

AT S9 E18 Loving the Church_mixdown

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 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. We've got a really special episode for you today, and we're going to talk about loving the church in all her beauty and all of her sorrow. So if that's something that's been on your heart, as we often see things unfold continually in the church, I really, really think as we wrestle through these things. And as we seek the Lord's heart in these places, this might really bless you as well. And so, but before we dive into that deep, deep, deep waters, Michelle and Heather, it is full on spring. And Heather, we have to talk about how beautiful it is up where you are. Can you just tell everybody what's happening to your trees right now?

Heather Khym: Oh my gosh. Okay. So normally up where I live, it's very similar weather to Seattle. So it rains like. It feels like 80% of the year. And then you have this time where all of a sudden it's like a light switch goes on and all of a sudden the sun comes out and everything starts blooming. So I went for a drive with our kids yesterday and we just rolled the windows down and we were cruising through all the farmlands and the smell of just all the blossoms and everything coming off, the trees was, you can't even express. You just feel like it's heavenly in some way, but last week it was super exciting on our property. Before we bought this property, the person who owned the land just like tore down all these huge trees, which is so sad because I wish that we didn't know that and had a choice in that. So we just had a whole bunch of new trees planted and. It's beautiful already there buds are just starting so that, cause they just got put in the ground. So we're like doing all the things watering and the sun's out. So that's good and trying to take care of it, but it's really been causing me to think again, of like, what are these trees need to thrive? Like what do we all need to thrive? And I think this is just a great thing. That's on my mind, especially for today's episode of what does it look like to thrive? What are the essentials we need to thrive? So. It's awesome. I'm going to take some pictures when they start, when they start blooming, I'll send it to you guys. Michelle, how are you?

Michelle Benzinger: Good. I am really good. We just had the sacrament of confirmation for my ninth grade son. And so actually his sponsor was father Mark Mary. And who is actually a really great confirmation sponsor. And even though we tease each other a lot, he is really like I've said before, family to our family. And he was great sponsor for my son, Sam and our \ Bishop Bill Wall is just a gem. He is just a gem. And so he just did a beautiful job and I just love the power of the sacraments and especially the sacrament of confirmation. I love it. And um, I want to be like, do you know what's happening to you? Like the Holy spirit is coming upon you. Like he did the apostles at Pentecost. And so it's was telling my son that and he's like, mom, I get it. I get it. But I have to tell you this funny story. So we're standing is sitting in

the Pew. My son, Sam looks at me. He goes do I have to keep my shirt tucked in the whole entire time? You know, he's wearing a nice dress shirt and tie. I'm like, yes, Sam is your confirmation. I said, give Jesus your Sunday best. And he looked at me and goes, mom, Jesus says, come as you are. And he looks at me with a little smirk and goes. I just scripture you and I'm like saying, if you don't know him, he's very quiet or reserved. So he was just really funny. I was like little stinker. Yeah. So it was good Sister. How are you?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I'm doing well. I just got to see you, Michelle Benzinger and your whole family. You got to see a couple of times I was in Tallahassee doing a event with Dr. Bob Schutts a priest retreat. And so I got to see it because. My visit in February was shut down by the Arctic, Texas weather. I tried again in April and it worked out. So I got to see Michelle on your fam and then went to the Tallahassee for the priest retreat. And then you came back into Tallahassee for one of Sam's soccer games, which was just great. And so it was bookend, it was, it was a lot of fun.

Heather Khym: Your post on social media was so cute. Father Mark, Mary Sister, Miriam, and your husband, Chris, like all cheer leading on the side, I was like, Oh, that's the best little cheerleading squad I ever did see.

