

## AT S 9 E 7 God's Mercy Pt 2\_mixdown

**Michelle Benzinger:** Hello Abiding Together Podcast listeners. It is Michelle, and I'm here to talk about our sponsor for this week's podcast. It is our great friends at Ascension press and Fr. Josh Johnson and Fr. Mike Schmitz, who have both been on the podcast, about their new book, The Pocket Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is a small but powerful book and it is the perfect book. It is like the perfect size. I love the size that it is to bring with you for an examination of conscience before reconciliation. It is a great gift to give to confirmation children or people coming into the church, but it's a great gift for you to really enliven the sacraments and to really make it a beautiful routine in your spiritual life. And so you can get your copy at [AscensionPress.com/reconciliation](https://AscensionPress.com/reconciliation) and this book is available for pre-order and it is expected to start shipping in February. But for all of our Abiding Together Podcasts listeners you get 15% off with the code abide15. And again, that website is [AscensionPress.com/reconciliation](https://AscensionPress.com/reconciliation) and you get 15% off with the code abide15. So give yourself the gift of this beautiful book, The Pocket Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation Have a great week.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Hello and welcome to the Abiding Together Podcast. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sister Miriam James Heidland and every week I'm joined by two of my very dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. This podcast is born out of our friendship and all that the Lord is doing in our lives. You hear us laugh. You hear us cry. You hear us share very vulnerably, and you hear us talk about the things that we're still learning along the way. And you're most welcome to join us. You can find out all of our information on our podcast episodes on [abidingtogether,podcast.com](https://abidingtogether,podcast.com), but for now, grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home

Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are delighted to have Fr. Josh Johnson back with us again. And this episode is going to rock your heart and your life so get ready. Okay. Get ready. So he's going to speak to us very deeply about our hearts, but before we dive in Heather, Michelle, how are we doing? Are we how's it going?

**Michelle Benzinger:** We are good. We are really good. And so, yeah, Lent is upon us.

**Heather Khym:** Prepping for Lent. I know prepping- thinking about what I'm going to give up, what grace God might have in store. Yeah. I mean, lent is hard, you know, it's not like something you look forward to usually. At the same time, like it's going to make space. That's the hope right? make space..

**Michelle Benzinger:** It is. Make space. I saw this graphic that I love from an artist that I love and it said, don't waste the wilderness. And I just love that sentiment.

**Heather Khym:** That was awesome. Yes.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah. I was like, do not waste this wilderness. And it was interesting. My spiritual director said, cause I was, I feel like the Lord has been leading me into a desert and um, he said, you know, he is going to tempt your identity and what you do and how you relate to the Lord and your intimacy with the Lord. You know, he says, so be on the lookout

for that. And I think that's what we're really diving into in this next episode is where does, you know, the devil try to go after our identity in what we do that we want to do more for the Lord than be with the Lord. And then what hinders our relationship with him? Like what are the pitfalls? And so. I'm really excited about this episode, just Fr. Josh's heart, but prepping us for Lent. Like let's go in there. Let's not waste this time with the Lord, you know, Lent, let's go all the way to Calvary and let's go all the way to the resurrection people let's do this.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah. Yeah. Hmm. Amen. Yes. And father you were sharing with us, just off mic, right before this, about a story that really kind of changed how you personally encountered confession. And we just thought that would be an incredible, just place to dive in for all of our listeners today. So do you want to share that with us and kind of unpack that for us?

