



My Motives In Service

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Sunday, September 4, 2022

Talk Outline

- Intention of Humanity
- Original Purpose of Service
- Types of Services that we seek
- Wrong intentions from Service
- Examples of deviations in Church History
- Church of Alexandria and School of Alexandria
- Living true kenosis to reveal the image of God



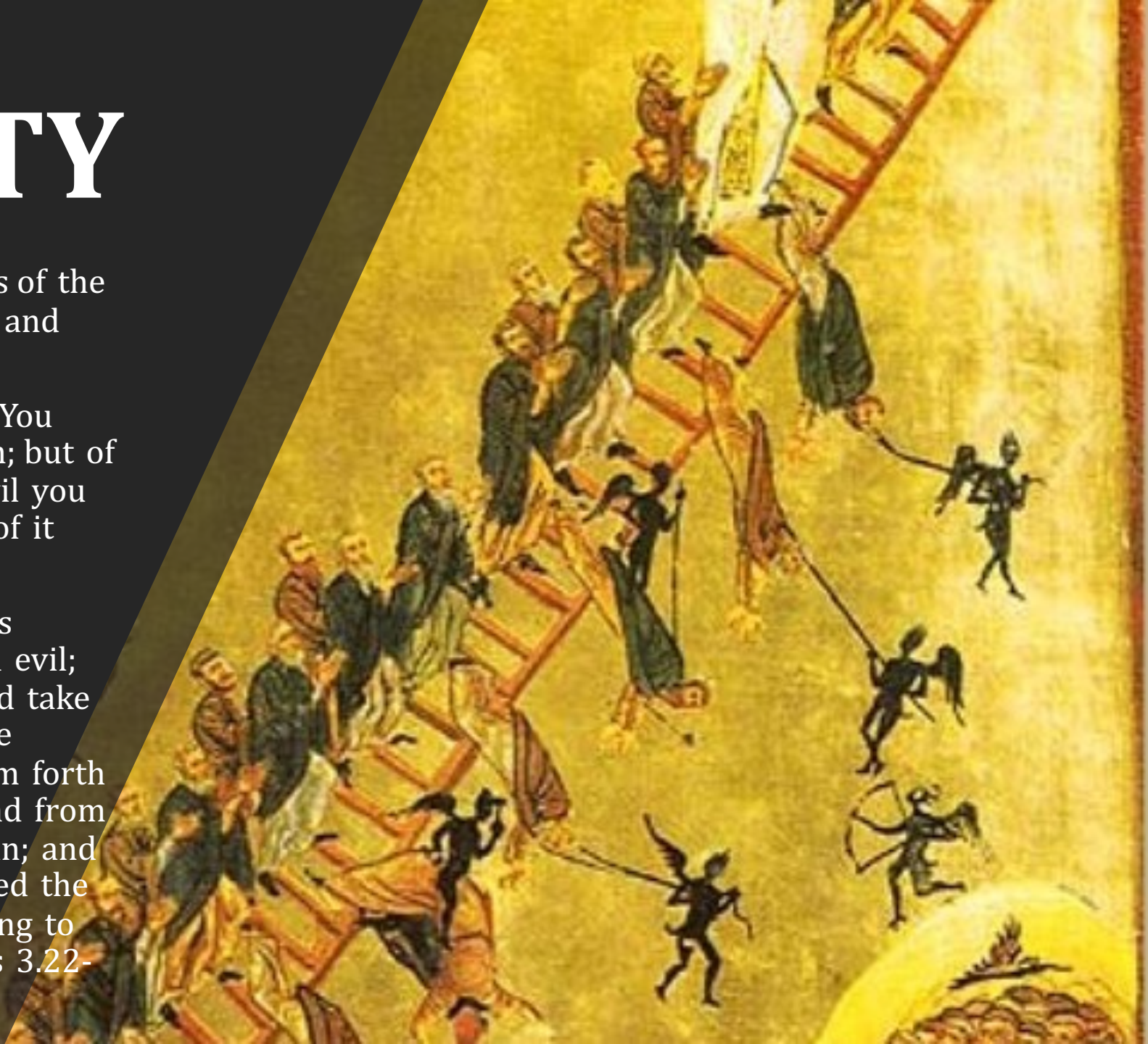
There is a human striving for self-transcendence. It's part of what makes us human. With all of our flaws we want to go a little bit further than we've gone before and maybe even further than anyone else has gone before.