Michelle Benzinger: it is. It's so funny though. I totally forget that both of them are in, you know, their habits. And so when we come up to a soccer field and people are like, Oh, Oh yeah, here's the CFR Friar. Here's the, you know, religious Sister. It's so funny. And I just love it. I really love it, but it was great to have them with us and yeah, it was, it was so great.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. It was a true delight and really like the face of the church. Do you think about it often like that, you know, in my religious community, we're very familiar with priests and sisters and families. And so that's very common for us and for a lot of people, they don't see that. And I think when we talk about the church, like we're going to talk about loving the church and what does the church look like in all of her different facets and, and just her sorrow. I think that that unification of the coming together of the vocations, serving and living in the heart of Christ and each revealing their own gift is a really special sign of the times. I really believe, I think something that the Lord is, is rebuilding. So we want to pull out a couple of quotes here that we're going to lead our discussion today. And one of them is from a homily by Saint John Paul, the second, which he gave in 1982. And he says, this. He says there's only one church of Jesus Christ, which is like a great tree into which we are grafted. It is about a deep, vital unity, which is a gift of God. It is not only, or above all external unity, it is a mystery and a gift. And I think we could all agree that the church is a mystery. And again, like we ourselves are mystery and gift of many times. And I just wanted to kind of let Michelle open this discussion because Michelle, you found a great. Honest heart-wrenching and heart inspiring quote, um, by an Italian priest from a book, which I think is, you mentioned it was called letters from the desert, but do you want to cue that up for us? And maybe talk a bit about that?

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. So I had read this a couple of years ago. I read this in a passage and last week when I was praying about the church. So because there's more just disheartening news that we received about the church, you know, another scandal. And then another situation happened that I was aware of and my heart was just breaking. And I was just like enough already enough already. And then I came across this, uh, excerpt from letters from the desert, from Carlos Caretto. And it just really talks about really the tension of the

church and the quote that I have is super, super long. So I won't read all of it, but I'll just pick some of it. But it just put to words what was going on. It just really gave a language of what was going on in my heart and how I felt. And it says how baffling you are, old church, and yet how I love you, how you have made me suffer. And yet how much I owe you. I would like to see you destroyed. And yet I need your presence. You have given me so much scandal and yet you have made me understand what sanctity is. I have seen nothing in this world, more devoted to obscurity, more compromised, more false. And yet I have touched nothing more, pure, more generous, more beautiful. How often I have wanted to shut the doors of my soul in your face. And how often I have prayed to die in the safety of your arms. And it just really goes on, like we could, we can pull just different excerpts about it through our conversation today, but just living in that tension and the mystery of the both and in the church, you know, and saying, basically this is a church made of sinners, but yet this is a church that has a spotless bride. So how do we really live in that tension as we are here? On this side of heaven, how do we live in this tension of this bride that doesn't feel sometimes the bride feels really messy and dirty and broken. And sometimes the mother church feels like the last place that is safe. A mother is supposed to be safe and our arms are supposed to be open. And a lot of that is not been our experience with the church, or we constantly see the scandal and, you know, and we're like, like I said before enough already. So how do we love the church? And her fullness in the both and. And how do we continue to be faithful members of this church in the both hands and live in this tension. And it's not an easy tension. So how do we do that? Yeah.

Heather Khym: Yeah. When you sent this to us, I, it was the first thing I read in the morning I got up and I read it and I, I didn't know what to say. Like, I was completely stunned. It's pretty long. But I felt like everything I read, I was like, this is everything that's been rolling around in my heart and my mind for a long time at different. He just said so well, so clearly, you know, you feel this tension between these two things of like, I love the church so much, and yet I've been so hurt by, by the failures of human beings within the church. And, and I think everybody has, you know, it's not just me. It's, it's everybody in different aspects, whether it be sexual misconduct or just like attitudes and harshness from a spiritual father or from someone in the church that you feel like should, should be better treat people better. You know, you hear that a lot. It's like, I would expect something better from Christians, you know? So yeah, we all do. We all expect something better. And yet at the same time, I'm faced with my own failures, you know, in my own places of tension. And that seem in opposition to each other within my own heart. I'm like, this is just playing out on a way bigger scale, you know, here in the church. And it reminds me of when I was 18 years old and I was on a ministry team. And it was the first time that I heard about a scandal with a priest and someone that I knew. And it was absolutely shattering, you know, I'm a young person. Like I was lucky. I had no idea that stuff like this even happened. And so I was so shocked and I have such a justice button that when something unjust happens, like I just, Oh my gosh, like my heart just engages immediately. So. I was talking to a deacon who is a friend of mine, and I was so upset. And I just said, how could this happen? Like, how could this priest do this? And I remember he said, very sternly. He looked at me and he said, that was not the priest. That was the man. And my 18 year old self, just, I just stopped dead in my tracks. I just stood there. I didn't know what to say. And that those words have like echoed in my heart in my mind. Since then since I was 18, that's come up over and over again. This is not who the church is. You know, like when I encounter all of these flaws, I'm like, this is the human parts and this is what God chose. He chose to have all of us as human beings participate. In the

