

S10 E07 - Daughter Pt 4

Michelle Benzinger: I am so excited to talk to you about our sponsor for this episode, It is Every Sacred Sunday and these are the new Sunday journals, and these are the old ones. Look at that beautiful display. So Every Sacred Sunday is a mass journal that was launched on a Kickstarter campaign in 2017 by former college roommates, Cassie Manning and Christie Peters. It was created with the hope of offering others a tool to help 'em intentionally engage with the mass each week. It contains the full mass readings for each Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation for one liturgical year. And identical translations to those used at mass in the USA or in Canada, approved by the Catholic Bishops Association. It has beautiful thick paper and simple journaling templates following each reading. It is ideal for Catholic men and women to prepare and follow along with mass each week. It is thoughtfully designed with each element inside these pages invite us to encounter the Lord and listen to its voice. It is built to last with keepsake quality materials and features a durable cover with gold foil cover designs, key prayers in the front and the back, original illustrations, 300 plus full color pages, dated and tabs, and a silk ribbon bookmark. These things are absolutely beautiful. And I have to tell you, I've had every single one and this will be my fourth year of using it. And I actually use it as a keepsake journal and it is one of the most timeless pieces that I think I have in my faith journey. So each of these journals are prayerfully designed and they will add so much to your literature life in the next year. So check out the Every Sacred Sunday journals.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hi and welcome to season 10 of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are so excited to have you with us this season. 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 every week I am joined by two of my dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. We talk about our life with Christ. We talk about big things, small things, beautiful things, sorrowful things. We laugh, we cry you'll fit right in. You are most welcome here. So please grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the "Abiding Together Podcast." We are going to complete our series on the Identity of Daughter today. So our part four of our four-part episode, and there have been some tiny little, little plastic hands that have made an appearance in between takes that are really wonderful. We might, we might see them later.

Heather Khym: Michelle hates us right now.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well because we were putting the tiny hands on her, which she found a little creepy. Which I do-

Heather Khym: We were talking about becoming child-like. It just seemed appropriate.

Michelle Benzinger: It's wrong. It's all wrong.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hold me closer tiny Handsa, I mean you know. Anyway, so. But we're gonna talk today about the healing and redemption of being daughters. So we're gonna have a lot of beautiful things for you. And what we've been doing is we've been spending the entire month now in one particular scripture. So we'd like to once again, present to you St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians 3:14-21. And it's been our prayer this month that, that scripture passages continue to unfold for each one of us. And each episode we've talked about look a little bit different facet of it, because it's just so rich with so many things. And so once again, we'll just read this for you and we'll dive in today. So this is Paul, St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians 3:14-21. And he says this, "For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in Heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the Lord's holy people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. And to know this love, that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever." Amen.

Michelle Benzinger: Amen.

Heather Khym: Amen.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Amen. And I think today probably what we're gonna highlight most is God is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine. And that's very fitting for us. And when we talk about redemption healing of a daughter, and we've talked a lot about spiritual and emotional wounds. And I think today, all right in just the aspects, but I think today, we're also gonna talk about our physical aspect of who we are as women, that the beauty and the dignity that we have as women, body and soul. And to kind of jump off from there, but in Isaiah 61:4, he says "In place of shame, I will give you double honor." So Michelle, do you want to talk a bit about kind of jumping into this place of redemption and healing, especially in our physical bodies and as women, the gift of our identity as women and who we are?

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, I think there, when you go back to daughter, like when you think about, it goes back to the very first episode we talked about, being like that we are the crown of creation. And that even how you're designed, our bodies were designed, I think for the majority of us, a lot of times we feel like that we are at war with our bodies and not at home with our bodies. That our bodies are not a place where like, I like it. Like we do not treat it as a temple of the Holy Spirit. We kind of treat it as something that needs to be subjective to us. Like we need, it just needs to do what we say. Like we need to do what we say. But even realizing, even the journey, that I've been on the last couple of years, it's just this whole like redemption of the body. We talk about theology of the body, but we are incarnational people. And us as women, I think, especially because our bodies, literally we are created to give life, to bear life. Everything that our body is designed to do is to give, bring forth life. And where I realized that that is, that I have not treated that as a blessing, a lot of, oftentimes I would treat it as a burden. Everything for, like even like going through puberty, now I think like how you see your breasts. How you see your period, your menstrual cycle. How you see your womb. How you see your stomach. I think so, like there's certain areas of your body that they don't feel like a blessing. They feel like, oh my gosh, oh my gosh, look at my thighs, look at this or whatever. And where we actually don't look at our bodies and think that it's good. We think that it's something that needs to be changed and transformed, but to meet someone's usually other standards, I mean I think there's a beautiful thing about stewarding and being healthy. Like there is that, but realizing that our body is good, no matter what shape or form it is. And that is a blessing, and it's there to give life. And a lot of times, like I know for certain women, like they just wanna hide when it comes to that kind of situation. And not really even look at that whole part of themselves. So Heather, what are your thoughts?

