

S11 E11

Heather Khym: [00:00:00] Hello friends. Today's sponsor is Leanne Bowen Fine Art. She sponsored before, and we love her work. She just released a beautiful Spring collection of candles. One of the candle packs has a Tuscan Lemon candle paired with an Orange Blossom, and a Magnolia and Rose candle. We love the artwork on the labels and that the scents are really unique. I feel like it's hard to walk in a store and find an orange blossom candle. Especially one that has an incredible saint quote or beautiful painting on it.

One of Leanne's other candle sets is a Dad Pack. It is a combination of three candles designed for your significant other, dad or father-in-law or priest. I feel like the men in our lives are kinda hard to shop for, so it was cool to see how she curated gifts that would really be fitting for any of them. One of them is a Christ candle which smells exactly like the oil used at baptism. I love that smell and I feel like it's hard to find. We like lighting it in a prayer space and remembering that the Lord is close to us.

Leanne also has incredible prints in her shop. One of the favorites is of Our Lady of Guadalupe, placing her mantle gently around a priest, as he lifts the Eucharist. It has been such a consoling image for [00:01:00] priests.

Leanne makes beautiful wedding and sacrament gifts as well as great gems for Easter. If you're looking for a truly beautiful and unique gift, please visit leannebowen.com.

That's LEANNEBOWEN.com. She's offering 15% off to all our listeners through May 1st. Just use the code `abide15`. God bless you.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hi friends and welcome to Season 11 of the Abiding Together Podcast. Abiding Together as a place where you can find connection, rest, and encouragement in your journey with Jesus Christ. Every week, I'm joined by two of my very dearest friends,

Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger, and we talk about all things Christ, about life, about beauty, about sorrow. We laugh, we cry, you'll fit right in. So grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are deep [00:02:00] into the season of Lent. Very, very deep. We're actually almost towards the end, which perhaps we thought we'd never get here. Here we go. But here we go. We're in week five of Lent and we are still journeying through the Restore book, and we are going to talk this week about forgiveness, and we're going to have a deep discussion about forgiveness, and we'll see how the weekend folds.

But before we jump into that, we've been talking for a while as we always do. So my dear friends, Heather and Michelle, how are we doing? Heather? Has it going?

Heather Khym: It's going pretty well. Um, the puppy is amazing. I'm just going to say little Andy, our golden retriever puppy. Yeah, I will. I will post some pictures. She's growing like a weed.

And it's funny that we're talking about forgiveness because, uh, today, because our dogs, like we live on property. Right. But it's really rainy this time of year, because if we have the same climate as like Seattle, so they are constantly outside getting muddy like four times a day. And so four times a day, I have to wash them off and I'm like, wow, isn't this just a good little reflection of the muck and mess of our life and how somebody has got to wash [00:03:00] that off.

They would be happy to run around and just leave mud all over the house. And I'm like, wow, that's often like how I would operate, you know, in my life. But anyway, no, we're having a good time and we're going to be going to visit our daughter who's in Steubenville for Easter. So just looking forward to that, but yeah.

Trying to just like, hang in there the last little bit of Lent. How about you, Michelle? How are you?

Michelle Benzinger: I am good. Yeah, we have the last little bit of Lent while we're recording this, but I think we have to be a little authentic that we are not recording in real time. We're recording a couple of weeks before.

So at this time, Ukraine and Russia...The whole debacle. Now we don't know where it will be when this podcast airs. So just the heaviness of the world right now. And like the world just needs forgiveness in such a powerful way, but just what the power of the beauty of forgiveness and the power of the beauty of our faith. I just feel like it's so tangible at this time, more so than it has been in awhile. So the last three years, man. Whew. So it has been a doozy. [00:04:00]

We are resurrection people, so we are Easter people. So just keeping that in the forefront of our gaze, Sister, how are you?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, I am on the road again, so right before Lent is very busy so I've been on the road for quite some time doing a lot of events. And so I just have to give a shout out to everybody at Prince of Peace Church in Lake Villa, Illinois. So Barb and Father, and just all the great priests they have there and just all the people who've come to the parish mission, it's just been wonderful.

