

AT S09E09- Lent Part II

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, but for now, grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello. Welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together podcast. We're going to dive into week two of our book study, our Lenten book study called *This Present Paradise*. And we're just happy to have you with us. And we're going to just dive into chapters six to twelve. And as we mentioned earlier, you don't have to have read the chapters first, just come along with us on the journey. And I just, as full disclosure, we've been laughing for about 35 minutes, the three of us. And my stomach hurts right now from laughing. And, uh, unfortunately we cannot disclose the contents of our previous...

Michelle Benzinger: She can't even get it out.

Heather Khym: It's not podcast worthy.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: conversation.

Michelle Benzinger: She can't even talk.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: but here we are. So anyway, uh, Michelle, without disclosing our conversation before you're looking lovely in your glasses, can we just talk about that?

Michelle Benzinger: Thank you. Thank you. What do they call these again? Blu-ray glasses. What are they called?

Heather Khym: Blue light. Blue blockers.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: DBlue-ray is a DVD dude.

Michelle Benzinger: Shoot. Got something else wrong. Anyway, aren't these fun, I got them. They're pink. They're funky, but I am doing good. My sides hurt from laughing also, but it's all good. And second week of lent we're in it. We are in it, here we go, ladies, here we go. You know, so.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: We are in it to win it. Heather, how are you?

Heather Khym: I'm good. I just, yeah, I love having friends. Don't you guys? I just like rejoice in the gift of friendship. It's great.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. So good. Especially when you can laugh.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Speaking of Heather, you sent us, you texted Michelle and I on our group text a picture of us like three years ago at the Mexican food restaurant. I think

we were like eating chips and salsa and queso, and we're like, Oh my gosh, because we haven't seen each other, the three of us in a long time.

Heather Khym: I know. I was like, remember when we used to be able to be together.

Michelle Benzinger: I know.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: We used to *abide* together.

Michelle Benzinger: seriously. Yes. Poor Heather.

Heather Khym: I know you guys have seen each other. Probably like four or five times or whatever this year, but yeah, I just, haven't seen you guys. It's been the longest ever in our friendship.

Michelle Benzinger: It has been the longest ever we haven't seen each other in person. Yes. So sister and I's states are closer to one another and

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Love for the South, but we miss the Northerner. We miss the Yankee up North.

Michelle Benzinger: seriously.

Heather Khym: Yep, expect lots of hugs and kisses. When I actually do see you in person.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh girl, we will, bring the coffee. Bring the coffee.

Michelle Benzinger: So good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Okay. So we're going to dive into, uh, the part two of our series, on St. Elizabeth of the Trinity. Which I hope last week's episode, and just the thoughts that the Lord brought to your heart over the last week are blessing you. And we're going to talk, especially our overriding theme is going to be St Elizabeth's heart, which is the cloister of the heart, where Jesus - all of us have a part of our heart and where Jesus comes to dwell with us. And so she said, we always have to stay there. So it's allowing this cloister, this quiet place, a sacred place to be built, where we can always abide literally with the Lord. And so we're going to actually use for the scripture passage. We're going to talk about abiding in family and community and communion. We're going to use the scripture passage that we've used before. That's very obviously dear to us on this podcast. And it's John chapter 15:4 where Jesus says "abide in me." And then St. Elizabeth says this, "The Word of God, Jesus, is the one who gives this command, who expresses this will. Abide in me, not for a few moments, a few hours that pass by, but abide in me in a permanent and habitual way. Abide in me: pray in me, adore in me, love in me, suffer in me, work and act in me. Abide in me in your dealings with anyone and anything, always entering ever more deeply in me. Mic drop there. Oh my goodness. I mean, that's, that's the core, like that's the heart of everything. That's the heart of our life. That's the heart of our existence. That's the heart of heaven. That's the heart of eternity. And so when we talk about last week, we talked about surrender and we talked about just the place of, of our wounds and our gifts and what the Lord is asking of us. And so this week we're going to dive into these places where, you know, even from the little girl, Saint Elizabeth, Here's the call of Jesus to want to be a nun, to belong to Jesus exclusively. And that, that call of her heart to give herself totally in love, which really