— *George Leonard* —

AZ QUOTES

HUMANITY

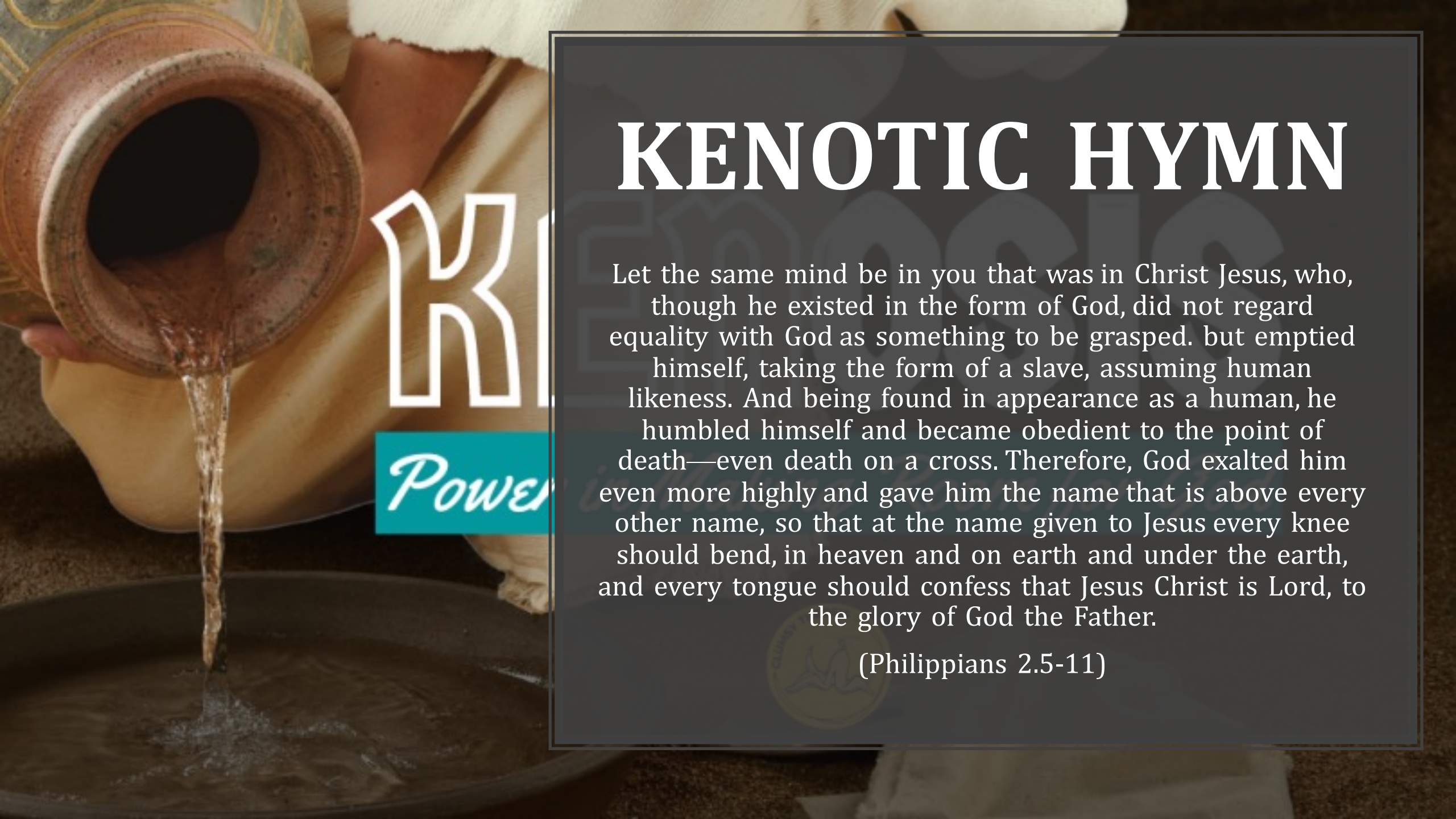
- I have said, ‘You are gods; you are all sons of the Most High.’ But like mortals you will die, and like rulers you will fall. (Psalm 82.6)
- And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” (Genesis 2.16-17, NRSV)
- Then the Lord God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3.22-24, NRSV)



When did they know he was the Son of God?