So I'm ready to go home for, to Texas for a few days,

Michelle Benzinger: When's the last time you've been home. How long have you been gone this time?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh, I've been gone a couple of weeks right now and it's been a full, it's been all wonderful. God's done a lot of wonderful things and, and it's, it is a regular part of my life, but I'm like, I want to go home.

I just, people are like what's the most, what are you looking forward to? I'm like, I just want to go home. Like, I just, I want to go home and go to my own convent, sleep on my own pillow, and sit in my own chapel, and go for walks. And so it's, it's worth it, but I, I like everybody else. You

know, have to be very [00:05:00] intentional how I recharge and how I keep my time with Jesus and to be able to go and do that and to give myself again. So it's been a long trip I'm pretty tired. The nun's tired. Let me just tell you that. The nun, she is tired, she is tired. So well, let's jump into, um, this kind of last week of Lent, which is forgiveness.

This is a deep topic for everybody. Everybody's affected by this. And this is part of our second week on almsgiving. So we talked about how prayer heals our relationship with God, fasting ourselves, and then almsgiving with others. And we spoke about how last week about how almsgiving isn't just writing a check and kind of making a distant donation.

It's actually giving the gift of yourself. And one of the ways we can give alms, one of the deepest ways we can give alms is actually by offering forgiveness, by receiving forgiveness from the Lord, and offering that to others. And so part of our section here is the quote we heard from last week from St. Ambrose, who says we will never heal ourselves by wounding another. And then what we're going to use this week, as Jesus speaking to the [00:06:00] woman, who's caught in adultery. And that's from John chapter eight, verse 11, where he says to her, neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more, go and do not sin again. And there's just so much in there as well.

But, um, ladies, just curious, I know for myself, that's something that I often share in my own story of one of the reasons why I was stuck in unforgiveness for so long is that I had a profound misunderstanding of what real forgiveness was. And I thought I knew. And so I was not open to anything else, but it wasn't until the Lord pierced me, and he showed me my soul in a certain area that I was like, oh my gosh, I've been wrong on a lot of issues about forgiveness. What I thought it was. Maybe you guys could just kind of just share in your own hearts when we think about forgiveness or the story of forgiveness and ourselves being forgiven by God and then forgiving others.

Heather, what for you, what are some things that stand out for you just, even in your initial kind of responses to even the word forgiveness maybe.

Heather Khym: Yeah. Well, the first thing I think of is just hard. It's like, there's a part of me that just goes. Oh, man, I don't want to talk about this. Like, it's really hard because, you know, immediately it brings up the [00:07:00] things of like that are, that are the most painful in our life, you know, and whether I have been able to forgive or I haven't, and I'm still holding onto some things, even, even if I'm like, I don't want to, but it's still there and it lingers and it, it sort of festers or, or erodes a little bit of like, just parts of my heart. And so, yeah, it's hard. I mean, I think for me, there's different reactions that I have, depending on how deep the wound is. But I think one of the most familiar things that comes to my mind when I've been hurt is like, what I want to hear from the other person is, "I'm sorry, and I'm never going to do that to you again," like "I know what I did, and I'm going to acknowledge what I did." And it's like a part of me always wants to hear them say, "I know what I did to hurt you." Because that lets me know, you're never going to do it again, or you're going to really try to not do it again, which gives me that sense of safety. Like that's what I'm looking for.

And repair of [00:08:00] relationships is like, please let me know that I can be safe with you again. But the reality is we don't often get that. We're not in a situation where we can ask for that. Like, I mean, I can ask for that from my husband, I can say like, do you know what happened so that I could feel safe here again? And I don't have to like, hold onto this, but that's, that's one of the hardest things for me and forgiveness and something that often hinders me from moving forward is I, I start to protect myself. And then that's what makes me hang onto it. You know, it's like, I just need to know that I'm going to be safe.

And often I don't in a lot of relationships. So that's where like grace and sacraments and other relationships are so vitally important, which we'll jump into more. But Michelle, what about for you? What are some of your first thoughts.

