

Transcript of “Ancient Solutions:. Mobile Phones, Silence & Solitude with Fr. John.”

00:00:00 Speaker 1 21 elephants by Scottie Reeve.

00:00:15 Spanky Moore We might be currently lost trying to find the monastery. Isn't that right, Scottie? No reception, Scottie's phones gone flat.

00:00:22 Scottie Reeve I wouldn't, say we lost everything belongs like.

00:00:26 Spanky Moore We're supposed to be there at 3:00.

00:00:29 Scottie Reeve Oh man, have you ever seen a monk angry? I haven't. It won't happen. No, that'll be fine.

00:00:35 Spanky Moore I don't know.

00:00:36 Scottie Reeve Which way are we going? Is there a map on this thing what do we do? OK, we want to go up that way.

00:00:43 Spanky Moore Up where?

00:00:44 Scottie Reeve We want to be on State Highway 2.

00:00:45 Spanky Moore On the yellow one, yeah. Oh.

00:00:48 Scottie Reeve Sorry, just go back. Go back out again.

00:00:51 Scottie Reeve Um Pahiatua. I think we do want to go to Woodville because that yeah, that heads us up that way. Alright, we're going to Woodville.

00:01:01 Spanky Moore Do you know how to get there?

00:01:02 Scottie Reeve Its up this road, I think.

00:01:05 Spanky Moore OK. To Woodville

00:01:07 Scottie Reeve To Woodville. This part of New Zealand has this odd Nordic theme that I don't really understand.

00:01:18 Spanky Moore What do you mean?

00:01:20 Scottie Reeve It's like all this Viking stuff.

00:01:24 Spanky Moore Oh, look at this land. The windmills.

00:01:20 Scottie Reeve I don't know if we're doing this the right way or not?

00:01:31 Twenty One Elephants theme music

00:01:57 Spanky Moore Well, Scottie Reeve here we are again.

00:01:59 Scottie Reeve Here we are travelling up the glorious the beautiful North Island together. Having a lovely time, aren't we, Spanky?

00:02:05 Spanky Moore Oh, it's just amazing. And it's been so good for our friendship, hasn't it?

00:02:10 Scottie Reeve Oh, just depth unto depth unto depth.

00:02:14 Spanky Moore Wow. So, can you tell me what the heck we're doing travelling in a relocatable wagon from Thrifty up the North Island? Because last time we did a podcast you had just written a book, but we're doing the second series, and you haven't written a new book. Why am I here in the North Island with you?

00:02:33 Scottie Reeve Yeah. Well, that's right. You know, in season one we talked about a bunch of things that were pretty pertinent to young adults, to millennials at the moment. And we got so much feedback from the people who listened to this podcast about, you know, can we go a little bit deeper on some of those conversations? Can we explore that some more? And one of the things that became really clear to us was that there were these kinds of repeating themes of modern problems that were coming up. And they were things like anxiety and mental health, you know, which we talked that last week and technology addiction and cultural dislocation. And as these things came up, we couldn't help but think that there were actually some kind of ancient people who were living into these kinds of really old ways who we thought maybe they have some ancient solutions to some of these modern problems we've been talking about.

00:03:29 Spanky Moore So Scottie said to me in the North Island, we have wise people and much more interesting people than in the South Island. Why don't you come on a plane? You can and I'll take you on a 48 hour road trip and I'll introduce you to some of these ancient gurus. So here we are on our way on this on this road trip.

00:03:46 Scottie Reeve That's right.

00:03:47 Spanky Moore One of the things I was going to say is that if you've been enjoying the podcast, don't forget to go back and listen to season one, cause a lot of people like that, but also if you've been enjoying this season, we'd love it if you'd like rate us and review us on iTunes because that I understand helps other people find the podcast so. This is us begging you ...

00:04:06 Scottie Reeve Absolutely

00:04:07 Spanky Moore ... to write nice things about. That'd be really kind.

00:04:11 Scottie Reeve That that would be super helpful. Thank you.

00:04:14 Spanky Moore And a big thanks also to Laidlaw College, who helped cover some of the flight costs and some of the petrol costs so that we could kind of afford to gallivant about the countryside in the way that we've become accustomed. So, thank you, Laidlaw. Now Scottie, you are a pastor, or kind of like a vicar, priest in charge of this incredible church Blueprint in Wellington. I've told you this is my favourite church in New Zealand and you kind of took my recorder along last Sunday to kind of check in with them. Ask me a few questions.

00:04:47 Scottie Reeve I was interested in this stuff of kind of tech addiction and our fear of silence. And so, we took the recording device around a couple of nights ago and this is what they said.

What do you guys reckon about the impact of like mobile phones for millennials at the moment? Like, do you, do you think there's a thing with like social media and cell phones are like struggling to be present?

00:05:14 Speaker 7 Yes, yeah, I think it. I think it changes your brain. It's kind of that, maybe it's the addiction part of your brain, but your brain is constantly like, oh, I could check this other thing or this other thing, or this other thing. And getting that thrill of like a red dot or a, you know, like a like or whatever it is. You kind of like reach for that constantly and I think that while our phones do give us access to really good things and I use apps for like contemplative prayer and stuff, yeah, I think there's a risk of it being not a helpful tool in the way that it treats our brains or changes our brains.

00:05:48 Speaker 8 It's figuring out your own way of how you can, being able to use it as a tool. You know, and your spiritual life and your everyday life without it kind of taking control. You have to kind of tame the monster of it in some way.

00:06:10 Scottie Reeve How does it feel for you guys if you have, like, a moment of silence and nothing's happening. Like, what are the first thoughts that go through your mind in that moment?

00:06:22 Speaker 10 Oh my gosh. People are going to forget about me and the world's ending. And this is horrible. I need to fill it.

00:06:27 Speaker 11 Yeah, I think about probably what I should be doing.

00:06:31 Speaker 7 Yeah, the list of to do things that I have to get done.

00:06:34 Scottie Reeve And do you feel like it's kind of like when you try to slow down or have silences like the wheels are still spinning.

00:06:39 Speaker 10 Yeah, absolutely, definitely. And it's hard for it to stop. It's just like this thing that's on a roller coaster.

00:06:50 Speaker 13 It's such a unique thing in our society because we live in. I live in the city and there's, you know, there's always noises even at night you can hear the kind of the sweepers going past the street, you know. So having silence is such a unique thing for us that we kind of feel a bit naked without sound because there's always sound around us. So, taking that time to remove that from your life. It's like, whoa, what is this space I'm in where there's no noise around? It's kind of such unusual thing that it's kind of like it takes a while to adjust it.

00:07:20 Speaker 11 I think like the voice in your head kind of gets turned up at that point, and so you can sort of actually hear what's going on. Silence, I think is pretty powerful, but I think I need like a really good lead in in order to actually be able to really enjoy it and not feel threatened by it.

00:07:39 Spanky Moore Gosh, Scottie, you know I don't want you to feel smug about this, but the members of your church are much more intelligent and astute than the members of your average congregation.

00:07:49 Scottie Reeve Possibly they just need that level of astuteness and intelligence to make up for the glaring lack of leadership. I don't know.