- Feeding the multitudes?
- Raising Lazarus from the Dead?
- Centurion:
 - “When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.” (Matthew 27.54)
- “He showed us what it means to be God in the way he died as a Human Being” (Fr. John Behr)





KENOTIC HYMN

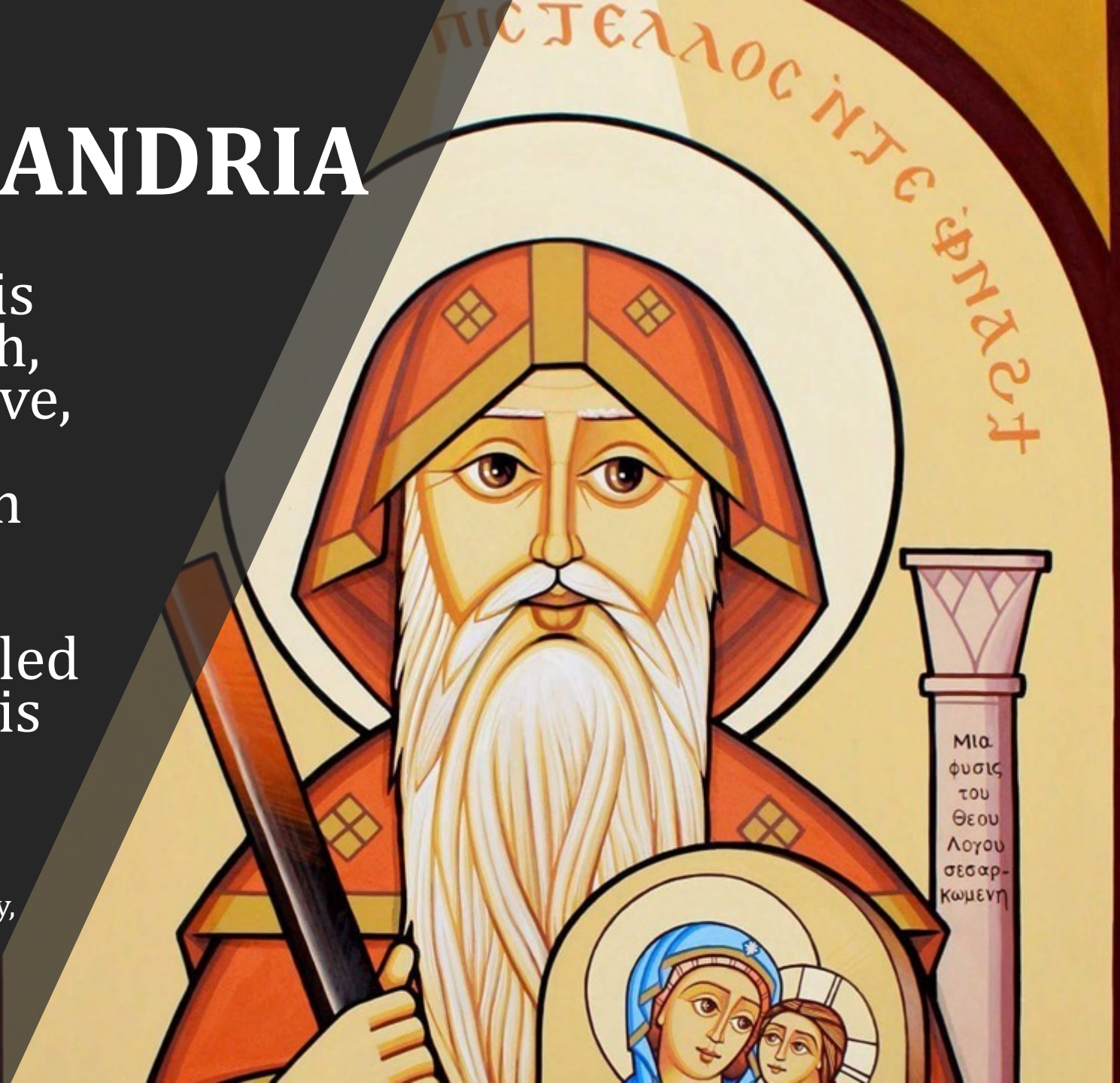
Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped. but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore, God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(Philippians 2.5-11)

