well, John Calvin, there are several witnesses. And for some strange reason, we in the 21st century now have more witnesses, scientifically, for things about the Shroud, than anybody since the first witnesses of it. Jesus said if people stopped saying, “Glory to thee, O Lord,” the rocks and stones will begin to say it, and that’s exactly what’s happening. We’re going to look at the forensic studies of the rocks, the flowers, the moon, and other non-human beings that now are shouting confirmation of what is in the gospels.

I don’t present this: “Is this Jesus?” like it’s on TV. I love to do this for people of faith because all that we learn simply draws us closer. So let’s start with what we can see. First of all, biblically:

Since the life of a living body is in its blood, I have made you put it on the altar, so that one may be made for your own lives, because it is the blood [it’s in the blood] as the seed of life that atonement was made.

This is at the core of the Jewish faith. It has to do with all of the what we now call kosher laws, the reason that the blood would not be eaten. The blood would be drained, because the blood has life in it. A strange thing that’s different than this... When you kill an animal and it’s afraid, its blood is saturated with what the pituitary gland and the limbic system do to... a good man. [Laughter]—with its fear. So if we eat the blood of animals killed and mistreated, we are, at a biological level and maybe at a certain other level, being filled, infected, by their terror. I think it’s not insignificant that ancient peoples, particularly some of our Native Americans, only killed with prayer, and they used every single part of the animal and respected that this came from the Great Spirit.

This prayer is far more than us that flap our jaws when we eat like a dog. To hunt and to respect the life given and the sacredness of the transfer of the life is something that in our culture we’ve lost. We hunt for sport, like a man who was quoted in a newspaper as shooting the toes off a raccoon while the dogs barked below; he said, “That’s the fun of it.” Shooting them off, one at a time. This is a whole ‘nother thing about what happens to us when we

become so dissociated, removed from the personal aspect of life, the eucharistic nature of “thine own of thine own,” the deer as “thine own,” the squirrel “we offer thee.” When we lose that, we’re deeper and deeper into chapter three of Genesis, where we have objectified the world, and, as one corporate CEO said, “The only way the world can be saved is to own every piece of it.” That’s downright scary. We had enough trouble with slavery; and even deeper, to own a world and extract a profit from it: is that the only way we can save it? This is anti-Christ. This is a whole ‘nother area, then, to go through, to look at.

So [Matthew 27:25](#): “His blood be upon us and our children,” a kind of ironic prophecy, which we hope is true at one level, but it would be true also because we killed him. I’m going to skip this one by C.S. Lewis, but Lewis is just making a point that if Jesus forgives you for hurting this person, this is crazy. How can he do that? *This* is the person who has to forgive. But if hurting him is hurting Jesus, then of course he can. So this has deep theological implications for us. If we say that all sins are sins against Christ, we’re saying something very important theologically.

Okay, to the forensics, because I’m way behind. We’ve got 20 minutes to get to the meat of it.

Audience: 22!

Dn. Stephen: 22, all right. [Laughter] This is the back side of the Shroud, and what you’ll see is what lets the people know that one man was tall, one man was short, and they used something called a flagrum, and they hit at angles. There were 120 lash marks with this instrument on the back, not a single one on the front. If you were hit with this kind of thing, it tended to rip open the flesh, and it caused pain to the point of seizures, tremors, vomiting, and cold sweats. This is what it looked like: little tiny kind of barbells that someone described as “seashells,” but that’s something I’m going to have to investigate, because this is the picture I have of it. So it was metal, and one Eusebius [said] eyewitnesses said that the veins were laid bare, the muscles, sinews, and bowels of the victim were open to exposures. So it must have been pretty bad.

120 lashes—what do you know about Jewish law? You couldn’t give 120 lashes. You only could give 39. That’s the maximum. So one reason this person, if it was Jesus, and they wanted to turn him over to the Romans because they wanted him hurt worse than they could do. They couldn’t execute him and they couldn’t give him more than 39 lashes. If Pilate *didn’t* want to kill him, he beat him so bad that it might have been enough to give him back, but they still didn’t want him. They said, “Give us Barabbas.” The son of the Father. So he was crucified. By the time he was there, he had been beaten so bad, they can tell from the forensic studies that he was dehydrated already, probably in a very weakened condition even though he was quite strong and vigorous.