00:07:56 Spanky Moore So one of the things what we're wanting to explore in this episode is around cell phones and the impact that cell phone, smartphones, technology might be having on both, how we interact with each other, but also our spirituality. Is that right?

00:08:13 Scottie Reeve Yeah, that's right. I mean, you know, just the other day, I downloaded a little app on my phone which tells me how many times I've picked up my iPhone and pressed that little circle button in a day. And I've got to let you know, it's terrifying. It is much higher than I thought it was.

00:08:30 Spanky Moore I was away on holiday last year. I had this interesting thing happening. Scottie, where I was walking along this beautiful Golden Bay beach. And it was gorgeous. You know how beautiful Golden Bay is. Have you been over there?

00:08:42 Scottie Reeve I think I have been there once.

00:08:43 Spanky Moore Like I agree that most of the South Island is the pits. It looks horrible. But Golden Bay is one of the few parts I think any North Islander would agree it's at least on par with Porirua.

00:08:54 Scottie Reeve Yeah

00:08:55 Spanky Moore So right. So, walking along Golden Bay and it's a beautiful sunset and the beach is in front of me. And it's absolutely gorgeous. And I discover that inadvertently I'm looking at my phone at Instagram. Of photos of other people taking of the sunset that I could have been looking at. But instead of looking at the actual sunset, I was looking at everybody's Instagram versions of the sunset. And I was like what is wrong with me.

00:09:22 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:09:23 Spanky Moore You're like, what's going on here? So, I decided I wasn't going to have my phone on me anymore. And my wife could tell if I'd even been looking at my phone for five seconds. She could instantly tell there was a change in mood that I had. It was a really incredibly liberating experience being free of my cell phone, but of course I have now entirely slipped back into this hell hole that is technology addiction. Have you read that research, Scottie? That says that even by having a cell phone, even if it's turned off in the same room as you it sort of distracts people. Have you heard that?

00:09:58 Scottie Reeve Yeah, I have heard that. And I know that that is true. You know, when I'm catching up with people for coffee that if that thing is anywhere near accessible, you know, even if it's on the table turned up the other way, I am aware that it's there. You know, it's like having another silent party at the table with us.

00:10:15 Spanky Moore So all of this is to say that I think this is a pretty legitimate modern problem.

00:10:21 Scottie Reeve Absolutely.

00:10:22 Spanky Moore So what's the solution, Scottie? Where are you taking me, right now?

00:10:26 Scottie Reeve Well, we are heading north. We're driving up into the Hawkes Bay to a place just out of Dannevirke called Kopua Monastery.

00:10:33 Spanky Moore Alright, OK. Well, let's do this thing. Let's do it.

00:10:43 Spanky Moore Is this it?

00:10:43 Scottie Reeve Yeah, here it is Kopua Monastery.

00:10:45 Spanky Moore Oh, look at this, there's a sign and there's a road.

00:10:50 Scottie Reeve Look at their glade of trees.

00:10:51 Spanky Moore Look at it. There're trees either side of us.

00:10:55 Scottie Reeve And mountains either side.

00:10:56 Spanky Moore And chickens, chickens.

00:10:58 Scottie Reeve Little chickens, rooster. So, because this is the 21 Elephants Podcast, I should let you know that I wrote a couple of chapters of the book here.

00:11:09 Spanky Moore Did You? I didn't know that.

00:11:09 Scottie Reeve Yeah. Yeah. When I was very depressed.

00:11:14 Spanky Moore Gosh, what? Like, I think we can work out what chapters though?

00:11:18 Scottie Reeve Yeah, it was definitely in the last half of the book.

00:11:21 Spanky Moore Oh, look at this. Look where we are.

00:11:22 Scottie Reeve Glorious. Oh, do you think they're going to judge us because we're pulling up on this, like, incredible machine?

00:11:29 Spanky Moore Yes, I don't really know. So, two ... - are you 30 yet?

00:11:36 Scottie Reeve 32 this Friday.

00:11:38 Spanky Moore So two 30-somethings rock up in a Prado. Late. Wanting to talk about silence.

00:11:47 Scottie Reeve We have no idea. I was telling Spanky earlier that the first time I came here, I didn't really get it. I was watching episodes of Black Books on my laptop and got told to turn it off because we were actually in the greater silence, and I didn't know.

00:12:02 Spanky Moore Don't mess with the greater silence.

00:12:05 Scottie Reeve Don't mess with the Benedictines. Oh, like someone is coming out to welcome us.

00:12:08 Spanky Moore Someone's coming to welcome us. And I don't know where I've put the key actually.

00:12:10 Scottie Reeve We don't need to lock this do we?

00:12:14 Spanky Moore No, no, I don't think anyone's stealing anything here. Hello. Yes. How's it going? Nice to meet you.

00:12:28 Celia How are you?

00:12:29 Scottie Reeve Sorry we're a little bit late. It took us longer to get here than we thought we would.

00:12:31 Celia Yeah, it's a little bit like that it's out in the whoops.

00:12:33 Scottie Reeve Yeah, That's a good thing.

00:12:35 Celia Anyway, welcome. So, it's Father John, who'll be meeting with you. That's him there.

00:12:39 Spanky Moore Oh, nice.

00:12:43 Celia So I think he's probably ready.

00:12:45 Scottie Reeve Neat.

00:12:46 Celia So maybe I'll just quickly show you your rooms and then when you're finished with him, you will know where to come.

00:12:52 Scottie Reeve and Spanky Moore That'll be great, OK.

00:12:56 Celia Here is the church.

00:13:05 Father John Testing John speaking. Testing 1-2-3.

00:13:08 Spanky Moore I think that's pretty good.

00:13:09 Scottie Reeve All right. We are sitting here. We've arrived at Kopua Monastery up near Norsewood, Dannevirke, Lower Hawkes Bay. We are really lucky to sit here with Father John, who's one of the monks here. Who has been here for 15 years. So, Father John, do you want to start by telling us a little bit about your common life here and what happens here at Kopua.

00:13:31 Father John Common life is made-up of community prayer. We come together 7 times a day to pray together. That's chanting the Psalms, reading the scripture. And then we usually return to our rooms. And there it's a prayer again but prayer of a different type. An individual will sit down there with Scripture and a form of contemplative prayer there that we call active contemplative prayer, or sometimes it's known as cataphatic reading scripture, you're reflecting on what's God saying to me in this. How will I respond to God? We sometimes refer to that as *Lexio Devina*. That's an essential element of this Cistercian lifestyle here. But then there's another form of contemplative prayer. We call it centering prayer, or we call it Christian meditation. What we call the passive form of contemplative prayer, or the apophatic is the Greek word for. And that's where you're not using your mind. You let your mind be focused on your mantra. And that way you are one with the prayer of Christ.

00:14:49 Spanky Moore How did you come to be a monk here in the monastery? And can you tell us a little bit about how that happened and the vows that you took, what those vows mean?

