

S9 E2 - Fr Mike Bible in a Year Transcript

Michelle Benzinger: [00:00:00] Hey Abiding Together Podcast listeners. It is Michelle and I have an announcement and an invitation for you all. First of all, the announcement: on January 18th, we will announce our book selection for our Lenten book study and all the details. We are so excited about the book we selected, and we are so excited to journey this lent with you all. I think the Holy Spirit is going to do something powerful this Lent, and we can't wait to bring you on the journey with us. And number two an invitation: right now, as I am recording this little ad thing invitation Fr. Mike's podcast is the number one podcast in all the country - out of all podcasts, not just religion podcasts. So I really invite you to pray for Fr. Mike Schmitz. Like the Lord is using him mightily. And I think it's a really powerful thing that a priest and the Bible are the number one podcast of all iTunes. but the Lord is using him as mightily and so I know there's going to be some pushback some way somehow, but I would really invite our listeners to pray a Hail Mary for him offer up a rosary for him, anything that you can do for him. Pray adoration, offer up communion for him, but just really cover Fr. Mike Schmitz in prayer. I think that is the best gift that we can do for him. And I'm just excited to see how, what happens when people really get in the word and allow the word to transform their lives. So to our Abiding Together Podcast listeners, thank you so much for being on the journey with us. And we just love you and really find it a sacred privilege to journey with you. So have a great day.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:01:37] Hello and welcome to the Abiding Together Podcast. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sister Miriam James Heidland, and every week I'm joined by two of my very dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. This podcast is born out of our friendship and all that the Lord is doing in our lives. You hear us laugh, you hear us cry, you hear a share very vulnerably and you hear us talk about the things that we're still learning along the way. And you're most welcome to join us. You can find out all of our information on our podcast episodes on abidingtogetherpodcast.com. But for now, grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hello and welcome to season nine of the Abiding Together Podcast episode two, and we have a wonderful, amazing, awesome guest for you, which we're going to make you wait to find out who it is before. So happy new year, Heather and Michelle. And Michelle, you just recently got off a silent retreat. Do you want to share with our listeners a little bit about what it's like hanging out with us after you've been silent for several days?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:02:40] This is the third year in a row that I've done a silent retreat during advent, which being a mom of a lot of kids during this season, it's like Moses always parting the red sea for me to be able to get out the door and then coming back. But I love it. I think it will probably will become my tradition, but I was so ready to go into silence this year and I was really prepared.

So yeah, I jumped in with both feet and the Lord met me there with arms wide open, kicked my butt and loved me well, but it feels really weird. I came home and there was a house full of my people and it was really loud. I turned it down.

Heather Khym: [00:03:14] Michelle, can I just say just how much you've matured. You've just grown right before our eyes. 22 years ago, when you and I went on our first silent retreat

with Fr. Dave Pivonka and you and I both were like trying to go to confession every hour, just so that we had somebody to talk to. We were like the worst silent retreatants ever.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:03:34] Yes. The worst. Yes it is. And now I just love the silence and unplugging too. Like I just didn't miss anything, I loved the silence, so it was really good. And it's amazing how that still small voice gets really loud when you're quiet. Yeah. So Heather, how are you?

Heather Khym: [00:03:53] Yeah, I mean the still small voice well we've had a lot of that. Yeah. There's a lockdown that's been going on for quite some time here in British Columbia. And so. Yeah. Even through advent and everything, and now into the new year, like there's just a different kind of quiet. There's a stillness like I've never known. And I definitely am feeling know the Lord speaking to me in that. And I'm trying to focus more on welcoming that than being resistant to it and frustrated by what's not here. And just like focusing on what is here. Like this is an opportunity that we will never have again, probably, hopefully. Hope to God we don't, but you know what I'm saying? But I know it's been really beautiful, actually. Just the stillness of the whole, of the whole thing. So, yeah. How are you Sister?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:04:37] Good, I'm actually your neighbor to the South here, so I, you know, it's nice to be in the same time zone you. Usually Michelle and I are in the same time zone, but now, you and I are in the same time zone. So yeah, my mom had surgery, so I came home to take care of her. And so bless her heart is just, you know, beautiful to just to get back to your mama and try to help her and my moms, you know, as, as you've heard over the years, if you've listened to our podcast, my mom is a force to be reckoned with, and I was telling them when we were right before we started recording that my mom's reward for herself after she recovered from her surgery, she's going to go mow her lawn. To mow her lawn again, it's three acres and she just raring to go. So this is my mother people. This is

Heather Khym: [00:05:14] step two is getting her chainsaw out quick. Right.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:05:18] Now you know why I am the way I am. Yeah, it's so great. But without further ado- last week, if you listen to our episode. So last week we talked about our word of the year, which we've been doing for several years now. And so this episode, we're going to talk about the year of the word. And for our scripture, for this particular episode is from Romans 12: 2. It says, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. And we couldn't think of anybody better to talk about the year of the word than our dear friend, who is the pastor and of the chaplain for the university of Minnesota in Duluth, a man who really needs no introduction - Father Mike Schmitz, welcome to the Abiding Together Podcast Season Nine.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:06:01] Thank you a ton. I also really love that we were talking about the word of the year and flip it around. The Year of the Word. Yes. So good