beauty of the church. And it is that Michelle, like you said, she's a spotless bride and yet full of sinners. And what do we do with that? Because there is, I think for each of us so much love and so much pain I'll make stuff in it. What about you Sister? What are some of your thoughts?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Gosh, yes. I think anybody who has been part of the church or has observed the church or is really human at all, if you've ever thought about it deeply, you've wrestled with these things. And let's just be honest that these are hard things to talk about. And I think a lot of us want to do the either or thing because the either or the excess or defect is easier in a sense of, of the both and, and the crucifixion, the paschal mystery of the middle, which is the middle way of Christ, right. Where he brings us into his heart. And I, yes. Uh, you know, over the years growing up in the church, I didn't really think about those things. And then we went to mass every Sunday. And then obviously when I became a religious sister, I just saw a different side of the church that I hadn't really had never been so deeply inserted into her as a church. And then also I've never had never ministered, you know, within her heart and also lived in her heart and also been broken by her heart and probably broken her heart as well, to be quite honest and in different ways. And so I think that that reality is the perpetual like perplexing of humanity since the fall of throughout the old Testament. You know, we talk a lot about from. Say, for example, in Lent, we read it from Hosea where God says, I will allure you. I will bring you back. And I will speak to her right before that He told her how unfaithful she was and how you're an, like an unfaithful bride. You're an adulterer for a year. And it sounds like this, this tension of, of, within our hearts, which is the magnification of the whole of the parts of our hearts that are faithful and the parts of our hearts that are unfaithful the parts of our hearts that are scandalous, the parts of our hearts that are Holy and this, the continual integration they're in. And so what are we supposed to do really? It's like, what, what, what are we to do is many it's like when the people here, I think it's Peter preaching. They're like, what are we to do? Like, we were cut to the heart, like, what are we supposed to do? And so how do we, how do we continually respond to these manifestations of such sorrow, which is not the will of God. God is not rejoicing in the brokenness of the church. Like that is not pleasing to him. He's not, you know, so how do we respond to that also in the ways that he's calling us to in the immense amount of purification, it takes for us to respond in love. And I think that's, that's the perpetual question. The all of us have to continue to ask with the Holy spirit in our hearts and allow him to lead us through personally and collectively as well.

Michelle Benzinger: And I keep on going back and thinking more and more. And actually we were going to talk about this probably deeper in an episode, we're recording in just a little while. Or the, in one of the end of the episode, I mean, end episodes in the season. But I keep on thinking about when Jesus left, he gave us the Holy Spirit, you know, he said it was better that I leave. I am giving you the Holy spirit. And that is the beginning of the church. You know, we call the birthday of the church Pentecost, which is, you know, the feast that we are about to come up on. And that is the birthday of the church. And that is the power of the Holy spirit and these scared men and women in this upper room. We're like totally timid, totally scared. And when the Holy spirit came upon them, they were bold. They were courageous. They went out preaching, they went out and power and I've been thinking more and more of this is the part of our sinfulness in the church is because we've limited the Holy spirit in his conviction. You know, we don't believe in the power like the Holy spirit convicts us and not in a condemning way in a conviction way because we're the spirit of the Lord is