00:15:01 Father John I came here about 15 years ago. I came here as a man in my very early 50s. I had lived in the world, so to speak, until I came here. I was actually married at one stage with a family, and children had grown up and married her broken up. I had gone to a monastery in Australia for a week and felt that different reasons, I came back to New Zealand where I originally started from and asked them here and they said, yeah, why not come along? So, I came and tried it. Yes, and I've been here ever since. It is in the three vows which we have here. Stability that is being prepared to spend the rest of your life in this place, committed to this way of life. Number two is obedience. You obey the Abbott, and you obey your brothers, whom you live with. And number 3 is what we call *conversio morum* – conversion, being prepared and willing to change yourself so that you are part of a holistic community of monks who are living together in the name of seeking God. So, you take those vows for a couple of years and then they ask you again, would you be prepared to take that on a permanent basis. You usually step out of the monastery for a few months before you make your final vows. And I did all that and came back and said yes, I'm happy to give myself to the life here to the to the contemplate of life at Kopua for the rest of my life.

00:16:45 Spanky Moore How many monks are here?

00:16:47 Father John There are seven permanent monks here, and we have a visitor. A Cistercian monk from the Philippines who's with us for eight months.

00:16:56 Spanky Moore Right, you seem to have a quite a clear sense of what Christian contemplation is, or Christian meditation is, as opposed to meditation in general. You know,

mindfulness and meditation are popular now and there are many other forms of meditation in other religions. How does a Christian understand how contemplation fits? What anchors us as this being a particularly Christian discipline?

00:17:22 Father John Christian meditation can trace its roots; the practise of Christian meditation can trace its roots back to the period we often refer to in Christianity as the Desert Fathers, the Desert Mothers. Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, spoke in great detail on it a few years ago in Sydney, what they called the John Main Seminar, and he has since spoken further, and he's written a lot on the subject. It's sourced in that period when people were living in the society that time - Christians saying we can't live as Christians here. I want to live as Christ showed us according to the scripture. But living in society, we can't do it. So gradually, a few of them started moving away, living out in what we would say in the bush nowadays. They were going into more. desert areas there. And so that's how they got the name the Desert Fathers. The person who said to being the first one was one we call St Anthony. He wasn't really but you have to have someone to focus on at the beginning of something. He lived to be 105 and couldn't read or write. Rowan Williams has written extensively on it, saying how this is what modern society needs. We need to take up being apart. Now, we can't all go into the desert by ourselves, but we can take periods out of our modern day lifestyle, we can do it on a daily basis. We can take out every few months. We can take a bit of time out, but the main focus of contemplative prayer is that it is part of your daily life. You take time out, two times every day, to be still, to be silent and simply say your prayer word, your mantra. And that way you're forgetting everything else. You're being one with Christ, one with the prayer of Christ. Which is coming from within you. A temple of Christ.

00:19:38 Scottie Reeve So I think that's really interesting, that idea of being set apart, which I guess the kind of more - or the biblical word would be like holiness, wouldn't it? And we live in a time, particularly for our generation, where those moments of stepping out don't really exist anymore. You know, I remember growing up as a kid there would be times on our street where there was just no noise. You know because they just, you know, it would just go quiet. And you would - solitude or silence would find you. But now there's this kind of time where we actually have to find it because we constantly connected on mobile devices. And you know, you never see anyone walking up Cuba Street in Wellington where I come from without earphones in. And yeah, so it's a really interesting time and I know that the Desert Fathers, you know, there was sort of a sense that the empire was going down and sort of, you know, got overboard, you know, to get away from this pervasive culture. What? What do you think? Yeah, what do you think the value of silence is? And I guess in your day-to-day and for the monks when you step out.

00:20:56 Father John The value of silence is you come to find yourself - your true self. The self of the world is focused on, what we might call, our survival mode. We have to survive. The world, our modern society, the culture we've created is focused on consuming more goods and services. And no one knows themselves properly as long as that is what they're doing. If that's their life. Surviving. But all human beings to find their true selves have to go beyond survival. We have to go to the centre of our true self. We call it our soul, our heart. Where we are one with the spirit of Christ, who is always one with us.

How do I say that in other words. I don't know. It's survival. And then the other level of being human, our spiritual, spiritual level, the world we live in. Is it focused on the spirit in any way? I don't think so, and no one knows about that. But inside every human being is a deep yearning. We have a spiritual essence inside of us. Every person has it. Well, we live and doesn't cater for that caters just for our survival. So, I say we need to take time out every day. Monks have come here. We've acknowledged that we're seeking God, and we think this is a good environment suitable for seeking

God. No one wants to come here nowadays. I was the last person to come here and stay. Others have come and they've tried it. They've gone again. For some reason I like, I wanted to say, but it's in many ways this form of monasticism we have to ask ourselves, is it relevant for our world?

00:23:10 Spanky Moore So from the other side, me and Scottie working with student age, so kind of 18 to 30s. We see it through sort of the other side of the lens. So, we see it's not just that there's lots of noise. It's that particularly cell phones, the way that cell phones are, where your whole life is on them, that people seem to be anywhere other than where they actually are. Do you know what I mean? They're never present to them true selves, probably how they're feeling, but present to the world around them, to the neighbour, they're not present to - I mean, I know this in myself. I know this, but that doesn't stop. My hand appears to keep picking up my phone. You see, there's sort of this addiction to this hyperstimulation. We just wonder if silence offers a kind of solution that hasn't been very explored at all with young people. What do you think?

00:24:17 Father John You just talked about grabbing for the - what do you call it?

00:24:21 Spanky Moore The cell phone. Yeah.

00:24:22 Father John Yeah, yeah cell phone. Silence is here if you want it. If you want it. But even here we have access to the Internet here. You can use it here. We don't have not in our rooms, but there is a community computer. You can go to it and use it if you want it. Silence, I see, is an essential part of being human. At the back of our property here, there's, I suppose, there's about 10 or 12 acres of what we refer to as bush land. I spend a lot of my spare time just being in the bush there. It's planting trees sometimes. Just sitting there being there and silence. It's not silence there because I hear birds, hear the cicadas, I hear insects.

00:25:15 Spanky Moore My understanding of silence is there is silence; And then there's SILENCE. SILENCE is what you're left with, regardless of the noise, there's a sense of inner, the inner silence.

00:25:29 Father John If you stop and be still your mind is going continuously. If you try and stop it, you can't. Because that's human beings, we we're constantly going. The mind has been described as a tree full of monkeys and many other such descriptions. When you say silence, you need to have something to enable you to be silent. And that's one of the practises. That's one of the things with Christian meditation we talk about your prayer word. People come here to me often. Everything so wonderful and peaceful and quiet here, they say. Because you can hear the noise at the moment you hear the cicadas and a bit of wind, but they say it's oh so wonderful. But if you sit still there like by yourself. Your mind's going instantly. And how do you stop it? Do you want to stop it? If you don't have cell phones and that you still, you've still got your mind there so it's still going still going from one thing to another constantly.

00:26:41 Scottie Reeve So you talk about silence as this important thing for like discovering our true selves. Is it that would you say that it's like sort of when the noise dulls down that we realise what we're left with. Or how would you describe like, what is? How do you think silence helps us to come upon our true selves?

00:27:00 Father John When you realise that by myself, I'm not by myself, I've got all this other noise going on me continuously. This is me. Is this really me, this continual going, going, going. And when you come to acknowledge you need something else to find your true self. I can't. I've just got all these silly ideas in mind. They keep coming and they're going like this one going that way. They can't be my true self. I have to go deeper into myself and contemplative prayer as the way to do that, that's acknowledging that we are spiritual beings.

