



**ALL things  
are POSSIBLE  
with GOD**

**STUDY GUIDE**

*As seen on the inspirational TV series  
"All Things Are Possible"*

**JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT**

**12 Programs of Hope and Inspiration**

## **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD**

Welcome to the "All Things Are Possible With God" Study Guide! This study guide is intended to be used with the "All Things Are Possible With God" 3-DVD\* collection. It is not a stand-alone booklet, or book.

Please view the "All Things Are Possible With God" DVD\* with the notes in this study guide. Many of these notes will appear in the program. Some will not, and appear only in the study guide. All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Bible (NAB), unless otherwise marked.

After viewing the program, answer the questions that appear in the text, and at the end of each discussion guide. These are designed to assist individual reflection or group discussion; they are ideal for small group settings.

We pray that these programs will encourage you in your faith walk with Jesus in the Church and the world! **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD!**

\* To order your copy (or more copies) of the 3-DVD collection "All Things Are Possible With God" please visit: [www.johnmichaeltalbot.com/DVD](http://www.johnmichaeltalbot.com/DVD) or call **TOLL FREE 877-504-9865** Mon. - Fri., 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM CST.

### Programs

#### **DVD 1**

- 1) All Things Are Possible With God
- 2) Spirit, Soul, and Body
- 3) Poverty
- 4) Chastity

#### **DVD 2**

- 1) Obedience
- 2) Stability and Conversion
- 3) The Jesus Prayer
- 4) The Marian Rosary

#### **DVD 3**

- 1) The Liturgy of the Hours
- 2) The Walk Through the Liturgy
- 3) Testimony and Evangelization
- 4) Summary and Conclusion

## DVD 1: Program 1 - All Things Are Possible With God

Do you ever feel depressed or discouraged? Grab hold of this promise – All things are possible with God. Have we lost that message?

17% of Catholics in America come to Church  
15% of Catholic youth come to Church  
30 Million non-practicing Catholics in America  
It would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest denomination in the country  
50% of the people in the mega churches are non practicing Catholics

Pope Francis is calling us to Engaged Faith! Catholics are ready to get excited about their faith!

A host of Biblically-related Words:

δυνατός	dynatos	able, powerful
δύναμις	dynamis	power
δυνατός	dynatos	powerful, capable, or mighty
ἀδύνατος	adynatos	not possible, impossible

Matthew 19:23-30

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, “ Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “ Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “ With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” Then Peter answered and said to Him, “ See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “ Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

Luke 1:34-38

*Then Mary said to the angel, “ How can this be, since I do not know a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” Then Mary said, “ Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.*

What are the areas where God is calling us to something so wonderful, holy, and true that we think it is “impossible?” We need prayer and practice. We also need some excitement! We need better singing, preaching, and participation in Catholic parishes in America! We need Catholic Revival in America! Nothing is impossible with God!

Do we have the “dynamite” of the Spirit in us? If so, we can change the world:

Acts 1:8

*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

It is not just excitement, but it is enthusiasm. We must be enthusiastic. The word ‘enthusiasm’ literally means ‘in God’ (ἐνθεος - entheos - in God)

Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. She is a model and mother of the Church. Are we giving birth to Jesus today?

We Catholics sometimes think we’re anointed, but we’re only excited! What is the sign of being anointed? The Fruit of the Spirit!

Gal. 5:22-25

*In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-24

*The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

Power is related to the Cross; die to the old self, and rise up a new creation in Christ today!

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Are we rising up to a new person in Christ today?
- 2) Are we dying to the old self through the cross of Jesus Christ?
- 3) Is the dynamite, or power of the Holy Spirit exploding through the spiritual blockages in your life?
- 4) Does this mean that you will be able to do whatever you want in Jesus name, or does it refer to a more spiritual interpretation?

## DVD 1: Program 2 - Spirit, Soul, Body

Do ever feel like you settle for a second best version of yourself? Jesus gives a better way!

Are we spirit, soul, and body, or body, soul, spirit? We are frequently turned upside down, thinking of ourselves first as body, then soul, and then spirit; however, St. Paul uses spirit, soul, and body to describe us:

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

*May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.*

The New Testament in some other places also speaks of just the body and soul, or even mind and soul:

Matthew 10:28

*And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul*

Hebrews 4:12

*Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit*

Matthew 22:37

*You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.*

The distinction between "spirit" and "soul" is difficult to parse, since at times they are used somewhat interchangeably and at times in distinct ways. "Mind" also enters the mix as a reference to something much deeper than that associated with a physical brain.

In Biblical Greek, the basic terms for spirit, soul, body, and mind are these:

πνεῦμα	pneuma	air, wind, or breath ( <u>spirit</u> )
ψυχή	psyche	may also refer to breath, animating force ( <u>soul</u> )
σῶμα	soma	that which casts a shadow as distinguished from the shadow itself ( <u>body</u> )
νοῦς	nous	the intellect, i.e. mind (divine or human); reason, the capacity for spiritual truth, higher powers of the soul, the faculty of perceiving divine things, of recognizing goodness and of hating evil
the		

This is one way to think about these distinctions:

Body - Senses, Emotions, and Brain Thought

Soul - Spiritual Mind

Spirit - Intuition

## **The Body**

Senses- The 5 Senses

Emotions- Chemistry- Psychology and Psychiatry

Brain Thoughts- Neurology in Chemistry and Electricity

Negative or positive thoughts are habitual that precondition future habits  
Bad habits are overcome by good habits - Imitation of Christ by Thomas A'  
Kempis

## **The Soul**

The Journey of the Soul (or Mind) to God  
St. Bonaventure - 1221 – 15 July 1274; Itinerarium Mentis in Deum - The  
Itinerary - The Journey of the Soul (Mind) to God  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonaventure>

In this context of “soul” we view it as “spiritual mind” - The spiritual person behind  
the brain thought.