You can see here around the body. The man of the Shroud had suffered blunt trauma to the neck, chest, and shoulder, from behind, which caused neuro-muscular damage to the entire brachial plexus. It affects the nerve impulses to the shoulder, the arm, and the hand, and this is

the kind of injury that would happen if your neck was forcibly pushed in front by an object behind you, which would have been likely 120-lb. oak beam that he was tied to and had to walk with from the place where he was beaten to Golgotha. Now, when he stumbled, of course, he had nothing to stop him, so his face would have likely hit the ground flat on, and his knees would have tried to break the fall, which is confirmed in the studies of dirt, blood, scabs and things along the knees. The cartilage in the nose is broken. There were no bones in this body that were broken, but the cartilage is dislocated in the nose, and there's dirt in his face.

If they had hit him with that instrument on the chest, what would have happened? He'd have died because his heart would have stopped. So he was *not* being beaten to kill him. He was being beaten for something else, so they only hit him in the back.

This shows when the spike goes in here, what happens to the automatic clenching of the thumb, which is why, when you look on the Shroud, there's no thumb visible. The nails froze this in a retraction because of what the nerve did when that was spiked in.

A final picture. There's his blood that is likely the crown of thorns. Why does the blood stay red? Blood is supposed to not stay red, so some say it must be dye. Does anybody know what happens if you're traumatized, what your body does? It excretes a substance—maybe bilirubin; I forget—and it causes the blood not to turn, so it'll stay red. So this is a traumatized death.

In the 16th century, repairs were made to the Shroud because of damage to it and the silver reliquary that it was in. So they took cotton, they used a madder root to dye it slightly to make it look like the linen, and they did such a good job because they were incredible weavers in France that it was hardly detectable, whether or not the people who took things for the garment knew what they were doing or not, it's now been proven that they did take it from that, and a chemist, Ray Rogers, who published a peer-reviewed article in *Thermochimica Acta*, which showed that this was incontrovertible and dated the cotton deteriorations from the 15th century instead of the other and got a wrong date.

The neat thing about this is there's not only one way to date it. You can take something called vanillin, which is in flax, and it deteriorates like carbon-14 in a certain way, so you can tell how old something is. Vanillin that was present in linen of a medieval origin, and not found in the linen 1300 years earlier—mummies, Egyptian mummies, we know what happens—so there isn't vanillin anywhere in the Shroud. It's consistent with first-century, or possibly even a little earlier, date. There was a little bit of repairs made, again, because you're dealing with something that was more recent.

When you look on this, you can see that the blood on here seeps down into the flax. This is very significant, because when you look at the image, there is no seepage, so this has to be explained. Also, one of the experts in Hamburg in weaving says that the seam of this cloth corresponds to a fabric found at the fortress at Masada near the Red Sea in the first century, it's a three-to-one twill weaving consistent with a first-century Syrian design, and it's much more expensive than would have typically been available in Jerusalem, consistent with being wealthy

—Joseph of Arimathea. It does not display any weaving or sewing techniques which would speak against its origin from the first century.

It is bilirubin in the blood. The body goes into shock, and the liver floods it with bilirubin, and so the blood stays red permanently.

Here, when you look at the images on the surface of it, there's theories about how this was made, but it appears to be a radiant image. It's consistent throughout the whole Shroud, exactly the same thickness, about like a soap bubble or the protective anti-glare on your glasses. It's extremely thin, and it doesn't respond to oxidation and things. There's something about this image that is all the way across, uniform, and independent of what we would expect from anything that was a dye or whatever. So the question is: What created this?

You know what image that is. That's from Hiroshima, where the flash from the atomic bomb put the shadow of someone that it vaporized. So this is very different than the image on the Shroud, but still it gives us the vaguest sense of comparison. So what created it? Uniform color, same intensity all across, stable to water, heat, insoluble to acids. Now, the frontal and dorsal views are of equal intensity. You would have expected, laying down on this, to have created a different image than that which was loosely covering the top, but it isn't; it's exactly the same. And a negative image of the body produces a photograph-quality photo. Not only is it photographic, but it actually gives us three-dimensional data so that NASA can build a picture. This shouldn't happen with a photograph.

Now, this is a very interesting discovery. Not only is there an image on the front of it, but on the back side of the Shroud, the exact same image is there, only much fainter. So if you put a needle through the eye on the front, it goes through and it hits exactly the same thing on the other side. So how did the image do this, and furthermore, nothing goes through! So the image of soap-bubble thinness on both sides of the Shroud, with nothing going through, and it's in perfect correspondence. That's a real puzzle.