00:27:40 Spanky Moore Are there people here who've taken any vows of silence or any people that spend more time in silence than others.

00:27:47 Father John We have one person who lives here as a hermit monk.

00:27:50 Spanky Moore Tell me about the hermit.

00:27:53 Father John Well, he's been living like that since about 1987. He lives by himself. For many years he came to the community two days a week to contribute to the community as a cook, cooking meals for us. He used to come cook the meal, then off again. He didn't talk to anyone. He lives by himself. And one of the priests from our community goes over there once a week and says mass from the Eucharist. But he's wholly by himself all the time. Occasionally visitors go and see him, people he knows.

00:28:25 Spanky Moore Does that have to do you think with the solitude or more of the solitude, more with the silence? What do you think in terms of the spiritual?

00:28:33 Father John It's hard for me to say. It would not suit me. I know that man. It does suit him. He has lived in community. The same as us here, but he when it first became available, he said he would do it. There was a unit available there so he said he would go straight away. He hasn't come back soon, so some people are called to that trouble, but none of us here would want to do it.

00:28:56 Spanky Moore Well as someone with a young family I instantly feel called to that.

00:29:00 Father John On a permanent life by yourself?

00:29:01 Spanky Moore No, just for three days, just for three.

00:29:05 Father John By yourself. Wow. St Benedict in the rule of Saint Benedict and the rule of Benedict is that it's OK, but you can't do it until you've had about 10 or 15 years. So, no one can be by themselves and seek God until you've lived in community for 10 and 15 years, community is the perfect way. That's where you really find yourself. You find yourself, whether you're angry or bitter or generous, or everything comes out here in that environment.

00:29:32 Scottie Reeve You talk about this importance of silence in community. Would I be right in thinking it's the silence reveals your true self, but your brothers are also helping to reveal your true self as well.

00:29:46 Father John Your community shows your true self. People you don't know at all. When you were young, you were born into this world and your parents cared for you and your brothers and sisters. You grew up with them. You knew their ways and they knew your ways and you accommodate with one another. But if at later in life you then go and put into another community with people who have got different ways of washing the dishes, who've got different ways of putting plates away, and they just little, little, little different ways of closing the door, that can grate, but you find your true self, how well can I cope with that bloke banging the door all day? That tells you whether I'm angry or whether I'm gentle, or whether I'm kind, you know, the spiritual. Love, Joy, peace, patience, self-control, goodness, kindness. What Paul told us, the spiritual gifts. That's where it all comes out - in community. If you've done that in community for 10 or 15 years and you're still there, you can go and have a go at being alone.

00:30:54 Scottie Reeve Is part of the role of silence and prayer. Does that allow you to refresh? I mean, have a refreshing of grace for the people around you and you know, for all those things,

maybe as you say, the tea bags in the wrong place or the dishes aren't done. Do you find that space of union with God is what allows you to continue to love your brother.

00:31:18 Father John That's the very thing. You learn to carry your cross one with Christ. Every difficulty, every difficulty that you perceive as a difficulty because of what someone has done or hasn't done. It's your opportunity to share with the Christ, and that's what you learn early on. You take them into your mentality.

00:31:44 Spanky Moore Well do you have any advice for people who struggle to be present? So, they want to be present to the moment, but they find themselves, I mean, I see this in myself. That I'm often dreaming about where I could be. And the thing you know, the next thing I'm going to do, I really struggle to be here. What's your advice on how someone who might live in Wellington or Christchurch, Auckland wherever. How do they go about being more present?

00:32:13 Father John Living in the present moment. It's very difficult. We live in a cultural world where we're planning for the future or reflecting on the past. Living in the present moment is not easy. One of the things that we learn in Christian meditation your mantra - You carry it with you always, so whether you're cleaning your teeth, whether you're sitting on the toilet, whether you're getting on the bus, whether you're standing in the supermarket, you're saying your prayer word, you know, you're one with Christ. Becomes so much a part of you. Whatever you are, whatever you do and you're not engaged in something, you naturally say your prayer word your mantra.

00:33:00 Spanky Moore I know that lots of people listening to you now will be saying. "Father John, where do I get one of these prayer words from?" They'll be like I have never heard of this prayer word. And where does one purchase one online. Do you? Can you tell us a little more around the prayer word. Is it something that changes? Is it something that you have? How a young person might go about having that as some sort of practise?

00:33:29 Father John When I was growing up as a young person, there used to be, it was very kitsch to go and come out of The Beatles and India and Transcendental Meditation. And you used to go to a Yogi and get your own special word that would give you a special word. And that was real for many people. I think it still is and I know people older than me who it's still part of their lives. They were given a word once by a guru and they keep it with them. Christianity says that you take a word from Scripture. It can be just the word Jesus. Christian meditation encourages the word Maranatha. Ma-ra-na-tha a four syllable word - it means come Lord in Aramaic the language that Jesus spoke. It's doesn't conjure up any images or any pictures of anything else in your mind. So, the people who started this Christian meditation 50 years ago thought of this, was a bloke called John Main, and he said this is a good word. Let's stay with us and they've encouraged everyone to stay with that word. But you don't have to. If you want to say "ABBA, father" or "Jesus", or "Come Lord Jesus" or "Lord" or "God, come to my assistance", "Lord, make haste. Help me." So, there's many other options, but as I said, Maranatha is encouraged for the reasons I just said.

00:35:00 Spanky Moore And so it helps you to become present to where God is, in the now.

00:35:05 Father John In the now yes. When I'm walking out the back amongst the trees and that there I'm sitting there, I'm sitting there. Ma-ra-na-tha. You can even hum it if you want to. You can say it, but you just walk along. Ma-ra-na-tha. Your life becomes more aware of God in your life. Instead of being focused continually on the cell phone going off. You are Just more aware of other that there is more in life.

00:35:30 Scottie Reeve Do you own a cell phone?

00:35:32 Father John No, I don't. I went away over to Australia last year for a few months and my father, who died a few years ago when he died, he gave me an old cell phone. So, I took that with him, I thought oh I'd be able to use this, so I took it back over there and it wasn't working. So, I don't know anything about them.

00:35:55 Scottie Reeve So the word that that you choose - I think of this picture and you might be familiar with this picture being from Australia, but they talk about how out in the Outback you can't build big enough fences to hold the animals, so they they'll put strategic water holes or wells, and the animals will never go too far from the water.

00:36:16 Father John That's right.

00:36:20 Scottie Reeve And I kind of hear what you're saying, and I think of that picture where it's, you know, maybe the word is like this place of Christ's life that we keep on drawing back to.

00:36:30 Father John It's quite it's a good image, yeah.

00:36:33 Scottie Reeve So the word itself is not the point. The word is kind of an anchor.

00:36:39 Father John It's rooted in your heart, and whatever you do, yeah. If you're not engaged in something, if when you're driving by saying it, saying it.

00:36:50 Spanky Moore So does the word start to resonate with your being? It's more than a habit. It's more than spiritual smoking, isn't it?

00:36:57 Father John It's hard to stick to it. It really is hard to stick to it because the mind is saying to you, I don't want to do that. The mind is a busy, active part of yourself. The mind is the tree full of monkeys. Well, you try and get those monkeys to be still. They won't. So, you have to have something to keep them still. It doesn't. It won't stay there. The mantra will quickly go away.