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Yes but before I can share what's on my heart. I'm ADD and Sr. Miriam used the words, like getting it ready. And when I was a kid, there was a song by a DJ Jubilee called get it ready - get it ready, get it ready, get it ready, ready. Get it ready, get it ready, and then at one point, it said, what's the name of your school? Lee! What's the name of your school? So it's like, what's the name of your order? SOLT! what's the name of your order? SOLT! Uh, anyways, so

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We'll take it Father. We'll take it.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** There it is. Yeah, so, ah, yo, I was, um, whoop, there it is. God's mercy, butterfly on their soul, let me see that tootsie roll. Do you remember that Sister Miriam? I can see you dancing whenever you were in college. I could see it

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh we cannot confirm nor deny any rumors you may have heard Fr. Josh Johnson.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** I'm having an image right now. I have the vision. It's a Whoa, it's happening.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Oh whatever I have the videos

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I'm only 27 years old people. I'm too young for these things.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Okay. So whenever I was in seminary, I went to confession to Fr. Mark Touts, a good friend of all of ours. And it was one of the most powerful experiences in confession because after I confess my sins, like normally you go to confession and you receive the penance and you do your penance, get absolution and you go, and it's beautiful. And God's grace is operative even in the most simple, quick confessions ever. However, in this confession Fr. Mark asked me a question that I'd never pondered before. I had never thought about, he said to me, He said, okay, what happened before you sinned? He said, like what preceded your sin? Like what were you longing for? And I was like, Whoa, hold up. Wait, I'm sorry. I did not come in for conversation. Uh, no, like just give me a Hail Mary or two or three. Let me go. And which, again, those are super powerful to get Hail Marys. It was powerful for me to stop and begin to like, look at my day, look, examine my heart and think about like, what happened that day? Like, what did I feel rejected? Did I have a conversation with somebody where even if they didn't reject me, I perceived rejection? And because I

perceived that rejection, I began to grasp now at a quick fix with sin, you know? Right. I wanted to belong. Right. So like maybe before I gossiped, I had never addressed my abandonment issues. And I just want to be a part. And so I'm going to participate in gossip because I don't want to be left out. And so like, that's what preceded was I did not want to be left apart from the conversation, even though I knew it wasn't healthy conversation or good conversation or whatever it might be. Or if it was a sin of lust, it's like what preceded Right? Both in the interior of my heart - where am I longing for intimacy with God, but also just like what happened that day in - there's one of my kids, whenever I was at LSU, good friend of mine, still good friends. He was in a frat and when he joined his frat, he did it because he wanted to be a disciple and he wanted to make disciples in that area. Like he was like, I felt called to the messiness of fraternity life. And I want to disciple those guys in the midst of the frat life. And whenever he would go to like frat meetings, he was virtuous. Whenever he would go out to even bars with his brothers in the frat house, like he was virtuous, but anytime he went to a party at the frat house, He would always get drunk and he would always objectify women and just like just, it was never good. And I remember he and I were talking about it one day and I said, well, maybe your near occasion of sin is something about the trigger. Your mind is doing parties at the frat house, you know? And so maybe you could go to the frat house and disciple people there for meetings. Maybe you could hang out with guys tailgating, whatever, but when you go to that place, it's something that it triggers in your mind and all of a sudden you keep falling in. And when he began to avoid parties at the frat house, he began to find freedom. And so sometimes there is something on the, just a deep level of the heart as to why we do what we do. And sometimes it's because there's triggers, there are natural things that in our psyche that are just going to precede us committing certain bad habits. Does that, did you, have you had that experience?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Target dollar section. Just kidding. But, I think it is, I think there's something more that we have to dive into. I think like Saint Teresa of Alva often says the self-awareness is the beginning of holiness. Like to really learn ourselves that we have to be students of ourselves and we learn ourselves by coming closer to God and God shows us how he created us and how he made us. And a lot of times our greatest sins come from our greatest woundedness. I mean, almost all the time, you know? And so asking that question that Fr. Mark Toups asked you like, wow, mind blown, like, okay, that's totally different. How, like what preceded the sin? Like, that's something I'm going to start asking myself, like what preceded the sin and then asking what is the real longing and desire in my heart. I think that part of that question is huge for you. Like you wanted to feel like you belonged, so that was gossip. You wanted to feel this so that. So you get to that desire that is good but we have distorted.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Communion is good but yes.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes but we have distorted in some way, shape or form. Yeah. That's beautiful.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** In the - what's the prayer we do- uh, the act of contrition we say like, and I will avoid the near occasion of sin. Um, and, and how many of us actually like leave the confessional and are like what is the near occasion? I know that was my sin. I know what my vice is. I know what my bad habit is. But what's the near occasion. Like what precedes that is