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

“What sort of emptying is this? To assume the flesh, even in the form of a slave, a likeness to ourselves while not being like us in his own nature but superior to the whole creation. Thus, he humbled himself, descending by his economy into mortal bounds.”

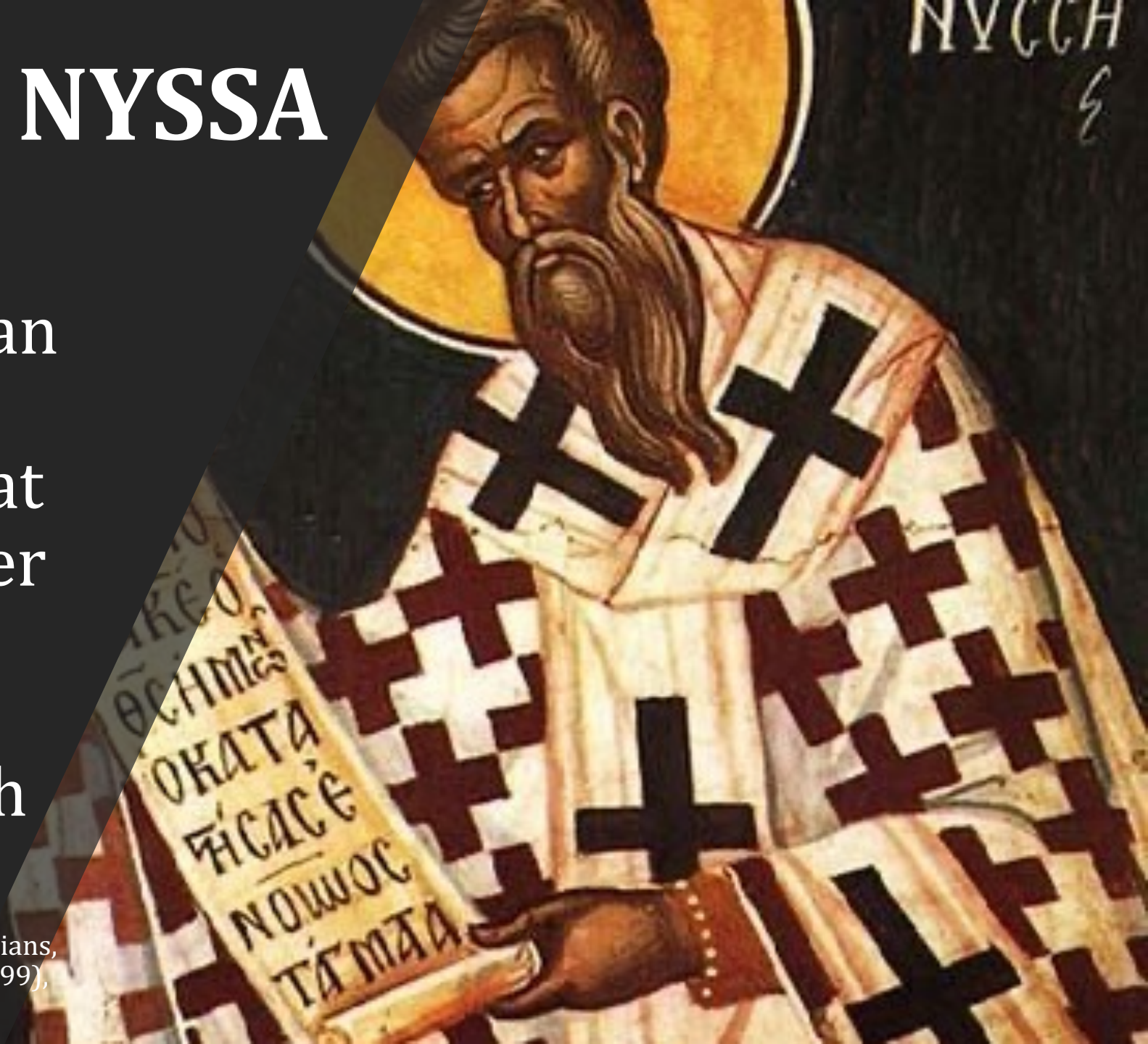
(Mark J. Edwards, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (ACCS 8; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 237)