## **The Spirit**

The Eastern Fathers say that the spirit has been created capacity for infinity and  
eternity!

The spirit can be in eternity in an instant! We are already in heaven in Christ!

Ephesians 2:5b-6

*...(by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him, and seated us with him  
in the heavens in Christ Jesus.*

My mind, emotions, and senses are not in Eternity! My spirit is in Eternity in His  
Spirit! The human spirit has the capacity for Eternity in the now!

When we are trapped in the body first, followed by the soul, the spirit gets overlooked and covered up. Jesus restores the primacy of the spirit facilitated by the mind, thoughts, emotions, and senses.

Who am I?

The west: "I think, therefore I am"

The east: "I am, therefore I think"

Do we get stuck in senses, emotions, and thoughts? Only when we bring the old disordered self to the cross can the new self be born again.

Breathe in the Spirit, and breathe out the old self.

We are only one breath away from the Spirit being reborn and placed first again in Christ.

Don't just pray. Be a prayer - St. Francis of Assisi. Let the old self die. Rise up a new creation in Christ!

All Things Are Possible With God!

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Do we operate spirit, soul, and body, or body, soul, spirit?
- 2) Do we ever feel out of touch with who we really are?
- 3) Do we understand the difference between soul and spirit?
- 4) Do we break through to contemplative union with God in a way beyond senses, emotions, and thoughts?
- 5) Do we really live with an eye towards, and a current awareness of eternity, or are we stuck in space and time?

## DVD 1: Program 3 – Poverty and Simplicity

Do you ever feel possessed by your possessions? Jesus will set us free!

- 1) 5/50% - Ratio of the USA population to the world's resources, and the gap is growing.
- 2) Pope John Paul II: "On Social Concern"
  - a) The few have the much while the many have the little
  - b) The more the few who have the much get, the more they want, and the more essentially unsatisfied they become - Consumed by our consumerism - Possessed by our possessions - habit patterns that enslave us.
- 3) Jesus gives 3 scriptural patterns
  - + Matthew 10 & 19 - Complete Renunciation - Break Free
  - + Acts 2 & 4 - Common Life
  - + 2 Corinthians 8 - Equality in Private Possessions
- 4) Three Examples of these patterns

### + Matthew 10 & 19 - St. Francis and St. Antony of the Desert/Hermits

Why so radical? Why leave everything? Break free!

Matthew 6:21 *For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.*

Matthew 10:7-10

*As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep.*

Matthew 19:21

*Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to [the] poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

## + Acts 2 & 4 - Jerusalem Church and Monastic/ Religious Community

How did the early Church make that work? The Book of Acts describes it:

Acts 2:44, 45

*All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need.*

It was not just for religious, but for everyone.

## + 2 Cor. 8 - Average Christian in Parishes/ Aqueducts of Grace

Here is where the real challenge is for most of us who do not live in religious communities.

The right to private property, but the privilege to give. We become aqueducts of God's Grace.

Luke 12:22-34

Consider the Lillies - you will have what you need, but seek first God's kingdom.

2 Corinthians 8:12-14

*For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs, that there may be equality*

## Renunciation

Luke 14:33

*In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.*

ἀποτάσσο    apotasso    to say goodbye, say farewell

Say "goodbye" to the old patterns that end up possessing us.

The more things we get, the more thing-like we become. Lose humanity.

Evagrius (345-399 AD) - "Renounce all to gain everything!"

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evagrius\\_Ponticus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evagrius_Ponticus))

St. Francis - Have no home, so we are everywhere at home!

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis\\_of\\_Assisi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi))

Are we content?

Philippians 4:11 (St. Paul)

*...I have learned, in whatever situation I find myself, to be self-sufficient.*

## **Holy Hatred**

μισεω            miseo            to hate

Luke 14:26

*If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

Luke 16:13

*No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

Jesus is not passive about this!

We wish Jesus said, "Wherever your heart is, there will you find your treasure?"  
But he really said, "Wherever your treasure is, there will you find your heart?"

You have to get fired up about being set free, or you will not be set free!

Why hate people, possessions and self? People and possessions aren't wrong, but we often use them wrongly. Possessions sometimes possess us. Relationships sometimes enable bad behavior, and we try to possess each other.

Have to even renounce ourselves! We have often settled for a second best self image of ourselves. Let go of the old self. Let it die, so that you can be born again everyday.

## **Practical Tips**

St. Augustine - Is it a want or a need?

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine\\_of\\_Hippo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo))

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietrich\\_Bonhoeffer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietrich_Bonhoeffer))

John Paul II

When the few have the much and many have the little, the little will rise up in revolution, and it will sometimes be bloody.

Matthew 5:9

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*

Are we peacemakers or bloodletters?

Are we addicted to wants?

God wants to give us some wants, but he does not want to addicted. When we think we need only what we want, we are addicted.

Get set free in the simplicity of Jesus Christ!