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:06:10] That's how, that's how we do it here. Did you see what we did? You see what we did there? So.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:06:17] Together Abiding.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:06:19] That's next season. We'll do that. Well, Father you're about to start something really exciting. I think our listeners are absolutely going to love. But before we talk about that and this initiative, and kind of, what's flowing out of your heart and this brand new podcast that you're about to start. We want to know, we can't assume anything anymore. I mean, it's 2021. Do you still drink coffee? First of all? I mean, can we still even talk about that and how do you drink it if you still do.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:06:43] Yes. Uh, yes, the answer is yes, I still do today. Uh, so to beginning, so I've been doing this thing. I hate bringing it up because I feel so. Uh, what's the word? I don't know, sell out a millennial. I don't know. Uh, But I've been doing this intermittent fasting for about two years. And, and so I've been doing a 16, 8th or 18, 6 protocol for a while. That means like you're fasting for 18 or 16 hours then feeding for six. But I had listened to this podcast that talked about after you're 40 and I'm a closer now to 50 than I am to 40. They say that it's better to have extended fasts, like 20 plus hours, a couple days a week, three, four days a week. And so today I was black coffee all morning. And after this, I'm going to put some protein into the coffee to break the fast. So then it'll taste like a mocha. And I haven't had a mocha ever since December 7th, 2007.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:07:43] What happened?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:07:43] I am fascinated that you know that date please share this story.

Heather Khym: [00:07:47] Like what happened on that date?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:07:48] I know this is like a story. Oh, do tell, do tell.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:07:50] We just passed the 13th anniversary last week or a couple of weeks, whatever it was. So December 7th, 2007, I used to do this thing where I'd never drank coffee ever in my life. And then, um, my last year of seminary, I realized I, the people, when I go to their houses as a priest, they're gonna everyone's gonna offer you coffee. Cause that's what people do. They just, Hey, want some coffee? And I don't want to have to say no every single time. So. What would happen is on Fridays, we would go walk down or drive down to the Planned Parenthood building and we'd pray a rosary. And then afterwards I would just split off from the other guys and drive down or walk down to a Starbucks at a Barnes and Noble. And I would be there on a Friday afternoon, Friday evening, and work on my homily for the weekend as a deacon and would have my first coffee. And my first coffee was a caramel macchiato. I think. And, um, I get that every Friday evening or Friday afternoon. And, um, I remember telling my best friend at the time, uh, yeah, I drink coffee now and he asked me what it was and I told him caramel macchiato. He said, that's not coffee. You're drinking a warm shake. And yeah. So I went from that into what caribou coffee up here in Northern Minnesota. We have white chocolate mocha is, Oh man. I'm sure they have it everywhere, but. So that was what I would drink a white chocolate mocha sometimes multiple times a day. And I'd meet with people at a coffee shop and like, I'll get them my white chocolate mocha. And I realized after a while, coffee's awesome. Cause I'm not even hungry. This is crazy.

Heather Khym: [00:09:17] And also gain 20 pounds.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:09:19] So one day I decided I'm going to look up the nutrition information for the white chocolate mocha on caribou coffee.com. And I did, and I thought. Wow. That was the last day I ever had a white chocolate mocha in my entire life because the trade off is not worth it. And now I drink a cup of coffee that costs like, you know, \$2 instead of \$5. So I save money, I don't eat those calories, but with the protein in there it's chocolate and it kind of tastes Kind of mocha-y so that's kind of a nice way to break the fast. That was a long answer to a very introductory question.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:09:58] So we're all still fascinated. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Is your chocolate the collagen, like protein, like that goes in there? Like what chocolate, how do you get chocolate in your coffee? I'm just fascinated by that part

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:10:07] Just protein powder. Cause its good to break the fast with protein and not like fat and protein. Just have it as clean as possible. That's what they say at least,

Michelle Benzinger: [00:10:20] Mmhmm right there with you too. That's all. Yeah. Yeah. That's what they say.