John Paul the second, and his work on theology of the body - he says, really the ultimate question for the human person is not, will I love, but how will I give the gift of myself in love? Like, how will I do that? So maybe Heather, what are your, what are some of your thoughts on these six chapters or just at the very beginning of when she talks about virginity for the sake of the kingdom and married life and the gift of the heart of a woman. What are some of your thoughts as we kind of dive into week two here?

Heather Khym: Well, I just want to start by saying, like, I love that the church sets us up with seasons. We've said this before, but it really is so true. Like Lent is a time to make space, you know, as is advent. And the church helps us come into union with God, and that's what it's all about. We can get lost in the fog of like to dos. And even in our faith, it's like, I got to check the box of doing this and this and this, my prayer time, you know, I got to go to the sacraments or I got to go to mass and it becomes less about intimacy as it is about, I just got to get this stuff done, off my to-do list. So it's just a beautiful time for us to refocus. And that's what we hope this book study is about. Refocus on what it's all about. And St. Elizabeth is just here, here we go. Abide, abide in me. This is what it's all about at the end of the day. Is Jesus abiding more fully in us and are we abiding in him? Is he really becoming our home? Or is it just like another thing to do? So starting there I'm like, yay for Lent. Let's go. We all need this reminder. But I loved where she was talking about virginity for the sake of the kingdom and the understanding of Christian marriage are inseparable and they reinforce each other. And I think we should just talk about that for a little bit, because I think this is a really important topic that we don't often talk about.

Michelle Benzinger: I think it is. I think it comes down to both that they compliment each other, both of them, the sacrament and the vocation of marriage and the sacrament of virginity for the kingdom. They're both beautiful, but they're both calls to intimacy, deeper intimacy. And I know for me in this Lenten season, like the Lord, just set this up beginning with this past advent and going into the Lenten season. I am still staying with the scriptures that I prayed with for my four day retreat. And it's just a deeper call to intimacy. But it really, what it is bringing me to is a deeper call to intimacy and really learning to know that Jesus is my bride groom. And that the father is who gives me my identity and my name, but the Holy Spirit is who creates things within me and co-creates, and we create together. But really realizing that, and it has been just a deeper level of prayer. But it also is where I have noticed that I've... it's like exhilarating and beautiful. And I also, it is where at times I feel like exposed and I was like, I don't know, I don't think... We're created for community, we're created for intimacy, but we don't know what to do with it also, you know, because it's... we are really seen, we're really seen in our goodness, but in all of our weakness. And it's just like, okay, Lord, I know you see me. And it's kind of like a kid playing hide and seek, you know, covering his eyes when everyone else can see them. And he knows that he sees us, but I think what Elizabeth of the Trinity's saying. Our vocation is to love and to be loved, whatever you're called to. And so right now is the extension like sister said earlier, like John Paul the second says it so well in the theology of the body is just learn how to love well. Learn how to love yourself well, the Lord well, then you can learn to love others well. And it is the, it sounds simple, but it is the hardest thing to be able to give and receive love well, you know, and that's the invitation she extends to us to learn how to do that.

Heather Khym: And I think with like the sacrament of marriage, we can often view it just as an end in and of itself. It's like, you know, marriage and this is the highest thing. And we forget that it's a sign like as a sacrament, it's a sign of the unity that God desires with us. And