00:37:21 Spanky Moore What do you see? What's the benefit then? You know that cause you must have assumed that God in some ways makes our mind to be these creative things. Because that's what I could imagine people saying. I've got lots of ideas. I like having lots of ideas.

00:37:33 Father John Yeah, they do. They do. The Alcoholics system - I used to work with Alcoholics years ago "I don't want to give up, you know, I. Enjoy it".

00:37:43 Scottie Reeve Which is actually not a totally different image from how some of us use our cell phones. I installed an app on my cell phone you said which tells you how often you've looked at that and it showed me that by mid-afternoon I'd picked it up and looked at it 41 times, you know, and it's like probably some of us, it would be more than that.

00:38:03 Spanky Moore I've run, and Scotties been part of, a number of silent retreats for young people. And they're scared because they've never been silent. To be honest. I mean, most of them have never been silent. It's become a very noisy world in a whole lot of ways but it's interesting how many people report quite profound encounters with God, with the spirit. Things that they never saw coming, things that really are change, a total change for them. Have you had anything like that happen to you and do you think that the way God sometimes uses these times of silence and solitude.

00:38:47 Father John Yes, I have. I've had what we refer to them as a spiritual experience. One of the things with contemplative prayer, or this form of contemplative prayer, spiritual Christian meditation is you're more open to the call of God in your life. Whether it's the bird, the piwakawaka flying around you all around. You're grabbing the insects as you're moving. Or whether it's talking to

someone or listening to someone on the bus or something like that. You can be aware that the spirit of Christ is there with you in a way that's unique to that, to your individual person. I have had things like that.

00:39:33 Spanky Moore So do you think ultimately for a younger person who's on their cell phones? Hmm. You've mentioned a mantra. Do you think, though, that that there's actually a special place for retreat, then to experience some sort of stillness and silence and solitude to get started?

00:39:53 Father John One of the things with this Christian meditation is it's not only an individual practise. It's a community practise. You come together once a week with other people who have this discipline as part of their life Christian meditation. We refer to that as a prayer discipline. Two times every day you stop. You're silent. You're still. You simply say your prayer word or your mantra. And you do that in the morning and in the evening when you first start you up for 20 minutes as you progress and you've been going for a year or so, you move up to 30 minutes. And for the rest of your life, you make this commitment. I'm going to be stopping two times every day, once in the evening, once in the morning or whatever time suitable for you. There are people all over the world doing this now from China to South Africa there are many people doing this, but they all come together once a week in the suburb of Singapore or the suburb of Auckland or Indonesia different parts there. You do it as yourself by yourself. Two times a day and you come together with others and it's not for any particular church. It's Christian. It's a Christian prayer form for all Christians.

00:41:09 Scottie Reeve So you see a lot of people who are really hungry for the chance to experience Christian meditation and to have times of silence with Jesus.

00:41:21 Father John Yeah, yeah, there's a lot of people here and they come here because you can only get so many to this place, but they don't know what they're looking for. Spiritual direction is something. I'm a spiritual director. You can't force it on the people you know so you have to hear people as they yearn and yearn. They might be here for a week. And you'll see them once every day. And you have to let it come out and slowly, slowly, and there the end, you might make a gentle suggestion. You can't force people have to find it themselves.

00:41:56 Scottie Reeve And that's something we were talking about earlier. My background is in community work, and I came to a point of anxiety and depression and real struggle where it felt like the well inside me wasn't deep enough for everything that was going out. I think it was at that point that these practises of silence and solitude began. It's like you say - they kind of found me when I was ready for them. And I wonder. Earlier, you said that you wonder if maybe whether this is still relevant to young people, but I wonder if it's for some young people that it's just further down the journey.

00:42:41 Father John Yeah, that's true. Yeah. But I have taught it to little kids. They're just superb, they are the best meditators. Children, 6, 7, 8, 9. They're just perfect, and I've been teaching kids here and I've had them say, like, can we go longer the next time?

00:43:00 Scottie Reeve What do you think it is about little children that find it so compelling? It seems like you're saying they find it easier than we do.

00:43:08 Father John Oh, they do –

00:43:09 Scottie Reeve Why do you think that is?

00:43:12 Father John With children, say 6 year olds. You do it for 6 minutes. I mentioned before 20 minutes and 30 minutes for the time for adults. When you teach young ones, you do it for six minutes for 6 year olds and go up like that. And when I first teacher a group it might be 10 minutes

just to get them going on the thing they come off and come back. "Wow, that's amazing". How can they describe what was amazing? I'm not sure. I've asked them that they've just said "Oh, come on. That was that was great. Father John"

00:43:46 Spanky Moore Do you have a different technique for kids than for adults?

00:43:50 Father John Oh, just sit there on the floor with them. I usually sit on the floor and I say, "Now where's God" and they point up to the sky. Then I say, "But the spirit of Christ in here, right?" Just be still and be with Christ. Be still, be with Christ and the best way to be with him is to say your prayer word. Your mantra. Ready. Yeah. Don't worry.

00:44:10 Scottie Reeve And they just choose the word?

00:44:18 Father John I tell them the word "Maranatha" You say that a few times.

00:44:22 Spanky Moore And they love it.

00:44:23 Father John They love it. Yeah. The little ones do. The older they get the harder it gets.

00:44:10 Scottie Reeve I have a 3 ½ year old. Do you think I've got much chance.

00:44:28 Father John You try. I had children of my own. I can remember using my own kids.

00:44:32 Spanky Moore It doesn't work for me. I'm going to bring her to see you. You can try.

00:44:42 Father John OK. I can remember using my own kids when they were young, before I even knew Christian Meditation. I remember telling my own kids for punishment. "You sit there and be quiet. Don't move. Be still. Be silent." You teach kids to do that from a very early age. There's a French philosopher. Simone, Weir. She taught that in education the first thing children need to be taught is to learn to be still, to be silent. And say nothing, so that they can find their true selves and use a prayer word to do it. Education is pointless, she said, unless you teach children how to be still and silent from a very early age.

00:45:22 Spanky Moore Not to oppress them, but so that they know. So, they know who they are.

00:45:25 Father John You oppress them when you put them when you put them in a classroom and make them go this and that. Right?

00:45:30 Scottie Reeve I love what you say around how they finished that time, and they say oh that was amazing, but they can't describe it. I think something beautiful that I've known about silences is that my union with God comes to a place where there are no words. Where it moves beyond metaphor or anything to be able to describe it, because there's something bigger going on. Do you agree?

00:45:56 Father John I agree. Your spirit and the spirit of Christ together – how do you describe that.

00:46:01 Scottie Reeve Yeah, maybe an interesting question to finish on. One thing that people listening can't see is that Father John, when you talk about silence and Christian meditation that you light up and you're kind of your face lights up, which is like quite, quite like joyful to see how you know how much you just seem to beam with. And I guess in in all that time with Christ. This is such a broad question, but who is Jesus to you? And what does your relationship with Jesus look like from this journey of?