Michelle Benzinger: I like the concept of forgiveness until I'm the one that has to give it.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: "It's a great quote by CS Lewis."

Michelle Benzinger: Like it is. I like that whole concept of it and I want to be forgiven, but [00:09:00] it's because I want justice. You know, and it's like, I want that hurt to be made whole right then and there, like you were saying, I want the acknowledgement, I want the thing. And I think one of the things I fall into is blame and blame is really just a whole idea of control.

Like we want to control the situation we want. And then when I stopped to think about it, I was like, oh my goodness, this is not a question of right or wrong, you know? And it is not until I can forgive that God can bring justice are, you know, and God's justice doesn't look like our justice, you know where yes.

And when I think about right or wrong, like that's one of the big things we say at our house, okay. This isn't a question of right or wrong. This is a question of loving, and I'm not saying like to fall into the moral relativism, but I'm saying like, okay, like we have to forgive. And what does it look like to forgive 70 times 7 and just the constant forgiveness.

But I, the older I get, I realized forgiveness is about my healing and not about the [00:10:00] person's reaction or response, which is such a hard concept, you know, like you were saying, Heather, I want you to acknowledge what you did wrong. I want you to tell me how you're going to make it better. And that if you buy me a gift also, it'll be really great. You know, like this is how it's gonna work. So yeah.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh, that's so true. And I love what you both are saying here. And I just want to honor the truth of what you're both saying is because it is, it is natural, and actually it's right to want justice to be restored because forgiveness is about an injustice. It's about an injustice.

It's about, like you said, Heather, it's about wanting to be safe. Again. It's about wanting somebody to admit what they've done and to repair and those are all good and honorable things. And I think in our hearts, sometimes we feel like, gosh, you know, as we get to be adults, we were just talking before we started recording about how old we are, but we're like, we're old, but I think as we get to be adults, we run into these places in our heart.

And we say things like, oh, this shouldn't bother me anymore, or I shouldn't hope anymore, or they're never going to change. So I'm just going to co-exist [00:11:00] and I just don't think anybody in our lives, we really want to co-exist with the people we love most deeply. And I know for myself, when I have a hard time forgiving, when I get to the root of it, it's because I do, I want to protect myself and I don't want to be hurt anymore.

And sometimes it seems like the only option is forgive and get destroyed or harden your heart and kind of co-exist in it. And thank God, there's another way through than that, but it is hard. And I think that's why it's a heroic virtue. Like for truly forgiving is a process. It's not an event, and it's a heroic virtue.

And it is like you said, Michelle it's really was giving somebody an undeserved gift. And, and we're the ones, whether they're sorry or not, we're the ones that are set free. So it's like, it's very deep and it's, and the Lord understands those places in our heart.

Michelle Benzinger: And I wonder, I think about it when I was thinking about this Lent and journeying through this Lent, I wondered, like I've been really pondering on the posture of Mary's heart and the power of women not to be bitter because there's something powerful when a woman's heart remains open and tender and almost formable, like the [00:12:00] Lord can like you know, really form her heart and keep it open. And I was like journeying deeper with the Lord. He's showing me more of my own poverty, which I'm like, oh my gosh, have we not hit the bottom yet? Like, come on people. And, but he's like, not until you

really embrace these parts fully, like really fully embrace these parts, can I bring resurrection.

Not just like, excuse them or like toss them to the side, but I was thinking to myself for the first time, like, what was Mary's heart like towards the soldiers that beat him? What was Mary's heart towards the crowd that was jeering him? What was Mary's heart while she was standing at the cross?

Like, what was her heart? Because I'm thinking, man, there is nothing that will rile me up iff someone hurts one of my kids, like if someone hurts one, I mean the mama bear comes out in full force. And so, like we had an incident a couple of weeks ago where someone used a racial slur against my child. I mean, you should have felt the anger rise up to me.