Now, presumably light of some kind or energy could do that, but there is one other alternative that's been suggested. Pliny the Elder. There are brown coloring of the images that appears to have starch fractions and saccharides. This is an important detail, because Pliny, from 23-79 A.D., who, by the way, died of smoke inhalation rescuing people from Mt. Vesuvius, quite a leader, a military leader and a scientist, he discovered melanoidins. After the body... This is used in beers, turns beer brown, hops, and all, or toast. After a body has died and starts to let off proteins, if these proteins connected with starch that was there, it would form this brown.

Well, what was starch doing on the Shroud? Pliny tells us that flax, which was in the first century, when they were trying to make it spin faster, they put starch on it. After they got the thing woven, they washed it out and let it dry in the sun. So one speculation is: it dried with a heavier starch film on the part that was exposed to the sun, and less on the other side, so when the gases from the body began to go through, they didn't do anything in the middle section, because there wasn't starch there. It's interesting, but I'm not sure it's as good as the one that

has to do with the light, but it just shows how many ways you can try to explain something that is a kind of a real puzzle.

Here's the three-dimensional part that they get from this, that shouldn't be. In the blue, no one expected to find coins over the eyes, because that wasn't something that was done that often, although it was done in Jewish burial. Here you see magnifications if you want to study this. It's not just imagining things. It's very clear that you can find on coins minted by Pontius Pilate aspects of the coins over the eyes of the Shroud. One of the other interesting things is that they found this print. They used a /c/ instead of kappa. They found it, and there wasn't a coin extant at the time with this, and they found one *after* having discovered this. So that's another interesting detail.

Coins of Pontius Pilate would have been printed in Greek letters using a kappa, and at the time of this discovery, there was none left on with a /c/, so if this had been pareidolia, where you see what you want to see, they wouldn't have been looking for /c/.

Now, there are 74 points of congruence with a coin. This is a *lituus*, which could easily be almost a staff, which I find very ironic: they found a coin with a staff and put it over the eyes. One was a coin in honor of Pilate's wife, and since y'all were good on my first coin, I'm going to let you hold a 2,000-year-old coin, which is my favorite of all. This is a lepton, a lepton minted by Pontius Pilate, and they only were for about six years, so that's another extraordinary thing that the man in the Shroud had Pontius Pilate coins on his eyes that date what went on to the time of Pilate.

Audience: Is that the same type of coin that was on his eyes?

Dn. Stephen: That's it. That *is* it. That's the real deal. That's 2,000 years old, getting more valuable by the year. [Laughter]

Now, this is travertine aragonite, a very interesting limestone, interesting because this limestone is not known anywhere in the world except the old city burial site in Jerusalem. Guess what's found on the feet area of the Shroud and on the Shroud? This. So the dust of this rock is singing for us a Hallelujah, and it's an exact match.

Look how unique pollen grains are. You can't miss them, which one goes with which. They're kind of like those dust mites on us if we could see them; they're absolutely unique, terrifying creatures that are crawling all over us right now. There are 58 different pollens on the Shroud, and they dated to the Red Sea, or they're located geographically to the Red Sea, the Negeb Desert, the Anatolian steppes of central and western Turkey (Edessa), Constantinople, and Western Europe. It's a virtual chronology of where the Shroud's been for 2,000 years.

Several of these species are even more interesting because they tell us some very specific things. This one only blooms between March and May. It's a good temporal indicator, and it is a widespread Mediterranean species, but it doesn't locate it specifically to Jerusalem, but it tells us the months it was open.

This is a detour. What is that?

Audience: Mars?

Dn. Stephen: Now what is it?

Audience: The sun.

Dn. Stephen: Oh, you all are easy. And now what is it? It's getting more and more familiar in the circle. And look: there's his ear, there's his leg, there's his tail, there's his... that's another ear. But it isn't a rat; it's just a rock, but we see what we want to see. This is pareidolia. What do you see in the middle here? All right, somebody sees an angel. What else do you see? A cross?

Audience: I see a crab.

Dn. Stephen: You know that this is the Rorschach inkblot test. Yes, I'm trying to be tricky here, because I think it's hard to find even one of those in there.

Audience: Yes. I see little faces.

Dn. Stephen: *Now* look. Now look what happened. *That's* what you see. Someone has found flowers, and what they think is that the flowers were put on there and that they left an imprint. Some people say maybe it's pareidolia, but I think we can see some difference.

In any case, it's up here, and look at this icon.

Audience: Hmm!

Dn. Stephen: Somebody studied the Shroud *real well*. And then, of course, historically, the epitaphion, yes.