when we don't have a healed, restored view of marriage and our sexuality, it's very difficult to understand how like the call to virginity and, you know, like in your vocation Sister Miriam, and how it goes together with marriage. And I would love to just hear your heart on that Sister.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh, that's so true. Really, when we talk about discerning a vocation, we're not talking about, will I get married or not? It's just like, how will I give the gift of myself in love? And that's really something really important. And I know this is not a podcast on discernment outright, but that call - everybody has a spousal nature. We're called to be gift to one another, to be given as a gift and to receive as gift. And that's written, as John Paul the second says, it's written in our bodies. It's in our bodies, it's in our hearts. And so when Jesus says that some people are eunuchs, come people forgo marriage for the sake of, because they're born that way or because they've been made that way by others, but some forsake marriage for the sake of the kingdom. And it's the higher, it's the higher call and higher meaning, the eschatological, the eternal call that every single one of us enters into the day we leave chronos, we leave chronological time. So really the answer isn't like, will I get married or not? And I think that's kind of a, it's a false dichotomy. And so it really keeps people stuck in fear of like, Oh, I'm... And then it's like all the fears of like, will I live this life of loneliness and I'm going to give up everything or am I going to, you know, and you can't even, you can't even quantify really what that life is going to be like, but the, the reality of Jesus calling. Not because marriage is bad, but for the sake of the kingdom, as a sign of what all of us will live in eternity. And John Paul the second so beautifully says that it's a marriage - that we need, our vocations need each other. Like when I'm around you guys and your families, it opens my heart to how Christ loves. And then when I'm around you, it's a revelation of heaven, of how ultimately Christ is the one who fulfills us and all of us will be immersed with him forever for all eternity. So it's that we have to have both signs of celibacy, which is the gift of self for God and the kingdom and the sign of the giving oneself in sacramental marriage, where that's the reality of how Christ loves the church and how the church receives him. You know, so.

Heather Khym: And I think it's also a beautiful thing to recognize, like, for people who are single and they're like, I'm not living out my vocation. Like I, they just can feel sort of stuck or like God isn't answering anything and that they don't have any purpose. This is where the vocation to love, I think is so vitally important for all of us across the board. No matter where you are, whether you're living into your "vocation" or not. Like the vocation is to love, like no matter where we are and you don't have to wait for that. You know, like you don't have to put your life on pause for that. You don't have to wrestle with that. It's very, very simple in many ways. And at the end of the day, Jesus is the one that is going to fulfill every single desire of our heart. And everything that we offer to him even the sacrifices and the hardships, like are such a beautiful gift that will not be unseen by him.

Michelle Benzinger: I mean, what you said is beautiful. And I think the complimentary of the vocations, they belong together. Like there are two sides. And I was just thinking about thinking about that. Like, I love watching Sister Miriam and my husband, Chris, interact with one another. Like, it's just, they're just very... it's just such like a brother, sister kind of relationship. But there's just different gifts. Like I'm like we were talking about a situation like Sister, you're going to have to speak into this, you know, with Chris, because they're very similar in their temperament, but Chris' closest friend is a priest, you know? And it's funny that we laugh. We were even talking about our 20th wedding anniversary and we're like, are