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Do we differentiate between wants and needs?
- 2) How does habitually indulging wants kills the needy?
- 3) Is there relative equality between the rich and the poor in my parish, diocese, or world?
- 4) Do we see the connection between the disparity between the rich and the poor as a cause of violence, bloodshed, and war?
- 5) Do I use my emotions as a way to break free of addictions to consumerism?
- 6) How can I simplify in a way that is realistic for my life in our culture?
- 7) Am I willing to radically change my life to follow Christ?
- 8) Is simplicity really possible in Christ, or do we think Jesus is outdated?

## **DVD 1: Program 4 - Chastity and the Power of God's Love**

Do ever feel besieged by sexual immorality in this culture? There is a way out!

Sexual immorality is in our music, in the media, on the Internet. TV programming typically expresses a secular humanist moral agenda. There has, accordingly, been a shift from a Judeo-Christian to a Secular- Humanist moral base in our country.

### **Spousal Mysticism**

- 1) Love is a Mystery! - The Trinity, The Incarnation, The Paschal Mystery, The Church
- 2) We ourselves participate in this sacramental mystery; we don't have it all figured out, but we love, and the possibilities this opens up for us are tremendous.

κενω (kenoo) - emptying, to make void. We empty ourselves on the behalf of the other; Love is about what we give the other, not what we get from them.

Chastity is more than just about dialogue and doctrines regarding about faith and morality. That is included, but it is so much more.

It is about a love relationship with Jesus, and for those who are called to marriage, about the opportunity to model the love relationship between Christ and the Church.

It is not just logical, nor do we have it all figured out. It has aspects similar to courtship and marriage, for example, a consummation of Mystical Marriage and passion beyond logic. A period of afterglow (quiet contemplation when we just *be* with the other person). Followed by a daily life together (evangelization).

Do we have that spousal love with Jesus? Do we have a personal love relationship with Jesus? Get our love relationship with Jesus right before we get our sexual morality with each other right.

Matthew 19: 11-12; 29

Some have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.

*And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.*

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

*I should like you to be free of anxieties. An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. ... I am telling you this for your own benefit, not to impose a restraint upon you, but for the sake of propriety and adherence to the Lord without distraction.*

Hebrews 13:4

*Let marriage be honored among all and the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the immoral and adulterers.*

Our Rule and Constitution of the Brothers and Sisters of Charity address this as well.

### **Consecrated Chastity - Celibate for life/ Prophetic Sign of Heaven on Earth**

Celibacy for some: Jesus loves marriage – his first miracle was at the wedding Feast of Cana (John 2) – but calls some to ‘celibate chastity.’ Those who renounce all, gain everything! (Evagrius). Others may be single for a period until married, or for life, without consecrated chastity. Marriage is the most intimate sharing we can have on earth, but even that pales in comparison to heaven:

1 Corinthians 13:12

*At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.*

### **Conjugal Chastity in Marriage and Pro Life**

Three Necessary Components in Catholic Sexual Ethics

- 1) Mutual Self Giving in Contrast to Self Indulgence
- 2) In the Context of Marriage in Contrast to Promiscuity
- 3) Procreation Possibility Under Ordinary Circumstances

About what we can do, not what we can't do!

Not against life, but for life.

Do you have a relationship with Jesus? He will call you to an earthly expression of that relationship that is deeply personal.

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Do I have a personal love relationship with Jesus Christ?
- 2) Am I willing to find my ultimate personal fulfillment in the spousal relationship in the intimacy between Jesus Christ and me?
- 3) Do my earthly relationships flow from that primary relationship with Jesus, and lead back to Jesus?
- 4) Have I considered celibacy for a period of time, or permanently?
- 5) Have I considered marriage?
- 6) Are my earthly relationships really self emptying, or self gratifying?
- 7) Is procreation possible in my marriage? Do I consider life as a spirituality, or a prohibition?

## DVD 2: Program 1 - Obedience

Do you ever feel like you don't want to do what your boss asks (or what your spouse, your pastor, bishop, or even the pope asks)? Do we even want to do what God asks of us? There is a way to find obedience, not as a way of limiting us, but setting us free!

Obedience is misunderstood concept today. Not about control, Gospel obedience is the way that sets us free.

Hebrew concept:

שמע (Shema) hear, listen

1 Samuel 15:22

*"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord's command?"*

Obedience is better than sacrifice

Sacrifice means external ritual worship, while obedience means worship with a humble interior heart.

### Individualism v. Individuation

In this country, *individualism* is valued. But like most *-isms*, *individualism* is individuation gone wrong. *Individuation* refers to the utterly unique gift of each individual human person, in the context of community. - Pope John Paul II

Duns Scotus- John Duns, O.F.M.

*Individualism* places the rights of the individual over the rights of others, thus *individualism* eventually rolls over others.

*Individuation* looks at the rights of the individual person in the context of the community of creation, humanity, and the Church.

### Community of Creation and Humanity

Matthew 5:45

*"He makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust"*

## Community of the Church and Religious Communities

Romans 12:4-5

*"For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another."*

--Functional Obedience

We already practice functional obedience in society (traffic signs and lights).