GREGORY OF NYSSA

“The Godhead is emptied so that human nature may accommodate it. What is human, on the other hand, is made new, becoming divine through mingling with the divine.”

(Gregory of Nyssa, Mark J. Edwards, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians (ACCS 8; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 244)



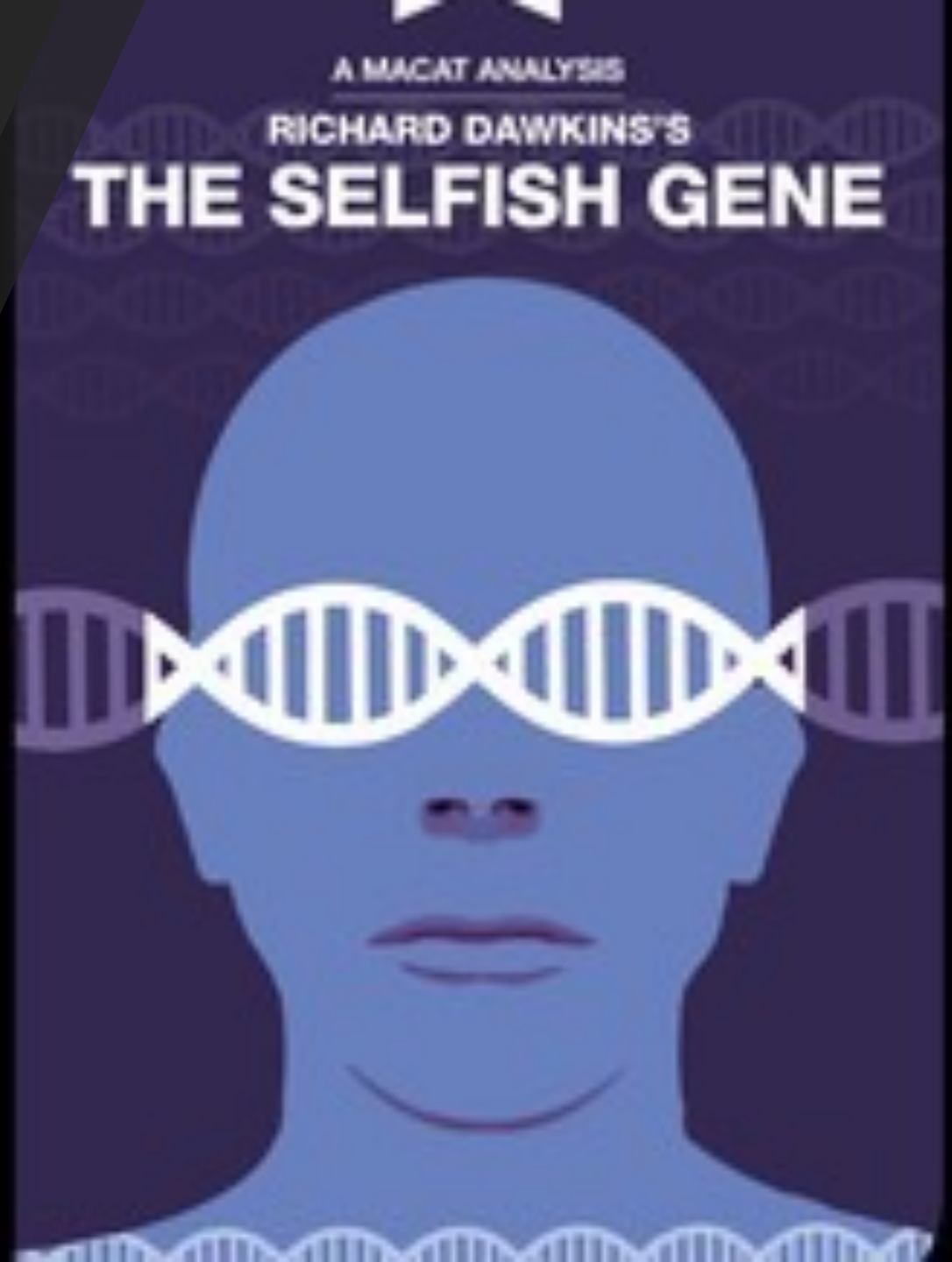
PURPOSE OF SERVICE

- To reveal to all those around me the 'image of Christ.'
- When you are filled with Christ, you pour the image of Christ on all those around you.
- Filling with Christ entails being emptied from all the passions that gratify your desire



WHY DO I SERVE?

- We are always inclined to run after glory, praise, and honor.
- It is very natural to want to feel good about yourself.
- As Richard Dawkins put it, “we are the selfish gene.”



SERVICES THAT FAILED



- Mainly because of pride and seeking self-gratification
- For example: Deacon-hood – pride of displaying the voice
- Pre-servants – hopefully one day I'll become a servant
- Sub-deacon or full deacon – when do I become a priest?
- Monk – when do I become a bishop?
- Kitchen or Scouts – Who listens to who?

CHURCH HISTORY

- Unfortunately, our understanding of service has become constricted to the clerical office we have in church.
- If we have a prominent standing, we are worth more.
- In the Middle Ages, the love of priesthood became an alternative means people sought once the church weakened.