we going to bring Sister and Father Joe with us? We were just laughing because, um, on this thing, but even we have a lot of young adults with us. And like even last night I was making dinner, one of the young adults was over here and she's like, hey, I'll do spelling homework. And she could love this child in a different way than I can. And I was thinking about it. This is such a complimentary of the gifts and the seasons and how they belong to one another. You know, and I think for us as families, we have to do a better job of extending invitation to those that are not in like domestic churches or nuclear families to be a part of that and bring that invitation to one another. Because we need one another and we belong to one another, and that is such a beautiful foreshadowing of Trinitarian love at its best. I think it's one of the most awesome things about the Catholic church too, you know, is just that beauty of all the different vocations. So yeah.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, and that's exactly what Saint Elizabeth learned even as a young girl of her at 14 hearing Jesus call her. And she, and can I just read this quote where she says, just so stunning at 14. I mean, I don't know what y'all were doing at 14, but I was not doing this. So she just receives Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and she says, "Right then and there, she made a vow of virginity and she..." This is so glorious. This is St. Elizabeth says, 'We didn't say anything to each other.' She recalled, "Jesus and I, but we gave ourselves to each other by loving each other with such intense love that my determination to be wholly His became even stronger.' Hmm. I was like, Oh my gosh. And that, and she'll have to wait to actually live out that call until she's 21. But what she's teaching us in that is like you were saying Heather, that Christ is first and foremost. He is the love of every soul. Even you as married women, Christ is, he's the foundation. Like he's the love of your soul. And then your love for your husband and your family flows from that love. And she will continue to surrender how that love is lived out, which is a great purification for her, but that the truth of Christ, the primacy, like the cloister, I guess. You know, we really won't be able to say that enough during these weeks of Lent of... this, my dear friends, this is the most important thing. It's the most important thing. It's union with Christ and everything else flows from that. So maybe we could talk a bit, a bit about just there's so much in these next few chapters yall. So if you guys just want to jump in, but she talks about the Eucharistic Lord, she talks about sacred spaces. There's just so many wonderful things between two worlds, you know, where she wants to enter a Carmel, but she's at home with her mom and being respectful of her mother. She talks about Mary and Marian devotion. I love, can I just say about that when she talks about the woman of the hour, the chapter, the woman of the hour.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh me too.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I love how I hadn't really thought about that, of that particular nuance of when she was talking about how, when Mary was the one who said to Jesus in the gospel of John, they have no wine. And she obviously, she, we know that she institutes really Jesus' public ministry, but I love Saint Elizabeth, the nuance of that, of giving everything to Mary and letting Mary decide when it's time.

Michelle Benzinger: I love that too.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And that just was so wonderful. That our life, if we can entrust everything to her and trust that Mary will at the appropriate time, if it's the will of God, say, do whatever he tells you. You know, she'll lead us into that. So that for me was

really like, I just, I love that. Of course she would. She's a wonderful woman who knows the details of people's hearts. And so she knows when to initiate and when to wait and when to say no. And also what time is the perfect time. So that's something that really stuck out to me. Yeah, I think

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, I think that's huge. I think that Mary being the woman at the hour and like do whatever he tells you and that she was the one that decided that the wedding of Cana, that that is when Jesus would come out and do his public ministry. And Jesus, I think about that scripture and Jesus says woman, my time has not yet come. And she says Um, yeah, it has. Cause she sees a need, you know. And isn't she the perfect Jewish mother and sees a need and said yes, this is the time come. And that Elizabeth of the Trinity entrusted her vocation, her timing to Mary, like a good mother. And I was like, you sister, I never thought how we say, "now and at the hour of our death." And when she tells that story about St. Therese, when you know, like that battle of the hour of your death, and that there's a huge battle for your soul. And that she heard this voice and Satan says, she's mine, and she's heard this other woman's voice, no but she belongs to me. And she hears this other *voice*. And it was a woman that says, no, she belongs to me. And I mean, is that not the warrior mother at it's best? Like I just think that is just such a beautiful thing. And just, and one of the other things I loved about that chapter, we can consecrate whatever is in our hands to Mary and she will take good care of it. And I know for me as a mother, that that has just brought me a lot of just consolation. You know, and that that continuing surrender to hand my children over and put them on the altar over and over and over again, you know, and knowing that she will care for them, even when I cannot be there. And it is just a constant reminder of that a maternal love follows you wherever you are, you know, and that she is fighting for us and loving for us.