Heather Khym: It's hard. Like as you're talking, I'm like . Like there's like so many places I think within all of us. Where we misunderstand our bodies or misuse our bodies. Where we either hide or we use it as a manipulation in situations to get what we want. And so we just, I think for many of us, just don't have a healthy relationship with our own physical self. And many of us don't feel comfortable in our own skin, so then what do you do as a result of that? How? And those are some of the questions that are really hard to get into. It's like, why do I do what I do? And what's at the heart of why do I hide or why I use my body to gain attention or get what I want? And yeah, I think these are hard questions. They're tender places, but not to be avoided, because they're hard. And that's I think the maturity that we're inviting everyone into and also pressing into ourselves. It's like avoiding things, doesn't get us to where we need to be. Avoiding doesn't equal maturity. You can't ditch out on certain parts of the process, because it's too hard. We just watched this great, it's the beginning of "Wonder Woman," Mary Bielski sent it to us. The the beginning of the new "Wonder Woman" where she's like, they're in this competitive

environment. he, everybody can just watch the opening scene of it. It's really, really good. And she like ends up taking this other route and she takes this slide.

Michelle Benzinger: A shortcut.

Heather Khym: It's a shortcut. And at the end, like she almost is gonna win. And then it wasn't her mom, but it was like-

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Her aunt.

Heather Khym: Her aunt yeah. Kind of takes her out and says like, you don't deserve to win, 'cause you didn't actually win. You took a shortcut. You can't take shortcuts. And that just really stuck with me. I was like, oh my gosh. So often we want to take a shot cut or-

Michelle Benzinger: We want the quick fix baby.

Heather Khym: I wanna skip like a certain part and like, I'll just go around, just kind of a detour around this part, But it's like, are we willing to face all of the dark places within our own hearts, minds, and bodies, and souls. Like to let Jesus come even there, even there, even there. Oh, it's excruciating, Certain places will be harder than others for people, but yeah, I think that's where I'm learning over and over again, you cannot ditch out on the process. You have, there's only one way to resurrection and that's to the cross, every time. There's no way around it. If you go around it, you're not gonna get to resurrection. Yeah, so what are your thoughts, Sister?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Gosh yes, this is so good. I love that. I used that particular clip from Wonder Woman at one of my Steubenville talks this summer to the girls. And her aunt says something to the effect that "nothing good is born of lies." And then it's not until you're willing to walk in the truth that then you're ready. And it was just such a good, oh, it was like, so piercing. It's like nothing good is born of lies. And that has to be, so we had to be willing to with Christ, allow him to untangle the lies. And a lot of that has to do with our, we're at war like St. Paul says with all the different parts of ourselves. Like we've talked extensively, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, sexually. And I think there's a particular war that happens, within, because of the war, the incarnation, because of who Christ is, the union of soul and body that the enemy comes so hard, I think especially against women. Because our gift is beauty in form, and like just the bodies are in our bodies, and our emotions, which is women are just beautiful. And there's such an attack, especially on women and our bodies. And in the incarnation of us, of the, the hylo-morphic union that we talk about where we're union of soul and body.

Where we, I remember the Lord convicting me a couple of years ago, of what we talked about blessing versus cursing. And there had been parts of my body that I'd cursed my entire life. Outright like looked in the mirror and was like, "I hate that part of me. I wish it was different." I, and it was, I did not know the damage that I was like entering into darkness. With like, because Christ, when Christ looks at my body, he doesn't do that. Like that's not repulsive to him or whatever I think about my body needs to be different. Christ never looks at me and says, oh, I wish you had bigger or smaller this. Like he, and it was such a, I had to repent to the Lord for the ways that I cursed my own body. And in a sense, like make peace with that part of myself. And I think especially in a like a pornified society where everything about women is objectified and it's either augmented or it's made smaller, and it's impossible for women. And so we're under this constant attack of, of what we should look like or versus what beauty standards are. But then also the experience that we have in intimacy with our own self and with other people. Like we've had some very vulnerable conversations about, especially for you as married women, about sexual intimacy with your husband. And what does that mean? And it's not just about an act, but it's about a melding of all the parts of you and how tender and vulnerable that is and the conversations that have to happen there. And that we as women even don't have conversations like appropriate conversations about here's what desire is, or here's what that means, or here's how to do this, or and so we lack, and we're kind of, we're left to fill up the gaps. And then I think in many ways, depending on what your state of life is, we think I'm the only woman who doesn't know this, or I'm the only woman who doesn't know how to navigate certain like, whether it's your period, whether it's whatever that is in your life or menopause, or just all this stuff that, my goodness, and many times it wasn't modeled for us with our own moms or other women in our lives. So we're like, what do we do? So we, then we just hit up, we call it the curse, right. It's just, gosh. And it's like, we just, it kind of becomes part of the spiritual atmosphere, or the atmosphere that we breathe. And we don't even realize that we're cursing ourselves instead of blessing.

