

AT S8 E14 Advent Part 3 Warrior Mother_mixdown

Michelle Benzinger: [00:00:00] Happy Advent Abiding Together Podcast listeners. I'm here to talk about this week sponsor Project Light Ministries. And so Project Light Ministries creates resources that are designed to create space and starting points for conversations that matter. They use the power of storytelling on film. And y'all, these films are stunning. The aim of creating these films is helping others create a safe space where individuals can sit and find the courage to tell their story, a space that would confront the uncomfortable. They talk about the hard things. They talk about the things that you don't want to bring into the light. Some of the people would say it's taboo, but it's not taboo. We, as the church, have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable and have to extend invitations to start having these crucial conversations. And what Project Light Ministries does is they've created tools that inspire us to have these crucial conversations. And they've created tools to create safe spaces, to make these conversations seem attainable for each of us to have. You can find the amazing films as a DVD and digital download at projectlightministries.com and enter the code `abide10` for 10% off of the DVD bundle, which includes a copy of both *Speaking to Sparrows*, which sister Miriam is in, and *the fourth man*, which my cute husband is in. So go ahead and check that out. With Project Light Ministries and we are so excited that they would sponsor our podcast this week. Thank you.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:01:30] Hello, and welcome to season eight of 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 each and every week. I am joined by two of my very dearest friend, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. This podcast is born out of our friendship and sharing all kinds of things together: our walk with Jesus, our insights, the lessons we are *still* learning, our joys, sorrows, tears, and laughter. And you are most welcome on the journey with us. You can find out more information about all of our episodes at abidingtogetherpodcast.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. And welcome to part three of our advent series on Mary. So if you joined us for our first episode, we talked about Mary's Fiat. Our second episode, we talked about the womb of Mary and this week, we're going to talk about her warrior heart, the heart of Mary. And I think you're really going to love this in a lot of different ways. But before we dive into that, Heather and Michelle, we've been having a lengthy conversation as we always do. Of all the things, everything, all the things you possibly imagine. Yeah. So Heather, how are you?

Heather Khym: [00:02:52] Yeah. Well, it's so hard. Yeah. It's so hard because we don't usually get a chance to connect other than when we have a scheduled recording or something. So it's like, okay, there's 18 topics that have come up in the last two weeks, we have to talk about, which I love. So if only we could be in person, that's always my heart's desire, but I am happy for this. I'll take it. I'll take Skype any day of the week instead of nothing. So good to see you, Michelle, how are you?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:03:20] I'm good. I didn't tell you when we were talking, you know, that it was an old, um, game show. Are you smarter than a fifth grader? The answer is no, I am in the middle of every fifth grade school project that needs to be done. And I've already

gone through fifth grade, but obviously my fifth grader doesn't care. So I've meant to tell you that I need help with the explorers report that I'm doing right now. It's due on Friday. An Explorer's report. So I can tell you everything about Magellan, Columbus and everything else right now. And so, but this is what we have to do.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:03:53] Why did they do an episode on Christopher Columbus? It was so weird. So outside of their genre usually.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:03:59] I know, and then I'm like, I don't remember any of these facts and I want to be like, you will not use this in later life, but you know, that's not, no, no, we can't do that, but it's good. It is so much fun. Sister, how are you doing?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:04:13] I'm doing well. I had a little retreat, a little personal retreat up in a lovely home in Austin that some people let us stay at when they are out of town. And it was very nice on the Austin countryside. And I took myself to the art museum one day and did a lot of walking and a lot of praying and just a lot of just being, which was really nice. Yeah. I love that. Refresh. Sometimes a girl just has to be outside. You know, you guys, you know, how much I love being outside. I was outside at all times as I possibly could.

Heather Khym: [00:04:40] But it's so important. I mean, that practice, you both have been very good at that of making like regular retreat times or times to get away. Michelle, you just went away with your husband, Chris for an overnight, which is awesome that you've been making time to do that.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:04:55] We try to do it once a quarter, every three months. So yeah, it's all good.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:04:59] It's worth it. Isn't it? Where we can have a chance to, to make that time like that change is Michael Jackson. We do that too.