Heather Khym: [00:10:26] So speaking of healthier things, um, I've just started the reform wellness program. With Jackie Mulligan, who we interviewed, it's like a whole body mind soul thing. And this is the time of the year for new things and Fr. Mike, that's why I love what you're doing. And I would love to jump into just understanding what you're doing with the year of the word. And how did you get this idea? Just a year of scripture. Just tell us all about it.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:10:53] Yeah, no, thanks for asking the, um, it's the Bible in a year podcast. And, um, so we went through a number of iterations of what we call it. And so it was the Catholic Bible in a year podcast. It was the Bible in a year podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz. I like to call it the Bible *in your ear* podcast, the audio book. And, but what it is is the Bible, the entire Bible, all of 73 books from January 1st. Well, actually. Any 365 days that you need. So it's not locked into today's January 1st, 2021, but you could pick it up at any time, whether it would be like at the end of next year or in three years from now, the idea is that it would stay constantly free and constantly living in a place where it's accessible to anybody. Who's just experiences the draw of the Holy spirit to know the Lord, even more clearly through his word. And so Every day there - every single day, seven days a week for 365 days, there is, there are three readings essentially. And I love the format of this because there are other podcasts that have like the Bible in a year. There's other reading plans that have the Bible in a year, and this one is unique for a couple of reasons, but one of them right off the bat is that it is based off of Jeff Cavins' Great Adventure Bible timeline. So if you, I don't know if you've ever gone through that Bible study. It is the study that changed my life. I would say that, um, After having, you know, nine years of studying theology, four, five of those being in, you know, graduate level after all of those classes in scripture and theology. When I went through the Great Adventure Bible timeline with Jeff Cavins was when it was like, Oh my gosh, this is, this makes so much more sense. It was like all the pieces that all these, you know, decent instructors had given me, he was like, all of them. Came together. And it was like, Oh, I don't just know what the stories now I know *the story*.

And one of the hallmarks of his Great Adventure Bible timeline is that. He will continue. He he'll keep the narrative going. And the narrative is what are these 14 - He picks 14 narrative

books. And what we're going to be doing is we're going to be following that, that first reading every day is going to be from the narrative books. There's going to be a little bit of a lull in the middle of the reading where it's, there's a lot of prophets. And so. But the great thing is the second reading is always supplemental. Like it's still the word of God, but it's supplemental to - it's in context, I'm trying to say it is in context of that first reading. So when you're going through Exodus, that's when we'll be also going through Leviticus. And that's just, it's so, so helpful. I think, because you're hearing the story of here's Moses and Aaron and the people of God in the wilderness. And also here's Moses talking to Aaron and saying, when you do such and such, you'll also do such and such, you know, it's like, it's not this kind of disconnected. Now I launch into Leviticus and just try to get through the boils and hostels and what to do about the white spot, if it turns blood red or just the context. And, and so that's going to be, I think, hopefully for so many people, a. A huge blessing because it means that the entire time you're being brought into the story. So I don't know. That's a little intro into what it's going to be for the 365 days starting on, you know, we'll starting at the beginning of the year where, when, whenever anyone wants to pick it up.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:14:04] Wow. Oh, so even starting this, like how, what inspired you to even begin a project of this? Yeah, I mean, yes, the Holy spirit, but like what personally inspires you to even take this on?

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:14:16] Well, it was a little bit of, I don't wanna say frustration, I'll say this. Um, a, I really like audio books. Number one, audio books, podcasts, videos on YouTube, but just like I'll put my ear buds in and like play a talk on YouTube and just cook dinner. Like I just, like, I'm always like ingesting stuff through my ears. And so, um, that's one thing. And then I found that when I sit down to read it, it almost doesn't matter how good the book is. I'm like I'm out like a light. I'm falling asleep. My eyes get tired, getting old and, um, Even when it came to the Word I, I like, I want to get deeply into my Bible. Um, but I find myself sometimes, you know, my eyes are getting crossed and I just, I can hear in some ways better than I can see. And I know that the word of God is meant to be proclaimed. Like it is, it is written to be read, to be proclaimed out loud. So anyway, that's kind of like some context. And then what happened was I found myself over the last number of years. I've discovered a number of people that I really trust their opinions. I trust their insight. Uh, they're really smart people. They have even, even have wisdom when it comes to cultural issues or when it comes to insights into politics or insights into just kind of, um, human behavior and what real good living could look like. And I found it a lot of fruit from that. But I also found that when there were certain seasons, when there were certain topics afterwards, it felt really combative. Like afterwards, I felt really like, okay, now I know, and I'm going to argue this, I'm going to fight this, or I'm going to kind of just wrestle with these people who are, wrestle with anybody who might not hold this particular perspective or whatever. I just, the example I like to think of is. Saint Ignatius of Loyola. They say that when he was convalescing from a cannonball wound, that we love to read books like daring and books of glory on the battlefield and of knights and ladies. And, and then he said, when he would read those, he felt this surge of his heart. Like, yes, I want to live like this. I want to be this kind of person. Um, but afterwards he crashed. There was this emptiness and when he read the stories of the lives of the saints or the life of Christ, he had that same kind of surge of that's what I want. That's what I want to live for. But it didn't crash afterwards. The example I always think of my mind is like, eat a bunch of sugar. It's like, that was awesome. It's so great. And you crash versus you have some protein in your coffee and it's like, you have that like bump, and

then it just stays like, no, this is consistent in, this has, has, uh, this consolation is deeper. So what I found was. When I was listening to these people who, again, I respect and are wise, afterwards I would look at the world and be like, ah, crushed by this or crashed. And I started listening to scripture and it just did something to me where it wasn't just consoling, it wasn't just kind of like, okay, that's fine. You know, it was, it was challenging. It was convicting, but it did this thing like referred to, as it shaped my lens of when I put scripture down or put, you know, put the earbuds out. Okay. The way I saw the world was through the lens of the Bible was the lens of here's God working in people's lives.