Heather Khym: And this other theme of waiting and trusting, you know, sort of came to the surface here. Like where Elizabeth's mom said, no, you can't go in to be a nun right now. You can't go into the cloister right now. And so she had to wait. And I loved this part where she said the delay was not an obstacle to God's plan. It was part of it. It would be the place of deep encounter with Christ's cross and an occasion of learning both to trust God and to offer herself for others. It was a gift and she was beginning to unwrap it. I think waiting, you know, and when things go sideways and we can't see how it's all working and we might, you know, just have the tendency to think, ah, these are all obstacles and whatever to what God wants to do. And in fact, the obstacles could be a part of God's plan, you know, and that God can make all things work together for good for those who love him. But I think like trusting in that - waiting is so hard. And we all have places where we're waiting. You know, we feel like we're in a holding pattern and how do we not just like white-knuckle it through those times, but live into it? And where we can actually see it as a gift that we can unwrap. I just thought, Whoa, like that's, uh, that's incredible. That's an incredible thing for us to, to listen to.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Gosh. Yeah. I think it speaks so much to what we were talking about last week about surrender. Because it's a crucifixion, it's a being nailed to the cross with Christ. And that's why it hurts so much. I mean, isn't that so much why we sin is because we don't want to suffer? It's just like, I don't want to, I don't want to suffer. I don't want to be inconvenienced. I don't want, I want what I want and I want it now, or I don't trust that God's going to give it to me. And if I just wait, he'll fulfill what I'm really looking for. I think that's just the, yeah, like the hard, the hard place of, um, just, I'm just, I don't know, as you guys talk about that, I'm just, so just once again, like stunned, anew of just the economy

of salvation and of how the Lord ordains all things and allows all things. And there's nothing that he's ever allowed in our life that he doesn't plan to bring something good out of it. Even our sin, even our sin, he can bring something good out of it. And it's not in spite of these things, but it's actually through them. It's through these very places. I just, the Lord is so gracious and so detailed, isn't he? Like, just so lovely my goodness.

Michelle Benzinger: And to trust him in the waiting and going back to like the chapter on sacred spaces. And as she says in the book, Claire does, and the fact that he creates places for us, she says, since Eden he has carved out spaces and has hovered over our chaos to help us make rooms and homes and chapels and churches and places or pilgrimage that speak to us of something wholly here and point to something wholly beyond. So I think about it because I think of the scripture, you know, Psalm 23, he goes before me, and makes a place for me. He makes a space for me. He makes these spaces for us to wait. He makes these places for us to rest and take refuge in the pilgrimage of this faith walk, like these places where we can exhale. These places where like, I love it in Catholic Celtic spirituality, they call it thin places - those places where heaven meets earth, where they feel like the veil is very thin that you can experience it. Like, you know, in our Catholic tradition, we call it, like there's Lourdes or there's Fatima. Or these you know. And there's different chapels that you can go to. And you're like, okay, this is holy ground. Like this is holy ground. But I also think that he gives us, I've been praying a lot about this for the last couple of months. I think there are thin places, but I also think there's thin people, people that have such deep intimacy with the Lord, that they can help, help usher in the Lord's presence into our life. Or midwife what the Lord is doing in our life, for us. I was thinking about even just like a week or two ago was dealing like I had a hard, um, just healing session and I was praying about it. And I had a good conversation after with Sister Miriam, you know, and it was just so beautiful. And I was thinking to myself, her name lives up to what she does. Like she midwives people's healing and it just makes me cry. Like she midwives peoples, like she brings them like Miriam brought Moses, picked him up and, you know, put him in the basket and brings them, she midwives people to freedom like that is her gifting and her anointing. So I think it's also inviting, creating those places with the Lord, but are we thin places, sacred spaces for others to come to receive their stories? To receive when they are... are we good rest stops on the journey? You know, where people can exhale? People can just be who they are and their messiness and their beauty and their glory, because it's all wrapped up in one. Are we places where people can come without judgment and they can just receive love? And, you know, I've said it before on the podcast, you know, creating those oases and gardens where all the fig leaves can be dropped. Are we those places? And I think that's the invitation the Lord is calling each of us to, to be those spaces and places for others.