00:46:38 Father John Christ is with me all the time. The spirit of Christ dwells in me and my journey through life is to be with him. Always. The more I can spend time just being. We live in a world of

doing. A world of being is what we need to be developing. Being one with Christ. And that's means being one with yourself. We have Christ with us, and this is being with Christ as your journey. Whether I'm planting a tree or doing the dishes and the best way I've found is saying my mantra. Just keep focussed on that.

00:47:15 Spanky Moore Thank you so much. It's been fantastic.

00:47:17 Scottie Reeve Yeah, it's really a real blessing, thank you.

00:47:18 Spanky Moore Thank you.

00:47:50 Speaker 6 When he saw Jesus, from a distance he ran and bowed down before him. And he shouted at the top of his voice "What have you to do with me? Jesus, Son of the most high God." And the unclean spirits came out and entered this swine and the herd numbering about 2000 rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the water.

00:48:34 Spanky Moore Well Scottie, here we are.

00:47:37 Scottie Reeve Here we are.

00:48:38 Spanky Moore At a monastery. We just had old umm. Was that the last prayers of the night of the night.

00:48:46 Scottie Reeve That was evening prayers. There is a compline at 8:00.

00:48:50 Spanky Moore And then it's silent.

00:48:51 Scottie Reeve And then the greater silence.

00:48:56 Spanky Moore Tell me about the greater silence Scottie.

00:49:00 Scottie Reeve I think Isn't that quiet until 4:00 AM or something until they pray again, or till seven, maybe.

00:49:05 Spanky Moore 4 freaking A.M.

00:49:04 Scottie Reeve Start praying at 4:00 AM.

00:49:08 Spanky Moore We have to get in the car at five, we think, to get to Hamilton in time for our next ancient answer.

00:49:16 Scottie Reeve And they get up every day at 4:00 to pray.

00:49:18 Spanky Moore So we'll be up at 4:00. It's going to suit us quite we'll because we're going to get up and pray.

00:49:22 Scottie Reeve What do you reckon about Father John today.

00:49:28 Spanky Moore I reckon it's really hard. I think it's really hard for people from a different generation, and then from now totally different life to, actually understand the gift they have. You know, like I think you could kind of explain to him the cell phone and the impact it's had. Yeah. But in the end, he just couldn't believe it.

00:49:53 Scottie Reeve He just like he had no idea.

00:49:54 Spanky Moore Yeah, yeah.

00:49:55 Scottie Reeve Every time we talked about stuff, he looked shocked.

00:49:57 Scottie Reeve Like he laughed.

00:49:58 Spanky Moore Every time you talk about the cell phone. He just laughed. He was shocked. And then just laughed and said "You must be joking. People like that can't exist."

00:50:05 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah, yeah, totally, totally.

00:50:08 Scottie Reeve Something I think that stuck out to me from chatting to him was the idea of being set apart. And that, you know, he's here until he dies. He's been here for 15 years and he's the youngest monk here or the one who's been here the least time. And they are set apart here for prayer, and they pray seven times a day.

00:50:32 Spanky Moore It's like eating for a Sanbran. It's not like good time prayer.

00:50:37 Scottie Reeve It's not. It's like, yeah, it's like chewing dry weetbix.

00:50:45 Spanky Moore Holy moly give me some prunes and custard.

00:50:46 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah.

00:50:48 Spanky Moore Give me anything, a little bit of nutrasweet.

00:50:49 Scottie Reeve But so they do that seven times a day, seven times a day, and then they have 20 minutes, twice a day of centering for Christian medication, medication, meditation as equals.

00:51:02 Spanky Moore Well, it is. You say it's like antidepressants for the soul.

00:51:06 Spanky Moore You get it. That's me playing around with words. I actually find, like the prayers we just saw it's quite confronting.

00:51:15 Scottie Reeve I don't really know how you do that seven times a day. And I know it's from a different tradition to ours as Anglican priests. One of the things that Father John kept coming back to though he talks about this idea of the true self a lot. And that silence kind of takes us to the true self and I think, something I do think about is, and we talked with Jean Malcolm about this a bit, is that so much of what we do on our devices is about creating a false projection of self. And so it kind of makes sense if these things are at odds with each other that we have to put down the device and kind of remove ourselves, set ourselves apart from it, in order to come upon the true self.

00:52:04 Spanky Moore Yeah. I mean, I think cell not like self phones. They're actually it's a sad situation we're in. Because pretty much all the all of the devices have, we've gotten rid of them and condensed them into this one super device. Supra Hypera, Theo, device, right. And so, the good and the bad are sort of yoked together in a way that's very difficult to separate. So, what do you do with that? I mean, I'm mostly of the opinion that cell phones are 90% spiritually destructive. Certainly, some good things, particularly if you like really lonely, but they both they make you lonely and connect you and all that stuff I mean, what's he got? The chickens, that's where they hang out those chickens.

00:52:51 Scottie Reeve Let's just see if they've got like something to say. Brek, brek elephants.

00:53:00 Spanky Moore I don't know. He didn't seem impressed by silence, did he? He was into mantras. Mantra your way out of cell phone. You know when you're asking him around his relationship with Jesus, were you disappointed with how cosmic he was?

00:53:12 Scottie Reeve I was thinking well. He spends all this time with Jesus. I pray seven times a day. I do 40 minutes a day of centering prayer, and it's to be in union with Christ. I guess maybe the

Protestant kind of Pentecostals reading me wanted to know about his relationship with Jesus. I was trying to find a bridge to another world because his world is so different from any others.

00:53:39 Spanky Moore This is the problem we've got with the ancient solutions is they sometimes seem impenetrable. Don't they? Like, I feel like I look at it and I get it. And I'm moved, in fact, about how this could be helpful. But I'm not sure that place is the container that is required for our modern problems.

00:53:59 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, totally. Something I think, the really far end of the Catholic Church is hard for Protestants to get our head around. You know, like, we're having a conversation over you know, with that young guy and you know, he's telling me about Mary appearing in a tortilla in Mexico.

00:54:21 Spanky Moore You should have lied.

00:54:23 Scottie Reeve I don't know what to do with it and I do respect the Catholics. We all come from the Catholics eh.

00:54:30 Spanky Moore Yeah. Yeah, yeah and the orthodox. Yeah, yeah. I married a Catholic. Did you know that? Have I told you that.

00:54:34 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah, yeah. You've said that many times today, thank you.

00:54:36 Spanky Moore Yeah. Here is Something I was struck by. The gospel reading and prayers today by Father Nico was the story of Jesus and Legion, the man, the Demoniac, the man that was possessed, and they threw it into 2000 pigs. There's one thing before we get to that. Imagine 2000 pigs rolling around in the sea, dying and squealing. And then the body's rotting. You don't imagine that coming and seeing it.

00:55:07 Scottie Reeve As they drown, you harvest that meat. You cure it.

00:55:10 Spanky Moore I wouldn't be eating possessed meat. I mean, if you're nervous about a mantra I'll tell you what you're going to be nervous about demon possessed pork and bacon. And I'm assuming they didn't eat that much.

00:55:20 Scottie Reeve Demon cured bacon.

00:55:22 Spanky Moore Anyway, that's an aside. I was genuinely struck in that reading. There was a sense of this person who was shackled and said to Jesus "What can you do for me?" And I thought - well, that's the reason we're here basically, is that same sense of feeling like a generation that seems to be shackled by stimulation and a pretty much unknown unnamed technology addiction. A connectedness addiction. And here we are at this monastery asking the same question. So, is there any liberation from this? Is there anything that can be done?