I was [00:13:00] like, you know, I can see my child's like, mom don't say anything. Don't say I'm like, but, but she did it. She stood in that. And she would have had him forgive also because of her immaculate hearts. And that is how the holy spirit works so powerfully through her as her power of forgiveness. So how do we make all the bitter things in our life, like scripture says, sweet. It is the power of forgiveness, the power of receptivity and forgiveness.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And it's through, I think part of, one of the things that was news to me, um, you know, cause I thought forgiveness for a long time. It was, I kind of like just words alone. Yeah. I forgive you. I had never taken a full inventory of what had happened.

And that's part of the challenging thing about forgiveness is taking a full inventory of what somebody did and how it hurt us, which can be very scary for us. It can be easy to be like, no, I just forgive you because going down those places, like that's really difficult. And to admit where they've hurt us and to admit the places where [00:14:00] we've made agreements, maybe with some things they've told us about ourselves or just like those tender places.

So what we do is. So for me, it was like, well, you know, if I forgive you, if I forgive you, I'm just going to let you off the hook and you can't be let off the hook. Like you have to know the deep places. Like you have to know how much I've hurt. And if I forgive you, it seems like you're going to get away with it.

And you're never going to suffer. I'm suffering. You're never going to suffer. You seem fine. And like that illusion of holding onto that grudge or holding on like, like the unforgiving servant, like holding onto the fellow servant, like throttling them, choking them by the collar of their shirt and throttling them.

And somehow that's making me better. And, and all it does is just destroys our hearts. And it really is. We've talked about this before, but I really believe this more and more in my own prayer. It is only through lamentation. It is only through taking account and is only through true expression of grief that goes beyond hating ourselves and hating God and hating the other person coming to the places of distillation, where it is like Job.

And you're sitting [00:15:00] there at the foot of the cross, or you're like Mary at the foot of the cross. And it is pure lamentation. And as Christ comes to accompany us in those places, that trauma and all the bitterness and all the hatred and all the desire for revenge that gradually is transformed, and then we become free, but there, I wish I could tell people there's there's other ways around it, but there's really no other way around it.

Cause that's the way of Christ. Like he stripped naked and he never says it's not a big deal. Like he stripped naked, hanging naked on a cross. He never says don't worry guys not a big deal. Like you exactly see what it is. And like that that's I think the hardest thing was just sometimes admitting where our hearts have been hurt.

Oh my gosh.

Heather Khym: Yeah, the road to new life is never void of the cross. I mean, that's the hardest part of the Christian life is that it's always going to go there. Eventually, it's going to go there to a crucifixion. And that's why, you know, like you were saying at the beginning of the podcast, Michelle, like we're an Easter people.

Like you have to hold on to the hope of Jesus's resurrection and, and freedom and [00:16:00] life and goodness and everything that he promises, or there's no way that you can go through these things. There's no way that you would choose just suffering for the sake of suffering. You know, there has to be a purpose.

There has to be meaning behind it. And I think for many of us, we don't think about it that way, but sometimes that can be like a motivator into a new place is like, is there meaning that I can find here in forgiveness and through this suffering? And yeah, maybe it's just going to be like right down to like, yeah.

The purpose is because I want to grow close to Jesus. And this is about, this is intimacy with him. There's barriers now between me and him, because I'm holding this unforgiveness or anger, resentment, whatever it might be because often, like you said, sister, it's not going to involve the other person. It's going to be between you and Jesus at the end of the day.

And I think we have to hold that hope of like the resurrection power and new life. That's on the other side of that, like forgiveness does lead to new life. It does lead to freedom. [00:17:00] It is a release for bondage. That is the truth. And I think the enemy wants to convince us that nothing happens after forgiveness, that we're just actually losing at the end of the day, you know, we're, we're losing like that control or, or whatever it might be.

And the enemy is a liar and we just have to call it what it is. But it's easier to do that. Like you said, Michelle, uh, when it's about somebody else, like, it's easier to say that, but. You know, as a Christian, we have

to be applying these things to ourself, not just to everybody else around us.

Michelle Benzinger: And I love what, uh, one of, one of my favorite Henry Nouwen quotes, I mean, well I love everything that Henry Nouwen says.

