

S08 E03 - Personal Holiness, Personal Mission

Heather Khym: [00:00:00] Hi friends. Our sponsor for this episode is CORDA candles. It is finally candle season, and we all love a good scented candle. Anna from CORDA handcrafts saint candles, where each scent she creates is directly inspired by the saints and the faith. For example, there's a candle for Blessed Pier Giorgio that smells like mountain air and pipe smoke, and one inspired by night prayer that has calming sense of dark amber, lavender, and vanilla. There's even a fragrance free candle honoring Mary, the Immaculate Conception. There are several new scents on the way like St. Padre Pio, St. Joan of Arc and Divine Mercy. Personally, I'm excited to try one called Battle Cry. Of course, Anna only uses high quality, long lasting ingredients. These candles are such a beautiful sacramental and can help create a place of prayer where you can connect more deeply with Jesus, the light of the world. You can learn more about CORDA and explore all the scents at cordacandles.com. That's cordacandles.com. God bless you. We hope you enjoy this episode.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:01:03] 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 Sr. Miriam James Heidland, and each and every week I am joined by two of my very dearest friends, 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 the Abiding Together Podcast. This week, we are going to talk about personal holiness and the call to holiness and what the Lord is doing in each of our hearts. We are actually recording this on the triumph of the cross. I think it's a really good, it's a really good day to talk about holiness, and the restoration, and what the Lord is doing in us. Heather and Michelle, this is where we've come to in our podcast. We've all chosen these random backgrounds. So it looks like we're in these exotic places, but we're all, we're all at home. That's, what's really going on.

Heather Khym: [00:02:21] We're trying to add some drama to the situation.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:02:23] Because 2020 doesn't have enough drama, like really. Do you want to add anymore? I don't think so.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:02:30] It's been so drama free. I love the memes of like people, they wrote 2020, and like this flaming dumpster fire, like going down the road. Oh my gosh that is so true.

Heather Khym: [00:02:41] I know. We're all like, when will it end?

Oh

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:02:45] gosh. Oh gosh. Well, here we are ladies. Heather, as we kind of journey in this and what we'll frame our quote for the week, but how's it going? How's life in the great Northwest? Or the Southwest, I guess we should say for you Canadians.

Heather Khym: [00:02:56] It's good. Yeah. I mean, it's strange, we're recording this episode a little bit early before it comes out, but we're blanketed in like smoke from all the wildfires. So definitely, yeah, it's just been on my mind to pray for people and just the circumstances that people find themselves in with everything else going on, you know, it's just, yeah. It's, it's tough. Michelle, you're facing some storms down there where you are. I think everybody is like, what is going on in the world right now? So how are you, Michelle?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:03:27] I am good. But, yes literally recording before we start to get the effects of Hurricane Sally coming to Pensacola. We're just, the storm is not supposed to hit here, but we're supposed to get really bad rain and wind and all that. But it was so funny - I walked my kids to school on Friday and we'd been in school for two weeks and things are going well. Everybody's healthy, everybody's good, even at the school, and just it's starting to feel like fall. And then I was starting to get that feeling like - Oh, it's coming. The Dawn is breaking and then the next day, my husband, "You know, a big storm set it towards us. "Like, Oh my gosh come on people like, dang it!"

Heather Khym: [00:04:02] I just want to put out my nice fall pillows.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:04:05] Exactly. I'm so glad I did not decorate my porch for fall yet. Like that is one good thing, but yeah. But besides that, I'm doing all right. I'm good. How are you sister?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:04:15] Well, you could send the winds and the rain. I mean, you guys are, I know Heather, you and I were, we were texting on our text thread about that, that my mom is also near where you are and the, there are hundreds of you guys are hundreds of miles from the actual fires, but the air to give people an idea, the air is so thick with smoke that my mom had ash from the fires on her window sill. Like that's and they're hundreds and hundreds of miles away. I mean, it's just, you know, I have my mom's weather on my phone, on my app and it just said hazardous air quality. And I was like, "Mom, what's happening?" And she was like, "Oh my gosh, you have no idea." So yeah, just praying for people, whether you're in the you're in the South or whether you're in the North, you know, or in California, my goodness. Gosh does not the world, certainly, yeah, certainly need prayer right now. Which I think is really fitting that we're going to talk about personal holiness and I can't remember. So I'm going to let one of you two, I'm going to our quote for just a frame. This podcast is really a beautiful one by Pope Francis. And he says this, he says, "Holiness is the most attractive face of the church." Holiness is the most attractive face of the church. And kind of, depending on what stream of Christianity you grew up in, even the world, holiness can kind of conjure up several different reactions. And sometimes people think holiness is the most judgmental face, or it's the most kind of persnickety face, or it's the most repressed face, or it's like this, and that's not what we're talking about. Cause that's not true holiness. And I love what Pope Francis is saying here. It's the most *attractive* face. And that's what we find so captivating about the saints, because that's what we find so captivating about the person of Christ. So I can't remember which one of you actually, which whose idea was that? I don't think it was mine. I'm the nun, but this was actually not my idea for this podcast. So which one of you, cause we've been kicking around this idea for a while and I love the genesis of how it began. So can one of you, I can't remember which one of you was, it was your idea first.