there is freedom. You know, and there's perfect freedom. So I'm thinking to myself, like, Lord, where have I limited the Holy Spirit in my own life to convict me of my own sinfulness, to convict me of my own judgments, to convict me of the ways that. I like, I love the prayer that we pray at mass, what I've done and what I have failed to do. And I love that. We say, I ask you all my brothers and sisters to pray for me. It is like what I've done, what I've failed to do. And I've been thinking about all of that, just the Holy spirit and coming. But when it says, I ask you my brothers and sisters, the church is a family, you know, and any kind of family, I don't care how good your family is or how messy. A lot of us have messy families. All of us have something in our families, all of us, it doesn't matter who, but we are all family. We are all brothers and sisters, so we all love one another. We kick each other out. Sometimes we roll our eyes when we're called to a family gathering because we don't really want to be with these people, you know? And you want to be anywhere else. But with my family, not my family just saying in case they're listening, but, um, But you're just asking, like, there's always some kind of family drama, but what if the Holy spirit is saying, Hey, brothers and sisters come together and let me heal you. And let me come in my power to see what we can do and really be family to one another in the Holy Spirit's power in presence. And I'll know, it's just, that's what has been stirring in my mind, in my heart.

Heather Khym: Yeah. There's there's many times where I hear different people who are Catholic talking about something. And I'm like, are we even in the same family? Like what? Like, it's just so different from how I think or how I live my spiritual life. And, and at the same time I'm reminded this is the church it's, it's big enough for all of us. You know, like even if we it's almost like we speak a different language altogether. And I remember, you know, when the whole scandal really broke open several years ago and I. How long ago was that it feels like several years ago, maybe it was just two years ago. I don't know several stages of it. Yeah. Several stages of it. Yeah. But just like one point feeling so strongly, I was like, I can't do this. I'm like, Lord, will you be mad if I, if I just become a Protestant and go somewhere else, like, you know, there was like 15 minutes of really seriously. Like, I don't think I can do this anymore, you know? And, and just like bringing it before the Lord, very honestly. And, and that whole scripture came, like, where would I go? Where would I go? Like, I just it's like there's problems everywhere in the world. Like, no matter where you belong, like there's problems everywhere, you can't escape the humanity and the brokenness of human beings. And I, and I love this part. He talks about that in that quote Carlos Coretta does. He says the church has the power to make me Holy, but it's made up from the first of the last of only sinners and what sinners! It has the omnipotent and invincible power to renew the miracle of the Eucharist. But it's made up of men who are stumbling in the dark, who fight every day against the temptation of losing their faith. It brings a message of pure transparency, but it is incarnated in slime. I'm like, Oh, Oh my goodness. Like, this is exactly what we encounter in. Sometimes it cuts so deep that we just want to run away. We just want to go, I can't do this anymore. I was just struck by the gift of the Lord, letting me encounter the beauty of the church, because I think that's really what has made me stay. I'm like, this is where Jesus is. This is his body. And, and I don't want to leave him, you know, as much as I want to fight for her, I want to fight for the church. I want to fight for the beauty of the church and for what the Lord intended. And so even in the midst of all of these horrible things, like. Where else would I go? And I've really had to face that and recommit, you know, to, to my faith and where I belong in my family. Like all of those things I've had to just in my own heart and mind, like recommit to, um, fighting for her. Amen.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And amen to it. Where else would we go? Well, it's true. Where else can you go? That that's, it's an illusion. I love what he, what he says. He goes on to say those who dream of something different from this are wasting their time and have to rethink it all. And this proves that they do not understand humanity because this is humanity made visible by the church with all its flaws and its invincible courage with the faith that Christ has given it. And with the love that Christ showers on it. And we. Oh, we all want, I mean, all of us are longing for heaven. We all long for a time, you know, uh, time and, and in Kairos when we won't cry anymore and there won't be sin and there won't be division and there won't be misunderstanding and, and we're all aching for that. And everybody has their own idea of what that looks like and how to achieve that. And. I think if we think of just the different faces of the church, everybody from the top of the Chancery, say down to the bottom, like we've all been wounded by different faces of the church because we've all been wounded by each other. And. Yes. Where, where else would we go? Like what, what are we supposed to do? And I, I think this, that I I'm so grateful. We were talking before we started recording about the chosen. That's one of the things I love about the chosen is the humanity of it. And you see the disciples arguing and you're jockeying for position. You know, that's exactly, we read about that in the scripture, but you know, that's exactly what would have happened because it still happens to this day. It, those places in our hearts still exist. And I think we don't even understand. The deep trauma of, of the, say the 12 with Christ of journeying with him for all those years and being so intimate with him and then having Judas betray them. I, I think we don't understand the deep trauma of what that would have done of them saying, I thought, why did he, they were there when he chose them. Like he looked at Judas and chose him by name. So, you know, they would have wrestled with the fact that he not know, or if he did, why did he do that? And how is it that one of our own it, cause it's, I think oftentimes scandals shake our foundation and it challenges our beliefs that we have about ourself. Because to be quite honest, I know there's nothing in my life that I'm not capable of. I am capable of grave evil at any moment. I'm very well aware of that. And this is why we talked about prayer and we talk about healing and restoration and, Oh my goodness. The daily walk of intimacy with Christ. If we're not doing that, what can we expect from it?