Heather Khym: Yeah and I, I've had different conversations with young women who have just recently gotten married and they're talking about their intimacy with their husband. And they're just like, I just, like we're having some problems, like it's not perfect. And we are sort of like led to believe that everything would be fine. And they waited 'til marriage and all of this stuff, and they just don't know how to navigate certain things. And then it becomes a source of shame, because it seems like it's something that's hidden or that you should just automatically know. And I think in other cultures, they do a great job of preparing one another and the next generation to come about the beauty of womanhood and the beauty of entering into a relationship. And what does all of this mean? Whereas for many of us in our culture, we don't talk like that. We don't bless one another or welcome one another into a new stage of our maturity, especially physical maturity or in stage and states

of life. What does that mean? What does it mean to, to be a religious sister and to not be bearing fruitful, like physical life. But to be called to bear fruitful spiritual life in the lives of others, but then how does that affect you as a woman? Like and there's all of these different things. And I think about my relationship with my husband and how many times we both feel so incredibly vulnerable with each other, especially in the intimacy, in our relationship. So how do you navigate that well, and really bless one another in the places where there's sensitivity or wounding, or where you need to be care, like filled with care for each other. Not careful as , but just like filled with care for one another. And how do you communicate about that? Like, we are so intricate and sensitive as people, so many parts, but I don't think often we're given the language or the permission to have conversations like this. Like I remember one of the beautiful moment of like praying over a friend. There was a small group of us who were just praying over her before her wedding day and her wedding night. And it was so awesome. And I just, and even the things that were shared, I was like, "This is rare. Likes what's happening right now. This is amazing." And "I wish I had had that," and I was like, this needs to be a thing.

Michelle Benzinger Yes, yeah.

Heather Khym: Communally, how can we grow and learn from one another and really bless each other?

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, and I think that is, I think we'll go probably deeper in the subject when we go into the sisterhood section of this, but that's something that we need to even start having those conversations and not making, like making them off limits. I think they, we make these things off limits or we think if we talk about certain parts of our body, then we're talking about, well, people need to look this way or this way. And it's a sore ship, and we're like, no, that's not what we're talking about. Like what does it look like for us to come into the fullness of who we are, body, mind, spirit, soul. We are an integrated people. We are incarnational people, but I feel like a majority of the time is we separate ourselves and all this. We don't integrate these parts of ourselves. And I know for me personally, like Lord teach me, I got to be really good in one area. Like okay, I'm doing really good emotionally. Okay, kind of spiritually, all right physically I'm not. Like and it's like, the Lord is like, no, it's all of the above. Like and I'm, I treat myself like I'm in these silos and said, I am one person. This affects this. And this affects this. And the deeper dive I go into healing and even you like, just realizing how your story and your trauma affects your nervous system and it affects this and your attachment, and it affects your relationship with the Lord. And I loved, one of the things Father Michael Scanlan always used to say to me is, "Michelle, you can only grow spiritually as much as you grow emotionally." And then I'm realizing, actually you grow emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Like physically like completely embodied in yourself. And I was reading something, I think it was Balthasar. I can't remember, a theologian, but

they're talking about like Mary was the perfect embodied woman, because she allowed the Holy Spirit full access to her physical body, her emotional body, her spiritual body. Like she's like, let it be done according to me, according to Thy word. And so what does that look like for us to really treat like the Holy Spirit, give permission to the Holy Spirit, to redeem every single part of us as daughters. To come in to every single part of us as daughters and like to really breathe life into us. Really breathe life into us. Like come Holy Spirit as ruah, as breathe. Breathe your fresh new life into us and restore us into the fullness. And I think because like even when we were talking about sex and intimacy, because it's been so pornogrified and so many other different ways, that we're scared to death of desire. We're just scared to death of desire and longing and whatever, but then we will touch about, touch on it when we go to bride, that's how we will end this series at the end of next season. But I mean, if you read the "Song of Songs," we're blessed in breasts here, people. We're a blessing, kisses of your mouth. It is essential and it is beautiful, and this is the language of the Lord. And so like Lord created sex. It is good. But what do we allow ourselves to really lean into longing? Because we've just seen, a lot of times we've seen it disordered, and we have been hurt and pained by so much that we haven't seen what it means in its fullness. I mean, for me I would like these conversations to be, what does a holy with an H and a wholly with a W, and a hot sex life look like people? Like what does these things look like? And more, not just the technical terms, like and I'm not diminishing these at all, because they're beautiful and I love the girl's body. This is just a gift of yourself, Like, it's a gift of yourself. Like no, let's go deeper into this. I know that's been a conversation for Chris and I, like really digging deep into our intimacy and really like digging deep into the longing for one another. And so I have to tell you this really quick story. My counselor is just amazing. And her husband is a decorated Marine, and they're in their 60s, probably mid to late 60s. And he's so funny. He always says, he's like, "I mean I've led men into war and special assignments and whatever." He said, "The hardest thing I've learned how to do is to make love to a woman and be intimate and vulnerable." And he says, "It takes a lifetime. It's like anyone can have sex. It takes a lifetime to learn how to make love." And I was like, darn, that's a good word. Yeah that is a good word. And it's for all of us. And no matter what your vocation is, because we are all called to some kind of-