Heather Khym: [00:05:58] Yeah, I think I brought it up just, I was thinking, you know, we talk about this a lot. We mention personal holiness. We've been saying for a while that even through the church scandals breaking and all of that, that we feel like really, this is the only way forward is for us to take a deep look at our own interior lives and to allow the grace of God to transform us. And to do the work involved, to become saints, you know, in the world so that we can have an impact on our circles. And then I thought, you know, we don't often really define that in practical ways, what that means. And I thought maybe people just haven't really thought about it. What does it mean to grow in holiness? What does personal holiness mean? So I thought it would be wonderful for us to just talk about that. And I'm really excited to hear both of your thoughts on that as well.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:06:43] Yea and we were just looking at the overall rhythm for this new podcast season and we were just talking about the hard parts of the season that we're in. And we often say, but for such a time as this, but for such time as this is for us to become a holy. But like Heather is saying, we don't really give practicals about what does it mean? How do you grow in holiness? And that is really what the Holy Spirit is inviting each and every one of us to: a holy witness of our lives. And I think that's what people respond to most is a witness of a life full of holiness. So what does that look like? And how do we start? Like, we all have room to grow and it isn't something like you were saying sister, I think images get conjured up in your head. Like, Oh man, I got to do more. I've got to do this. It's like a rule follower. I've *got* to do this. And really holiness is becoming who you're created to be, in wholeness and relationship and then that, in your wholeness and your relationship with the Lord. And discovering who you are, then you live a mighty witness to the world, just being exactly who you were created to be in relationship with the Trinity.

Heather Khym: [00:07:50] Yeah. And that's so true that many of us do look at holiness as like a list of 'to do's,' but don't we all know people who are doing the right thing, but they're a jerk. You know, that doesn't like just doing whatever it is, like going to mass, praying the rosary, doing all of those "prayer things." It doesn't make you Holy. There really is more to it than that. So, yeah. Sister, what are your thoughts?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:08:13] Well, this is so true and I think it fits very nicely into kind of where we've gone already this season. You know, we talked in episode one about keeping our eyes on Christ and the natural byproduct of that when we keep our eyes on Christ and allow Him to transform us is that we become Christ-like, you know, that's what the Holy spirit does. The Holy Spirit brings into union with Christ, the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, makes Christ present in us, and then the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the world through us. That's exact, those are the movements of the Holy Spirit. And so I think it's a great unfolding of a response to this time when, so often we're saying, "Gosh, you know, what can I do?" And it's more of a doing, it's not so much of a doing what I mean by that is it's more of a *being* first. And so if we could talk a bit about just so for all of our listeners, we're all on the same page here. We have a really great working definition of holiness. Okay. So this is what we're talking about, right?

Holiness is incarnating the life of Jesus in our choices and our attitudes, right. It's taking him into our home, into our very being. It is doing the will of the Father in all things. And being wholeheartedly devoted to the glory of God and love of neighbor. Living a life of holiness leads to union with Christ, like we've talked about. It is the full life, a vibrant display of the fruits of the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity - the fruits of the Holy

Spirit. So it is experiencing in union with Christ the mysteries of His life. So it's allowing Him to bring us into His own divine life. The life of the living Lord Jesus. And I just want to, I was really praying about, I've been praying a lot with Ephesians 3 recently, Ephesians 3:14-19, and I've been very struck by that. And if I could just read that for our listeners, because I really think it contains how this works and what happens and the whole, the trajectory of the human person to grow into, into fullness of maturity. Saint Paul says this. He says, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. That according to the riches of His glory, He may grant you to be strengthened with might through His spirit in the inner self. And that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith that you being rooted and grounded in love may have power to comprehend with all the saints. What is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of Christ.