All right. Let's see here. Now, this one. *Cistus creticus* are found on the surface. It's a highly specific geographic indicator. It only grows as far as the old city of Jerusalem and higher elevations. So we're getting very close now, and this one is the most important of all. It begins to open midday until gradually opened at sunset, and precisely the buds open from three to four o'clock in the afternoon and *only* during that time. Yeah, that gives me... that makes my hair stand up, because it's pinpointing a moment in time that the Shroud would have *had* to be exposed to the air, and it was right when the gospels say that Jesus died and was removed from the cross.

They also found oak in the back of the head where the patibulum would have been, and oak was a very common tree, perhaps the most common tree in Palestine at that time. Crucifixion was horrible. Cicero said you couldn't do that to a Roman citizen, and when you read what he's saying, an upstanding, wealthy Roman, you can get a sense that we lose of how utterly shameful and horrible the cross was, walking naked through the city to be humiliated as an enemy of Rome that would never *dare* stand against the Roman empire. This is what Caiaphas and the leaders of Judaism at the time wanted done, because they wanted to crush any possibility that he could be seen as anything—utterly shamed.

Now, John Calvin is all over. Here's another witness. How many of you have heard of the Sudarium? You've heard of the Napkin, right, because that's how it's translated in English, but

it's the Sudarium, that's the word in the Greek. The Sudarium is a cloth, [and] we know its history very well. It's been in Spain for 1400 years. It went to Jerusalem, Alexandria, and then to Spain. The Sudarium, the writer of the *Life* of St. Nina of Georgia—the real Georgia, not where I live [Laughter]—who died in 338 A.D. mentions that the Apostle Peter hid the Sudarium. Isodad of Merv of 850 says in a commentaries on the gospels in Syriac, that was based on early Eastern traditions, says that the burial linens were given to Joseph of Arimathea while Peter took the Sudarium, and when he laid hands on someone, he put it on his head, and this lead to the tradition of bishops putting cloths around their heads and around their necks. It may even be part of the square; it's hard to say where our vestments come from, but they could well be related to the ancient memory of this.

In a manuscript known as *San Antonino Martyr* (St. Anthony the Martyr), there's a pilgrimage chronicle to the Holy Land in 570 A.D., and the author says that there was a cave close to the monastery of St. Mark, on the other side of the River Jordan, where seven nuns lived in seven cells, and they looked after the Sudarium. So there was a memory of this in the history of the Church. The Sudarium is very interesting. Here's its history, and it's rarely brought out. You don't hear very much about the Sudarium, because they don't bring this out much. It's been in the Catholic Church for a long time. Palestinian oak is on it. This is where its kept; this is what it looks like. It's a *rough* cloth, not at all like the expensive twill in Syriac. What they're used for is to put over the face of the dead when they die on the cross.

This is the blood. There's a lot of blood-flow and protein albumin on this, which gives all kinds of information. Somebody put their hand over the nose after the body died, after he died, to staunch the blood and the plasma coming out of the nose. This had to be staunched, because if [the blood] went on the ground or anywhere, it would be a loss, a defilement, so they immediately tried to contain this, but, as we're going to see in a minute, they were running out of time. And, since he died a death on the cross, it was not supposed to be clean. So these were very good, obedient Jews, and they would have been under a problem, trying to obey the Law.

You can reconstruct exactly what happened forensically. This is what it would have looked like. It would have been placed over the head. And when you look exactly, you can see when the head is up, the blood flowed a certain way. When they pulled him off, pulled the stake out and he's [lying] down, still on the petibulum because they haven't pulled the nails out—and you're talking about 300-some pounds; it was not easy to handle—the blood flows *up*, over the head. Thank you.

So this lets them know exactly how long he was in these positions, and how long it took them to unnailed him. And we can compare this, then, to what's in the gospels. There was blood and a pulmonary edema in a six-to-one [ratio], pulmonary edema to blood, confirming that he was asphyxiated; his heart stopped. Most, I would say, what you see in these icons of Christ on the cross with the spear over here are wrong. I don't know why traditionally that occurred. They used up the lance on this side to pierce the pericardium sac, and blood and water would have flowed out, exactly like St. John said. Of course, the water was the pulmonary edema. This is what they reconstructed how the face was, the bruising in blood from the petibulum.