And. No that's sometimes. Okay. I'll stop right there. So that's the beginning, I guess.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:17:37] Yeah. No. Could you want to continue for that? I mean, I think people can relate to that. I mean, yeah, just please. Yeah, go, please continue. And we'd love to hear.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:17:45] Time for a station station break. This is the abiding together podcast...

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:17:50] Together Abiding please.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:17:51] Thank you.

I, I had this like thought, like, shoot, I would love for this to be. Yeah, I would love for there to be a Catholic version of this because we know that as, as Catholics. Yes. We have the sacred scripture. We also have sacred tradition. And one of the things that happens for a lot of people is they'll get into the Bible and maybe they're able to, they'll be able to read through the whole thing, but we read through it. We often wander through it lost, wondering where does this fit? How does this fit? Not only with, okay. Back in the context, where does this fit with what we believe now, where does this fit with my life? And like, it's be good to have a guide. And so I said, okay, we need to be shaped by scripture so we can see the world through the lens, the biblical worldview, this lens of scripture, but also it would be really helpful to have a guide. I know for myself, whenever I've really gone deeply into scripture. It's almost always been with a guide. There's somewhere that I know I can trust someone I know is deeply steeped in the tradition of the church and they know what they're talking about and the scripture. And so I thought, well, I don't know, I'd like to do that. And so I contacted Ascension and I said, here's the thought, here's what I'd like to do. I don't know if this is maybe it's not me. Maybe it's someone else, but, um, I don't know if this is, this is what I would love. And that was during quarantine that was during, uh, like. I think it must've been somewhere in April of 2020. And it just took a lot of time to shape and come up with a Bible reading plan. And there were some people who work with Ascension who were so good. I mean, they spent hours and hours and hours crafting this Bible reading plan in such a way that things match up in a way that like, again has never. No one's ever created anything like this before. Um, so that it just, we can tell the story and those other, again, those other like prophets can fit like, Oh, that makes sense. That, that, that's why Jeremiah is saying this to the people is because of this what's going on in the story. So this is great news. And I, and they said, yes, they said, we've been wanting to do this for years, but we just didn't have anybody who wanted to do it, or didn't know. I was like, well, I will, if you don't mind. And so.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:20:09] Oh, awesome. That's awesome. That is, that's so amazing. But I think it's seeing the lens through like a biblical worldview, like seeing our worlds and having it, you know, it tells us the scriptures in Hebrew, the world, the word of God is living and active, you know, but if it's living and active in our ears or listening to it, it penetrates to our hearts and comes out of our mouth. And, uh, one of my dear friends here and the town is Jewish and she always says, you know, Her her Jewish children, um, memorize scripture, they have to, for part of their Jewish, I mean, they're extremely Orthodox Jewish, but you know, she's like, you need to know these words. So they don't depart from your mouth day and night. This is one of the age. I mean, and it's just, I love watching the beauty of their faith because it gets me even hungrier for scripture and my faith. And I just think that's amazing, like yes and so needed, like, so, so needed in our culture right now. Yeah. Yes. Oh, I'm so excited. Yeah. Wow.