And I'll unpack that as we journey together. But St. Paul is talking about us being filled with the fullness of Christ. That's holiness! And as we are rooted and grounded in the love of God, which is so much of what we talk about, that that transformation takes place in a lived reality in our day to day life and the decisions that we make. So I feel like that's a lot of meat right there, but what kind of, what do you guys think Heather, as we experienced this and this call to holiness and this, even the working definition of holiness of incarnating Christ into our life, or allowing him to bring us into his own divine life, what are some things that come to you?

Heather Khym: [00:11:00] Yeah, I think this is where it gets very personal for each of us. And I think we need to look at holiness that way we can't look at somebody else's life and just go, Oh, if I do this and this and this, that equals holiness. I think for each of us, it is union with Christ and it's us uniting ourselves to his will and to the way that Jesus lived his life in our own unique way. So in my day to day world, I have decisions to make and choices to make. And whether I open myself up to the grace of God, to be more charitable, to be more loving to those around me, to be patient, to be kind, to display the fruits of the spirit in the situations that I'm in. So whether I'm, you know, working for our foundation or I'm parenting my kids, or I'm interacting with people outside who are *still* working on our yard, you know, this is my path to holiness and in my marriage, especially, I mean, that's where the rubber meets the road. You know, when the people who are the closest to you, challenge your selfishness, your pride, your vanity, like all of the places where we all fall short of the glory of God. And, and I think that that's, it's actually very exciting to look at holiness that way, that it's a unique path for each of us, a path of surrender and a deeper willingness to acknowledge our littleness and where we need God. Michelle, what are some of your thoughts?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:12:19] Yeah, I think for me, when I was praying about this, even this topic, like what does holiness look like for me in *this* season? And I think for me, we touched on it on the previous two episodes of this season, but it is first Thessalonians has been a big deal for me, but be sober and alert, you know, that Satan is like seeking ready to devour like a roaring lion. So what does it mean for me to be wide awake in the season, wide awake in relationship with the Lord, wide awake to see how I'm displaying the fruits of the spirit? I think what the big switch in me, especially in this season is, that it isn't my determination or grit, which are both good things, but it is my full cooperation with the Holy spirit that is going to bring about holiness, you know, and where I can. I mean, I can grit myself with the best of them, but it is a full yielding, a full cooperation with the Holy spirit to allow Him to incarnate

Christ in me and to give him permission to do that. And there's a quote that I wrote on a little 3x5 card, and I've been, it's stuck in my journal. It's by Pope Benedict's and it says, "God came into the world to reawaken the thirst for great things in us." You know, and like he's reawakening something and that reawakening can be uncomfortable sometimes because the great things in us, also means there's some not great things in us and they need to be weeded out. And so are we going to go with the divine gardener to weed out the junk so that beautiful things can be, come to flourish in our own personal garden, you know, and as the garden of holiness,

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:13:50] Gosh. Oh, this is so great. I was actually thinking today of these very things, as we prepare for this podcast, and I was thinking that the Lord has provided all of our means for holiness, right where we are.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:14:00] Yes!

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:14:01] So often don't we want to like leave everything and go to some place and somehow find ourselves like, you know, something I'll just be Holy if I could go. And yeah. Oh, Oh, Oh no. Oh no, no, no, no. It's like right?

Heather Khym: [00:14:12] If only I was a nun.... ha ha.. Sister? Comments?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:14:15] I was like, amen, Lord. It is provided right here in my daily life. And I, yeah, I want to say more about surrender. I'll talk about that maybe later, but yeah those, those tangible things that I was just watching the US open and the finals, the men's final was by two guys that weren't predicted to be there. They battled it out over four hours. Four hours of head-to-head tennis and like their legs were cramping at the last set and just watching these men battle it out. I'm like, that is so journey of this showing up and just, you know, getting in the game so to speak and those, the decisions and the decisions that you and I make every day, you know, like we talked about our first podcast, like Saint Mother Teresa is like today's the day you have. And so often in my life, I'm like, well, I'll make that decision tomorrow but God's like, no, no, no. We need to make that decision today and it might not be perfect cause it's never gonna be perfect. But can we start today in the day to day life where we are right now? That is ground zero of holiness ground zero.