--Spiritual Obedience

### **The Rule of St. Benedict:**

[To a Leader:]

*"Listen carefully, my child, to your master's precepts, and incline the ear of your heart (Prov. 4:20). Receive willingly and carry out effectively your loving father's advice, that by the labor of obedience you may return to Him from whom you had departed by the sloth of disobedience. To you, therefore, my words are now addressed, whoever you may be, who are renouncing your own will to do battle under the Lord Christ, the true King, and are taking up the strong, bright weapons of obedience."*

[To all brothers and sisters:]

*"Not only is the boon of obedience to be shown by all to the Abbot, but the brethren are also to obey one another, knowing that by this road of obedience they are going to God."*

Obedience is learning how to listen (not answering before listening)

(Latin obedire, oboedire "obey, be subject, serve; pay attention to, give ear," literally "listen to," from ob "to" (see ob-) + audire "listen, hear")

Learn how to be still, and know that He is God (Psalm 46:11)

Do we talk before we listen? Do we answer in our mind before the other person has finished speaking? We need to learn to hear the heart and spirit of others. Consider the connection between meditation and listening, and listening to your own spirit before hearing the spirit of others. Only then will be prepared to hear not only what others say, but what their heart tries to say.

Luke 2:51

*"He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart."*

Hebrews 5:8

*"Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered"*

(Jesus learned obedience in his humanity)

Ephesians 4:15-16

*"...living the truth in love, we should grow in every way into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love."*

(Obedience brings functional harmony)

### **Some thoughts**

Turning Wheat Into Bread (A little uncomfortable, but turns us into nourishing bread)

The Train and The Track (The track seems to restrict, but gets us to our destination safely)

Listening to...

--Sensus Fidelium (The Sense of the Faithful inspired by the Holy Spirit)

--Community and Monastic a Rules and Lessons From the Past

--Individual Conscience

### **Ways to discern the will of God**

Are my plans (or actions, or ideas) in harmony with:

- 1) Sacred Scripture, Apostolic Tradition, and Teaching Authority (Magisterium) of the Church
- 2) Rules and Constitutions of communities
- 3) Community leaders
- 4) Spiritual directors
- 5) Good fruit

There are consequences for the conscience, and we need to be aware that big matters are tested in the little things of life (growing a green bean for God!)

Luke 16:10

*The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones.*

### **Taking Action:**

- Learn obedience with joy and freedom
- Listen to Jesus in earthly obedience
- Let go of the need to be in control
- Don't just go through the motions of religion, but have a heart and soul of obedience
- Be obedient to Jesus, and thrive today!

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Do I really listen to God, Church or secular leaders, and people?
- 2) Do I react before really listening?
- 3) Do I see obedience as functional only, or as primarily spiritual?
- 4) Am I willing to obey secular law, but not religious law?
- 5) What steps do I use to discern the will of God?
- 6) Am I willing to discipline my freedom in order to follow the will of God?

## **DVD 2: Program 2 - Stability and Conversion**

Do you ever feel like your world is changing so quickly that there is no stability?  
Stability in Christ and conversion to Christ is the answer!

World is changing quickly and can be destabilizing. Jesus is the "Rock that doesn't roll!"

Stability and Conversion an ancient commitment made in monasticism, didn't move around much.

We live in a transient, mobile generation and that has created a lot of instability.

### **God as the Rock**

Psalms 89:27

*He shall cry to me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock of my salvation'*

### **Jesus is the Cornerstone**

Acts 4:12

*(Jesus is) the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:19-20 (New International Version)

*...you are fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

### **Living Stones in a Spiritual Temple**

Build on our relationship in Christ.

1 Pet. 2:4

*Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*

Christ never moves from us. We need to find stability in instability. We are changing as a nation. We are finding ourselves in a less Judeo-Christian base.

We may be marginalized, demonized, perhaps even criminalized.

The Rise of Christianity - Rodney Stark - sociological study. Christianity grew 40% a decade under Roman persecution in its first 200 years. Constantine was

stating the obvious - Most people were already Christians by the time of the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. When people change, then nations can change!

## **Conversion**

If you are not careful, you are going to end up where you are headed.

Dare to be enthusiastic (en-theos, in-God). We need to turn it around. We need to walk back towards Jesus, come home. It is the essence of what John the Baptist taught and it is what Jesus taught. Change!

Greek: μετανοέω metanoeō change, repent, turn around

Matthew 3:2

*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*

Matthew 4:17

*From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"*

We are sometimes excellent at even fooling ourselves, putting Jesus' name on the old self. Let go of the old self. Dare to be a new creation in Christ.

"What do you seek?" - The profession formula of monastics

"Chase the rabbit back to the hole" - Abbot Jerome Kodell OSB

We can be blessed:

Greek: μακαρισ μαkarios happy, blessed

*Conversatio* - a conversion is possible only within a conversation, a relationship with Jesus Christ. Can't just repent the externals. This is an ongoing, everyday relationship. I turn around in order to come back to the relationship.

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1) Are we really willing to change?
- 2) Do we change for ourselves, or for God?
- 3) Do we really have an ongoing conversation with God that flows from a living relationship with Jesus Christ?
- 4) How do we keep that personal love relationship with Jesus alive?

## DVD 2: Program 3 - The Jesus Prayer

Do you ever feel like there is not enough time to pray?  
You can pray every moment of every day with every breath!

Scriptures tell us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). How do we do that? We breathe without ceasing!

In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, Diadochos of Photiki (400-c. 486) suggested we unite Jesus with every Breath!