Heather Khym: Yeah. And when we are able to experience like, the kingdom, like eternity, like we have these flashes of like, what it's all about. Like it, it causes us to not be content with the things of this world. You know, I love this part where it says the reality is that it is in our little spaces, some outside, some inside where eternity opens up to us, little portals into immensity itself, and we can no longer cling to what is shallow or clutch at straws to use a phrase of Saint Therese for, we have peered into places that we cannot describe. Like, so when we're able to create that with one another, where two or more are gathered in his name, there he is in our midst. You know, and when we become aware of God's presence in our midst, it makes us open up even more to the things of heaven because we can't be content. You know, like I remember as a young person going to conferences and having a

powerful experience with God, and then coming back to what felt like a desert, and you try to equal that with things of the world, you know, drugs, alcohol, whatever it might be, people, Netflix, like parties, like whatever it might be for you and nothing can match him. You know, and creates this hunger deep within for like, I want more of this Lord because this is exactly what our hearts were made for. You know, we're made for heaven, we're made for him, we're made for love. And so the more that we encounter him and we are those spaces where God can meet another person in and through us, we help each other long for heaven even more. And I think live into what our souls were really made for.

Michelle Benzinger: This is so beautiful and it goes straight into, and sister, you'd be good to talk about this, she talks about the Eucharistic soul, you know, like she has such a, like the Eucharist called her from such a young age. And then she has this beautiful part in the book, Claire writes about the Eucharistic soul and she uses a lot of Edith Stein, St. Teresa Benedicta, but that a woman is called to be a Eucharistic soul. You know, that we were supposed to give. And, you know, Edith Stein also has that quote, you know, a woman is supposed to be a shelter for other souls to unfold. You know, we've said that a lot. You know, and that is what we are called to do. But I think especially for women, you know, and it goes back to the theology of the body with this - is that we are also called to self possess ourselves and learn self-mastery because I think a lot of times for women we give to the point, we don't give out of our abundance, or we don't give out of our overflow, we give out of our exhaustion, you know, and then we become resentful. You know, because we had not allowed ourselves to be fully possessed and filled up. We had not... have not allowed ourselves to come and abide. Like it says, in the beginning and really allow the Holy spirit into... allow ourselves to dwell in the home of the Trinity and to be filled up so we can be Eucharist to one another, you know, that we can give of ourselves to one another.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh Gosh. Yes. And the, I mean, what you both are speaking about are just such deep realities. And she says that on page 50, she talks about a woman's life must be a Eucharistic life. And as we know, the Eucharist is Jesus Christ, body, blood, soul, and divinity as he truly is. And also the word Eucharist means thanksgiving. Right? So it's a life of deep union, which is overflowing in a life of Thanksgiving, even in the most difficult situations. And she writes Saint Elizabeth writes, it seems to me that nothing better expresses the love in God's heart than the Eucharist. It is union, consummation. He is in us and we in him and she says, isn't that heaven on earth. And it literally, it truly is where Jesus Christ chooses in, just in a profound act of humility to be present in this piece of bread, right? When the priest prays the prayers over it that it really becomes the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ and how, how Jesus comes to us. And he comes to us and they were speaking of in former times, you know, when we couldn't go to daily mass and things like that, but how often Jesus comes in his presence to meet us where we are. And like what you both are saying, cultivating that ongoing intimacy with Christ, where people have an encounter mediated through, you know, earthen vessels with Christ himself. And we know, we all know people like that. And for that to happen, like we said, we have to continually go back to Christ. The one who loves us, we have to go back to our first love the one who called us the one who chooses us, the one who, you know, you didn't choose me, I chose you. And you love me because I love you. And those places that might seem so far off to us now, but that were... where the Lord comes to meet us. And I just want to, just one last thing here. I was very struck by Claire, just this beautiful kind of exhortation of her own heart, where she, on a Sunday, had hoped to get away and to go to the adoration chapel, just to be with Jesus

in the Eucharist. And she ended up, the whole day got taken up by her kids and just all the things that she wishes she could have done. And she said - it was very beautiful. She said little fires had to be put out, the many needs of six children simply had to be attended to, and soon the day was gone. Finally that night I knelt, not in prayer, but I knelt on the kitchen floor head bent over, cleaning up spilled Cheerios. And then suddenly this thought came to me. You couldn't come to me, so I have come to you. And she says, those words penetrated my heart because I knew Jesus was there. He was there, with me among my mess and my dark kitchen. And he saw, and he knew. And just the graciousness of the Lord, where he comes to meet us in these places that he knows our hearts. And he comes to meet us in the deepest places. And he never leaves us. We're never alone. Like we were saying earlier, he's, he's always there, you know.