Heather Khym: [00:15:17] Yeah, I think just to get practical, I would love us to talk about like, what are some of the things that we find are of primary importance in our own spiritual life, in the pursuit of holiness? And the one that I want to start with is obviously surrender is going to be the overarching one, I think for all of us. And I want us to get into that, but I think strengthening of the will is a really, really good one. Because I think for many of us, I experience this all the time, I can't always do the things I want to do. This is St. Paul, right? It's like, why do I do the things I don't want to do? And why can't I do the things that I really desire to do? You know, my flesh is weak I'm so weak here. And there's an abandonment to God in that, but there also is a growing of our, we call it in our family, "the will muscle." You know, where you choose to do difficult things to strengthen your will, to strengthen your yes. Like your yes to God, my yes to God, is so vitally important in the spiritual life. We don't lose ourselves in this, you know, like God wants a relationship with us that, and he desires us to say yes. Not just to be, you know, forced into anything. And so our free will and choosing his will - choosing to do the next right thing doesn't just happen. This is something that we can grow in. So there's little challenges that we give our kids and we make them fun and funny, or they give each other, they give us, you know, where we have to grow in. And it's like, will

you do the hard thing? You know, will you clean the bathroom for someone else, even though it's not your turn? Or will you, whatever, there's all kinds of things like that. But fasting, I think is a key for growing in holiness. Like fasting. Isn't just us saying no to something that we want and it may not be the typical, you know, bread and water fast. That sounds like a dream to me. I'm like, can I eat bread all day? That sounds awesome. You know, so I would fast in a different way. But it just creates space from, from everything that I want desire to say no to myself, because then I can make a greater yes to what God desires. So I would say fasting and growing our "will muscle" is really key in this area. Michelle. What do you think is one of the keys?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:17:22] I think for one right now: I totally agree because for me I've been starting intermittent fasting for six weeks. Yes, sister's doing it with me. So we've been doing it for six weeks and it has shifted something huge in me and like really shifted something. But it's that denial that intentionality of like not saying yes to my comfort. Which is such a big thing for me is such a big sin for me. Ooh. I just want everyone to be comfortable and everyone, Oh, you want that baby? Let me get that to you. I don't want you to do without. And my intentions come from a good place, but it's disordered in ways. And so I need to get it back on the right track. For me I think one of the big things is like for just the thing the Lord is working, being sober and alert is, I read a couple of statistics about the use of most people in the Western world and social media and electronics. And it really made me want to throw up and how we're literally numbing ourselves, you know, to death. And there's like by a year's end people will spend over 700 hours on social media. This is not even YouTube. This is like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, over 700 hours on social media. They will spend over 2000 hours on TV. And it says 75% of people sleep next to their phone, 90% of people grab their phone upon waking up. An iPhone or any kind of cell phone user touches their phone over 2,600 times a day. And I was just like those, when you start adding those up, like. I was just really convicted this summer. Like alright do I reached for the word or I listened to his voice first or do I listen to the world's voice first? You know, who am I going to first? Like, who gets my first fruits of the day who, where do I go? And it has to be him. Like, if he is a lover of my soul. I have to be rooted, I have to be rooted in him first. So for me, I just, I could tell I was doing really well and the kid's started school. And then I started falling back into old, bad habits again. So what did I do with some of my birthday money? I went ahead and ordered a new alarm clock with a sound machine because I was using the excuse. Well, I need to use the sound machine on my phone because mine is broken. So I was like, Nope. I you know, I ordered a new alarm clock, a new sound machine, cause I put my phone across the room. Cause I literally have to get up and look, so it's a conscious effort and it's little things like that, you know? Yeah. Do I listen to his voice the first thing? You know, because it tells us in scripture, he talks to us about his unfailing love first thing in the morning. Well, I don't know about you, but I need some unfailing love in my life right now. So yeah, what about you sister?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:19:58] Oh gosh. Yeah, those are both so great. I, the fasting and also just being very attentive to what we're spending our time on, like what we're looking at, what we're feeding ourselves with. When I think about, you know, being strengthened within, for me, I really think it's for me, the foundational thing is prayer. It is prayer. I am not a well person when I'm not praying well and I'm not well. And it is allowing Jesus into the most intimate places where nothing is off limits, where He can talk about whatever He wants, where I have something triggers me that day, where I'm in prayer with