Greek	πνεῦμα	pneuma
Hebrew	רוּחַ	rûah

Both of these refer to air, wind, breath, and 'Spirit'

Breathe in...	a full communion with God through Jesus
Breathe out...	anything standing between us and that full communion

*We begin by breathing in "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God... "*

### Lord

Greek - κύριος - kyrios - Lord
Hebrew - יהוה - yhwē - Lord

In Old English, the word 'Lord' was 'hlafweard,' literally 'one who guards/keeps the loaves'). We can think about the process of making bread, and some spiritual parallels:

Harvesting and Cutting the Wheat- giving gifts and talents to God  
Thresh- Community and hard relationships  
Winnow- Up in the Air and Adventures in the Spirit  
Crushed- The Weight of Daily Life and Tragedy  
Flour- Salt to Preserve, and Water of the Spirit  
Kneaded- Messaged and Worked by the Hand of God  
Rising – Yeast to Lift Us Up  
The Pan- Shaped in the Image of Jesus  
The Oven- Life Hot as Blazes!  
The Golden Brown Loaf- Nourishing for All

Let God turn us into Bread!

### Jesus

Greek - Ἰησοῦς - Iēsous

Hebrew - יהושוע - Jehoshua (i.e. Joshua)

- Bonaventure - The hand of Jesus pulls us out of the pit of sin
- Jesus dies for each of us personally; if we were the only people to ever receive Him, He would have done everything for us!
- Monk from Mt. Athos - "Are we being saved by Jesus today?"

## **Christ**

Greek - Χριστός – Christos - Christ

Refers to the "anointed one", i.e. the Messiah, from another Greek word (χρίω chriō) meaning to smear or rub with oil.

Are we becoming more like Jesus everyday?

Jesus bore the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25):

*In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.*

## **Son of God**

Greek - θεός - theos - God

The love mystery of the Trinity

The love mystery of the Incarnation

The love mystery of the Spirit in the Church

The love mystery of the Eucharist

The Incarnation continues in the *Church*

Greek - ἐκκλησία - ekklēsia - the gathering

1 Corinthians 12:14-15

*Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body.*

1 Corinthians 12:25

*...that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another.*

Ephesians 4:15-16

*Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, with the proper functioning of each part, brings about the body's growth and builds itself up in love.*

We now begin to exhale, letting go. Do not grasp the old self. Let it go, and be born again! We pray...*Have mercy on me, a sinner!*

### **Have Mercy**

Greek - ἔλεος - eleos - compassion, tender mercy

Hebrew - רַחֲמִים - ḥesed - lovingkindness, mercy

Mercy: We talk about loving someone with our whole heart or butterflies in our stomach. For the Biblical authors, mercy comes from deep within, *From the Bowels*

St. Augustine - "Late Have I Loved You"

God knows us better than we know ourselves because He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. Do we really know others, much less ourselves?

1 Corinthians 2:11

*Among human beings, who knows what pertains to a person except the spirit of the person that is within? Similarly, no one knows what pertains to God except the Spirit of God*

### **On Me**

It is personal!

Galatians 6:2

*Bear one another's burdens*

Galatians 6:5

*...for each will bear his own load (burden).*

Revelation 3:20

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me*

No one can accept Jesus for us. No one can be saved for us.  
Have we accepted Jesus *today*?

### **A Sinner**

Greek - ἁμαρτία - hamartia; sin, but literally an archery term: "to miss the mark." To miss the bull's eye (or maybe even the target!)

Does sin turn us into a pile of dung or a dirty mirror?

The Soul is a Mirror to Reflect the Image of God

Sin is dirt on the Mirror, but the good news is that Jesus does Windows!

*Breathe in - Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God  
Breathe out - Have Mercy on Me, a Sinner*

Do not seek to pray, but to become a prayer- St. Francis

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Do we try to pray without ceasing?
2. Do we connect pray to our breath?
3. Have you ever seriously tried to pray The Jesus Prayer as a daily discipline?
4. Is Jesus really the Lord of our life?
5. Do we experience salvation as a daily reality?
6. Are we really anointed, or just excited?
7. Do we enter into the love mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the dying and rising of Christ in our life, the gift of the Spirit to the Church, and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist?
8. Do we ask God to help us know others and ourselves in order to know His forgiveness and love?
9. Is our relationship with Jesus really personal and intimate?
10. Do we sin as something that essentially changes us beyond salvation, or as something Jesus can forgive? How does that affect our self image, and our relationship with others?

## **DVD 2: Program 4 - The Marian Rosary**

Do you ever feel like you can't really pray and get a full breath of the Spirit of God? There is a way to fix that!

### **Two Lungs**

Pope John Paul II- Breathe With Both Lungs

The Church is the body of Christ and has two lungs - An Eastern and Western lung. Breathing from just one lung is a problem.

Five Patriarchates (Major Ancient Churches established by Apostolic Succession)

- 1) Jerusalem
- 2) Alexandria
- 3) Antioch
- 4) Rome-The only western patriarchate
- 5) Constantinople ("The New Eastern Rome")

Out of first 5, only 1 (#4) is Western!

Rome presided in love, and still does so today!

Roman (Latin) Rite evangelized most of the Western world, and most of what we call Christianity is Western.

Protestants are a reform of perceived abuses in the Roman Church, but even Protestants are breathing only with the Western lung!

Yet much of our Christian history and community today remains Eastern.

What's the Difference Between the East and the West?