Heather Khym: And we see that in Peter, right? Like, like Judas just betrayed Jesus. And then you have Peter going. I will never do that. I will never do that. And then like the next day or two, like there he is. And he's just flooded with shame. And I imagine what was going on in his mind is mostly. I cannot believe I just did that. Like I said, I wouldn't do that. I didn't know that was in my heart to even do that. Like, I think it shocked and probably that's the impression that I get is that he was shocked at himself. And then the shame just destroyed, you know, in that, in that moment. And does Jesus do though, like he goes after him and builds the church upon this guy, like this is who Jesus chose. Like the repentance that occurred is key. And we were talking about this before we started recording that, you know, in the church. So many things have come out and there's been a lot of transparency that's happening. And I, this is part of the healing. It's so hard to hear. It's so hard, but it needs to come out. The wound needs to be exposed, but that's not where it ends, you know, it needs to go into repentance, not just, I'm sorry, but repentance of like, things are going to change. I'm going to change. I'm going to reform and, and restore, you know, that there's a restoration that needs to occur here through the power of the Holy spirit. And I think that's, that's representative even what happens has to happen within us. Like there's places within me. Right now that needs to come out into the light, but not just come out into the light. And I think we see this a lot on social media. We see people like coming out into the light

with like all kinds of ugliness that's in their hearts. They're like, I'm just going to be honest. Or like, you know, I just, I just need to share what my truth or whatever it might be. And. That's a powerful thing. Like not to undermine that it is powerful and it's so important that we understand our poverty, but it can't stop there. You know, we need to move to that next place of like dependence on the Lord and his power to redeem, restore and make whole, because if we just stop at being honest and vulnerable, Or letting the wound be open to other people. That's probably where it's going to stay, you know, and we need the power of God's healing like this in this Easter season. I'm glad we're talking about it right now, because that's what this is all about is that we don't believe in a God that died and stayed dead. We believe in a God that Rose from the dead and, and can restore anything so he can take the ugliest things and make them beautiful again.