like the thing that the Lord I think is inviting all of us to ponder. I think Sister Miriam, you're about to say something.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Uh, what I was going to say is this is where the real work takes place. And I think these are the tremendously vulnerable places. I really believe that I know in my own journey asking these questions now for so long, those are the tender places of, of, okay so yeah, I gossiped her. Yeah, I did this. I grasp this or that. And then to say, well, here Father, here's the real story. See, I was feeling really lonely. Like these are the, Oh, these are like the tender, vulnerable places. And I know Dr. Bob Schutts often will say, there's a great saying that he talks about when we give priests retreats and he says behind every disorder. I think you said it with us when he was on our podcast, but he said behind every disordered desire, and all of us have disordered desires -we all do. We said behind every disordered desire is a good and holy desire. An unmet need and an unconfessed wounded and unconfessed pattern of sin. Right? So behind every disordered desire is good and holy desire, an unmet need, a wound and an unconfessed pattern of sin. So you can see the birth of what happens at the root of that tree because nothing ever comes out of nowhere. I guarantee you, nobody ever just gets angry and cuss somebody out of nowhere like that. That's got a story to it, you know? So it's a matter of sin management versus allowing Jesus, the gardener to come to the root of our tree and bring some maneuver up in there until the soil. And that is. That my friends that's the real work. I mean, I, as I say it to you, I'm saying it to myself, I'm like, yeah, this is really where the real work is.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Even it's going deeper than the surface. Right? So like on the surface, I could say like, what preceded my sin was I was really tired. And when I'm really tired, I'm just not in the best place to whatever, but that's surface. That's the surface excuse right there. I was tired. Why am I tired? Is the next question while I'm tired because I've said yes to every invitation I've received from people. Okay. Why did I say yes to every invitation that I received from people? Well I said yes, because I'm scared that they're gonna reject me. If I say no, I'm scared that if I say I can't, then I'm going to miss out and I'm never gonna... I can't trust that God's going to, he's gonna supply the grace that need, he's going to fulfill me in all these other areas and in, so that's the deeper things. I don't trust that Jesus Christ is sufficient. Like the deeper issue here is I don't believe God's enough for me. And so I'm saying yes to everything. So that's like where the Lord is trying to take us. And so that when we go to confession, he's like all right. So we start with the sin. And then we go beneath this of the surface and then we go down, we start digging and we're like, Oh, shoot. Like the real issue here is I don't trust my father and then it's like and then that's where the healing begins to. I mean, again, the grace is so good, but like, there's like always a deeper healing that the Lord is trying to invite us to experience and boom, you know, so yeah.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. I think for many of us I've experienced this so many times. I think many people listening are like, I don't want to go down that rabbit hole. Like that's scary. It's scary to go down the rabbit hole because you might not know what you're going to find. And I think that's where we need to call to mind the truth of who God is that he is a healer. You know that he has the power to heal and to save like those places. If we go in on our own, we don't know what to do. We don't know how to fix it. It's just filled with pain and shame and mess and yuck. And it's like, I don't want to go there, but if I hold the hands of Jesus and I go there with him, that's totally different because on my own power, nothing, I got nothing.