The West- I think, therefore, I am

The East- I am, therefore I think

### **Prayer**

Rosary - A repetitive prayer prayed on a knotted cord, or beaded string  
Many religions use a type of beaded prayer: Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems and Christians

Some object to repetition, but Jesus does not oppose repetition; he opposes *vain* repetition

Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer partly as a help against vain repetition

Matthew 6:7

*In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words.*

The NKJV phrases Mt. 6:7 this way: *And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do*

So what is *vain* repetition?

Greek - Vain - μάτην *matēn* - does not bear fruit

Didache - Prayed the "Our Father" 3 times a day

(The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles—*Didachē* means "Teaching"—is a brief early Christian treatise, dated by most scholars to the late first or early 2nd century.)

We need to slow it down, and pray like we really mean it

Unite with our breathing

Greek for 'Spirit' - πνεῦμα *pneuma*- air, wind, breath

Breath - Slow Down and Focus: Body/Emotions/Thoughts

### **Marian Rosary**

Early monks used to pray all 150 Psalms each day – *Agpeya*, the Coptic Book of Hours. Learned to pray (and even memorize) lots of Scripture

Proverbs 23:7 NKJV

*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he*

When we meditate on the Lord it changes how we think and changes our lives

Rosary - 150 pebbles for each psalm, and would pray three of the ancient prayers of our faith: Ave Maria/ Our Father/ Glory Be

Evolved into knots on a cord or beads on the string

Very early in the Church it was recognized that Mary symbolize *our* participation in the life of the Church

Some historical developments:

St. Dominic -13th Century

Franciscan Crown - Added "Holy Mary, Mother of God"

Council of Ephesus 431AD - Theotokos and the deity of Jesus Christ

Cyril of Alexandria vs. Nestorius - Theotokos, or Christotokos and Anthropotokos

Nestorius- Divine and human "prosopons," faces, or persons in Jesus

St. Cyril of Alexandria- The divine and human natures in one "hypostasis" or one person in Jesus

The term *Theotokos* ('bearer of God') emphasizes the incarnation, God in human flesh

Mary – "My soul *magnifies* The Lord!" (He who is already infinite is magnified!)

Mary always points to Jesus

The Church grew in love of Mary as they grew in their love of Jesus, the Word

Incarnate; Mary as the Model and Mother of the Church

Exercise:

(Breathe in)	Hail Mary full of grace, The Lord is with you
(Breathe out)	Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus
(Breathe in)	Holy Mary, Mother of God
(Breathe out)	Pray for us sinners, now and at our death

Let us pray with both lungs, East and West

All things are possible; with Mary, let *your* soul magnify the Lord

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Do we understand the significance of the ancient history of the Marian Rosary, or do we interpret it through a more modern lens?
2. Do we see the Rosary as a scriptural prayer?
3. Does our relationship with Mary always lead to Jesus?
4. Do we see the dynamism of devotional prayer or view it as something static?
5. Do we rush our Rosary (Lord's prayer, other prayers) or do we pray slowly?
6. Have we tried uniting the prayer, including the Rosary, with our breathing?

## **DVD 3: Program 1 - The Liturgy of the Hours**

Do you ever feel like you're not able to pray the Scripture throughout the day and get through a lot of Scripture? All things are possible with God.

After the Mass, The Liturgy of the Hours is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Most Important Public Prayer of the Church! (More important than the Rosary or the Jesus Prayer or most other prayers?)

How many pray it? (Deacons, Priests, Religious, dedicated lay persons, etc.)

### *The Work of the People*

Greek - λειτουργέω leitourgeō - serve, the work of the people, worship, ministry, care of the poor

### *The Work of God!*

St. Benedict of Nursia (born at Nursia, c. 480; died at Monte Cassino, 543)

Liturgy- where the work of God and the work of the people meet; where heaven and earth meet. Not just about mumbling through some words.

## **History of the Liturgy of the Hours**

Originally goes back to the practice of the desert monks praying all 150 psalms

Two different traditions: Cathedral / Monastic

Two organizational systems: Thematic (Cathedral) / Numerical (Monastic)

Cathedral - Sanctifying specific times (certain hours) of day

Monastic - A continuous meditation

Began to come together in later monasticism

### **Cycles**

- 150 Daily - Hermits and pre-Benedictine
- The Rule of 12 Psalms at Lauds and Vespers - J. Cassian (360-435 AD)
- 150 *Weekly* - Rule of St. Benedict and Rule of the Master (5th Century)
- 150 *Monthly* - Taize and Vatican II

## Prayer Times

Rule of St. Benedict (Chs. 8-20)

- *Matins or Vigils* - 8th Hour of Night (2 or 3 AM) - 12 Psalms (plus two fixed) and 3 Canticles
- (Carthusians and Franciscans pray Vigils at Midnight)
- *Prime* - 3 Psalms, and *Lauds* - 1st Hour of Day - (5 Psalms and Canticle)- Sunrise, resurrection
- *Terce* - 3rd Hour (9 AM) - 3 Psalms - Trial of Jesus and Gift of the Spirit
- *Sext* - 6th Hour (Noon) - Crucifixion
- *None* - 9th Hour (3 PM) - Death on a Cross
- *Vespers* - Evening Prayer - "Lamp Lighting" - 6 Psalms - Laid in the Tomb
- *Compline* - Night Prayer Before Retiring - 3 Psalms - Examination of Conscience and Rest

The Two Hinges of the Day - Lauds and Vespers  
Whole day is sanctified by set hours throughout the day

## Some Tips

Slow Down!