The person in both the Shroud and the Sudarium has AB blood type. It's very rare, although among Semites, Jewish people, it's about 18% of the population; for the rest it's about 2%, 2 to 3. So we have that, and examination shows that the man's knees were bruised and scabbed over, his face was smashed in, and both are congruent with what would have happened by carrying the [petibulum].

Audience: This Sudarium exists in northern Spain?

Dn. Stephen: Yes. It was in a... There were several other relics with it. I don't know if they still exist now, but this still exists there. So what now happens is the Shroud doesn't exist alone. Its blood, pollen, everything syncs up, and the face is the same face as the man in the Shroud: the nose is the exact same length. It was over that face, and it was set aside in the tomb by itself, and he was put in a fresh linen cloth, and they didn't have time to finish. They had to come back because of Passover, and the sun was setting.

Audience: So the Sudarium was first, you're saying, and then the...?

Dn. Stephen: The Sudarium was put on when he was on the cross. After they brought him down, pulled the nails out, and Joseph brought back 100 pounds of myrrh and aloe. They had to try to immediately contain all of the blood and they didn't wash him, so the Shroud has dirt, aloe, myrrh—all this is still part of it. And they put him in there. I'm getting a little ahead of myself, but I guess I'd better finish up here.

I've got to get to the astronomy, because we've got to see this. We've had a blood moon recently. A blood moon is when you get a 20% eclipse, and the moon looks red from the earth. Now, the gospel writers differ as to the actual date of the crucifixion of Jesus. The synoptics say it occurred on Passover; the Apostle John dates the crucifixion on the 14th day of Nisan: this is Friday, the day before the Passover. This is the day the Passover lambs would have been sacrificed. So how can we find out which one is right? Well, modern astronomy helps. It adds a third witness to the crucifixion.

According to their observations, there are only two possible dates on which the 14th of Nisan is on a Friday that would have occurred during Pontius Pilate's reign, and they are April 7, 30 A.D., and April 3, 33 A.D. Now how do we differentiate which one is which? Well, only one of those two has a partial eclipse of the moon which could be seen from Jerusalem just before Passover begins, with the setting of the sun. And that would have been April 3, 33 A.D., at 6:20 p.m., and it would have lasted until 6:50 p.m. in the afternoon. I'll skip some of the dating of that, but that makes a whole lot of sense, so the only real acceptable date would be that, according to the Julian calendar.

So what we have is a chronology now, based on forensics that corresponds to the gospel. 12-noon crucifixion, if he dies of at 3:00 p.m., he dies fast. He was exhausted, dehydrated, nearly beaten to death, and unlike other people who were put there and had to have their legs broken, he didn't because he died very quickly. He was on one of the taller crosses, which means the dogs couldn't chew on him, so it's a little bit better. It's a step up in the shame of the

thing. So: 3:00 p.m., he dies. We know this from the Sudarium that his body hung on the cross, and Joseph would have had to get permission from Pilate to remove it. The blood-flow concentrations reveal how long he was there upright.

Then he was removed at 5:00 p.m. and laid on the ground, still attached to the petibulum, for about an hour. 6:20 to 6:50, the moon turned red, which would be seen from Jerusalem, and they had ten minutes from 6:50 to 7:00 to carry him from Golgotha to the tomb. Now, the petibulum is 100 lbs., and he weighs 180. That's pretty heavy, and if you put 100 lbs. of myrrh in there, too, it would have taken Joseph, John, we don't know who else, to get him to the tomb.

So where was Peter when the moon turned red and Jesus was dead? Remember the prophecy of Joel: the moon turned to blood. Peter was somewhere having to decide if he trusted the word that Christ had told him ahead of time, which is: *You've never really gotten it, Peter. I know you would fight for me like a soldier with your sword, and I know you believe that you will never desert me, but you need to know that you will. But like every other man who's ever lived, every woman, every human being from the beginning of time to the end, you are not capable of doing what I am calling you to, out of your own, egocentric, anthropocentric human power. And it's going to be a painful lesson, and you're going to learn it and find out when the cock crows that you're going to do exactly opposite of what you're saying right now. But I want you to remember when you do this that I love you, and I already know this, so it doesn't change anything about our relationship. In fact, it's your last test for this course. You have to discover your own nothingness.*

And when you have betrayed the commander-in-chief and you're a deserter and you are so ashamed for betraying all of your company and abandoning the entire fight and you want to fall on your sword and die—don't do it. Remember what I'm telling you now, and when you've seen what I need you to see, get up, come home, and strengthen the brethren, because what I need are priests who recognize their nothingness, priests who do not try to stick Christianity on to an anthropocentric foundation, and with zeal and reason and all of human powers make a super-man, just take Jesus and apply it to my humanity and I'm man on steroids. I need you to see that you are utterly empty to the possibility of this. And from that position, strengthen, comfort, serve.