But he says, I began to see that much of praying is grieving, you know? And so going back to what you says, Sister acknowledging it, identifying it, because a lot of times we want to forgive and forgets like, but really we want to forget and not forgive. I think we want to flip that on its head.

And so to go back and identify and see it and realizing it. One of the things my counselor always says [00:18:00] is Michelle worked through the emotion. Don't stop and get stuck because when you get stopped and get stuck, it gets lodged in your body. It gets lodged and all that stuff. And so she's like work through this emotion, you know, get to the other side.

So that is like and you do it so well in this devotional Sister, it's such so beautifully written talking about the power of our emotions. Our emotions are not dictators. Like we said before, they are indicators of something deeper, the longing in our heart, the hurt in our heart. But we have to acknowledge those.

We have to acknowledge and bring them through and say, okay, what is the deeper question? What is really going on in my heart here? And we often laugh. I know Sister and I laugh, like when something triggers us, we're like, Bless those triggers. Cause it's just showing me that something else is deeper, they're going on.

Or like, like, and where we said a couple of times on the podcast where we approach it with holy curiosity, right? What's the deeper thing here. What is really going on? And I just know for even the season, like. There is a week there that, I mean, y'all I was just nasty. [00:19:00] Like, I mean, just not a nice person to be around.

Like my husband looked at me, he's like, babe, what is going on? Like, and I was like, I feel like Eustace in the Chronicles of Narnia. I'm the dragon. And I feel like my skin is being peeled off, like, and it was just the Lord, really just bringing some postures in my heart that were ugly, that needed to be really cleansed really needed, but they really needed to be looked at the deeper issue.

And I don't want to look at the deep, the depth. And I felt like God was just, and I said it previously on one of the Lent podcast, excavating parts of my heart that I didn't even know were there. And so it is, yeah, so it's just grieving. But knowing that grieving, like Heather said comes with resurrection.

And so our joy, our sorrow will be turned into joy, but it has to be surrendered.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, well, and I think we've all seen places in our own lives. I know the three of us have talked about this extensively just in our own friendship of, of just real areas of freedom in our life. Like things that we receive now, I was just [00:20:00] thanking God that for that the other day, I was driving in my car.

Lord, I'm so grateful. I'm so grateful that even these amazing places of poverty, just in the last couple of weeks, you've made huge movements of freedom in my life. Like things I, I couldn't even imagine. Like I'm so grateful and I, you know, I think everyone knows like Dr. Bob Schuchts is just a great mentor to me, such a great spiritual father and some time ago. It was a couple years ago. I was like going off about somebody, how would they're hurting my heart and dah, dah, dah, and Bob is so great. And he just listened. Very graciously and very lovingly. And I finished, you know, my kind of rant in my, you know, and it was just, it was very hurtful. Like, you know, this person was doing and Bob listened to me and he said, um, I hear what you're saying.

And I said, it's true. What that person is doing is hurtful. But he said I'm much more interested in what's happening in your heart right now. And what you're believing about yourself right there. What are you? And I

was like...He would not let me get away with it. Like he was like, Sister. [00:21:00] He's like Sister. Yes. That is hurtful. But I'm much more interested in what's happening in your heart right now. Like what are you believing about yourself? How are you responding from this? He's like that, that is what is most important.

And I'm like, that is, so it is so hard is because it's not to say people, what they do don't hurt us. It's not that, but it's like, it's so much easier. Like Michelle, like you're saying to kind of shift the blame, like, well, if you would have stopped doing that, I wouldn't be at, you know, versus. Oh, well, how is this impacting me?

What am I believing about myself? What little places at pressing upon me, how, you know, it's like, that's the real work and oh, that's, that's a hard place. It's worth it, but that's a hard place to be.

Heather Khym: It's very hard. None of us want to feel that sense of like, I'm so little. I mean, this is a place of poverty, I hate that, you know, like I want to feel like I'm strong, like I got control of things and, and unforgiveness gives you a false sense of control over the situation, you know? I mean, it's not real, but it makes us feel that way that we have some power or some control over the other person. Oh my [00:22:00] gosh. It's so complicated within our own hearts. I mean, and this is where it's like, we think we know ourselves so well.