Heather Khym: [00:05:07] Is that our guiding quote for this episode? Michael Jackson?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:05:08] Happy Advent, Michael Jackson make that change. Well, we're going to use, we got a lot of great stuff for you today, but we're going to use a scripture passage from the gospel of Luke chapter two, and then also a little quote from GK Chesterton, which we may have kind of hinted at before, but we're gonna use the scripture passage from Luke where Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple and Simeon prophesies over Jesus. And you know, just talks about who he is. And then he prophesies over Mary and in the gospel of Luke chapter two, verse 34. Right before that the show says the child's father and mother marveled at what was said about Jesus. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, this child is destined to cause the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the hearts of many will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too. A sword will pierce your own soul. And we've talked about our lady of sorrows. We talked about just of her different aspects of her heart, but we want to talk about the warrior heart of our mother. And there's a lovely poem that GK Chesterton wrote. And we may have, like I said, we may have alluded to it before, but it's called the ballad of the white horse. And in this beautiful poem, he speaks about our lady. And I'm just going to read this quote to you. And then we're going to kind of jump off in our discussion from there. And GK Chesterton writes this, he says, " One instant in a still light. He saw our lady then. Her dress was soft as the Western sky and she was a queen most

womanly. And she was the queen of men. Over the iron forest he saw our lady stand. Her eyes were sad without art and seven swords were in her heart. But one was in her hand. " So Heather what kind of stirs in your heart as we talk about those prophecies and the sword and her heart, and that the mama's heart of Mary. What's stirring in your beautiful heart right now, as we talk about these things?

Heather Khym: [00:07:05] Yeah, I think so often we are always looking for models or quotes or people to look to as an example. And it's easy for us to like look at a sportsperson or look at, you know, whatever, some kind of person out there on the internet that we find a quote from and hold them up as a model. And sometimes we have a disconnect with our spiritual family. And the saints and with our lady, but our lady is the mother of God. What better model can we look to, to learn from? And she's worth looking to and learning from, so to begin to like dive into her life and the things that she did and the things that she said. But more importantly, what we're talking about here is like how she carried herself, how she used her strength. And there is strength in suffering that only those who have deeply suffered know. That when you suffer for a greater good, there is something so incredibly powerful about that. And that's the thing that has drawn me to her over and over and over again, my relationship with our lady hasn't been easy. Not that I'm resistant to it, but it's just, hasn't come as naturally. Like my mom has a deep devotion to our lady. Always has, since she was a little girl. Mine has been like a slow growing over many years, but the thing that continually draws me to her is how strong she was. Over and over and over again, her strength in saying yes, when she was so young and that would have been so scary and there was all the unknowns, or she just like gave this big, huge yes. And her strength and knowing that her son was going to suffer. And she said, yes. There's strength in like going through all of these stages to be there, to be present, to not run away in the midst of sorrow and suffering. Like she stayed. And that has been a huge lesson for me in the most recent years of my life. Like, don't run away from the things that you're suffering in. You never know what good God has in store or when restoration might be right around the corner and something could drastically change. Yeah. Her strength is something I still desire, especially as a mother and a woman. How about you, Michelle?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:09:07] Yeah, this is probably one of my favorites in the series because 1) Chesterton based that poem off of when he read Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. And so he based it off of the characters of Lord of the Rings when he sees, okay. How do you say her name when she's fighting the witch king?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:09:23] Eowyn.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:09:24] Thank you. I always get the Elvish names wrong. I get all the names wrong. Anyway, let's be honest. So, but I love that because when she is fighting him, you know, like, but I was really thinking about the woman with a sword. Like, there's something about that. In the beginning of COVID when we all went on like three to four walks a day. And so, I mean, I still go on two walks a day, but you know, when you're like logging about three or four long walks a day. I remember walking and praying and thinking about like what does it look like for women to wield their swords? What does it look like for women to have strength, but yet tenderness and pure femininity, but yet still fight for those that we loved? And, you know, we call the word of God, the sword of the spirit. So I was really praying about that. And this is one that I really felt like it was an invitation for the Holy spirit, just to get deeper into the word of God, you know, and really learn how to wield our