Heather Khym: And that blesses her, like, as she responds to her vocation. Like her vocation as mother to be there for her children that, and you know, Claire goes on to talk about this later, but nothing should compromise our calling and our vocation. Like, you know, what we offer to the Lord, the things that we sacrifice for him and for the kingdom should never compromise our vocation. And if they do, you know, then that's not God's will. You know, that's just a good thing of discernment, like, you know, is what I'm doing compromising my vocation. I think that's a wonderful discernment tool that she just like casually threw in there. Don't you think?

Michelle Benzinger: Oh, yes, it is. And to be present - yeah, absolutely - to what is at hand. And my spiritual director is really good to remind me. He said, you know you will not be judged on how you preached or how you wrote or what you designed, he said, it's who the people, the Lord has entrusted you to love and steward. And that doesn't matter what your vocation is. Whether it's your religious community, the people around you, if you're single, or if you're married and children like that is, this is the tool that the Lord, the path the Lord has used us to grow in holiness. And so like they're in front of us, Leann Bowen Art, she sponsored one of our podcasts and she sent us some beautiful ones of her print. And there's one of Mother Teresa, and she's holding this little, uh, this little child and the child has her and she's holding - the child has her face. So I put that up on my window sill in my kitchen to literally remind me like that this is holy ground right here. Like for me to remind me wherever the Lord has you is holy ground right now. You know, wherever he has placed you, but that these children are like my most perfect way to holiness. And that it's an honor and a holy privilege to love them. And so, especially like when I'm cooking, which I don't love to cook. And so Heather loves to cook, you know, for me, I'm enjoying it a little bit more, but that's why I put that picture in my kitchen because I was like, but I can love my family this way. And let me make it an art form, if not my cooking, at least my love. So when I'm doing this, yeah. So absolutely a beautiful discernment tool.

Heather Khym: It does give us hope in, instead of like turning inward into disappointment of what's not happening, it does give us hope to say, no, it's really all about Jesus. So whatever is happening or not happening, it doesn't really matter at the end of the day, and that's the cloister within the heart. As we come back to that again, like this is what matters. You know, loving those that God has entrusted to us to love well, and to meet him there within. No matter where we are. So, so what, all my speaking engagements were canceled because of COVID. Who cares? Like that's not what it's about. Like, it's about me loving those around me and, and loving Jesus in the midst of right where I am. You know, you can do that anywhere. You're not missing out. For sure.

Michelle Benzinger: And I love what sister said about Jesus comes to us and she tells her sister that also. But then there's the beautiful chapter like about nature and walking in the countryside and for all of us. And that Jesus comes for us, yes, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and yes, that's the source and summit of our faith. But he comes together and comes to us in beauty, in nature. And being present to that around us. And for right now, those of us in Lent, like at some place there, you all have gray and snow it depends where you are. Our friends in Australia, y'all are having summer over there. I love seeing your pictures of all of you all in summer. And you know, we have people from everywhere. We're down South in Florida, so it's warm, you know, but one of the things that I've been doing is going for walks, without my phone, without anything, and just walking and listening and observing and being aware of the ways the Lord is showing me and being present in his beauty and the natural. And it, for me, it's almost about making myself, it's almost like restoring my humanity when I do that. It really is. There's something about it that just restores your humanity and makes you feel like, okay, like this is it. You know, like, this is what I was meant for. That there's a longing in the beauty and that he has all these different ways of sending love letters to us throughout the day. You know, whether it be sacramental or whether it be through a person or whether it be through nature. And that is, I mean, he's such a great lover that Jesus, you know, you gotta love him.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And that's so true. I, and that's what Jesus is. Jesus is teaching us how to be human. And I wonder this week for our listeners and for all, you know, for us as well. It just, as I'm listening to you guys I'm thinking of earlier, there's a quote from Saint Elizabeth in the book where she talks about making life more simple, like make your reading more simple, just make life more simple. And I wonder this week, where in the simplicity of a walk without our phone, or you know, just something where in the child singing as they color or something where I wonder where the Lord will come to meet us. And just kind of captivate us and perhaps speak to us in a way that we weren't expecting. And if only we have ears to hear. So I wonder this week we could expect him. Let's expect him. Let's just expect the Lord to show up today and this week someplace, that might, we didn't expect, but that he will be with us speaking of what matters most and what matters most. So.