We think we're so justified and in so many things, um, maybe we are, but probably in a lot of places we're not. To be able to just be little before God is something that it's a hard path, but it's one that brings freedom. Again, you know, like littleness leads to freedom because God has allowed to be God he's allowed to be as big as he wants.

You know, when we're little, he can be as big as he wants. And I know for me in the areas of forgiveness and just my own sin and all of that stuff, I'm like, I need a big God here. Like I cannot do this. The admission of like, I cannot do this has brought more freedom in my life than many, many things. I mean, so yeah. I mean, I just think it's okay to be a little.

Michelle Benzinger: And I think I look back at my own stuff and I'm like, why do I not want to forgive one? We don't feel like God will fight for us the way we want it to be [00:23:00] fought for, or he won't bring about justice, but it comes down to fear. I think it comes down to fear like.

Like Heather, you hit on it. Will I be safe? Will I be safe? And so, like I realized like, okay, there's deep areas of fear where I still feel like he will not come through or provide or fight for me. And I feel alone in that. And so like even going back to like where that stems from, and usually it stems from something in our childhood and then realizing, okay, the Lord was there.

You know, he is the, I am, he was present, he was there in all of those experiences and he just wants to come in and it's so much easier to be a fault finder than it is to be a peacemaker. And it is just so much easier, but he wants us to exude peace within him. And like one of the words that I really love about my word of the year of Jubilee is Shalom and that just, it means peace, but it means also an integration, a maturity of all the parts, you know, and those parts can't come together if [00:24:00] there's unforgiveness, like forgiveness is the glue that really puts our heart back together. And so just offering that really as the greatest gift we can give ourselves, because it is in that healing that's you know, restoration happens. And so, but man, wouldn't it be nice. Like if you could have healing of forgiveness and you can see how, like it was rectified, I want to see how the justice was brought. You showed me.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah, well, yeah, justice will be served. It just won't be served by us. Thank God. We do not administer justice very well.

And, and that's, I it's so true what you both are saying, and it is true. It is a gift we give to ourselves and it's a gift of alms and that's the beautiful that we give to others. And the truth is the beautiful thing is that we can forgive at any time. Like the other person doesn't have to be even alive on earth anymore.

That other person doesn't even have to be, sorry, they don't even have to know like that. Like that gift of forgiveness, that free gift that we can offer another person is something that [00:25:00] we can't do on our own. We can't do it. Jesus has to give us the grace. We have to ask him. And it's instance by instance of what they've done to hurt us.

And that's why it's a process. And it's like, we don't have to figure it out on our own. We don't have to make it happen, or we don't have to. You know, the emotions can come out. It's all part of the process. It's, it's, you know, it's an emotional release, the demand for repayment and, and allowing the Lord to come to be with us in these places.

And I don't know if you guys have ever had this experience. I don't know if I've ever talked about this before, but I was praying in my own heart actually this morning. It's very interesting. We're recording this this morning and like the choice, like the choices we have in our heart in places where our hearts have been hurt to either close our hearts and just to kind of survive or versus stay with our hearts open.

And I was like, Jesus, what does it look like to stay with my heart open and it's not like, cause sometimes people think either it's like, oh, I have to go back to an abusive relationship and it'd be a doormat or I have to totally shut down. And that these are false dichotomies, you know? It's like, how do you go?

How do you navigate situations? And we all have friendships every, I mean, we hurt each other. Like that's just part of human. Like we step on each other's hearts. And so like in our day-to-day relationships, [00:26:00] Like, I was just praying like, Jesus, how do I, how do I stay open to you? Like how do I open and stay open and allow you to protect my heart and allow you to, to come and minister to me and just to be a presence of openness and receptivity versus shutting my heart down.