swords. And I remember thinking to it, okay, Lord, what does this even look like? And I really felt like the Holy spirit was just whispering to my heart. He said, I want a generation of women that know how to wield swords. And I was like, Lord, how's that happen? I really felt like you were saying, first thing is put down there phones and stop scrolling and actually pick up a Bible, but really to know the word of God and have it like saturate us and have it saturate us. It is, I really feel like that the Lord really wants women to have a sword of the spirit. And on the other hand, I think he wants them to have a paintbrush to create something, to create beauty and both of their hands. There's no room for a phone, but I think that is the power of femininity. And that is the power of, you know, Mary as warrior mother. And it got me thinking, sorry, I'm going a little other tangent, but now a little thought process. It got me thinking in the beginning of Genesis, he said, you know, I'll put enmity between her and her offspring. We were public enemy number one from the beginning, but then I was thinking, no one launches a full-scale attack against something that is not considered a threat or that needs to make a difference. No one says I'm going to take you out. You don't take something out that is insignificant. You take something out because it's powerful. You take something out because we are life givers and you know, like, there's that quote, like the future is female. The future is female and male. It's not one or the other, it's him coming into their restored fullness. And so when we ask the question in our Doctors series- what is restored femininity to look like? I think this is one of the areas of restored femininity. To really learn how to fight well and fight for others in a purely feminine way. Not manipulation, not bitterness, but learn how to fight in a feminine, with the feminine genius. What are your thoughts, sister?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:12:00] Well be before we go on it. Cause we were just talking about that, of how one of you said, and I can't remember of how a woman, when a woman fights, she fights for people that she loves to protect. A woman doesn't usually fight for territory or power. That's not usually her greatest concern. She will fight in response to defend and protect those who she loves. Uh, so can we just, let's just talk about that a little bit. So Michelle, you want to kind of pick up on that?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:12:22] Yeah. Even thinking about it, like when we live up in the North Georgia mountains, what are the one thing that you had to be aware of? A mama bear and a cub. Like you do not get in between. Like we had to literally train our kids. If you see a cub go away, because that means the mama bear is close to it and you never get in between a mama bear and her Cub, because they are the most dangerous bears that you will go after. So isn't that how mother Mary is to us. Like we are her children and she will come after you. And then I think about it yourself as those of us that are mothers, whether physical or spiritual, those of us that are mothers. I think about her standing at the cross. And I think about her watching Jesus suffer, Mary and I love that scene in the passion where she is watching him and remembering him as a little boy. I mean, and it wrecks me because I think with women, we don't have like Achilles heel. We have Achilles heart. And our children are our hearts. I as still makes me tear up. The stronger person - I'm mean Jesus suffered, I'm not taking away Jesus suffering- but Mary suffering just to sit there and watch someone else suffer. Like any mother would take the place. Any mother would say just let me take it for you, you know? And we often do, but she does she fights for us. So. Sister. What are your thoughts?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:13:35] And yes, and she does, and she fights as a woman. And that's the beautiful thing like John Paul, the second, when he's talking about his, I think

his letter to women, and he talks about women. You go into any work you want to, but go into it as a woman, bring your feminine genius, bring the gift of your vulnerability and your foresight and your attentiveness to the person and your fidelity and your steadfastness and your constancy and your kindness and your bring that cause whatever it is, the world needs that the world needs you. And I was thinking of I during my retreat, when I was in Austin, I finished the book by Mother Mary Francis, The Cause of our Joy. I finished that book and there were parts of that just, I sat and sobbed over. And I think one of the parts that really affected me, probably the most out of any of that whole book was the section where Mother Mary Francis illumines, how Mary comes and she attends to us in a steadfast way. And, and she doesn't leave us. And she mother, my friends has made this great point. She said, every single one of us. Every single one of us on the face of the earth will have something spiritual, physical, or mental that we will suffer with our entire life. It will be something that we will wrestle with our entire life. And it will be like the St. Paul like that thorn in our side that we, we heal from but it's something that we will wrestle with. And she said, and Mary is there with us every step. Oh, she's with us every step of the way. She's not disgusted by our weakness or these areas of our hearts that we still struggle with. She's just -she's with us and she's not in a hurry. And she just so kind, she's not like condescending to us or dismissive or you pietistical. She just is with us in it with us and that kind of love and that kind of acceptance and that kind of forbearance and a tender open heart. I. How can you resist that? And that's, that's the feminine genius.