Him very shortly after, if not in the moment saying, okay, what's happening right now, you know? And making a choice that, that thing, toxic things like resentment, gossip, bitterness, grudges, judgment, self righteousness, those things are not an option, not an option. And they must be rooted out. They have to be rooted out. And so I guess for me, it's the continual. The continual attending of the soil of my garden in my soul. That is the interior life every single day. And when I don't do that, Oh goodness. Like the weeds grow fast. And I see that in myself, like even the temptations to gossip or to judge, or to be self centered or full of self pity. Oh my gosh, it's toxic. It is toxic. And so allowing the Lord access to that at all times, whenever he wishes. So he can be brought to birth in me is for me is foundational. I just can't, I can't do it without it. Without him. Yeah.

Heather Khym: [00:21:32] Yeah. That's beautiful. I think there's a lot of places where we separate out our relationship with God and holiness and we might think, okay, yeah, prayer. Like that's where I really connect with God. But then I go to work and I'm a tyrant at work, or I go to the school parking lot and I gossip my face off about everybody else. Or, you know, I'm slamming my pastor or, you know, whatever it might be. And I think this is a real area where we need to look at integrating. All like the fruits of our prayer, the fruits of the sacramental life of the church, because that's also key, you know, the sacramental life. We could talk about that for many, many, many episodes, but yeah, I think there's a lot of disintegration where there's these parts where it's like, well, I do pretty good here, you know, but I, I'm not so great over here. And I, I don't actually want to look at the places that I'm not great. I'll just keep focusing on the places that I do pretty well. And I would love, I would love for all of us to just have a deepening commitment, all those listening, like to just have an uprising of people who are willing to grow in holiness. Like to really take this seriously to say starting today- I don't know how I've been doing, let's just let go of what's happened in the past - but starting today, I want to make decisions to really grow, to be holy, to be kind, for the fruits of the spirit to be displayed when I am on social media, when I'm in the parking lot, when I'm at work, when I'm with my children, when I'm with my spouse, when I'm with my, the person that just drives me nuts, the most, like my roommate, my parents, like whoever it might be - not your mom and dad you know what I'm saying. I think that that would be just incredibly powerful. I think that's when the world would change is if there is an uprising of people just saying, "God, I just recommit to you and give you a wholehearted yes today. And I'm going to take these practical steps to get closer to you and in union with you."

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:23:16] Yes.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:23:18] Oh Amen. I think like there has to be almost like a battle cry, like an invitation battle cry. And I was reading something. I just found it in my journal from Pope John Paul the second. Hey, we are quoting all the Pope's here today, Pope John Paul the second and it says, "Do you want to become Holy? It means to set before them the radical nature of the sermon on the Mount. Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. The time has come to be wholeheartedly, to set the high standard of ordinary Christian living. The whole life of the Christian community and the Christian families must lead in the direction of extraordinary holiness in the ordinary. And like, it's just that call. And I love st. Trust says, you know, be a whole saint, don't be half saint or be nothing at all. Like, you know, like that it is. And it was funny because I was just telling the girls before I'm working with a new spiritual director and he's like, challenged me on some, do you want to be a Saint or not? Like, that's what you said you wanted. And I'm like, Oh yeah, but like, okay. And it tells us in scripture and Hebrews, this is the prize set before us to run your race, to break off any hindrance that