Heather Khym: Amen. Amen.

Michelle Benzinger: Amen, amen.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Alright, ladies, for the second week of Lent, what would you like your one things to be? Heather, Heather Khym from Canada...

Heather Khym: My one thing is...

Sister Miriam James Heidland: The first contestant on the show...

Heather Khym: Is our good friend, Fr. Mike Schmitz. I love what is happening with his Bible in a Year podcast. And obviously we had him on for an interview and it was wonderful to hear his heart behind that. But I am loving what God is doing with that and how it's opening doors, because it hit number one, as many people know. If you don't know, then you probably haven't had a computer or your phone on or something because it has been everywhere. Hit number one on the charts, not just the Christian charts, but all the charts. So he's above Joe Rogan, Brene Brown, Oprah, you know, there's Fr. Mike Schmitz, like with

his collar on, which is just so beautiful to see. But what I loved about it is that Fr. Mike right now is a face of the church that I think we just really need in the world. And, um, just his joy and his presence, and his fidelity to the Lord and how he articulates things. I was just like, so grateful for the gift of Fr. Mike. So yeah. Also pray for Fr. Mike. I just think it's important that we support him in prayer as he is in all of these different circles right now. So Michelle, what's your one thing?

Michelle Benzinger: Um, my one thing is a song from Steffany Gretzinger called This Close with Chandler Moore. It is just beautiful. It is so good. And so just the lyrics, everything about it. It says, you know, you're not striving to hear me because you're already there - just goes along so well with our themes of the inner cloister and abiding in him and dwelling in the heart of the Trinity. So I will post the link there. Sister Miriam, what is your one thing?

Sister James Heidland: Well, there could be several, but I just have been. And I, I don't only think I can even recommend, like, I can't recommend the actual playlist, but you know how Spotify generates your daily mix? Like all your daily mixes, and there are like six different versions of it. Somehow Spotify with the algorithms, which is a little scary, has taken like just this daily mix of everything from Steffany Gretzinger to Matt Maher to all these cool and eclectic Christian, just like chill music and just put it all together with some, uh, just some other stuff as well. And I just, I just been fun driving in the car or just when I go for walks and sometimes just listen to music and just the, just like the simple nature of worshipping God. Like in acoustic, I don't know. It's like this acoustic just chill kind of, the little things where the Lord comes to meet us, I just absolutely love. So I just want, I just want to give it up. I mean, I'm not like - I just like chill music anyway, but it just some good classic, almost like coffee shop, acoustic Christian. And some of it's like flat out traditional from, you know, you know, Jesus, you know, in the garden where the Lord, you know, the Lord saves my soul to just some more contemporary stuff. I just, I love a good chill Christian playlist. And just throw in some other stuff too. So yeah

Michelle Benzinger: There you go, girl.

Sister James Heidland: It's very simple, very simple. Well, dear friends, we want to just encourage you once again, to expect the Lord to show up. And it's in a thin place today and this week in your heart and in nature and in beauty and, and all the things that the Lord has brought into your life because he loves you.

So thank you so much for joining us on this journey and we can't wait to be with you next week. And until then we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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