Heather Khym: [00:15:26] Yeah, it's beautiful. And she literally watched the most horrific thing happen and. It'd be also turned upside down. She also witnessed the resurrection. She also witnessed all the good that came. So she believes that for us too, like she's a champion of that for us as well, that God can bring good out of anything. He could restore anything that seems completely lost her steadfastness and laser focus on the kingdom and God's will being accomplished is unbelievable to me. Like, like truly only by the grace of God can that happen, but that we all can learn from that and live into that. Like, that's what I hope that I, I only can hope that I can have that kind of focus on the kingdom that I'm willing to suffer, because I know that what is coming is great. Like her being at the foot of the cross watching Jesus die, she knew that there was a purpose, even though everything in her would want to take his place or cry out. All of that stuff that would be so natural for anybody, but that she was laser focused on the bigger picture and being submitted to the will of God. So she had this incredible strength, but it was strength submitted under the will of God. It wasn't a strength that she went out on her own. And did her own thing. It was always submitted under the sovereignty and the will of God, which I think is incredibly important for all of us. I think that we can get lost in fighting small stories and small battles, things that God doesn't intend for us. And I actually think that the enemy does distract us by that, you know, give us something that, that is good, you know to fight for or whatever, but we can become very, very distracted from the bigger fight that might be there and needing us, needing our strength, needing our presence, needing our maternal hearts. And like you said, no matter where we are, whether we're physical mothers or not, that that is part of the feminine genius that we bring to situations.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:17:21] And I think to her, and I'd like to her right now, like Mary one, most like to allow her to come and mother meet, but also for her to teach me as a mother to mother. You know, whether we're physical or spiritual mothers. And for me, like one of the things I've really just been intentionally working on both in like spiritual direction and

counseling is just like, hyper-vigilance like, I'm very hyper, let me take care of this. Let me take care of this because just the atmosphere for me growing up was very chaotic. And so it was always one of those where the other shoe could drop. So, but if I was around, I could make sure that other shoe wouldn't drop, like, or I can make sure other people wouldn't fall. And just how that translates in my grownup life right now. And just watching Mary, where Simeon prophesied this over her, like thinking. Well, it tells her these things about her child. She could have gone and like, let me just, you know, huddle him up, make sure nothing happens and, you know, make sure all this, you know, let me keep him safe. And she knew that God's sovereignty was bigger than his safety like that she was safe in the will of God. That really was the most secure place. But she surrendered to that. And so she had to be able to take that position of full surrender and not trying to control a situation. Where I, you know, my biggest thing is like, okay, scoot over Holy spirit. Let me show you how to do the job. You know, like, this is how I am, but like really going deeper. Why do I want to control the situation? Why do I want to, like, it's not because... I wouldn't say like, it's not an intention to be manipulative or anything like that. It's an intention. Like I don't want people to be hurt and I don't want the other shoe to drop, but really it brings up my trust issues with the Lord. Do I trust the Lord to be who he says he is? And do I trust other people to allow them to go through their process? Like I've said a couple of times. I like to think I almost make things too comfortable for people and a lot cause I want to make sure they're okay and do that. And part of it's generous, but other part is not. You know, the other part, it really disables them from growing and being the people that they're called to be.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:19:25] Oh, that's so true. Oh, that's so true. And I, I certainly my own journey can relate to the hypervigilance in that, the disposition of people pleasing or trying to, you know, disassemble certain situations or diffuse them before things boil over. Like, I can totally understand that from my own childhood. I'm just thinking that the same thing and I think we talked about this before, but the surrendering of control and the surrendering of responsibility for other people's behaviors, right? So then we can be safe in the will of God and we can be responsible for what we're supposed to be responsible for, because if I'm trying to be responsible for what you were supposed to be responsible for, it's like nobody's responsible for anything. Right. And there's all this and all this overreach. And I was thinking of like our lady of how we were speaking about her womanly heart and how she suffers and how she walks with the Lord and how she brings the church into the resurrection. And she does it all without bitterness. Without bitterness. And I remember Bob, you know, Bob Schutts, you know, we all love Bob and you know, he's such a great mentor to me. And one time I was telling him the situation that in my life that I was like, just trying to quote unquote, get over, you know, we all have these things like I just need to get over it. And I used something, I used similar terminology, but I hit it under like this kind of verbiage. And he looked at me and he smiled and he says, it sounds like you haven't received that situation. It sounds like you're resigned to it. And I was like, you know, like the places where yeah, like, Jesus, please. Please open my heart as a woman, so I can accept and receive you, not just to be quote unquote resigned and just to tough it out here. Like what are you trying to open in my womanly heart? So the response like you're both saying is vulnerability and strength versus resignation or control.