00:56:02 Scottie Reeve Yeah, that's interesting. What do you think we can take from Father John around silence and around how we live in this world where we're glued to our devices.

00:56:14 Spanky Moore There you go. I got something for you. I take from Father John that you can't remove something without putting something in its place if you hope to get somewhere. So, he named it as a mantra. You need something, so if you go to your phone, what are you going to go to now?

00:56:30 Scottie Reeve Yeah, that's right.

00:56:31 Spanky Moore And we might debate a little bit around what the best thing is to go.

00:56:36 Scottie Reeve But it's the old, you know, Jesus old principle, you know, that you clear out the house. If you fill it with nothing, you know the demons come back sevenfold, eh. As much as I wonder about the mantra thing, and it probably only makes me uncomfortable because it's using the word mantra. It's probably another.

00:56:53 Spanky Moore I see, you know. I mean, I don't have as much problem with Mantras I mean as you. Because it's just a, it's just a breath prayer isn't it.

00:57:02 Scottie Reeve Yes, I wasn't sure. When I you know when I kind of drilled down and asked him, so the words not the point, right. But I'm not sure the word isn't the point, but the thing that I do think about from regardless of how we feel about mantras. So maybe he's saying Maranatha 100 times a day, right? And as I said earlier, you know, just put this new app on my phone to see how many times I look at that screen each day and by mid-afternoon, it said 41. So, do I want to say a word that means Lord have mercy, or do I want to look at a screen that tells me I'm not good enough? You can't criticise something like that when we return to the same thought or to the same word or the same images over and over again a day.

00:57:43 Spanky Moore Well, we have an unintentional habit and that much of the time does do some kind of harm? So, it's hard to get on your high horse.

00:57:53 Scottie Reeve Exactly

00:57:54 Spanky Moore And say. I mean, my experience has been that there is huge fruit for young people like, you know, millennials, whatever. In silence, huge fruit. He's like, why are you guys talking about silence?

00:58:08 Scottie Reeve I don't, I didn't take it that strongly from him. I thought he was saying silence is good, he was saying silence is good, but your brain's still going to be full of noise. You know you can be somewhere and not be present. You can be quiet and not be silent today, but there's a state of the heart thing in there. The two things probably that I take away from Father John is firstly, the importance of silence for knowing your true self.

00:58:41 Spanky Moore Oh that's right. That's very good. That's very good.

00:58:43 Scottie Reeve Like I think that's big, and I think so much of what we do on our devices is manufacturing of false authenticity.

00:58:54 Spanky Moore Mm-hmm.

00:58:55 Scottie Reeve So I think silence centred around Christ might be our answer or our antidote to creating false identities and false selves. So, I think that, but I think again what he said, which Jean said when we met with her too, is that it's in community. That you can't go be silent on your own. Like they didn't even let that guy be a hermit until he had hung around for 15 years in community and he still wanted to be. I think there's this thing where, you know, he was saying that the experience of, you know, iron sharpens iron, the abrasion of being around the brothers and people not doing the dishes and all of that, plus this place of contemplation and silence and solitude are revealing who he most truly is in Christ. And I think that's something we can take even if you're not going to move out here. We want to be the best of who Christ has made us to be. And he seems to be saying that we do that in times of silence being one with God, being in union with God, and being in union with our brothers and sisters. One of the things, which probably, I always find interesting

about kind of I guess more closed off monasteries is that, where is their service to the least of these, you know.

01:00:25 Spanky Moore Here we go Scottie now picture this.

01:00:28 Scottie Reeve You know, where is that in the picture? And so, I'm like, I don't know, because we didn't ask this question and we're only here for one night. So, what do we know?

01:00:40 Spanky Moore And we have nowhere else to stay. So, you don't want to piss off the monks too much.

01:00:44 Scottie Reeve You know there is something. There is this place you move into where God is doing something like spirit to spirit, where you can't explain it. And so it may be that this wasn't all we thought it was, but it may just be that there aren't actually words for it.

01:01:03 Spanky Moore Well, you've got to say a dude, who spends his time praying for 15 years. I'd have to say a 37 year old and a 32 year old turn up for a night and I'd be like who gives a shit what do they know? You know, talk to me for 50 minutes and analyse me for two hours.

01:01:19 Scottie Reeve Yeah, yeah, yeah.

01:01:20 Spanky Moore Ah no, not much fruit there. Like you know, people must do that in my spiritual life all the time.

01:01:26 Scottie Reeve A guy comes here to visit a guy who's been living in a monastery for 15 years and then asked him to talk about his relationship with Jesus and concludes he doesn't have one.

01:01:38 Spanky Moore I'm glad he didn't say. How's yours? Oh shit, it just got real 10,000 Reasons starts to play, you say? Well, actually, I've got a song.

01:01:50 Scottie Reeve It is beautiful out here, though.

01:01:52 Spanky Moore It's pretty good, yeah. There's not much to do out here either. You come here for an exciting antidote to hyper-stimulation and we're just left bored. Yeah. Guess I'll have a drink. I look forward to a drink whenever mine ...

01:02:14 Spanky Moore OK We're back at the mothership. Get your maranatha on.

01:02:56 Spanky Moore I'm sitting in my room or in my cell at the monastery Scottie and I went to night prayers at 8:00. And then as we left, all the monks filed out, and then the abbot Father Niko he had some sort of like stick with a dingle, and he dipped in the water and put water on everyone's head as they left. And then after that everyone entered into the Great Silence, which means no one can talk to each other. So, I'm here in my room, whispering because everyone silent in the monastery, they seemed to be asleep. And the first breather of 4:00 AM. So, Scottie's gone to sleep with his block of chocolate, which he had for lunch. So, I guess I'll go to sleep and get up at 4:00 AM before we keep going on this road trip? Right into the silence I go.

01:04:17 Spanky Moore And so it's what time is it?

01:04:19 Scottie Reeve Oh my word it's 5:33 AM.

01:04:21 Spanky Moore 5:33 we're in the diesel Prado leaving the monastery.

01:04:31 Scottie Reeve Now where is reverse on this thing. Here it is got it. Got it. Do you want to go?

01:04:38 Spanky Moore Don't you think humility is important?

01:04:41 Scottie Reeve Humility. You're going to ask me if humility is important at 5:33 in the morning.

01:04:44 Spanky Moore I'm just asking you; don't you think? No, I said don't you think it is?

01:04:48 Scottie Reeve Nothing is important at 5:33 in the morning.

01:04:50 Spanky Moore Well, I tell you what is important to me.

01:04:53 Scottie Reeve What?

01:04:54 Spanky Moore Is that one of us was up at 4:00 AM praying with the brothers.

01:04:59 Scottie Reeve Oh my gosh, did you?

01:05:00 Spanky Moore Oh sorry you didn't. Oh God, that's well, I want to be humble about these things cause I wasn't sure.

01:05:03 Scottie Reeve Absolutely did not.

01:05:08 Spanky Moore Yeah, well, it wasn't a big audience there I'll tell you.

01:05:11 Scottie Reeve Well, be honest. I you just happened to be awake at 4:00 AM and you went.