But with Jesus there, you know, he has the power to heal and to save and restore things that we can't even fathom could be restored. That's what he does. That's what he's all about. That's what the crucifixion and the resurrection shows us like if he just was crucified. Well, I mean, we're all lost, but he rose, you know, that's the point, so he can make all things new. And I think being willing to expose ourselves to the one who has love and the one who can save us and desires to save us is so important. I remember going to confession one time to Fr. Dan when I was at Steubenville. And I was like the queen of like, I don't want to be totally exposed. So I'm just going to put everything under the umbrella of like, yeah, I struggled with impurity or whatever it might be. And I remember him one day we were walking for confession and he just said, tell me more about that. Um, and he just said, was it this or this was it this? Or, and he got very specific and I was like, mortified, you know, but I realized like it was so tender and loving the way that he did it. Like, like what you said, Michelle, in the last episode, it wasn't exposing to shame me. It was like uncovering me to the light of God. It's like, if I cover myself up, I'm not going to be hit by the healing light of God and those places that so desperately we needed it.

**Michelle Benzinger:** We have a priest here and here when you, if he has time, if you go to confession, you can do it in like the little adoration chapel to the side. And so he makes you look at the monstrance when you confess with him. and he's such a gentle, loving priest, but it is like when I do it that way, I see the gaze of love in the monstrance. But I also see like the heartbreaking also, and it just brings a deeper contrition into my heart, you know, because I realized after I confess something last time and I saw like, I was about to, I paused and stopped myself when I was about to fall into the same sin. But then all of a sudden, my mind went back to the monstrance and my mind went back to the Eucharist and Jesus I'm like, no. And I was able to turn myself around because I remember, Oh, I have to get back in the gaze. I have to get back, and oh I don't want to hurt his heart. Okay. Stop, like pay attention, you know, to what's going on, be aware. But I think that it's what you were saying, Fr. Josh, like you go deeper, you ask yourself the deeper questions. Like, why, I'm not, it's not that I'm just tired. It's because I did this because I did this. And that takes time, you know, and takes attention.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** And I think one of the things, so one things that I do whenever I walk with people, especially whenever they haven't been to confession in years and they are believing a lot of lies from the devil. Because of what has happened to them in their life and what they've done. Whether it's, you know, abortions or adultery or affairs. Whatever it might be like, whatever. Uh, whether it's these fantasies that they're just so ashamed of that they have. They're like, I wish I didn't have these fantasies and I'm so ashamed because I like, I've been in church all these years and I've been doing ministry all these years and I still like have this fantasy life that I am attracted to, whatever. It might be. One thing I always do whenever I would have time, especially like I encourage people, like make an appointment. And it we can go behind the screen still. Like, you don't have to be face-to-face, but. If the way we can have time is I invite them there. There's a video that Michelle's husband Chris shared with me years ago. And it's the come and get your love where there's a father. And he's like dancing over his son when he's a baby. And he's delighting in his son when his son's three. And he does it again when his son's like 12 and 16, and his son at this point, doesn't want to receive the father's love, but the father is still delighting and still loving him. And then again, when the son's finally older, the son has received that so much that he's now able to share that back to the father. Um, but I always invite people to watch that video before the