Heather Khym: [00:20:55] Yeah. Look at our lady too. And how, if I knew, and this is how I often operate in life, when I know there's pain or there's going to be pain, I want to detach. You know, I just want to sort of put up a wall or a barrier. It's like, ah, I don't want to be hurt -

natural human tendency, but we don't see that in our lady. That's like her full yes. Her yes was yes to everything even though she didn't even know the extent of what she was saying yes to. But she did know, she knew the prophecies, she knew them well. She knew all the scriptures well, of what was to come, but of course she couldn't be prepared for it all, but she said yes to it all. And she wasn't, she was so deeply bonded to Jesus you know, she gave her whole heart to him and she didn't put up these walls of self protection. Which gosh, I think for myself, but for women in general, we do that. So often we have these walls of self protection. I think what's so inspiring about her is that she knew that he had a father. Like God, the father was involved in this, the Holy spirit, her spouse was involved in this whole thing. I think often our world is too small. We look at ourselves and our spouse or our community or whatever our situation is. And we think that that's it, you know, but I've often had to surrender my children to God, the father, and say like, I need you to father them in a way that we can't, you know, like they do belong to you. There is this sort of like, like you said, it's not like a resignation, but it's, it's an open handedness with everything that God gives and God takes away. And a trust that he is about good things in the end. You know, even if we don't see it here and now.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:22:36] And I think that Mary is offering us now, like really like to pray for her intercession and what invitation she's asking each and every one of us, like, how do you want her to fight for you? You know, like Mary, I need you to fight for me in this area. We see these statues of this beautiful woman and this, you know, like robe gown with a veil, but she's crushing a snake under her feet and we kind of ignore that whole point. Like, I mean, okay. Like we should stop, like, okay, hold on. She's bare feet. Ooh. She doesn't even have shoes on half the time. And she's. Uh, you know, crushing a snake yuck, but that is the power of her. Like she will fight and she will fight for us. And she is the mama bear. Like she's totally the mama bear. And she wants to snatch you out of whatever snare that you're in. Like, and she's inviting us to that. And I loved that. Like even how Chesterton wrote this poem when he was writing it, you know, and he was so inspired by this beautiful scene from Lord of the rings when she was fighting the witch King. And he said, you know what, man, dares to fight. You know, and she pulls off her helmet because she is, you know, snuck in there to be a soldier to fight. And the reason why she was fighting was to what to save her uncle or her father? Her uncle yeah. And you could see her beautiful blonde hair. It even tells it in the story, like in the novel so beautifully, but she was completely tender and, but yet completely fierce. And that's how she is, you know? And she said, you know, I am no, man. I am a woman. And I think it was just such a beautiful way, but, and then she ends up killing the witch King, but only because he was going to do those that she loved harm. Yeah. But she would stay, you know, she's stood between her uncle and harm, and that is how Mary wants to be for us. She wants to stand in between and be an intercessor, you know, to be that intercessor for us to pray. Let me, and I think that's the invitation she's inviting us. To ask she's a mediatrix, she doesn't take the place of Jesus, but she does want to mother us in a way. And I think for each and every one of us, she wants to mother us in a way that she hasn't before. And she's extending that invitation of grace to each of us.