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Self gift.

Michelle Benzinger: Self gift and communion.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And I think also because of that desire, like we talked about in the very beginning of being delighted in. Like it goes all the way back to being delighted in, 'cause you talk about eternal delight and the marital act is a foretaste of consummation that will last forever with the Lord. And we understand it in a particular way on earth, but like that unity, that the desire, the joy,

the beauty, those are strands of things we've been talking about that are the deepest desire of the human heart. And I think in our hearts, like to be seen like that, to be known, to be loved, to have our wounds kissed, instead of ostracized. To have somebody come alongside is like, that is the revelation of how Christ loves us. And that's the echo of eternity. And I think those places in our hearts where we all have desires that haven't been met or they've been disordered within ourselves. So we've seen our, in our own hearts even of what oh gosh, I followed this desire and here's where it left me. So that desire must be bad. Versus going to the root of it. Okay Jesus, what's the holy desire there? What am I really aching for? And what are you, what are you trying to untwist, so you can meet me in the deepest places? And I think as we're talking about these things, like just the reality of us as women, of the heart of that is really the blessing of it. It's good that you're here and it's good that you're a woman. It is good that we are women. And I think that can even be hard for us to-

Michelle Benzinger: Embrace sometimes.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And then to sit with and to let that marinate like, 'cause we all have parts of ours, where we're like well not that part or not this part, or I wish I was something different or I don't, but it is good that we are here and it is good that we are here as women. That's a stunning, each single, every single one of us is a revelation of how Christ loves, how God loves. It's just so beautiful, like the unique dignity of the human person. And then just the way that God makes us with different body types and different shapes. And it's just so, like looking at just the creation, it's just so stunning. I'm so glad he doesn't make us all one size, we all look alike. We're also vastly different, and the Lord delights in that. And I love that. I love that.

Heather Khym: Yeah and I think one of the downsides, one of the many, many downsides of the culture is that there's an overemphasis on equality, which equality is important. Men and women should be equal in dignity, but in that equality, it starts to bleed over into all of these other areas where there's a dismissiveness around the uniqueness of male and female. Where there's a huge, like beauty of complementarity between men and women. This is how it's supposed to fit together. Like this beautiful puzzle that's like this perfect fit. And I think when we diminish the differences, then we're not able to see the uniqueness and see it as a gift, right? And so, it's not to diminish men in any way, like all of this focus we're talking about women's hearts and daughter and all this stuff. It's not to diminish men at all. And that's not how women should be elevated- To diminish men. There is an equality, but also this complementarity of coming together in our individual uniqueness and the gifts that each of us have, and that's how God designed it to be. It's the togetherness. That is the reflection of God. This marriage is the icon, the best icon that we have into the life of the Trinity, because it's supposed to be lived

out as this like full donation of self as you mentioned, but like this reciprocated love. This pouring out and receptivity that is constantly happening. And the problem is that often like the icon is disfigured or the icon becomes-

Sister Miriam James Heidland: The idol.

Heather Khym: The idol. It isn't leading to God anymore. It becomes the end in and of itself. And so to just be aware of like, wow, where are the places in my own heart and mind have I like, my thoughts have been twisted to believe this certain thing that just isn't true about who I am as a woman, about who he is as a man, and who we are in our complimentary gifts to each other. Do we see one another as a gift? Do we see ourselves as a gift? So I think there's a lot there, like a lot of cultural influence that we may not even realize is at play in some of our things, but even just like as we grow up as kids, and how we're treated, and how we're treated as young girls by boys and like all these different things. And sometimes it can be great. And sometimes not, and sometimes even in the little things. I remember looking at or playing with boys all the time in the neighborhood, and I always had to go home to pee and I was just like, "rats, I hate being a girl," but it's like those things that you say that you think are kind of funny now, but you're like, well, I really need to be careful. It's like, you're saying, I really need to be careful what I'm saying about myself, about my body, and especially in relation to men. About how we compare ourselves and stuff like that. So yeah, these are tender places, but again not to be feared.