Cause I've had moments where I've I've shut my heart down and I just get harsh with people and I'm like, it just like cuts all the color out of your life. Like I just, and I'm like, why am I doing this? I don't, I don't like

when I do this, like, what is it? So Jesus teach me, I don't know, like Jesus teach me how to stay open with a soft and vulnerable, receptive heart.

And to be honest in this friendship or honest in this relationship or honest, like teach me how to do that. Cause I don't know how to do that. Like teach me, you know? Oh my gosh.

Heather Khym: Um, I love what you said, there "cuts the color out of our life. That's so true. That's a powerful image to sit with.

Michelle Benzinger: And I think, yeah, I'm right there with you.

I think that's one of the things I've been praying about because as the Lord just excavates parts of my heart, it's more and more open. But [00:27:00] if there it comes in, it leaves me vulnerable. And I said to someone the earlier podcasts, like, oh my gosh, that vulnerability, there's something about it. Like, it keeps you open, but you're like, oh man, I want to put those walls up or self-protect.

And it's almost learning how to live a holy...almost a completely different way. Relating and living a completely different way. So what is it like, to take your language, What is it like to live in color and not black and white at our heart where it's closer, open, but what does it live to like fully open.

And, but like I said before, I think it's so dangerous, especially for women. If we close our hearts because we are the heart, you know, and if we close our hearts, blood doesn't pump to the rest of the body, it doesn't bring life to other relationships. And there is nothing scarier than a bitter unforgiven women

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh girl.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. And it's just toxic. It really does. It is. It's almost like a form of death, you know.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It's true. Yeah. That is true.

Heather Khym: The coldness of a woman is just, you know, [00:28:00] it's the opposite of what we're made for, you know, our sensitivity, as we've talked about in the feminine genius and all of that, like it just takes away something that is inherently feminine to deaden our sensitivities like that, which is the first thing we want. I want to do, I mean, you could just see the enemy just like subtly swirling around all of these things. And so yeah, exactly what you said. It's, it's those, those honest prayers of like, Lord help me to stay open, to do the things that I cannot do within my own power.

And I like Sister, how you distinguished, like, it doesn't mean that we stay a doormat or that we allow ourselves to be in abusive situations. Absolutely not. We need to have good boundaries. And there's some people that we might not be able to see again, but that doesn't mean that forgiveness isn't possible.

Boundaries is not unforgiveness necessarily, you know, it can accompany it, but yeah, but boundaries can also be accompanied by forgiveness and it's just the appropriate. It is the just and right thing to do, like, if you can't [00:29:00] trust someone, then don't act like you can trust them, but there needs to be decisions made.

And I think that's what we're all saying is that there are choices that we can make in the midst of like the process of forgiveness and healing to just stay when we want to run. Oh, to stay and to, and to feel when we want to freeze, you know, and shut down. Our choices are powerful in those moments.

Like I've had to talk myself through moment by moment, sometimes. Heather, do not run away right now. Like, stay right here, stay open, let your heart feel this. Don't shut down. You know, like I'm literally talking myself through and I think you all are the same. No, it's good to be well aware of what's going on. And to just beg God for the grace.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh, this is so rich and so beautiful. And one thing we also wanted to do, you'll notice in the Restore book that there's, I believe it's on Friday that I lead. I just kind of give you guys a forgiveness meditation, and I'm going to actually [00:30:00] record a separate audio of that.

So just to, if you want that to accompany your meditation, that'll be in a separate, like a bonus content for this week, but we also wanted to invite you to go to confession. 'Cause, you know, we were talking about this earlier. Like I've been to every kind of therapy in my life and, and, you know, spiritual direction and inner healing prayer and deliverance and all this kind of stuff. And it's all wonderful. And it's all good, but there is nothing my dear friends that replaces a good holy sacramental confession. And I just want to say as somebody who represents the Catholic church, I am very sorry. For ways in your life where you've been to confession, and that has been a horrible experience for you.

And I just want to tell you, I'm sorry, on behalf of the church, I'm sorry on behalf of the priest where they missed your heart, or they said things that were very hurtful or very cutting or just very discouraging. I'm very sorry. And I also want to, in that, invite you to return again. Please do not let the brokenness of one individual keep you from receiving the mercy of the Bride. You know, the church, the mother.