Michelle Benzinger: And I think there is something and we were mentioning it before we started recording. There's something that church is, mother church is bride. So she is a female. And like the church is female. That is who she is. So for us as women, how do we co-create with the Holy spirit, these spaces, you know, in these places for the church to be restored and reconciled? Like for me, I think about all the different places that the church has hurt different people, especially the sexual victims, especially when people don't believe the victims. And it mean it pierces me because the church is supposed to be a safe mother. And when those things, something that is supposed to be safe and sacred as profane and then hurt and damaging to people. So how do we come and create these safe places for things to be for people to be repented to, but also for people to be reconciled back to mother church. So then they, they can be restored. Like we said, we were talking about it before. Okay. We don't have the answers. We don't, we are in the journey with you. And we're just asking the questions and we're hoping to pose and ask the questions so that some answers can come about as the Holy spirit can come about with some answers, because that is our hope. And I think a really thing for on all of our hearts is. Especially those that have been victimized in severe ways from the church to know that you matter, like your voice matters, your story matters. What happened to you. Like we see and we hear you and it matters. And you are not something that should be dismissed or you're not just a number or a statistic in the church. You're a person. And you're part of the family. And we wanted to be a restored and reconciled member and part of the family once again. And. Like I said, we don't have the correct answers, but ah, Lord, you know. I always say, Jesus is the answer. Jesus has questions. Like he always asks us the questions. Do you want to be healed? Do you want to do this? You know, you know, so he's asking us, do you want to be healed? And we said, yes, Lord, we want to be healed. Please show us the way to go. And the next steps to take.

Heather Khym: Yeah. It's like some of these things are so hard to even talk about, you know, like I can feel the hesitancy within the three of us to even talk about it because it's so sensitive, like are for anyone who's been hurt in the church, like, and there's so many ways, you know, by spiritual fathers, by just people in leadership, by just friends that you thought would be different because they're Christians, it's so hard to talk about it because we don't know all the individual circumstances and the depth of the pain that's there. And. And I don't want to assume to know all the things I know my own pains that have occurred my own life that have come from the church and. And I'm aware of some that I've probably inflicted upon other people, you know, unknowingly, like just not being present or not being patient or whatever it might be. And, and all I can do is like, keep looking to Jesus. It's like, you are

hope Lord, like you, this is your church. This is your body. And you are the one that I want to put our hope in. And I love this last part of the quote, where he says he re-establishes our virginity, no matter how many times we've prostituted our bodies, spirits and hearts in this, God is truly God. The only one who can make everything new. Again, it's not so important that he will renew heaven and earth what's most important. And that is that he will renew our hearts. This is Christ's work. This is the divine spirit of the church. And, and that really is, I think our deepest heart is that. God would renew us that he would restore us. And then he would heal us that he would bring freedom in all the places where there is bondage, like within the church and within the members of the church within the body.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yes. And I have every single one of us, every single one of us in our lives throughout our lives, we'll have no other place to go, but to the foot of the cross and to bring everything there. And, you know, maybe you're listening to us now and you've suffered deeply from the church and people just won't listen or you feel ostracized or you felt unseen or unheard, or, you know, even in our own families, we have these areas of, of tremendous injustice happening in our society and in our families. So all of us, whether you've experienced that in the church or every single one of us will have many moments in our life where, where you've done, what you can do, or you've said what you can say. And what are you supposed to do then? Right. Or the poverty that we see within us, you know, how many times do we just go sit before the Lord at the foot of the cross and say I can't, you must do for me, what I can't do for myself, because I can't do this. And I think what you were hearkening to earlier, Heather is the, you know, the question of like, how will I respond? You know, what, what will I do? Because I know I was telling you guys very, very honestly, just before this started, like the Lord convicted me this last week of a place in my own life where I preferred my own lies and my own drama to the truth. And Jesus said to me, if you want to be well, you'll have to receive the truth here and it will be difficult and you will have to limit and you will have to grieve, but do you want to be, well, I think for us friends, You know, we it's very cliched, but you know, we talk about how, you know, hate doesn't help. Like, you know, we will never heal ourselves by wounding another. Amen. So I think the answer is the continually turns to the face of Christ and ask him to heal us and to heal our church. And to bring us into one is with him, because where else are we going to go?