Michelle Benzinger: Not to be feared. And that I know for many women and many of us like, and just to let you all know, we will touch on this in the next season when we talk about bride. Where our bodies have not been safes because they've been sinned against. I mean I think sexual abuse, I think that the statistics is one in four now.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That's what it's reported.

Michelle Benzinger: That's what's reported. It's much higher.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: For women, and then for men, it's actually pretty equitable. A little bit less, but yeah, it's striking.

Michelle Benzinger: So that is a topic that we will bring forth, so like we don't even feel safe in our own bodies, because they've been sinned against. And I think like that is such a hard place, and I just realized that the place that they'd been sinned against as also the place the Lord wants to heal. When we're hurt by these places, the Lord will usually use the same means, like relationship to heal in the same

means, whether it's communion with the Lord and communion with other people or whatever, but that those are really hard places. And especially if they happened when we were young, and formative years, like these are places that need to be grieved. And that's okay. But that, to realize the grieving process is hard, but the grieving process, like you have said, Heather, just because it is hard, it has to be dealt with very tenderly and very like, it is like precision work, like surgery work on your heart, that the Lord has to have a very tender, careful hand. But that it has to, we have to go there. We have to go there into these places of redemption and restoration. And oftentimes, like we said in the earlier episode, you cannot go to these places by yourself. You have to have someone with you to go to these places. But I'm always amazed at the Church and her beauty as mother. Like that there are the sacrament of communion. They are the sacraments, the sacraments are a place of healing. Not the only place, 'cause it takes a lot of work, counseling, redemption, restoration, all the things, but that there is a place to go to and to allow yourself, to come to the table with that.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well the Church is a mother.

Michelle Benzinger: The Church is mother.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: The Church is mother, and we think of the dispensing of the sacraments, which are instruments of communion and healing. And we talk about baptism. We talk about the healing of our identity and being rooted and grounded in Christ. And we talk about first holy communion, like literally holy communion, where there's nothing else. There's nothing else like it, where Jesus Christ comes. And we've talked about that before. There's only three times in somebody's life when you're inside somebody else. And it's when a man and woman come together, when a woman is pregnant with a child, and when we receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and that intimacy of, Jesus come to me in a place I need it the most. Come to me, right in that very place, where I needed the most, encumbering the healing. We talk about the sacrament of reconciliation or confession, where it's, Christ comes to heal. It's a sacrament of healing. It's like that reality of things that Christ gives us, he gives us his Church to bring us into communion. It's all ordered toward communion. And even with all the brokenness that we experience in the Church, like the heart of who Christ is, is he's given us his heart there of bringing it as a communion, so that's a beautiful reality is that none of us are stuck eternally in the places that we are. Like that Christ provides the remedy and the means. He doesn't, he's not a watchmaker, where he like, he sets up the universe, and says, well good luck people. Keep warm and well fed. Like he not only came to Earth 2,000 years ago, but he is present now. And he is present now in his Church. He's present now within our hearts, and he's bringing us to healing, which is wholeness and community, and redemption, the buying back. And we talk about Christ's mission is the reconciliation of all things to the Father. So he's coming to

reconcile, to bring back into community, every part of us mentally. Like we said, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, sexually into communion with him. And that happens piece by piece by piece if we allow it to be transformed. And that's the identity of us as daughter. And from then, that's the foundation of our house like we've talked about many times. Like that is the foundation of our house from which sister, bride, and mother can grow. Otherwise, if that isn't continually being rooted and grounded in Christ, we're gonna see, like we all do, the cracks of the house so to speak.

Heather Khym: Yeah and and that's where the deficiencies come through.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yes.

Heather Khym: And to remind ourselves, like we said before, God is a God who fills in the gaps, and that's beautiful. Like there's nothing that's lost. Like and I think to remember, like we are a person to be loved, not an object to be used or whatever may have happened in our past. That we, at the core of our being are beloved daughter, beloved child of God. So we talked about this at the very beginning of this series, that that's where we need to be grounded and rooted is in our identity. As we are loved, known, seen by a father who cares for us, who is good, whose heart is for us, like that is at the foundation of it all. And that's where we need to get back to. There's all these things that have been layered on top, like lies and things that we've put on ourselves, expectations. Other people have put on ourselves that take away and cover that up. And I think it really is like an uncovering again of who we really, really are. And this particular area, as we talk about wounds, and we're talking about physical wounds, and our body is like, oh my goodness, I think for some people even listening to this, you might be like, wait, what? I'm super uncomfortable. Like you guys, what? You're crossing a line, like talking about some of these things like this. But I think even in that, there's twists that happen. The beauty just slightly gets twisted and this is an old, long thing in the church of like, body bad. Like there's this message.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Many heresies.