is keeping you from running your race. So. Okay. These hindrances are not optional. They are an invitation to grow and holiness. And it's interesting. Mary has just been showing up powerful at the end of this year. Like St. Joseph came on at the beginning and Mary's coming on at the end. I'm like we're just having a Holy family party right now in my prayer life. But I was really praying about just the, in the consecration I mentioned at last episode is one, it highlights her different virtues, and I was really praying about one of them. And I was thinking about something about theology of the body and I was thinking like, she was so self-possessed and she was so self-mastered, you know, I was thinking like, she just is the model of self-mastery. And I was thinking about an area that I was totally just blowing it with a child. I'm like, Oh my gosh, like, how do I self master with this child? This kid can push every single one, my buttons, and I will respond with grace for about 10 minutes. And then I'm like, I'm done like whatever. And it's not him, there's something in me. And I was thinking about this. So I was really praying with like, okay, how is she so self-possessed and self-mastered? And I was just sitting there meditating and praying, imagining Mary asking her this question. She said, I wasn't self-possessed. I was Holy spirit possessed. I didn't hinder him at all. I allowed him room and I think that's, you were talking about earlier, she allowed like that complete surrender. She was Holy spirit possessed and that allowed her to be everything that she was created to be.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:25:53] One that's really beautifully. What you both are talking about is the integration of our life. It's the integration. We're not, we're moving from disintegration and dis-ease and, you know, being scattered to enter into wholeness. That's what holiness is. It's wholeness because Christ is whole, Mary is whole by grace. So we see these tangible realities of a life that we can live because grace has given to us. And it's so beautiful that the church, you know, born from the pure side of Jesus Christ gives us all these avenues of grace, all these avenues of communion through the sacraments. Through the Eucharist, which is a source of summit of our faith. Through reconciliation, where there's nothing like it, where we can go and have our sins forgiven and we'll to remember no more. Devotions, like the Holy rosary, lectio divina and the, and the grace that the Lord gives us. Like you both are talking about so beautifully that for all of us, we all have those moments. Just for example, where somebody says something to you, whether it's your spouse or whether it's one of your kids or whether it's somebody at the grocery store and you have a choice right there, and you can shoot back with something snotty or unkind, or we can just ask like Holy spirit and it feels like a crucifixion and it is at times, and to respond with love instead - that - those things matter. Like it's all, we're always about this. We're always about the little things. It's the little things like that, that are huge, right? That's how it works is the day to day that's how any relationship grows. And I think I love what you both are saying. I'm feeling very inspired of like, you know, Lord, and this is not as leading ourselves in a battle. This is the total surrender of the Lord to make us one with himself. That's the whole, it's the catechism says it is intimate union with Christ. This is not about me doing my little thing. So I can know, this is him bringing every part of me into communion with him. It is total intimacy, which is what we all long for. That's our deepest longing.

Heather Khym: [00:27:40] Amen. Oh my gosh. Yeah, holiness isn't something that we just do. It's all about union. And we have to have that goal in mind if heaven and union with God, isn't at the forefront of our mind as we go through our day, I mean, we are missing it because why do we do what we do? I mean, it's meaningless and it's hard and it feels like torture. And then we resent it and we get mad. You know, union with God! Oh, how appealing is

that? You know, like that just stirs my heart. And, and I think, we would be wise to begin our day with that, you know, "Jesus just helped me to unite myself with you today. Amen. "

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:28:18] Yes. And that is, that is the beautiful life poured out, you know? So I wonder for all of us of our listeners, and as we sit here today, you know, what is the Lord saying to each one of us? You know, what is the area of our life he's calling us to surrender? What is, what is he saying in our life right now? What, what needs to, what needs to come and what needs to go? And yea that we make a decision friends, that it's time that we make a decision to go forward into union with Christ. And we are going to do this with the Lord. He will lead us.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:28:48] And it's an invitation of love. It's an invitation, like you were saying of intimacy. It's an invitation of love. And I know I've told this story before on the podcast, but the first time I saw the Basilica in DC and walked up those big stairs and it says the universal call to holiness. There is something in me that just stirred my heart and be like, "GAME. ON." I want to be here. I want a statue here. I want a place here. You know, like it, like, it was funny.

Heather Khym: [00:29:13] I'm chiseling right now.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:29:17] Seriously, both of you are and Chris and the kids, but anyway, um, Yall are all making me holy, I guess I need a lot of work.

Heather Khym: [00:29:25] But isn't that true? I'm joking, but isn't that true? Like you all sharpen me and so does Jake and so do my children and we should, we should, this is how relationships should be, that we are championing each other towards heaven, that we are coming alongside one another saying, you can, you are better than this. Like, this is not who you are. You are not your sin. You are not your weakness. You know, like. Let's open ourselves up to the grace of God.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:29:52] Yeah. And I think that you're not your weakness and it's okay to be in the refiners fire. Like don't fear it go through the fire because that's the only way you become golden. That's the only way is the only way is through. And I love it.

Heather Khym: [00:30:05] And you're not alone in the fire.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:30:06] You're not alone in the fire. He's there with you. And, but we just put our finger in and then we want to take it right back out, like ouch, that's hot. And he wants us to go through because that is how we become on fire for him. Yeah, you have to go through the fire bottom line and, but wow, that's where the union comes. That's where the intimacy comes.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:30:26] Yes. And isn't that, I think we could all agree, that it's also where joy comes.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:30:30] Yes!