So I just please friends, like there's so many opportunities in Lent, especially to go to confession. And I just, I'm not above begging [00:31:00] you to go to confession, like, cause there's nothing in your life. Cause it doesn't just wipe away your sins. It actually literally heals your soul.

It's this it's one of the sacraments of healing. So it does, it cleans your sins, but also the grace from every confession permeates the depths of your soul and heals the roots of why you do what you do. And there's nothing that can replace it. So please go, please tell the whole story. Don't hide anything and just notice what happens in your soul when you do that.

Did either one of you want to add anything to that?

Heather Khym: Beautiful. That's everything. Yep. That's everything right there.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Eell, dear friends, we're going, gonna jump into holy week, next week, the week of week. And so we will, we will climb that mountain when we get there. So, but until we do that, my dear friends, would you like to Michelle Benzinger offer to the world you're one things to the world for fifth week of Lent.

Michelle Benzinger: Yes, I would, of course, mine are books as usual. And one is one that I love. And I've mentioned it before, is Joshua Elzner. Is that how I say his name?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I don't know, but it's amazing. Whatever it is.

Michelle Benzinger: He wrote [00:32:00] a book on the Song of Solomon and Song of Songs, and it's called *A Flame of God Himself*.

And this book is rocking my world. I am not even out of the second chapter because I can't...It like every paragraph is like, okay, I'm going to just sit and meditate on this for a while. And it's just absolutely beautiful. And he's the one that we base a lot of the motherhood on his Marian consecration. I mean, his writing is very poetic.

His, the theological depth is stunning, but I just cannot say enough about him. And a lot of you all have started to buy his books and whatever, and he's very appreciative, but yeah, it's just beautiful. So it's called *A Flame of God Himself*.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I'm sure we're blowing up his store. He's probably like, where does this come from? All of a sudden.

Michelle Benzinger: I know. Here we go. So, but it's really, really good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So, what about you, Ms. Heather?

Heather Khym: Um, I saw a video a couple of weeks ago that Fr. Josh Johnson put out and he was talking about black [00:33:00] Catholic on the way to Sainthood, like holy, holy people. And it was so moving to me, like, I hadn't heard these stories before, but just the way that he talked about it and the things that he said.

I mean, I was like in tears, just listening to his video, it was so, so, so powerful. And, um, so anyway, I'm going to, I know he has a whole documentary and it wasn't that one, but there was some something else. And so I'll put it in the show notes and it was just, it blessed my heart so much. And, uh, I just wanna encourage people to watch it. Yeah.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. There's a beautiful documentary that's coming out too. It was a kickstarter. We supported it and it was, it is. Yeah. It's beautiful. So well done too really well

Heather Khym: How about you, Sister?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That is, that is wonderful. Well, my one thing this week is another piece of art that I came across actually at Prince of Peace Catholic Church in a very simple but beautiful drawing of the visitation of Mary and Elizabeth.

And I will share it with our audience. Uh, it's just so incredibly lovely. I just have been sitting on that side of the church all week long since I've been [00:34:00] there. And every time I walked by, I just literally stop in front and gaze upon it. So I'm going to offer that to our viewers and I think you're going to like it.

It's a very simple style of just. Yeah, it's just almost, um, kind of whimsical and its way of being drawn, but I think you'll like it. So it's just

a simple, I love art and such a simple beauty of just the two women meeting each other and rejoicing in the Lord.

So anyway, well, thank you so much, dear friends for joining us this week. We just, yeah. We offer you just our heart and near the deep places of your heart. And we just want to honor just anything that this episode brought up. We just want you to, um, just to know how much we care for you. We love you. And the Christ is always with you. He will always lead you. He will always give you his own heart to walk into these places.

So you're never alone. So check out that bonus content of the forgiveness meditation, and we will see you in the week of weeks next week at holy week. So until then God bless you and we'll be Abiding Together. Have a great week.

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