Heather Khym: [00:24:40] Right. And I think she, we have to move beyond her just being a statue in our life and encounter her as a real person. I loved our conversation with Father Justin Brady in previous podcasts. For those of you haven't listened, I would encourage you to, to look him up in our previous podcasts on our website, but in my conversations with him, he's an Exorcist. And often, you know, you hear stories and they're very, I don't know, I

don't know what the word is, but they focus a lot on how powerful the enemy is. And I remember talking to Father Justin saying, what's the biggest thing that you've learned in everything that you've been doing in exorcism. And he just got this big smile on his face. And he said, it's all true. And I said, what do you mean? And he goes, Our Lady. How powerful she is. The rosary, the power of a cross around your neck, blessed things, Holy water. He said, it's all true. And he just, he just let this laugh out. And I was like, Oh my gosh. And there was something in my heart. It was like a little excitement in my heart. Like, it's really true. And I think we have to go there into those places and go, where do I sort of not believe that this is true, that Mary is just a statue or Jesus is just this figure, you know, in the Bible or whatever, how can I welcome them into my heart? Especially during this advent season, how can I make a home for them in my own spiritual life and in my heart where they are real and where I experienced the power that they wield. Because this is all given to us by God. Like God gave our lady to us as a gift that she can be a powerful warrior in our own life that she does actually crush the head of the serpent. This is just in his plan that this is set up this way. And how can she do that in your own life? Guys, I can tell you all kinds of serpents that need to be crushed in mine right now.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:26:36] This is so good. Yeah, and that, and that's true that that's the beautiful thing that it is. It's all true. And that it's happening now. And I think that's, like we said, you know, the. What the Lord is drawing us into is the eternal, the eternal reality, where he is triumphant, that the resurrection is for all time. It's eternal. And the suffering in our life is temporary. It is temporary. It's passing. The crucifixion isn't forever. The resurrection is. That's the last say. So in our life and especially as like the darkness comes in December and it just. Uh, you know, we look at our life a year ago, we've started a new liturgical season and, and who would have thought this last liturgical year, and this last calendar year would have held so much. And I, I wonder for each one of us, and I know I just, I love what you both are saying here, you know, where just like Jesus, we hear him so often when he meets people that he is so gentle and so consider of another heart and he'll ask, you know, what do you want me to do for you? Yeah. And I wonder maybe this advent, dear friends, you know, Mary says the same thing to us because they have shared the same heart and she's looking at us and she's saying, my son, my daughter, what do you want me to do for you? What do you, what serpent do you want me to crush? Or what do you want me to ensnare you or to pull you out of a snare? What knot do you want me to untie for you? Like would you let me take care of your heart? Would you let me do that and continue to surrender over and over and over again when you want to take it back for yourself, would you. Would you let me do that for you. I just, how gracious, what a thing to think of.

Heather Khym: [00:28:09] And to restore our image of mother, you know, whether it be the way that we live out our own motherhood, for those of us who are mothers in any capacity, but also for those of us who had mothers that weren't great, you know, that there's restoration that can occur there. Like when Jesus gives his mother to us, there's a reason. There's many reasons for that. But I think that this is definitely one that a lot of people have the opportunity to present to this gift of her motherhood.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:28:38] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. That's a lot to ponder and chew on. I know I'm going to walk away from our conversation today and certainly spend some more time with this myself. So well, so my dear friends, as we kind of let that settle in our hearts, Michelle, would you like to share your one thing with our audience?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:28:59] My one things are actually two different books by young catholic women authors. And I am so excited about this because I really could say like 10 years ago when people asked me, Hey, do you have any recommendations for really some good Catholic women? And there'd be a few, I mean, there'd be the great saints, like Theresa of Avila, Catherine of Sienna, you know, Therese of Lisieux, but modern day people like that, we actually knew. And so now I can say yes, there's so many. Let me tell you all about them. And so one is In Full Bloom by Claire Swinarski that does the Catholic Feminists. And it is so good. I am just so proud of Claire. Like she is not only writing these, she's writing fiction for young adults too, which I think is, I just love that. And then another one is called Rekindled and it is by Mallory Smyth and it is also so good. And it's just amazing her journey back into the Catholic church. And so both of them were really great. They're both really great young women, young moms and yeah, I just love that we have these options, you know, some really good Catholic writers. So those are my one, two things. Sister, what about you?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:30:08] Hmm, actually, that's interesting because mine was going to be a book too. I was thinking of a couple of things that I guess we can have a couple of things, but I think one of the best tried and true, uh, writings on femininity and womanhood is by Edith Stein and her book on women like a collection of philosophical writings on women is so good. So if you're, if you are looking for something that's, you know, really substantial and that you really want to dig into, and I think, and didn't endow also do a study on that.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:30:33] Yes. Endow did a study. Because she's not easy to read. Like there's a lot of personalism and she's very philosophical, almost brilliant philosophical. So, but, uh, Endow does a great study on them without like giving you the meat of her writing and they don't water down anything. I think, Sister Prudence Allen wrote that one. So it is good. Really good. Yes.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:30:53] Glad we had a little discussion about that. I would like to read it. I'd like to read that. Yeah. So, and then I have another one, but I think I'll save that second one for another time. So that's my one thing. Yep. Yeah. Heather?