Heather Khym: [00:21:08] When we do have so many opinions out there, and a lot of people who want to share lots of opinions, I think for many people, they find it confusing is like, how do I navigate this? Who do I trust? And this is what we've kept coming back to as well. And why we started on the importance of learning, how to read scripture and learning how to dive into the Bible is because we, we can trust the words. You know, this is the truth. This is the standard by which everything else should be compared. So we don't need to be afraid. It actually equips us. Like you were saying, to look through the lens of scripture, to everything in the world and hold it to that standard.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:21:41] Yeah. There was something that was so striking. I was going through judges. At one point last, gosh, it must've been either. It was right around that same time, a spring time, maybe early summer. And, and what I just found was this massive chaos. I mean, the, the book of judges is just all about chaos is all about here's God who has called his people to holiness and they. Are living so recklessly and so faithfulness, honestly. And, and then, so they've ended repent and he'd send them a judge and then the judge would bring some order and then they forget about it. And just this, this cycle of, of a, you know, the last line of the book of judges and that in those days there was no King in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes. And as I was going through that book of judges every single day, just a little bit more, a little bit more of these stories. He said I had so much peace because you would have, even in one verse of scripture, it'd be an entire generation just described as one verse. And you think that was one sentence where. Here's people living in chaos and yet the heres the Lord, God, who is accessible to them like any, and he is still called them to be here. And all we have, all we know of them is one verse. And, and it's just like, yeah, again, there's a sense of like, okay, let's have some perspective right now because here has God who is faithful even in an hour, every heartbeat, right? Like our, every breath, he's so close to us. And if one someday, you know, maybe our entire lives or what we're going through right now, would be one verse and in the book of life, you know, so it just it's, it was such, such a gift of perspective. And that's what I, part of what I mean by shaping of biblical worldview is that here's God's word when it comes to living rightly and uprightly and righteously, but also just that perspective of here's what God's people have been through. And so even when we hit the prophets, there's going to be something massively important about, uh, you know, Isaiah's just so long. It's like, well, you had a lot to say and my brother, um, but, but every, you know, new section, every section though, has that. Yeah. And here's where either where I'm convicting you or consoling you. And so it's just, that's so powerful.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:24:03] And I think what you said about having a guide is huge because a lot of people will say, where do I start in scripture? Where do I begin? And once you do have a guide and you really start to break it open, you realize like, okay, it does penetrate your heart and changes your eyes and changes your view. But it was interesting, even on my silent retreat, my spiritual director that guided me, he had me in three scriptures. Or I had two passages, one from John Paul, the second one from John on the cross. I could not do any extra reading. And for me that was painful because I love my books. And he's like, are you going to be obedient to me or not? It's like, this is, I mean, he likes to. Like the smack down a little bit, but anyway, um, so, but I was in Hosea two and I was like, Oh, I've read Hosea where it says, I will lure her into the deserts. You know, I will speak tenderly to, I stayed in those first six verses of that chapter. And I did not get past. For the day and a half and it wrecked me. And, and then I, you know, and that was where the guide was. And then when I realized, Oh my gosh, I'm the prostitute in this? Like, I'm the one. I mean, I was just bawling. It still makes me tear up because it's still so raw. And I was just like, Lord, I'm sorry. Like I have put idols before you I've made you a slave master instead of a husband, but it's all those words of scripture that the prophet Hosea was saying, but. I could say them back to the Lord too. Like, this is what I've made of you like this and it penetrates your heart and it becomes alive in you. And you're like, Oh my goodness. But then it brings this peace because like you said, and I love how you all carefully crafted this together where it tells the greater story, because all scripture is this, this beautiful love story. Like you can say, yes, it's this theological book information, but no, it is a love story meant for transformation of our hearts and our souls. And it's a love story of a God saying, let me tell you my words, I'm coming back for you. And I love you. And here it is. And I got skin in the game. I'm putting my son in this too through, you know, the word become flesh and that. Yeah. Do you feel like that? Like, do you feel this responsibility since COVID has started and all of that, like that you are really a guide, you have a lot of influence, you have become a good father. I mean, I think you're a great father, all of us here, but a good shepherd. Like what has been the Lord's, what is the Lord been? Stirring your heart and all of that.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:26:20] Okay. Uh, thank you for saying that. So I just, yesterday. I was thinking about this was thinking about like the, that, that kind of responsibility, not kind of responsibility, the responsibility and, um, not only that, but just.

So someone had asked me, I'm not sure when it was a student last semester and they said something along the lines of, you know, what should I do to stay humble? Like what should I do when people are saying good things about me and what should I do when, when people are, and I said, father, Mike, what do you, what do you, what do you do? And when people, when people, you know, say these things, and I think that I keep coming back to. The words of John the Baptist, um, at the beginning of John's gospel, when the scribes and priests, Levites and a priest come to John and say, Hey, are you the Messiah? And he has these three words. He says, I am not. And there's something so good about just like, okay, I am not that what you think I am. What I am is true. Like I am the voice crying out in the wilderness. Um, I am, I am that foreigner, you know, I'm not the bridegroom, but I know the bridegroom and I'm here to prepare the way for him. And there's something so good about like, gosh, just being able to say I not only. Uh, won't pretend to be someone I'm not, I can't, you know, I just do it because it's not going to go well for anybody. There's some times when you get really tempted, you can be really tempted to just let people believe things about yourself. Like they're like, Oh, I heard such and such about you. You're like, well, I'm not going to

correct you. And I'm not going to, if you ask me directly then fine, I'll tell the truth. But like, so coming back to this, I think that there is an element of just. Like, okay, Lord. I know that there's, there are our students on our campus via my Bishop before he passed, has asked me to serve. And, um, so that's what I'll keep doing. And then when it COVID happened, as, as we mentioned, we for our students at first, we were like, Oh, well, We, we left, uh, campus for spring break and then all of a sudden it was like, don't come back. And so it was this like cry, we right in the, you know, I, as you know, Lent had just started and we had this whole plan of like, we want to take you on this journey through lent because this is so important for all their students. And then we just couldn't see each other. And so it was a matter of, well, shoot, is there any way we can have our mass in our, in our little chapel? To reach our students. And so that's what we tried to do. And it kind of has gone on from there to being able to be, uh, a mass that I, I, you know, I, I get some friends and some family members, as well as people I don't, I don't know who are able to say that. They're grateful for what we're offering. I don't know what to say other than that, but it has been a, it's been a gift, but also that responsibility of, you know, wanting to, as you said, you know, shepherd, well, I don't know what else.