01:05:15 Spanky Moore No, I set my alarm for 3:50 and I was like.

01:05:20 Scottie Reeve No you didn't.

01:05:21 Spanky Moore Really. Yeah, cause I was like, where am I? I'm not going to, I've got kids. I'm not going to get to stay at a monastery. Put your lights on full beam. I was like when am I going to get a chance again, to be in a monastery that prays at 4am - so up I got. They were already about to start, and I walked in like an idiot, picked up two books and then I'll father Nico kind of had the signal to one of the stayers who clearly knew the ropes said.

01:05:53 Scottie Reeve To help you out.

01:05:54 Spanky Moore I'll just show this idiot, what's happening. He's picking up all the wrong books.

01:05:58 Scottie Reeve Isn't it just like so the entire story of us being here, is that we think we're here to do something helpful. We come here and we critique what they do. But we're these total Muppets. You didn't even know which book to get you. Actually, you think you did the humble thing, but you actually disrupted the brothers' prayer time because one of them had to break out of his mantra to come and hand you the books.

01:06:23 Spanky Moore Yeah. Or you're feeling better that by you sleeping you were aiding the brothers by not interrupting the prayer time.

01:06:31 Scottie Reeve Yeah, absolutely, I believe I was.

01:06:33 Spanky Moore What do you know, though Scottie?

01:06:34 Scottie Reeve I actually I thought about setting my alarm for 3:59, but then I then I thought, well, I'm not going to disturb the brothers' mantra.

01:06:37 Spanky Moore Wow, that's very, very virtuous that you even about it.

OK, here's what I was thinking though. Here's what I was thinking. Yesterday we were walking down the road, and you were ripping old Father John and you.

01:06:51 Spanky Moore Excuse me. Excuse me. You cannot throw under the bus on that one.

01:06:57 Spanky Moore Anyway, you know that he didn't give you the right answer on Jesus and he used the word mantra.

01:07:01 Scottie Reeve Oh my gosh.

01:07:02 Spanky Moore Let me tell you. Wait. Let me tell you that.

01:07:04 Scottie Reeve Stop painting me as the like conservative guy on this podcast.

01:07:03 Spanky Moore Let me tell you the funny thing.

01:07:10 Scottie Reeve Excuse me, Mr. every time Jean Malcolm talks about contemplative prayer and you're like, but tell me about Jesus, you know?

01:07:20 Spanky Moore I noticed that we're very gentle on our own friends. Well, now that I've prayed with, of course Father John so much, I regard him as a friend.

01:07:28 Scottie Reeve You prayed with them 3 times. 3 times.

01:07:31 Spanky Moore But I thought it was interesting.

01:07:32 Scottie Reeve And he's like 20 metres away down the other end of the room in a booth.

01:07:36 Spanky Moore Yes, but what I thought was interesting was despite all of your various critiques of the job.

01:07:41 Scottie Reeve Oh my gosh.

01:07:42 Spanky Moore Wait, who was asleep at four and who was up praying with myself,

01:07:46 Scottie Reeve I don't know.

01:07:47 Spanky Moore I'll tell you this, Father John was.

01:07:49 Scottie Reeve I think I don't believe.

01:07:49 Spanky Moore Father John was in his booth banging away like he has for 15 years.

01:07:53 Scottie Reeve I don't believe that at 4:00 AM, anyone's praying with Psalms. At best they're saying the Psalms.

01:08:00 Spanky Moore It is pretty [weird]. We were getting through the old ones about smiting thine the enemies and digging pits for them.

01:08:06 Scottie Reeve That's a good time to put those psalms out, eh, 4:00 AM.

01:08:10 Spanky Moore Like it's a little bit like when a late night radio show when you play all the heavy metal.

01:08:13 Scottie Reeve You can cut loose a lot and you know that no one is going to call the broad the broadcaster Catholic Broadcasting Standards Authority on him at 4:00 AM for smiting their enemies.

01:08:24 Spanky Moore Now here is wrapping your intestines on a spiky pole by cannibal corpse and psalm 59.

01:08:39 Tom Lark “Best Weekend”

Best weekend I've ever had its such a good time
And I really feel bad cuz it'll never be this good again
Memories fade and so does a tan
But I'm gonna remember this weekend
Forever even when I'm
An old man
Doo doo doo do do doo do do doo do do doo doo do

01:09:03 Spanky Moore Well, hey, what an adventure. Thank you for taking me to a monastery, Scottie.

01:09:08 Scottie Reeve Oh brother, I thought you actually fitted in quite well there. You know? Like I could imagine in another life you kind of donning your Benedictine gowns and living there with the brothers.

01:09:19 Spanky Moore Well, you know, if my wife dies or I ever get a divorce, you know where to visit me for Christmas.

01:09:26 Scottie Reeve Yeah, I probably won't visit you. I'll probably visit your wife Sarah, but.

01:09:29 Spanky Moore We would like to say big thanks to Father John and Kopua monastery crew. Do you call them a crew?

01:09:36 Scottie Reeve Yeah, thank you so much. Their maanakitanga was just beautiful. They made us so welcome. And I found out that actually they have a rule where you're only, you're only allowed to go if you stay for a minimum of two nights. But they let us stay for about 12 hours. So good on them.

01:09:50 Spanky Moore Yeah, that's kind. And despite all of the funny back and forth, you know, as we mused about a monastery, they looked after us incredibly well and we are very really grateful for having it.

01:10:01 Scottie Reeve If you have got a lot out of today's podcast and you're wondering how to begin your practise of silence, a great way to do that is to join a crew who are doing a silent retreat. So, we have one of those coming up in Wellington in a couple of months' time. There's one happening in Christchurch and one happening in Auckland. But what we'll do is we will put some details and a button to register your interest on the 21 Elephants website, which is [21 elephants.co](http://21elephants.co). That's the number 2, the number one elephants at dot Co. And you can go on there and let us know you are interested, and we'll actually get in touch with you and link you up with one of those crews where you can do a silent retreat. And remember, while you're there at [21 elephants.co](http://21elephants.co), the book is still for sale, and you can pick that up there as well.

01:10:49 Spanky Moore Before we go, I would like to say big thank you to Laidlaw College, who helped just sort of cover some of the costs of the flight of me flying to the North Island and some of our petrol costs getting around. If you're sort of wondering what kind of study you should do, or you know you're looking for a vocational next step, Laidlaw is a fantastic place to study. Laidlaw dot AC dot NZ. But they also have an incredible counselling course to help kind of explore what does it mean to be a relationally healthy person, which sounds quite apt for our time. So, I do go and check out the

website if you're interested in finding out more information about Laidlaw. So, thank you, Laidlaw, but thank you to Dave and Renee who supplied 21 elephant's theme song also, Tom Lark and Holly Arrowsmith who've given us some of our beautiful tunes.

01:11:40 Scottie Reeve Thanks guys.

01:11:40 Spanky Moore Don't forget to like the podcast on iTunes. Tell your friends. Tell your family well. Well Brian, I guess we should we get doing this thing. onward.

01:11:52 Tom Lark "Best Weekend"

Maybe later around we stroll through town.

Best weekend of my life

01:12:20 Speaker 1 21 Elephants by Scottie Reeve.

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