Heather Khym: That over and over again for many people, it's not that everybody deals with that, but many heresies around that, and just many people have fallen into that belief that our bodies are bad. Or our bodies are like a heavy weight that we're just carrying around. That is like a burden, like a real burden. And we've got to whip it into shape or whatever it might be, instead of really seeing it, like you said Michelle, as a temple of the Holy Spirit. And what does that look like? Like, can we imagine our body as a temple where the Holy Spirit is dwelling and what kind of temple does it look like? Like maybe that's a good prayer image to sit with. What does this temple look like where the Holy Spirit abides? And what is the Holy Spirit

doing in this temple? Where is he illuminating? Where is he healing? Where is he moving, restoring, empowering like this temple that is your body?

Michelle Benzinger: And to look at our body is like Sister was saying and look at and say, okay, where have I cursed my own body? Where have I said, "I hate my thighs." Or whatever they're, I mean, and people will be like, "Oh my gosh, that's uncomfortable." It is uncomfortable. The whole thing is uncomfortable, but we don't grow in comfort. Like I hate to say it. At least nobody does really. I know, but I have an idol, one, well I have a couple probably, but one of 'em is comfort. I like to be comfortable, and so like where have I cursed it? And where is the Lord calling me to renounce that curse or bless it? Where is the Lord calling me to bless this, bless my body? And that, it feels almost ridiculous in some ways. Like, I'm not going to say that, I'm not going to bless these, but yes, the Lord is saying to bless us.

Heather Khym: Well, we've talked a lot about declaring, right? And the truth and the power of declaration. It's like, we can declare the truth, but we can also declare hurt and lies and things like that. So how do you reverse one?

Michelle Benzinger: Oh yeah!

Heather Khym: It's like, you have to declare the truth. You have to.

Michelle Benzinger: And I think it would be really good Sister just to walk through really quickly. It's like, okay what does it mean to repent? What does it mean to all these things, some practical things going forward? Like we wanna just, as we're closing the section up to really give a couple of practical tools to our listeners. Okay, because our prayer for all of us is freedom.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, yeah, definitely. And I think also as women, we can also curse the parts of us that we feel are too sensitive. Like I hate my emotions. I hate how sensitive I am. I hate how much I care. I'm too much. I'm not enough. I am inappropriate. I, just all the places where, yeah, all the places where we as women just are at war with ourselves. And that's something that just the power of being a baptized Christian and the power of renouncing things in the name of Jesus Christ and announcing and receiving, here we go again, receiving the truth of who we are in the name of Jesus Christ has been such a tool that Dr. Bob Schutts taught me many years ago. And it's something that I do. We've talked about this a lot of, of that reality of the repentance to turn away, to turn back, to turn away, to turn our face to the Lord. So the question for us is not will I suffer or will I have wounds or will I struggle, but where will I turn my face? Where will? And that becomes redemptive suffering. Forgiveness is redemptive suffering. Repentance is redemptive suffering, Coming out of agreement with these lies, even

if they feel so true, coming out of agreement and coming into the truth of who Christ is and turning our face toward him and standing before him naked and maybe full of shame, but standing before him naked, and allowing him to bless us, that is redemptive suffering. And it becomes glory. And that's, that's the beautiful, that's the beautiful thing. And maybe that's something we can do. We can just pray at the end of this episode and just lead people through some of those areas, but yes and renouncing things in the name of Jesus Christ any areas we've come into agreement with, any curses that we've put on ourselves or other people, lies we believe about ourselves, abandonment, rejection, all those things. Bob talks a lot about that in this book "Be Healed" and then coming into agreement with the truth and proclaiming like you, so I love how you talk about that so often, Heather, the power of proclaiming scripture out loud, and the truth out loud. Even if it doesn't feel true, we know it's objectionably true. And that changes the spiritual atmosphere and that, like anything else in life, like you're talking about our spiritual muscles, like anything else in life that we practice over and over again will become part of our life.

Michelle Benzinger: Amen. Why don't we pray?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. Did you guys want to add a couple more, just practical things as daughters? How do we continue to grow in our identity? Would you say Heather, what would be maybe one thing you could offer our listeners?

Heather Khym: Yeah, I think one of the things is to be patient with ourselves. Like I mean, we've talked about not avoiding, We've talked about like pressing in. It's not fast. Like all of those things, I would say, be patient. Like you deserve this. I deserve this. That's hard to say. Like that's hard to say, I don't like saying, "Oh, Heather, you deserve this," 'cause I often don't feel like I deserve anything. But it's true. We deserve the time that it takes to allow Christ to make us whole. It says in scripture for freedom, Christ has set us free, but many of us aren't living in that kind of freedom. And I'm like, Michelle, you and I were talking this morning about like there was a part of us that kind of like got our back up with protection over the Church. Like about certain things. It's like, I'm the first one to say, "Hey, everybody needs to be held accountable." And then there's also this other part that I'm like, don't crush the bride. Like this is my Church. And at the same time, I think there has to be those parts that we allow to be activated within ourselves. Like where we're willing to stand up for the little parts of ourselves and say, "No more. I'm not going to let you be hurt anymore." Like I'm an adult now. Like I can take care of all of these little parts. Like I'm not gonna allow myself to be hurt, to be diminished, to be whatever, and that includes even by myself. That there is a, we can begin again and we can start new. We don't have to keep believing the same lies, speaking the same lies. Like we can begin new again. We can stop certain things that we've gone down this path of submitting to that we don't need to do that anymore. So I think it's like