Heather Khym: [00:29:08] That's beautiful. It's funny. Oh, sorry sister, go ahead. I was going to say, it's funny that you brought up that scripture about John the Baptist. I literally wrote that exact thing down in my journal yesterday and I was like, I'm not this, but I'm the voice. Yeah. Crying out to prepare the way. And, and I think we, we all need somebody to prepare the way, and that's what I see this part of what you're doing. I mean, your whole ministry, but with the scriptures in particular, in journeying with us through that, it's like, you're preparing the way for an encounter. That's the whole point. It's not just to know things or to read something or have another thing on our to-do list and other tasks, or to make us feel better about what we're doing or accomplishing something. But it's preparing the way. With the hope of the encounter with Jesus and encounter with his word. And I'm just curious for you, like when is the time that you encountered Jesus and the scripture in just a real way or scripture that just broke your heart wide open?

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:30:04] Well, you know, like in, in particular, a scripture that has done this. I'm not, I'm going to think about it a little more, but I will think that, especially since Michelle is sharing about her silent retreat, one of the things that happened for me when I was in my first year of seminary, that we have a J term or January term, and I had extra classes here, but not enough classes there. And so they didn't really know where to put me. And so one of the priests on campus, he said, why don't you do a 30 day Ignatian silent retreat? And I said, great. I would love to do that. And so I went out, uh, to, uh, Jesuit Retreat house. And the retreat director had said at one point, um, the first couple of days are, I might even just be the first day is a meditation or reflection on the love of God. So I was like, okay, sure. I'll do that. And I got done and checked in the next day and he's like, you know, I want you to stay there. I want you to keep, keep reflecting on the love of God. Like, okay, next day checked in. He was like, you know what? I don't want you to stay here is to keep reflecting a God's personal love for you. And I'm like, well, you know, the retreat is supposed to start, like I know that are kind of a structured spiritual exercises. And, um, everyone else has started theirs and he held me there for a week. I'm just meditating on God's love for me. And it was, it was so profoundly moving. It wasn't any, there was no explosion. There was no, um, like in this moment of like power, uh, piercing insight. But I hadn't realized the depth to which, uh, so much of my relationship with the Lord was based off of performance and was based off of

being a kid and was based off of not just his completely sheer gratuitous love. And whenever I think of your podcast, I always think of the word abiding and just like that. The invitation to simply abide. Um, and I always contrast like right, abiding and striving are kind of these, these things. They're not, they're more paradoxical, I think, than they are contrary to each other. And, and yet it just, the Lord did something so powerfully over and over every time I would come back to these scriptures of him saying, you know, His words of your precious to me, you are my beloved. You are just the reading scripture like this, and allowing it to be personal and then going on from there and actually got to do the rest of the trade, where with the gospels and being able to see Jesus and do those Ignatian exercises where, you know, you add in a sense. So let me just see the scene. Let me now, let me see it and hear the scene. Let me see it, hear it, like feel the sun or feel the breeze or smell. And then, you know, all these. So that at the end of that retreat, cause this was just, it was, so it was one of the top 30 moments of grace in my life. Um, in the sense of 30 days, I remember leaving this retreat in the two graces of the retreat.

One was I have had been given and awareness and a conviction that I can trust the Lord that has never been taken away. He is, he gave that. And, it is marked everything just then is deep. And I'll say the word abiding trust that that regardless of circumstance, regardless of situation, I can trust Him. And the second. The second grace is why. And the second grace was because I would say that up until that time of just being with him in yes. In his presence, in the Eucharist, in the chapel, but also just being with him in the gospels and watching him and listening to him and, and seeing him interact with people, you know, in, in that sanctified imagination, the way I describe it is like I had an uncle who lived out in California. Um, my uncle Tom, he would call occasionally and I, you know, we'd talk to them on the phone and we loved uncle Tom. And after, you know, the phone call, I would say, okay, bye uncle, Tom, love you. And I meant it. But the difference was like, what if I had gone out and live with my uncle Tom for a month and everything we did, we just got to do it together. At the end of that time, I would know him. And I would know to whom I was saying I love you every time. So I had to, and that was what it was kind of like, it was, it was, I thought I knew Jesus. I would, after spending that time, just watching him and listening to him. So the gospels as a whole, I guess I would say as a, as a big answer, because it was like, Oh, I know you and God, this is, I love you, Jesus. And because of that, when I see seeing you knowing your heart now, I mean just a little bit better. I know I can trust you. I know I never have to fear, even if everything's going to collapse, like even if everything's taken away, even if everything is destroyed, I know I can trust you. And so, so I would say maybe praying with the gospels and, uh, primarily just receiving his love or even just his believing, believing, uh, the depth of his love.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:34:58] That's stunning father. Thank you for sharing that with us. That's very beautiful. And that's yeah. I just want to honor that that's stunningly beautiful. And that's like, to me, as you say that, to just see like an anchor in your soul, like Saint Paul says, I've learned how to live in plenty and in want and, and, you know, in good times and in bad, really, like I've learned how to live because I know he's sufficient for me. And I think that's the love, that's the journey of love. Right. And I wonder if, you know, before we kind of go into our one thing here, what advice would you give? Like, uh, for so many years of being a priest and being a pastor and hearing confessions and walking with people and hearing stories, and, and now about to unveil this beautiful new initiative of, of leading people through God's word, through your, like what advice would you give to people

at the disposition of their heart as they enter in? I mean, obviously you're there, you're giving an intellectual formation, but really. I think it sounds like really what your heart is to, to bring about through the grace of the Holy spirit, a transformation of heart. So what advice would you give to our listeners and people who are really ready to download the app and just get going? Like could you give them a piece of advice as they journey into this beautiful love story with them?