Psalms are best sung

Cadence - Sung Speech

Psalms prepare you to pray and lead you to prayer

Take a few moments of silence after each Psalm

Wait for the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word

2 or 3 people recite back the line that the Spirit speaks to them

1 Corinthians 14:27

*If anyone speaks in a tongue, let it be two or at most three, and each in turn*

Jesus is the focal point of every Psalm!

Never pray against people; pray against vices

Pray the Liturgy of the hours. Let's change the world by first changing ourselves in Christ!

Chant From the Hermitage

<http://www.johnmichaeltalbot.com/index.cfm?load=page&page=214>

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Do you know the importance of the Liturgy of the Hours in the teaching of the Church on public prayer?
2. Do you pray the Psalms daily?
3. Do you fill your mind with the scriptural Word of God?
4. Do you consecrate the hours of your day to God?
5. Do you try to pray without ceasing?

## **DVD 3: Program 2 - The Walk Through the Liturgy**

Do you ever feel like Mass is boring? That can be fixed!

Only 17% of Catholics in America are coming to Church

Only 15% of Catholic youth are coming to Church

2<sup>nd</sup> largest "denomination" are non practicing Catholics

50% of those in mega churches are non practicing Catholics (because of *engaged worship*)

Pope Francis - Engaged Spirituality (Engagement vs. Entertainment)

Two areas of needed improvement: Better Singing and Better Preaching

A Walk (Body, Soul, and Spirit) Through the Liturgy

### **Body**

Gesture: Holy Water and Sign of the Cross

Bringing the old self to the cross.

We die and rise in Christ! We are born again in Jesus!

Sign of the Cross- Trinity and Incarnation, Dying and Rising

Holy Water- Baptism- Dying and Rising

Singing: Next physical element we encounter

Bad Composition and Bad Participation

"Those who sing pray twice" - St. Augustine

Sing to reach the youth who love to sing! Why?

Because...youth are leaving the Church in droves

They often go to Mega churches where they sing, or leave altogether

Good liturgy builds faith; bad liturgy destroys faith

### **Soul**

The Liturgy of the Word:

We hear a LOT of scripture!

The lectionary goes through entire New Testament, and a huge part of the Old Testament, every 3 years on Sundays. Are we paying attention?

"Ignorance of Scripture is Ignorance of Christ!" - St. Jerome

Earliest written record of Apostolic Tradition of the life of Jesus Christ and the life of the Church.

Seven days without the Word of God makes one weak!!!

We do not worship the Bible - We worship Jesus, the Word Incarnate

Preaching:

Bad modern reputation for Catholic preaching, but a wonderful Catholic tradition of great preachers- St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Bernadine

We must rediscover great preaching!

Preachers - Don't just dispense doctrine, but inspire faith, share faith!

Listeners - Don't just watch the clock!

We need engaged listening  
Reciprocal relationship - Respond to the Preacher  
They see "Fog" on the runaway of the faces of the people in the pews!  
If we want better homilies, become better listeners!  
Respond with your eyes!  
Give 'em an "amen!"

## **Spirit**

The Eucharist: Jesus always shows up!

A personal love relationship with Jesus Christ  
Early Church celebrated the Living Word, the Incarnate Word, the Body and Blood of Christ. Jesus is present at every Mass.

Calvary's sacrifice sacramentally repeated extended and repeated at every Mass

John 15:13

*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends*

The Love Sacrifice - Jesus gives His life out of love for us personally at every Mass, at every Eucharist

Every Mass is a Sacramental Altar Call

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Is Mass sometimes boring to us or to others? Why?

2. Do you want better singing at Mass?
3. Do you sing freely, or are you self-conscious?
4. Are you willing to sing more in order to make our liturgies livelier?
5. Do you wish our preaching were better?
6. Do you engage the homilist with eye contact, or are you more passive?
7. Do you really see Jesus present in the Eucharist, or is that just a doctrinal belief for you?
8. Do you focus on Jesus' personal love sacrifice for you at every Mass, or do you take that love for granted?

## DVD 3: Program 3 - Testimony and Evangelization

We CAN bring the Gospel to the World, and it starts right where we are.

### Testimony

Luke 24:48-49

*You are witnesses of these things. And [behold] I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Greek: Testimony - μαρτυριον martyrion

We get the modern word "martyr" from this. Giving our testimony is a risk!  
Witnessing sometimes leads to martyrdom!

Build each other up, don't just preach guilt!

Ephesians 4:29

*No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear.*

No Bible Thumping! Encourage, not create unhealthy guilt

### John Michael's Story (What is yours?)

JMT was born in 1954 of a Methodist mom and Presbyterian dad. How can these theologies be combined?

It's a Mystery!

Love is a mystery

Love in Trinity, Incarnation, Paschal Mystery, the gift of the Spirit, the Church, and the Sacraments

Sacrament - Mystery

How well have you loved? - St. John of the Cross

"Now that you're a Catholic, I think you're a better Methodist than ever!" - JMT's Grandmother

Greek:

καθολικός - (katholikos) - "universal"  
καθόλου - (katholou) - "on the whole", "according to the whole"  
or "in general"

Learn to laugh with each other! Is Jesus in your heart? Please inform your face!