This is extraordinary, and if we had another day to talk, we could talk about what it is for combat veterans and others who have faced horrific decisions that have a moral injury and a wound in their heart that they cannot make go away on their own. They cannot help themselves and they never will be able to. They'll always be exiles, unless they find what Peter found, which is to trust the love of God in Christ to forgive when I cannot, on my own, do it myself. And if I refuse and think, "I've got to maintain control, if I had done something else I could have saved that man from dying, I could have done that, I could've, I could've, I could've"—no, I couldn't, because I'm basically a helpless human being. And unless I rely on God, as every addict wants who gets into recovery, I will live in exile forever, as Adam and Eve would've. But fortunately, Peter, Moses in Egypt for 40 years, Jacob wrestling with an angel—

our heroes are the strugglers who are called into something that they face that's so big that they discover the limits of human strength. And this calls down the milk of grace by God, like a child's helplessness calls the mother's milk when it's hungry. And without that cry, God can't feed us because we're still trying to do it ourselves.

"Time is up"—is that what that wave is?

Audience: No, I'll tell you. There's somebody walking into the room.

Dn. Stephen: Okay. All right. That's a reminder. I'm sensitive. 8:13, I'm way past my privilege. [Laughter]

That's not actually where he was laid. That's the marble on top to stop the looters. It was underneath that marble. Passover starts at 7:15, so they had to get in there and they couldn't have finished. So they came back, and Simon Peter was back now; he's back on the scene, but guess what? He wasn't there when they put him in the tomb; John was, and John saw what the tomb looked like *before*, when they put him in there, and when he came back he saw that the Sudarion, the Napkin, was exactly where it was, and guess what he saw on the slab! How many of you get out of bed in the morning by passing through the covers? [Laughter] I don't think anybody does. So when he looks in there, he didn't see him roll them away and step out, and it settled down and there was a full-length image on either side, and he looked in and he believed something that was incomprehensible. Peter was still disoriented; he couldn't get it, but he was lacking some information, too, about that.

Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual one. He not only puffed through that, but what did he do with the walls in the upper room? And where was he? Forty people seeing him over here, five people seeing him over here. He's appearing to Mary Magdalene who thinks he's a gardener. And Cleopas and Luke on the road. And guess what's common to all of them—they don't know who he is. What are we being told in the gospels before and after the Resurrection? We are being told there's no human being on earth who can find Jesus Christ by reason, science, the five senses, or any other human power. We will never go from fact to faith, but noetically if the uncreated God comes to humanity and assumes it, then, as St. Maximus says, a natural faculty exists which can be communicated with noetically, and the heart communicates what is given, unearthly, to the rest of the body, but it can't do it on its own.

We have the testimony of the apostles that even though they lived with Jesus, they ate with him, they heard his teaching, they were closer to him than any of us, but then, in a human way, that did not allow them to get what he was saying. They only got it noetically. This ought to give us some pretty serious reason to think about what's in the *Philokalia* and what it means that our salvation is a daily struggle to find the depth of inner silence, wakefulness, where we attend to the mystery of the *thatness* of the world behind which is the invisible presence of Christ that comes to us that way and is on the other side of each person in this room, so that basically Jesus is saying: "Stephen, let me introduce to you Anne. Can you find room in yourself and in the world you know to include her? Because I have something I want to show you of myself that you will never know in any other way unless you encounter Anne." If I say, "Oh, no,

Anne's a bit odd"—[Laughter]—he'll say, "Oh, oy vey, I'm sorry. It means that you've refused me, and you will miss this part. I still love you, but there's no other way I can give you this."

So with each person we have a confrontation with Christ, who is inviting us into a larger life, and this is all invisible to the naked eye, only visible to the heart that warms at the altar of the fire of the Other, which is an invocation, an *epiclesis*, just as at the divine altar, for the noetic illumination of Christ who makes the bread and wine and turns us into the theophany at Emmaus. Glory to thee, O Lord, who went to hell and is raised from the dead. Christ is in our midst.

Audience: He is and ever shall be.

Okay. I was over my time, so I don't know if we have any questions.

Audience: There's two minutes left for questions.

Dn. Stephen: Two minutes for questions! [Laughter] Anybody have one? Yes, sir.