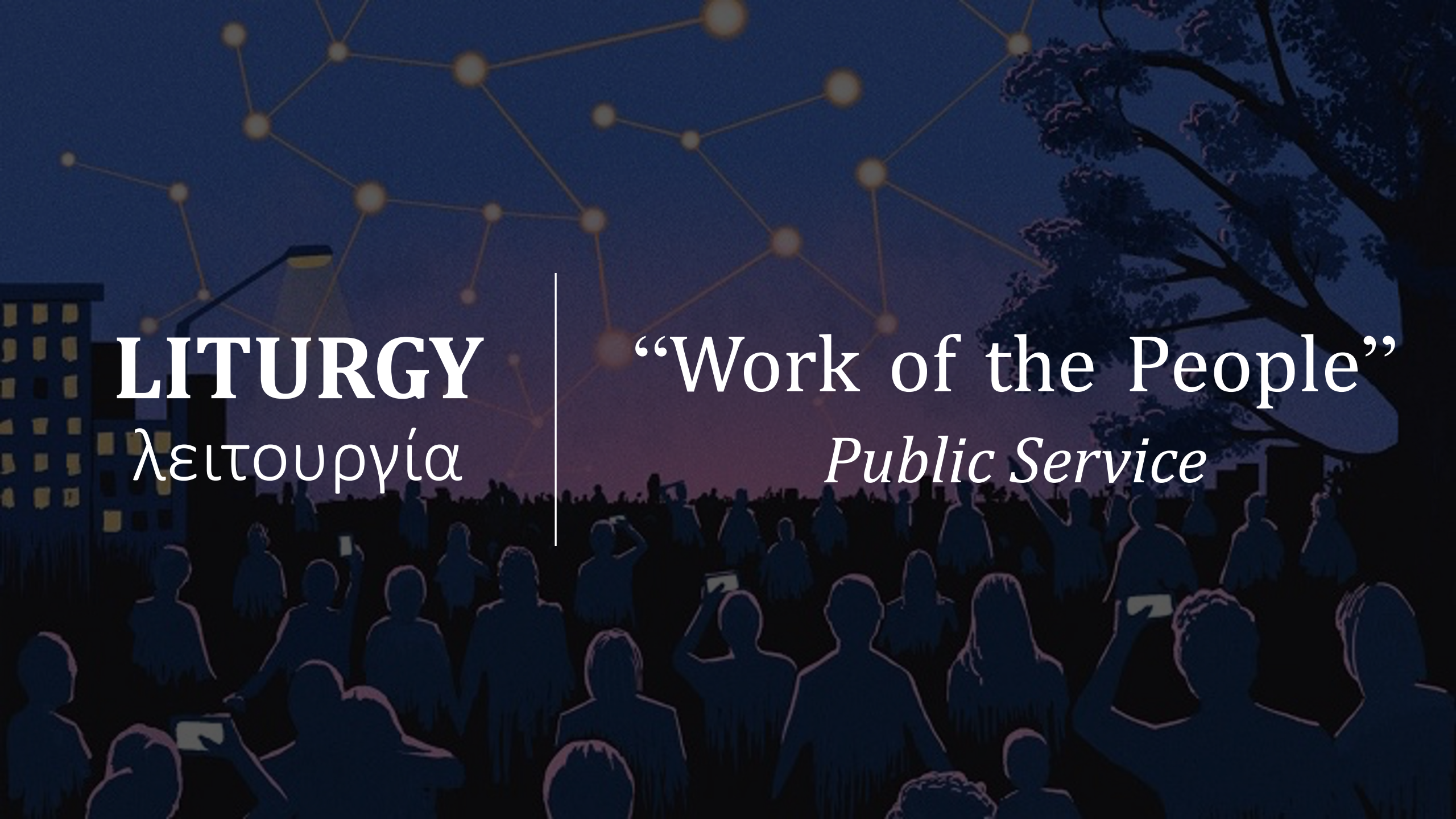
INTERNAL SERVICE

- Gregory saw in Christ's kenosis an example of his own situation as pastor in Nazianzus.
- He resisted taking the position for several years, fleeing from Nazianzus once, and only returned begrudgingly to care for his ailing parents.
- For Gregory, the practical concerns of pastoral life only brought him down out of the pure bliss of continuous contemplation of God.
- To do the work of a pastor was actually painful for him.
- However, Nazianzus greatly needed him, especially after his Father's death, and so out of obligation and humility he elected to remain.

CHURCH HISTORY

- The role of the congregation as people ‘who offer the oblations’ began to disappear.
- The role of the deacon as the attendant to the priest began to disappear.
- Are chanters deacons? The congregation all has a role in ‘offering’ the oblations.
 - Canon of Pope Athanasius II (Do not say the Alleluia unless the congregation gathers)
 - The entire congregation used to chant together





LITURGY
λειτουργία

“Work of the People”
Public Service

Nothing Greater than the Liturgical Service

- 1) An ongoing reaffirmation of the true Christian identity, fullness and integrity which have to be constantly renewed by the eucharistic communion.
- 2) To enlarge the space for witness by creating a new Christian milieu, each in his own environment (family, society, office, factory, etc.).
- 3) The liturgical life has to nourish the Christian life not only in its private sphere, but also in its public and political realm.
- 4) Liturgy means public and collective action and therefore there is a sense in which the Christian is a creator of community.





Church of Alexandria & School of Alexandria

We think service is often confined within the walls of the church.

SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA

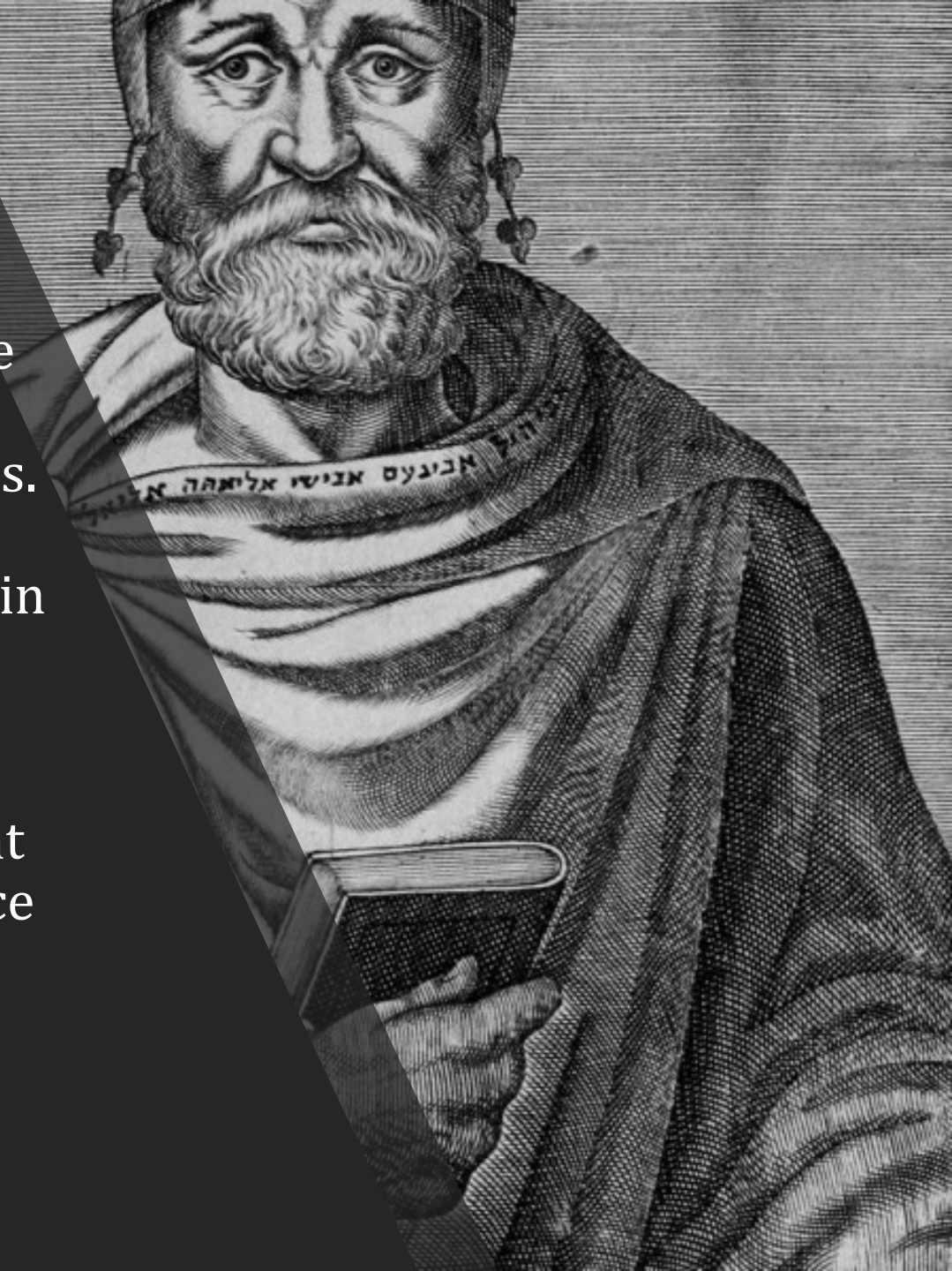
- Evidence suggests that Philo was one of those who originated the Alexandrian school of thought
- Inspired by the Greek allegorical method, Philo applied Hellenistic tactics in the interpretation of Scripture
- He established the Alexandrian method of allegory.



ALEXANDRINE MINDSET

In Gaius' reign Philo became widely known as one of the greatest scholars, not only among our own people but also among those brought up as pagans. By descent a Hebrew, he could hold his own with any of the eminent occupants of official positions in Alexandria. The constant and conscientious labor that he bestowed on theological and traditional studies is plain for all to see, while of his proficiency in the philosophical and liberal thought of the pagan world there is no need to speak, since it is on record that in his enthusiasm for the systems of Plato and Pythagoras he surpassed all his contemporaries.

(Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 1.4)



Eusebius of Vercelli

“The Word was made flesh by bearing and doing what was beneath him in his indulgence and compassion toward us. All that he possessed by nature is emptied into this his person. Having been made obedient as a man in the true fashion of humanity, he has restored to our nature by his own humility and obedience what had perished through disobedience in Adam.”

(Mark J. Edwards, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (ACCS 8; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 245)



Gregory of Nazianzus

“Since he is emptied on our account when he came down he is for this reason able to be received.”

(Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians (ACCS 8; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 237)