taking ground back from the enemy. It's like there there's this war, we've been talking about it. There is a spiritual battle at play. It's like ground has been taken in certain areas, be the queen of your house. Like be the queen of your domain, of your-

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Which comes from our baptism. That is sovereignty within. It comes from our baptism, yeah.

Heather Khym: It is our royalty that has been bought for us.

Michelle Benzinger: Our inheritance, yes, yes.

Heather Khym: so I think like sometimes we don't act like that with that kind of like royalty, kind of like power in our, from our baptismal call and really as daughters of the King. Like he is a King, so what does that make us? I mean, this isn't just a story. Like I said, this is real, more real than anything else that we see in our life. So I think taking that ground back and standing with authority as daughters of the King to say "No More." Like this is gonna stop here for myself, for my family, for my, the circle goes out from there. Yeah.

Michelle Benzinger: And for me, I think they're one of the tools that has just been, I think vital for just the healing journey in the last couple of years, has just been the growing expansion of my relationship with Mary. Because there's something about a woman, like where the Trinity feels more, even though God is all the above, but he's not like withheld, combined into gender, God is sovereign. But like there's something about Mary just coming in, and even how we say the Hail Mary, "Blessed is thy womb." Like we're a blessing her womb. Like, so she is, can really be our advocates, like just to teach us how to bless our own bodies. Teach us how there's something even so beautiful just about the rosary and really meditating with the rosary and really praying through the rosary and saying, "Okay, Mother Mary, come to me as a mother now. Show me how. Show me that these parts of me that are good. Show me these parts that have been disordered. Bring them into order. Show me how, as a mother, teach me." And I think one of the things that has come out of the podcast is just that she is not this, we've said it before, stoic statue, but she's this powerful mediatrix, intercessor mother that teaches us.

Heather Khym: She's a warrior. And I think the rosary, we underestimate the power of the rosary. it's brought to my attention again and again. Just recently I was visiting with a priest and he was over in Rome. And he's a younger priest, and he was invited by the Exorcist of Rome to do exorcisms with him. To sit in on these sessions. He said, at first he was like, "whoa," like this is like, he was like oh, like "scared," he says like, and then it quickly turned into him wanting to run into the

streets and be like, "Everybody needs to believe in Jesus." Like this is so real, the power of God was so real. But in those sessions, he said, "He learned like again, the power of our Lady when it comes to the enemy." He said, "Specifically the rosary" that the demon said, it's like the grating of over and over and over, like a repetition of the rosary is like the pounding of over and over. And they hate it. They just hate it. The truth is contained there. So I think to not forget the weapons that we have at our disposal.

Michelle Benzinger: Amen. So good, so good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. Isn't she lovely, right? She is truly lovely. Well maybe what we could do friends is I'll just lead us through a bit of a meditation and then this will be transcribed, right? So people could print this off and pray this prayer. Is that correct?

Mm-hmm. So, and we'll just, we'll just ask the Lord to lead us and guide us. And I'll ask people to just repeat after me, if they can out loud or in their hearts. It's better out loud, but wherever you are, but maybe some people can take it and just pray it. And it's just something that we'll just give the Holy Spirit room to move in our own hearts and just to allow the Holy Spirit in real time to reveal whatever he would like to reveal. Does that sound okay?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Okay. So let's begin. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus, we thank you for this time together. And we just thank you for bringing us to be daughters. We thank you for delighting in us and who we are as women. And we thank you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made Jesus, I pray that even now your healing love would come upon each one of us and every little part of us mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, sexually. That you're healing love and it's peace and gentleness would descend upon the deepest places of our hearts, even now. I just want to invite you just to imagine Christ in front of you. Maybe you're seated or maybe you're standing, or maybe you're sitting side by side near a lake. But could you just imagine Christ beside you, or standing in front of you, or seated in front of you. And what does he look like? Notice his kind face and his kind countenance as he greets you with such love and tenderness. And what happens in your own heart as he just gently gazes upon you with deep delight and care, so attentive. And as you're there with him, I'm just going to, just to lead you through a simple series of renouncing that you can pray out loud or in your heart. So I'll just have you in your own heart or out loud, repeat after me. In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the identity wounds of rejection, of abandonment, of shame, of fear, of hopelessness, of powerlessness, and confusion. In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the lie and I come out of agreement with the belief that being a woman is not good, that my femininity is bad, or it's something to be ashamed of. In the name of Jesus Christ, I repent Lord of the places where I