confession begins. And I tell them, I say like, this is how the father is delighting in you whenever you were baptized. This is the father's delight when you received your first communion. This is the father's delight when you committed your first mortal sin, whenever, whenever you were at that abortion clinic, the father was still looking upon you with love, like his delight doesn't change, and he was calling you. He's calling you to receive his love and mercy through your repentance in the confessional. And so, cause sometimes we get so caught up in that shame, in the lies, it's like. Let's always focus on the father's face. Let's focus on the father's delight. Like he is loving me. Um, and he is calling me to this intimacy and he wants me to be free and he wants me to be restored. But it's, I think it's super important that priest did with you Michelle, like, look at the Lord, look at the Lord's face and, and then begin your confession from there. That way you're not confessing out of a place of shame. You're confessing out of a place of relationship, of my father loves me and he wants me to receive more love. And so I'm going to bring this to him. I'm going to give this over to him so I could receive the blood of Christ. Inebriate my soul. Mm.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I think father, especially what you're saying here and what both you, Heather, Michelle have said is it's the differentiation between who I am as a beloved versus the sins that I commit. And I think so often we get those two conflated. We don't know who God is, and we don't know who we are either. And we take on our identity as our sin. Like I am my sin or I am my addiction or I am my struggle, or I am my, and we're not. Those are things that we experience and they're telling us something very valuable about where our hearts are broken. Whereas one priest said when we sin, we forget we belong. It's all the places I have forgotten that I belong and that I don't want to suffer or that I want to medicate. Or those are like the regulatory places of where my heart has been broken. And so where Jesus has coming into these places to remind me of the truth of who I am and to heal and the deepest places to bring us, it's all about Holy communion. It's all about Holy communion. So I wonder if father, I know that you are going to lead us through a meditation and our listeners love that. And so I was wondering though, if you could just tell us a bit about your book, about some practical tools for your book, and then maybe kind of just lead us through all through a meditation so we can help prepare our hearts.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Beautiful. Great. Thank you so much. Yes. So the book Fr. Mike Schmitz and I co-authored is called Pocket Guide to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And essentially, uh, through the book, we first want you to understand why confession, you know, where's it at in scriptures and in the history of our church, the tradition of our church. We then also help you to understand sin, uh, why we commit sins, why we struggle with that to examine our conscience, to discern what's our dominance faults or dominant vices and what are the virtues that we can cultivate to oppose those vices. And then we give you a lot of practical tools on how to be intentional, consistent in your relationship with Christ in the sacrament of reconciliation, by coming up with a rule of life, with regards to when you're going to receive God's love and his mercy in the confessional. And so it's a very practical book, and it would be a helpful guide to people who are either struggling with confession are they want to go deeper and confession and they want to have a good experience of receiving God's love and mercy, which is what God desires. Just to love us and to give us his mercy on earth so we can be with him in heaven.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I love that. I love that. Yeah, that's so good. And I love all the practicals that it has in it. I think that is something that we need, you know, we need these tools to be able to approach the sacraments. Because sacraments I love them I always call them, you

know, like kisses from heaven because they're tangible grace. They're grace. Like that is part of the beauty of our Catholic church is that we have the sacraments and I really call them. They're tangible grace, they're tangible kisses from heaven to draw us closer into communion with the Lord. And that I love that you give a lot of practicals in this book to be able to approach the sacraments even bolder, like even like, okay, Lord, I'm ready. Give me all the grace you got. Cause I'm ready to receive. Like it helps us prepare our hands wide open, so release what it needs to be released, like you said earlier, so we can receive all that he has for us. You know, there's so many graces that he has for us that we don't take advantage of. And so it's such a great tool. Yeah. So thank you, Fr. Josh.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Thank y'all. Shall we pray? Let's pray.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yes, let's do that.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I just want to invite us right now to go to the foot of the cross. This is the Lenten season and, Jesus, the word of God tells us was resolutely determined to journey towards Jerusalem to the cross where our healing begins. So I just want to invite us to go to the foot of the cross with John, the beloved disciple with Mary. I want to invite us to look at Jesus, look at Jesus Christ. Who's totally vulnerable with us right now. He's uncovered and he's looking at us. Hmm, there's a lot going on right now. There are people who are cursing at Jesus, and there are people who are mocking Jesus, and there are people who were screaming at Jesus and it's very loud and it's very messy and there's just so much going on right now. But Jesus, in the midst of all that is happening right now, he's looking at you. His eyes are only on you. And your eyes are invited to be only on him because we were looking at him as he looks at us with love, with unconditional love. We are able to now listen to him. We're not focusing on the distractions anymore. We're not focusing on the stuff. We're not focusing on the circumstances that we find ourselves in. We're just focused on his eyes because we're looking at him. We can listen to him. Jesus wants to speak to you, to me right now. This Lent Jesus, I want, I desire this Lent to be a Lent of deeper freedom. God, I desire for this to be a Lent where I grow in my relationship with you in ways that I'd never thought were imaginable before. And so, Jesus, I want to go to confession this Lent. I want to go to confession and I want to confess, I want to confess things that maybe I've never really been able to share before, because I was scared of being rejected. I was scared of that. Um, I don't know, I was just scared God. And so I want to confess what you want me to confess. So Jesus, I'm looking at you right now and I invite you and your love to see me to see all of me, Jesus, to see everything that I've done, see everything that's been done to me and the effects that that has had on my life. Jesus, as you are stripped on the cross, I am now stripped, you can see me. God, what do you want me to bring to the light? What do you desire for me to share with your priest and the sacrament of reconciliation Jesus? Jesus, as I hear you speak to me right now, certain certain things are coming to my heart. I'm going to show them to you, Jesus. How do you see me? Right now I'm not in confession yet. I'm preparing my heart for confession, but how do you see me? Right now? Now that you've brought up these sins that you want me to bring to you in your throne of mercy in the confessional. How do you see me, God right now? Not how are you going to see me after I go to confessional? But God, like right now, as I'm holding up the same struggles, the same vices, these sins that have been in my life and a part of my life for so long. How do you, you see me God? You love me. You delight in me. You want to be with me. God, I want to be with you too so bad. You're the one I was looking for the whole time. God, you're the one that was longed for the whole time.