Q1: The coin of Pontius Pilate: was that the same coin that was put over Jesus' eye?

Dn. Stephen: It's the same type, but it's not the one that was over his eyes. I don't know where that would be, because all they have is the image of that coin in the Shroud, but because this coin exists, there are other coins around that were minted by him. I don't know who may have handled that coin, though. One of the apostles may have had it; we don't know. Yes, ma'am.

Q2: I was reading that the myrrh and the spices and the aloe and stuff acted like a glue with the cloth, so was the cloth...?

Dn. Stephen: Would it have been sticky and all that?

Q2: Was it like... molded?

Dn. Stephen: Oh, it's totally flexible now. Whatever was there is long gone. I put aloe and oil all over my face and stuck it on here, but just can't see anything because it's just a blob, which shows it's a lot harder than you'd think to make something like that. [Laughter] If it was a forgery, it's a miracle! [Laughter] So that would have vanished very quickly, but it may have been a gooey mess at the time. I don't know. Although, they did have ten minutes, so it may well be that they simply spread this out, laid him down, folded it over, and they didn't wrap him, and they came back to add spices. So we don't know actually how much they even got on him. They could have had 100 lbs. and didn't put it on; we don't know.

Q3: I just wondered if you thought about this or looked at this or something, because in St. John's gospel he says that the darkness fell between the sixth and the ninth hour, which would have started at three o'clock and gone on until six o'clock. Is that right?

A1: Started twelve, till three.

Q3: Twelve till three?

A1: Twelve till three, yeah.

Q3: Take us to the ninth hour.

Dn. Stephen: The darkness is different from the eclipse.

Q3: That was my question. Are you trying to say that the darkness that fell was the eclipse?

Dn. Stephen: I don't know. The darkness is an unknown. I don't know what to say—or about earthquakes.

A2: But there was a historical account from somebody in Josephus' time.

Dn. Stephen: Is that right?

A2: That there *was* darkness.

Q3: Right, but my question was particularly about the eclipse. You're *not* trying to say that the eclipse was the darkness.

Dn. Stephen: No, no.

Q3: Okay.

Dn. Stephen: No, that's a different.

A2: But that is a prophecy in the Old Testament, about the sun going down at the middle of the day, and then there's a correlative in early historians, as you say, that at some point in/ around the time of Christ's [death], the sun did go down and he wondered what was going on, and then he found out later on, kind of a post-...

Dn. Stephen: I'll have to look at that. I'm not familiar with that.

A2: It's interesting.

A3: Plus the sixth hour and noon is traditionally when Eve was tempted and they fell.

A2: And the lamb was also slaughtered in the temple. And—I was thinking about this the other day—if you read in the Synaxarion, God created man on the sixth day, and he also re-created man on the sixth day as well, and he rested on the seventh day in both cases.

Dn. Stephen: Yes, and I think about that seventh day, that after God spoke the world into being, he then listened—and this was the first liturgy. And in the listening, the absence of God's creative action, I think we see a foretaste of the abandonment of Christ by God, so that there is the *deus absconditus*, there is the... The sabbath is not just "and it is good." What was good was not just creation. What was also good was the lifting and the resurrection of humanity, which comes from the willingness of God's love, to lay his life down, which, as Fr. Lev Gillet says, "There was a cross in the heart of God before creation." When God made the world and then he looked upon it, he said, "It's very good," I think he was talking about something more than creation. He's also talking about this paradoxical gift which God offers from himself through the

Son, always created through the Word, through the Logos, always re-created through the Logos. This is the reason we're not robots or addicts.

If God refused to go to hell and suffer everything we go through in our developmental immaturity, spiritually, we would not have the possibility of becoming persons, because persons must be free. So that means God knew, when he created us, that he would suffer terribly in order to make it possible for us to willingly accept the invitation to receive the divine life. This would be traumatic to God, to give his life, and it will be traumatic to us to receive it. That trauma is experienced—a taste of it—in everyone who must forgive parents for hurting us, abusing us, for injustices that come that we didn't ask for.