Heather Khym: And to trust that he, as much as other people might want to avoid those places or not talk about them or put them under the rug or go, Oh, like, yeah, well, the church has always been broken or if you don't like this certain thing, like you can just go to another parish or whatever as if it doesn't matter. Like these aren't places that Jesus avoids and I love the scripture of the widow at Nain where there's this huge crowd around and Jesus could have just got caught up in being the center of attention. You know, there's a huge crowd around and he's performing all kinds of miracles and doing all kinds of things. And he comes into this town and there's people everywhere and there's a funeral going on and there's a widow there and she's crying because her son just died. And so she's lost everything. And in the midst of the whole crowd of everybody probably rallying around him, he sees her and he goes right up to her and he says, don't cry. I'm like, can we just hear the tenderness of God like there? And I've talked about this scripture, I've talked about so many times because I feel the need to have Jesus come up to me sometimes. And to say to me, Heather don't cry. Not because it doesn't matter. Like it's not that kind of thing. Like, come on, chin up, girl, like suck it up, princess. Like it's okay. Don't cry. Like that's not the tone. Like Jesus is like, don't cry, like with so much tenderness This. And also because he has the power

to heal and he goes right up to that dead man, right up to her son. Who's dead at which you don't do. You don't eat and you weren't supposed to do that, like touch a dead person, but he doesn't even just get close. Like he touches him. And says young man get up. And he rose from the dead. And that's a real thing like that really happened. And this boy like sat up and rose from the dead. And I'm like, this is the hope of Jesus. You know, like this is, this is where we put our hope. It's not in other people. It is in the person of Jesus because he has the power to heal and restore and make all things new and blow our minds like, and our hearts wide open to something new again. And so that's where I would just like encourage all of us to keep going, is into the heart of Jesus who is tender, who looks at us in all of our pain and says to him, cry, like I'm here to make all things new again. And even when it looks impossible and lost that nothing is lost or impossible for him.

Michelle Benzinger: And I think just leaning into Lord, make all things new. And for a lot of us, we want to do something like, can we do something? And I think the invitation the Lord keeps on saying to me is no, can you be something? Can you be the kind of mother that I'm calling you to be, you know, like if you want mother church to be healed, then your mother had needs to be healed. And I was sharing with Sister since I saw her this week. Just talking about how deeper the Lord has been bringing me with just healing, just areas of my own mothering. You know, and just deepen, like, when you think about hurting your children, like makes you cringe and like makes you like, Oh my gosh, I can't believe I would even do this, or you're not doing it consciously. It's more subconsciously just in areas that you have learned how to express yourself or grow and live in. And, uh, the Lord is just showing me like this restoration and even my own motherhood will be restoration learning how to mother myself first and foremost. And then my biological, you know, my own children and then spiritual children. That's where restoration the church starts, but I want to do something even further out there. And I'm not saying that we should not, but we always start in here in our hearts and allow the Lord to really come and do that and make a new, make all things new within us first. You know, to look within us first and reform us first Lord, you know, start here. Let me love here. Let me forgive here. Let me speak life here. Speak life over the church. And that's where I think he's inviting each and every one of us is just this deeper calling to making all things new in ourselves.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Indeed, indeed. I think there's so much more we could say, right? There's so much more we could say here, but just a. Yeah, a gentle invitation to your heart. Dear friends, just to, just to notice what's happening within your heart, even as we've talked about some of these things and, and maybe you found some of the, some of it very captivating and some of it, maybe you found very challenging and that's okay. Both sides of our hearts are okay. And just to listen to what the Holy Spirit's saying to you. Now, and this week as you journey throughout the week, and maybe as you have a journaling time and with these questions, and if you have a small group discussion time of, of what is the Lord really asking, uh, for you and your own heart and what is he saying? And, and he's always about, like, we're saying here, he's always about something new, you know, he's always not about the next thing is about the new thing, you know? So what does he, what is he raising to life in? What is he allowing to be crucified so it can die. So something new can rise and. Perhaps for all of us it's time, right? It's time. So with that in mind, my dear friends, Michelle, would you like to share with our listeners, what is your one thing for the week?