Jesus and I thank you for thirsting for me. I thank you for wanting me knowing that I was going to mess up. I thank you so much God. And now that I know, and I can see in your face and I can hear in your voice and the size of my heart, how much you love me right now, before confession, I'm going to bring these to you in the sacrament. And I invite you, God. I invite you to take me wherever you want to take me to heal and to renew and to restore our relationship. Nothing else matters. Nothing but you. Nothing, but you God, in me and me and you and the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Heather Khym:** Amen. Amen.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Wow.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Beautiful Father. Thank you so much. Yeah. I think there's going to be a lot of people that are just going to sit with that for awhile. And I'm sure that many people, that haven't had an opportunity to sit with the Lord like that. So I just want to say thank you. It's profoundly beautiful.

**Heather Khym:** And maybe you're listening right now and you're in your car or you were somewhere else. And I just want to encourage you to come back with this, you know, that to find a quiet place and to really engage in that prayers. Really beautiful.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah. I was just going to ask you Father, where can we purchase your book? Where can our listeners find your book and any other resources that you could recommend?

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Yeah, so the packet guide to the sacrament of reconciliation is available at [AscensionPress.com](http://AscensionPress.com) and on Amazon so you can get in online. It be available I think in February.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Okay. We'll post some links in our show notes to our listeners. So, so we'll go, it's hard to switch to one things after that. And honor that time, but for our one things, actually I have a quote from Saint Catherine of Sienna that goes along beautifully with the reflection that we just did. I've been taking a class from father Paul Murray. Is that how I say his name is Sister? Moreau?Murray? Um, prayer and, uh, beauty. And he has had this beautiful line in this class on prayer and humility, like humbling ourselves before the Lord. And knowing that we need him in our weakness. And he says, God has been fully aware of the many mistakes we would make in the future and of our countless fallings away from grace. The gaze, his gaze has never left us for a moment. Saint Catherine of Sienna, profoundly moved by this fact, made this beautiful prayer. I just read this prayer from Saint Catherine of Sienna and it just wrecked me the other day and I've just been meditating it on. So I'll post it in our show notes and it says, Oh, infallible love. Although in your light, you saw all the evils that your creature would commit against your infinite goodness. You acted as if you did not see. Rather you kept your eye on the beauty of your creature with whom you fell in love as if you were crazy and drunk with love. And through love you drew her out of yourself and gave her being. And I just love that beautiful image that he's just drunk in love with us and that he does not look at our sins, but he looks at the beauty of his created creature. So I will post that in my show notes and our show notes. They're not just mine. They're our show notes. And so sister Miriam, and what is your one thing?



**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Well, I just have to say, once again, my one thing is just the priesthood, father, thank you so much. It's just been an absolute delight to spend time with you. And you know, I really believe that if men stopped saying yes, our world would cease to exist as well. So thank you for not just your yes on the day of your ordination, but your yes everyday since. Your love changes the world, and it's just a true delight to be with you. So that is one thing for the week, you know? Ms Heather.