Heather Khym: [00:31:04] My one thing is Epic movies. This is the season for Epic movies in our house. Um, but there's some that we've revisited that we haven't seen for a long time. So it was colder outside, you know, it gets dark really early and we're like, Oh, let's watch a movie. Especially on the weekend. That's something we like to do as a family. So we revisited gladiator and Braveheart and our kids have never seen it. And. Everybody obviously discretion. Obviously these movies are very violent and all of that stuff, and there's certain parts we skip over, blah, blah, blah. But the point of watching them was one to have our hearts inspired by these two men in these movies who just chose the good above all. They were willing to suffer for what they believed in and they were uncompromising in how they went about it and they were good. You know, especially in gladiator, he's saying strength and honor, like over and over again. And this becomes kind of the motto throughout the movie. And I was like, wow, you just don't see these like amazing examples of this on the screen much anymore. You know, there's often I was just saying to my husband, the other day, I said, You know what my problem with a lot of shows these days is that the hero is always not good. Like there there's this tragic thing going on in them, this conundrum where they're like, kind of bad, but kind of good. And you can't really love them. You know, you don't really love them. You're like, you're kind of despicable in some ways, but you're the hero of the

story. Whereas these Epic stories, I think speak to the bigger story. That there is a good worth fighting for, you know, that freedom is worth fighting for. And you put all of these in a spiritual perspective. These movies have brought about some amazing conversations with our kids, because we talk about the deeper spiritual meaning or what this means as far as character and how they live this out in their own world and in their own lives and what this means in relation to our faith. So. I just wanna encourage people, find some Epic movies to watch as adults or ones that are appropriate for you and your children, no matter where you're at checkout, you know, Lord of the rings, Narnia, like all of those ones that we can dive into. They've been tremendously beautiful for us.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:33:09] And you were saying, Heather, just as a last thing here, you were saying that you guys had some just really wonderful conversation around your dinner table on Sunday night.

Heather Khym: [00:33:15] This is the best, you know, we, yeah, just last night, I've been trying to set aside Sundays to be beautiful and to just make a little bit yeah. More of a special dinner to set the table a little bit nicer, open a bottle of wine, you know, to just have Sundays be really special in our family. And nobody wanted to leave the table last night. Like nobody jumped up to just like, get the dishes done and go on our phones or whatever. We just sat around for a couple of hours. This is the beauty of teenagers. Gosh, you just can't do this with little people. Now that teenagers, they have opinions. They want to hear things, you know, we just got it. Everybody was participating in the conversation. It was so awesome. And they were loving it, like just loving it. And I was riveted at what they had to say, you know, about different topics and. Yeah, it's just a really, really beautiful thing. I think there's often people will ask us on the podcast, you know, can you talk about politics and what's going on? And can you talk about this horrible thing that's happening here and there? Yeah, we could talk about it on the podcast, but we have this deep belief- all of us do that - those conversations are best had around dinner tables around, you know, are outside with friends or, and these are the conversations that even if you have really different opinions about it. That's the best place for that to happen is in person. And, um, yeah. So that's what we going to keep saying, have those conversations around tables.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:34:33] Yeah. Amen. Amen. Dear friends. And yes. And we have a warrior mother, right? Who is with us through, with every conversation and through every joy and sorrow of our life. And she loves us. So our heart for you this week is that you meet her and that you let her ask you what, you know, what she can do for you this week and open your heart to her. For she's never going to ever leave you. She loves you. So thank you for joining us this week. And until next week we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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