Others point to the Way, the Truth, and the Life

John 14:6

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life*

Started playing music when he was 8 years old, professionally at 10 years old.  
Launch of music career, eventually hung out with all the big names. Noticed they  
had everything he wanted, but weren't happy. Began reading - everything.

In prayer, he encountered Jesus and knew he was loved and forgiven. Sins  
were already stacking up.

Ever sinned?  
Feel unloved?

Started making records for Sparrow. Early days of Jesus Movement. Would tour  
and find:

1) Good people, 2) Spirit of God, 3) The Bible

People who sought Jesus but disagreed with each other - still disunity in the  
church

Stumbled upon the Patristics

The Bible came out of the Church,  
To understand scriptures that divide, go to early Church for unity  
Apostolic Succession  
The Pope  
Communion of Saints, and Mary  
The Eucharist

Did not want to be a Catholic, but JMT became Catholic in 1978

This testimony is still important for all of us today!  
God wants to heal and raise up the Church today!

We need to step out of the boat (Story of Peter)

Jesus wants us to walk on water today!

Jesus wants to work a miracle today!  
Jesus will lift us from the waves today  
Are our eyes on Jesus today?

God wants to work a miracle, and raise us up to new life in Christ today!  
He wants us to be born again! – John 3

Give gifts to God, and He will do more with them than we can

All things are possible with God!

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is your faith story?
2. Have you ever shared it personally, or in a group?
3. Are you willing to take the risk by sharing it?
4. Do you preach guilt or love in your faith story?
5. Do you really know the ancient apostolic roots of your faith in Christ?
6. How has Jesus used your natural and supernatural gifts?
7. Do you see the evangelistic mission of the Church as yours, or do you see it primarily for others?

## **DVD 3: Program 4 - Summary and Conclusion**

All things are possible with God! Covered a lot of ground. Here is a summation:

### **Possible and power**

Relationship between the Greek and the English word, "Dynamite!"  
Power of the Spirit

Streams of Living Water:

John 7:38-39

*On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him.' " He said this in reference to the Spirit*

We become "Aqueducts of Grace" - St. Dominic

Power comes through the cross. Die to old self, and rise up a new creation in Christ - Eph. 4:22

Have we unlocked that power in our life?

### **Vows and Commitments for secular life**

Brothers and Sisters of Charity  
Integrated monastics  
Domestic members in secular world

Poverty, Chastity, obedience, stability, and conversatio

#### *Poverty*

Simple living  
Wants or needs?  
God gives wants, but doesn't want us to be addicted

#### *Chastity*

Love relationship with Jesus as our primary spouse  
From that flows all earthly relationships  
Celibate  
Single  
Married  
Mutual self giving  
In context of marriage  
Procreation under ordinary circumstances

Watch our use of the media  
Garbage in, garbage out

*Obedience*

Learning how to listen  
To God, Church, family, and secular leaders

*Stability*

We make commitments  
Unstable marriages  
Internal commitment to Jesus with external manifestations that evangelize  
the world

*Conversion*

Turn around!  
Turn back to Christ in personal relationship with Jesus  
Conversatio implies an ongoing conversation with Jesus  
How is your relationship with Jesus today?

St. John Chrysostom - Any serious Christian is a monk inside!  
Monk comes from the Greek "Monos" - God and God Alone!

**Personal Prayer and Private Devotion**

*Two Rosaries*

Eastern Rosary - Jesus Prayer  
Western Rosary - Marian  
Breath From Both Lungs - Pope John Paul II

*Jesus Prayer*

Breathe in Jesus, The Trinity, and the Church  
Breathe out anything standing between us and full communion with Jesus  
and others in Christ

*Marian Rosary*

History- 150 Psalms for laity  
Participation in the Mysteries of Christ as symbolized in Mary, the Mother  
of Jesus, and the Church  
Are we praying these prayers slowly  
Do they build our personal love relationship with Jesus Christ?

## **Public Prayer**

Two forms:

Liturgy of the Hours  
The Eucharist

### *Liturgy of the Hours*

150 Psalms daily with first monks  
Weekly with St. Benedict  
Monthly with Vatican II  
Psalter: us the praying heart of the Church  
The prayers of Jesus  
Spiritual warfare - though we never pray against other people  
Pray against the old self  
We must change in Christ before we can change the Church or the world  
Psalms are prayed slowly  
Psalms lead to silent spontaneous prayer

## **Walk Through The Mass**

### *Body, Soul, Spirit*

Holy water and sign of the cross  
Come to die to the old self, and be born again in Jesus Christ  
St. John Chrysostom  
Competed with the Arians and sports in the Roman Circus  
Take the Mass to the streets!  
Singing, celebrating, rejoicing!  
Pope Francis - Take Jesus and the Eucharist to the streets  
Made Mass fun and engaging  
Better Singing  
Great preaching and congregational participation  
Jesus real presence personally in the Eucharist  
The greatest altar call at every Mass!

## **Evangelization**

Once we have a relationship with Jesus we have something to give the world

**All things are possible with God!**

## Discussion Questions

1. How has this DVD and TV series impacted your spiritual life?
2. Are there things you thought would never change for the better in your personal life, parish, or world that you now think could really change in Christ?
3. Are you now inspired to become an evangelizer in your parish and in the world?
4. Do you really believe that All Things Are Possible With God?

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