We are faced with the question that Christ had to face with us, which is: Will I forgive them when it wasn't my fault at all? It was totally unjust, wrong. Christ says: *This is part of passion-bearing, and if it were to be changed and I were to stop it, I would make the world in chains. So what I'm offering you is something that is indeed traumatic, but there is something: there's life after the trauma. There's life after the betrayal, and it is something that is so great that this is nothing compared to what you'll receive. A woman has travailed in birth; that's nothing compared to the life she gives.*

So the asceticism—this is so often underestimated, too; it's a certain parallel—but the asceticism, the hesychasm, of the mother, to learn very early all discomfort, all personal inconvenience, every single thing one would escape if one could, to willingly receive. You don't even have to forget, because life is being carried. This is what we hope, later, to do in life with other things. Asceticism is about being a life-bearer. What life? We're pregnant with the divine life. Am I willing to enter into ascetical discomfort in order to bear Christ, to enter into the passion-bearing of Christ? It happens in our ordinary life. It's not that we have to go somewhere, Mars, to do it, even Mt. Athos. If we can, fine, but our Mt. Athos, our cave, is right here.

And every thought we have and every choice we make is the painting we're making, is the book we're writing of our life. We are the book, and God will open the book at the last moment of our life, and our entire life, every word, every thought, everything is there. We can't hide from anything. It's all there. God will read it with love, and it will break our heart—anything that we have to bring before him. But what he reads will be things we haven't even got eyes to see yet.

So all the pain of this life will be gone in a flash, and then there will be an eternal liturgy, call and response, where instead of Adam and Eve and man: "Where are you?" it will be: "Here I am." The *I am who am* will call, and we will ring with the reflection of him when we say, "Here I am." And the kenosis of Christ with the perichoresis of the Trinity will empty out into us: "I am yours. Do with me whatever you want," and we will answer back, "I am yours. Do with me whatever you want." And we will discover what marriage is. Marriage is the holy Trinity, and marriage is the kenotic self-offering to the Other in the eternal liturgy.

This we will say later, because now what he says is: “I’m yours. Do with me whatever you want,” and we say instead of [whispered] “Yah-weh”: [shouted] “Yeehaw!” And we run off and grab the apple and the person, and we say, “I want what you give me, but I don’t want you, because I’m so excited about what you’re giving me!” [Laughter] And you can see that I’m getting into a sort of ecstatic and not enthusiastic craziness. It’s locoweed. This is the voluptuous choice, as Clement of Alexandria speaks of it, and we must learn that the voluptuous choice is very dangerous because it’s a mirage. It’s the projection of the desire of my heart out onto the creation, and I try to grasp it, not realizing that it is coming from God and I can’t get it.

And so I grab you and I grab this food and I grab something else, and it escapes me. And what is happening? I’m crawling into non-being, deeper and deeper, and the more I crawl into it, the more I ache and crave, because I’m getting emptier and emptier. I’m becoming a hungry ghost, a craving. And what’s the cure for grasping that which doesn’t exist any more? Because it only exists when we say, “Thine own of thine own I offer thee, in all and for all.”

So the mistake we make when we’re little toddlers and babies is: God says, “I give. I’m yours. Do with me whatever you want,” and we’re too blind and dumb and immature to realize that what we want to do is return it all to him and receive it back further. This is the only thing we’re trying to learn in our entire life, is to breathe in God and breathe out the love that God is, so that we never lose that love. And it might turn out that after we die, like Brother Joseph—or not Brother Joseph, but Joseph of Vatopedi—When my mouth hangs open like this and my monks are thinking their precious elder doesn’t look so good in death, and they keep trying to close it and fold it back up. So the abbot says, “Leave it alone. Go and prepare.”

So they put the black over him, and after a few hours, when they cut it open, that’s what he looks like. Have you ever seen—oh! He’s not on there! [Laughter] What’s happened here!? What happened here? Hey, you think I’m talking about something crazy. Let me put him back up here. Here’s the correct slide. You have to see him. Have you ever seen a mortician fix a face that has that kind of beatific joy in it? There are certain muscles in the face that are not under central nervous system control and cannot be forcefully copied. And that face appeared with the mouth closed, so this man, dead, a few hours later, somebody decided he was allowed to show us something he was seeing on the other side, and it’s a lot of joy.

All right. We’ve got to go, right?

Audience: That’s it.

Dn. Stephen: All right. [Laughter]

Audience: Thank you, so much, Fr. Deacon, for being with us. We appreciate your time and all of your words and everything that you’ve given us, so thank you so much.

Dn. Stephen: Thank you for coming so we could do this. Can’t have a liturgy without call-and-response. [Laughter]

Introduction: Maybe we could all rise and sing “Shine, Shine.” [Musical pitches]

Audience:

Shine, shine, shine, O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on thee. Exalt now, exalt, and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the resurrection, the resurrection of your Son!

Introduction: Christ is risen!

Audience: Indeed he is risen!