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:36:01] Yeah, I think so. Uh, thank you for asking that too. Uh, I would say it, I just have this word, uh, receive. Mm, it just came up as you're asking the question, I just thought, ah, receive. And, and here's kind of what, I mean, I think that again, when it comes back to, I've been reflecting on this ever since I knew I got to talk to the three of you, the abiding and striving thing. Um, and I know that sometimes yet when we're striving or when we're sometimes it's really good to take scripture up and hunt. Like I really do think there's something really good about taking scripture and hunting. Nice. God, what is it that you want to speak to me? What is it that you, that that is going to speak to either to me or to the someone that I care about right now? And so we can go about that, go about it that way, but there's also something that just is, you can pick this up, and a piece of advice would be, you just press play. And just let me walk with you, uh, and just receive that's. One of the things I love about, again, going back to the audio, uh, way or the word of God proclaimed is in some ways it doesn't cost you anything and it's not as intimidating. Uh, I don't have to figure it out myself. I just get to receive it. And so, but receiving doesn't mean passive, or receptive doesn't mean passive. So I love the example of the difference between so and mass, right? We rest to be seated while we hear God's word. And that posture of being seated, isn't being passive - although sometimes that's what we do - It's a posture of receptivity. And so the example I really like is Fred Astaire and ginger Rogers. I don't know if you've heard this example, but like, so Fred Astaire and ginger Rogers, whenever I bring this up, I think I brought it up last week and we did the teaching mass, um, with our RCIA candidates since a lot of them are in college. And so you guys know who Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers are. They're like, Nope. Like, well, it makes in the last century, there were two of the greatest dancers and blah, blah, blah. And so, you know, everyone talks about great Fred Astaire was, I remember seeing a meme that said, you know, Fred Astaire was incredible light on his feet and did remarkable things with dance. Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did, but she did it backwards in an and in high heels. Well, it's kind of fun, but interesting thing, I once heard that Fred Astaire said he loved dancing with Ginger Rogers more than any other dance partner. The interesting thing about ginger Rogers is she was actually not a professional dancer, she was an amateur dancer. And one of the reasons why he loved dancing with her is because of course she was talented and skilled and because she followed so well. And so he said I would lead her and she would go everywhere or anywhere I wanted her to go. And that's what I think of when it comes to God's word, is that when you press play day one or day 290, it doesn't matter just to have that attitude, that posture of receptivity. That's just like, okay Lord, what is it that you're saying to me today? I'm not, maybe I hunt. Maybe you can do that, but maybe it's just, I'm going to let you talk to me. I'm gonna let you speak to me and I'm just going to receive, and then it, cause, cause there's no pressure then, then it's just like, okay Lord, you're here I am here, speak. And I think that, cause I think there's too often, we, um, Hold ourselves back because we're intimidated by what is this going to cost me? What do I have to know? What am I gonna have to bring? Like now just show up, press, play, and receive.

Heather Khym: [00:39:20] That's so great. Gosh, I can't wait to dive in.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:39:27] Yeah, me too. Me too. Michelle, did you want to say anything before we jump into our one thing for the week?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:39:31] Yeah. I just love the whole where he leads. Let us just follow and receive. Let's just beautiful the word of God. And yeah. And like I said, just coming off of our retreat, so many themes that other Mike is saying, God's just confirming, just making sure his point is known, but I think one of the big things is he has such gifts for us and we just don't even receive or open them in like has it's. It was just receive, open them in like, and the gift, one of his biggest gifts is his word. And so let us just receive and open this beautiful gift and see where he. Leads us in and fall in.

Heather Khym: [00:40:07] Father Mike, I just want to say thank you for all the time that you're taking to do this because we get messages constantly of people saying, where do I find a spiritual director? Like I need a spiritual director and it is so hard to find. And yet at the same time, We have so many who are willing to guide us, you know, and, and yeah, it's preferable to be face-to-face in person. But I know during this time where we've not been able to go to mass for so long and been in lockdown, I have been so far, I've been fathered so well. By yourself and other priests like through these technology means in ways that I never thought was possible. And so for those people out there who are like, I need someone to help guide me while here is one probably of many, but here's one great way to be led right now. And, and I think for all of us, we need to allow ourselves to be led. We need to allow ourselves to step in as a disciple and to follow in very specific, intentional ways. So I just want to say thank you for the gift of this. It's wonderful.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:41:10] Thanks, Heather. That means a lot.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:41:12] Thanks for that. Where do people sign up? How can they, if they're listening right now, like I'm going to sign up right now. Where do they, where do they go? Like, how can they do this?