have cursed what you've made. And I just want to invite you now, my dear sisters to allow the Holy Spirit, very honestly, to bring to your heart, the places of your body, of your heart and your mind that you have cursed and said are bad. Places that bring great shame, or self hatred, or self-condemnation. And I'm just gonna invite you to renounce cursing yourself in the name of Jesus Christ. I renounce cursing the parts of my body that and whatever that is for you. In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce cursing the parts of my heart and mind that and whatever that is for you. Lord Jesus, I repent of this. And I ask for your healing and restoration here. I pray that even now I could begin to see myself as you see me. Lord, please help. And let's just receive the truth here dear friends. So let us pray in the name of Jesus Christ. I announce and receive the truth that I am the beloved daughter of God, that he cares for me, that he sees me, that he knows me, that he loves me, that he delights in me, and that it is good that I'm a woman. It is good that I am here on earth. And my presence is a life giving gift to this world. Holy Spirit, I pray that your love would be a healing balm when it comes into every part of our hearts, that you would fill the places that we have renounced today, fill them with your holiness for yourself. Fill us to overflow with your very self Holy Spirit. We just pray Father that we will come to anew, living out of our identity as your daughters. And we ask you Mother Mary, you who are all beautiful, you who delight in us as a mother, we ask for your kind and warm and secure and steadfast and tender love to be with each one of us right now. We pray that you would take us to your heart and just gently let us rest there. And we entrust every part of these episodes, every part of our hearts, every woman, every man who is listening to this at this very moment. We entrust ourselves to you, mama, as we pray Hail Mary.

All: Full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God. Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. Our lady of tenderness, pray for us.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Pray for us. The name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Michelle Benzinger: Ooh, thank you, Sister.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well ladies, should we talk about our one thing as we conclude?

Michelle Benzinger: I know it's like, it's hard to- transition here. Switch gears, yeah completely.

Heather Khym: Yeah, well my one thing this week, it may have been my one thing before, but it was just so good. I wanna say it again. So Father Dave Pivonka has a

ministry called The Wild Goose. And he has a video series of "The Wild Goose," which is a Holy Spirit thing, but he also did a recent one called "Metanoia." And it's just about conversion, about coming back to Jesus, about falling in love with him. And it is so well done and so good. I was so, yeah, just so impressed. So proud of him for doing it, but I think it's a great resource for people. So if you wanna head over to their website, Wild Goose. The information will be in the show notes and on our website and you can check out. It's a free series called "Metanoia." It's really good. Really good if you wanna do it by yourself, do it with someone in your household, or to do it as a small group. I think it's a great resource. Along with "Abiding Together Podcast." Which is now on video as well.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yes it is. All of the world can see us. Something wonderful, yeah. What about you, Michelle?

Michelle Benzinger: I'm laughing at the set crew with us here. They are like total troopers, doing this. Mine is actually our sponsor for this episode. This "Every Sacred Sunday," and I love it. This is my fourth year. It's four years, wow. I've done it every year and it has the mass readings for every Sunday, but it is so beautifully done and artistically and creatively done. Way to go Christie and them. And this year's one is stunning. We got a sneak peek of it before they showed anyone else. And even though this episode is airing later, but I was opening the boxes, and I was like, "These are gorgeous." And so yes. So "Every Sacred Sunday" is mine. What about you Sister?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, I think this week, Dr. Bob and I did actually a work on healing and redemption and the healing of wounds in the Hallow app. And so it was a several part series, on their mental health series, but we actually go into each one of the wounds that we prayed with right now and that we did, Bob and I each led a meditation. And so it's just an offering for you if you want to listen to it and just pray it with us. And we talk about identity. It's just all the things we've talked about, Bob and I talk about from that perspective of being beloved sons and daughters. So it's our hope that you can put it on the background and just pray with us, or just let the words wash over you and just to receive deeper healing from Christ. So that's in the Hallow app.

Michelle Benzinger: Sister Josephine has a meditation on that series too.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And we also have another gift for our Patreon subscribers, don't we?

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, so with this series, if you are a patron, and thank you, we could not have done the video without you. You are the reason we even have video

is that for each of the sections daughter, sister, you will have actually bonus content to go for you. From each of us. So for all of our patrons, thank you. You are such a gift to us. And so we want to give back to you also. So we really appreciate you all.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, so thank you so much for joining us for this four-part series. Our next four-part series is going to be on the identity of sister. So we hope that these beautiful layers continue to unfold in your heart. And it is once again, very delightful to be with you. So until next week, we will be praying together. God bless you and see you then.

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