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:30:31] This is a life of authentic joy. Yeah, that's, it's a natural outpouring of holiness. Jesus is a man of joy, like a natural outpouring of true holiness is one of joy. Even in, you know, joy is different than we talk about situational happiness, but there's a radiance that comes in our lives that, sometimes we don't always experience it, but

there's a natural outpouring of joy, which is, you know, a fruit of the Holy spirit that comes from living this life. It's just so incredibly beautiful, you know, that's the resurrection. That's the resurrection.

Heather Khym: [00:31:02] Yeah. I love this quote from the catechism. It says the way of perfection passes by the way of the cross. There's no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails the mortification that gradually leads to living in the peace and joy of the beatitudes.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:31:19] Amen.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:31:20] Amen.

Heather Khym: [00:31:21] Amen.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:31:21] That's good stuff. That is good stuff.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:31:24] So the question we leave you with for each other and our dear listeners is do you wish to be Holy? Amen.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:31:32] Amen. Well, shall we do our one thing? That was a lot like, that was great. I need to review some things in my own life. All right, Michelle Benzinger would you like to give us your two, one things for the week as we journey? I love y'all. I'm making your statute, your statute is my one thing.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:31:53] What really? I know I'm your masterpiece.

Heather Khym: [00:31:55] She's gonna have her like two fingers up, like it's my two things.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:31:59] I'm your masterpiece dear. Okay. My one of the things is right now, I have to just say really quick - Emily and Michaela, two of the young adults that live around us, that work with us and do life with us- they went out to get me coffee and they snuck it in, in here while we were recording. And Michaela's here crawling on the floor did y'all see that? Crawling on the floor, handing me coffee.

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:32:17] It just looks like you're outside. We can't tell. That's great.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:32:19] Yeah. Okay. Dear God, thank you for people that bring you coffee. hey're one of my one things, and the second one thing is, like I said, that I have really been praying. Mary has just been wonder woman in my life lately. And so I just, the power of the rosary. And I'm going to just leave you with there's two or three really beautiful rosary devotional books that I have really, the Lord has just illuminated to me to use and meditate on. And they have been really amazing. Fr. Dwight is one of them, and another organization for moms called *Mighty is Her Call*. It was so funny because I was really praying about praying for my children, with the rosary, and then one of my good friends. Texted me and said, Hey, I would love for you to read this. And it is all about a mother's devotion to the rosary and praying for her children. And it was just, and like I said, in the podcast previously, like the Lord has just really been showing me how the church is mother. And I'm like, okay, I get you. I get you. Like, it's everywhere I get you. Like, all right. Just making sure I don't miss these themes. So yeah, those are my many, one things. Heather, what about you?

Heather Khym: [00:33:21] My one thing for this week is a sweet little song from Chris August called *Abide in Me*. I came across it and it just was one of those songs that I listened to and it immediately swept me away. So I will post that in the show notes with the little lyric video, and I hope it blesses you. Sister, what is your one thing?

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:33:40] Well, this is beautiful. Cause I didn't know what y'all's one things would be, but it's, I think we're sensing a theme here. And I can't remember if I said this before, because we've had so many, one things over the last seven seasons, but I was doing a little video recording for Ascension Press for a new advent series that will debut this advent of Fr. Mark Toups and Fr. Josh Johnson. And I had the beautiful experience of being able to talk about the statue called a quiet moment by Timothy Schmaltz. And it's the statue of the Holy Family, where St. Joseph is very lovingly cradling Mary and she's resting in his arms and the baby Jesus is resting on her heart and they sent it to me. I just got it in the mail and it was so absolutely beautiful that I put it in our chapel near my chair in the chapel. It has been such a deep area of meditation for me and such peace and just such healing. So we'll just put the picture up there so y'all can see it, but it's just, there's so many beautiful nuances to it, but a quiet moment. I believe it's Timothy Schmaltz. He's a modern artist of just the Holy family in such a tender beautiful, sweet healing embrace that I absolutely love.

Heather Khym: [00:34:46] That's a gorgeous one. I have that in my bedroom.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:34:49] I do too!

Sr. Miriam James Heidland: [00:34:51] What? I'm like the cool kids now I love this. Yay. Was that middle school? Anyway. Well, thank you so much for joining us this week dear friends. We are on the journey with you. And so, yeah, let's just say let's decide again today, let's continue on the path and remembering that the holiness is the most attractive face of the church and that face is yours. So until next week we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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