Michelle Benzinger: Yes. One thing kind of goes along with, you know, where else would we go? And for all of us, you know, the sacramental life of the church is just such a beautiful

thing. Like is it is may is upon us. And so that's usually the season of sacraments first communions, confirmations, all that, some weddings as much as we can COVID style, but all of that. But I would like to recommend a book from that. I just picked back up two days ago from a good friend of ours. Dr. Bob Schutts, *Be Transformed* about the power of the sacraments and our everyday life. And I was just rereading parts of that and it was on reconciliation and we're all big fans of Dr. Bob's and Sister works extensively with him, but I was like, darn, this is good, this is good. You know, and he is just such a great example of a good spiritual father, but it's such a great example of a good a teacher that really prophetically teaches the beauty of the church. So I highly recommend that book.

Heather Khym: Well, just to join in the Dr. Bob fan. It's funny that you said that because my one thing is his podcast with my husband, Jake called *Restore the Glory*, and I've brought it up before, but I was just listening to it again last week. And I'm my gosh. There's so much gold in that Podcast. You know, it is very good to Catholic therapist talking about the anatomy of a wound and like family wounds and marriage wounds and all of these things with like restoration and how to heal and how to journey through stuff like that. And I just think there's so much gold there in so much wisdom there. And so I just want to encourage you to take a listen to that podcast, [restore the glory podcast.com](http://restoretheglorypodcast.com). You can check out their website or find it anywhere that you find podcasts and. I just love Dr. Bob as well. He's such an encourager. Like he has so many beautiful ministry things going on, and yet he always takes time to just send us notes of encouragement and just, yeah. Great guy, Dr. Bob. You're loved.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: He's the real deal. Yeah. We love him very much. Well, in the line of healing, it's not Dr. Bob though. That'd be so funny.

Michelle Benzinger: We don't tell each other our one things before.

Heather Khym: My one thing is the JP two healing center.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Actually my book, my one thing is a book by Dr. Gregory Popcack, which Michelle was telling me about. And then it happened to be in two other books that I was reading. I was like, okay, this is the Lord trying to tell me something. And the book is called *Broken Gods* and the subtitle is *Hope Healing and the Seven Longings of the Human Heart*. And if we're, this might be something that would be really a great compliment to our podcast episode this week, because it talks about. We talked about the surface presentations of the, say the seven deadly sins, but what's happening underneath. What are the longings of the human heart? And then what are the virtues that go along with the longing that we have that can help us be transformed in that particular area of our life? And it's Dr. Gregory Popcack, I believe is a psychologist. He's a Catholic psychologist. And so he and his wife had written many books, but I would really recommend this one. It's very easy to read and it might. Just shed some new light on places of your own heart, where you have longings that are instead of being expressed in a way that's, life-giving become destructive. So it talks about how to, with the Lord to help heal those and bring us into, into full communion with him. So

Michelle Benzinger: It is really one of the best books I think I've read this year. Okay. It is amazing like listeners. Yeah. You may want to go ahead and get that because that may come up in our next season,

Heather Khym: Like our listeners and Heather, listeners and Heather,

Michelle Benzinger: Like I was thinking like, cause that's one of my put on the list for next season too, for possible. I'm not saying it will possibly be a book study because it is that good and yeah. Like a Sister Miriam was saying, it says the seven deadly sins, but just those, the desire and the virtues that go with it. But what is the real desire you have that goes with it? You know? And I think even it's really helped us, even in our parenting, you know, like, okay, what is the desire for this kid? Like, what is the like, what is your deepest desire and really ask hard questions. So highly recommend that book. So good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, indeed friends. We continue to, to pray for you. Thank you so much for joining with us. We. We appreciate each and every one of you tremendously. And thank you for being with us on the journey and being the both and, and wrestling with things and allowing the Lord to, to heal all of our hearts. So until next week we will be Abiding Together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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