**Heather Khym:** My one thing is a series I just started watching. I think it's been out for a little while, but it's by Fr Dave Pivonka and it's the Metanoia series. I know many of you may have heard of his wild goose series on the Holy spirit, but this one is called the metanoia series and you can, you know, offer a donation to watch it, or you can watch it for free. I'm going to put the link to it in our show notes, but I just thought it's another beautiful resource during Lent. If you want to watch it with a group or, you know, online with people or within your family, he's so good. And it's so beautifully done. I was really moved. Like I was in tears the other night, just watching the beauty of it and, and what it was stirring up. So yeah, you can check that out. Father, Josh, what's your one thing?

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** Well since Michelle only gave one I'll give two. Uh, so one is another Maverick city song called, um, you're welcome in this place. Uh, and again, that's just another good song to pray with, uh, inviting the Lord into those places in our hearts, uh, where we struggle and where we are longing for love. And, um, so you're welcome with this place as one. And then the other song is by what Reagan. And I think this is a good song too, to listen to before we go through the sacrament, reconciliation is called through and through, and it's very simple. He just says, you see me and you know me and you love me through and through. And if we can, uh, be in that place, in that space as we go to God's mercy throne in a confessional, uh, then I think that that could help us to confess our sins well. And to receive all the love that he has in store for us in our walk toward eternity. Wow. And I love you too, sister Miriam.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I was about to say, okay, next week Lent is upon us, my people. So we are entering into the desert and these 40 days, we will be doing our book study, This Present Paradise by Claire Dwyer. All the information is on our podcast website. And we are going to journey into the heart of the Trinity with St. Elizabeth of the Trinity and dwell in that. Okay, father, Josh has to say something else. You should see him.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** If you could just do me a favor, so I'm the vocation director, as well as pastor, of Holy rosary. Uh, for the diocese of Baton Rouge and, uh, I perceived the Holy spirit, put this on my heart. So I'm just inviting people to fast for Lent, to please fast for healthy and Holy vocations to the priesthood and religious life for the diocese of Baton Rouge for everybody, but like specifically for the diocese of Baton Rouge. And so I'm just inviting people to fast, fast for this everyday. If one person, if your parish is gonna make a sign up sheet for this intention on my heart and just. For everyday for Lent, have one person fast the whole day, um, on bread and water or the two small meals, one main meal, no snacks between, and then pray a rosary, um, as well for the people who are fasting so that they can persevere in this intention for healthy locations. And our, I put together a little ebook.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Well, of course he did. In all your spare time.

**Fr. Josh Johnson:** . It's a free e-book, it's free. You can download it. And it's at [www.diobr.org/vocations](http://www.diobr.org/vocations) Uh, you can get the ebook and I wrote a reflection everyday of different saints who are priests or religious. To kind of inspire people by their stories. But the goal is to get people to fast and to pray because I really believe that with COVID and the pandemic, like I've not been able to go out and travel as much to promote vocations. And I perceive the Lord was like, Josh, don't do that. Like just get people to pray and fast and watch me, do the fruit in your land. And so if y'all can all join me in this for my land this year, your land next year, like just do it for me. Uh, please. Uh, cause I want to, I want to see the fruit of praying and fasting for Baton Rouge diocese. Thank you.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Thank you for being on the show with us again. We love you. We can't wait. We just want to encourage our listeners to get your book and to really make, we just wanna encourage everyone to really make a good confession this Lent, whether it's been a long time for you or whether you go all the time. Love always grows. And love is always blooming and there's always new places of our heart, where Jesus would love to bring us into communion. So there's nothing like it. There's nothing else on earth, like it than a good sacramental confession that has the power to heal and to raise us from the dead and to unite us with the one who's loved us from all eternity. So that's what we want to offer to you. So happy lent y'all happy Lent. And until next week we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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