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:41:17] Yeah, they, they can actually, they can go to [Ascension press.com/bible](https://www.ascensionpress.com/bible) in a year and they can, you can get the, the reading plan. Um, it's already printed out, so you can see it. I love the idea that when you have a map, you can see where you are, but you also can see where you're going. And so if you're on day three, what happens next or whatever? Day 33, what happens next? So you can go in the [Ascension press.com/bible](https://www.ascensionpress.com/bible) in a year. You can also, you can sign up for the email, like the, uh, uh, updates and whatnot by texting the word Catholic Bible. It's all one word, even though it's two words, one word CatholicBible. To the number 33777 just type three, three seven, seven, seven in the, like the number part, and then in the text box, put CatholicBible, um, would be great. You also can already subscribe. Uh, the podcast is up and going and, uh, just hit subscribe and you'll get in a little alert on your phone. If you have notifications that either, either late at night or early in the morning, just pop up and say, yep. The episode for today is available. So you can either start your day off that way or end your day. It will be there every single day for 365 days.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:42:26] Yeah. Yeah. That's so wonderful. That's so wonderful. Well, father, as you know, as you, in our last episode, when you were with us, we do a one thing, uh, for the week. It's something, it can be everything from the serious to the

mundane, to the silly, to some meme that you like, that you just really are enjoying. So we're gonna let you think about that for a second and we'll give ours first. So Heather, would you like to share with our listeners what your one thing is for the week?

Heather Khym: [00:42:48] Sure. I just had complete panic wash over me 30 seconds ago when I realized I didn't have one. So I was like racking my brain and what's come to me is my favorite prayer candle in my purse, which has become very dear to me. That little space in my home is from providential co and they have beautiful candles and beautiful, sacred things. And I just. Yeah. The one that I have is called Holy Mass. The scent is just so awesome. I'm going to be heartbroken when that thing runs out. Cause I don't, I'm going to need somebody to like sneak them across the border or something. Cause I don't know how to even do anything right now. Because I don't want it to be, come on. Like it's been a long time because it's like really my most special thing. So providential co you can check out all the beautiful things on their website and I've found like, Some kind of prayer space, even if it's small, like it used to be at a closet now it's just a little hallway part of my office, but it's just so, so it's been such a gift to me anyway. Yeah, Michelle, what's your one thing?

Michelle Benzinger: [00:43:51] My one thing is, um, is actually a Christmas present from my husband and he got which unbeknownst to him was one of my meditations at, on my retreat. I figured, um, he actually got me the painting from Ascension press and it is Joseph praying over Mary's womb. And he had no idea, like in my silent retreats, they had me, uh, my spiritual teacher had me pray with image of St. Joseph and the Holy family a lot, but it was of St. Joseph praying over, you know, me. And so it was just so beautiful. So that is. Yeah. The one thing is beautiful art. If you haven't seen it from the advent series that sister did with father Mark Toups and father Josh, our family did it for this advent season. And let me just tell you, it has rocked my world, brother, Mark Toups. I've always loved you, but you know, I mean, you've been so dear to us for so long and such a good friend, but boy, this one, this past advent rocks. My worlds. And I think it's very providential with the Holy father. I'm announcing it as a year of St. Joseph, you know, so as beautiful. So thank you, sister. You did a beautiful job too. Can I just tell y'all really quick? My kids, we were watching the advent series. We had young adults like college, young adults in our family that did avid every Sunday night at our house. And sister came up to do her meditation the second week. And they're like, Well, I guess, wait, that's our sister, like, what'd she do. They don't see her as anything, you know, like she's like, and then it was father Josh. That's our father, like I've been there. Like they just like what they doing over there. And so it was so funny, but she was like, Hey, that's our sister, your sister. It was cute. So sister went is your one thing?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:45:33] Uh, well, my one thing has been something that's, it's just been absolutely piercing my heart for a long time now. And it's the. I know it's not the Christmas season, so to speak right now, and this is going to air, but, um, it's the Christmas album by Maverick city music, but their particular version of O Come let us adore him, which you could listen to at any time of the year is it's like 11 minutes long. And it's just part of it where they take it from O come Let us adore him to, to the, the, the lead singer. Just saying I'm going to be like Mary and pour my oil out upon you. Because he's like, if it costs, if it costs me or worth it, if it costs me or worth it, and that I have listened to that probably every day, every day for weeks now. And it's just been ministering so deeply to my heart. And so, yeah, I would say if you haven't heard that album, it's definitely worth a listen, but the, their version of, Oh, come let us adore him by Maverick city. Music is stunningly

beautiful and it breaks my heart every single time. Like I, yeah, it's so lovely. So. Very beautiful father Mike my friend. What is your one thing for the week?

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:46:31] I, cause he just inspired me, um, uh, like a new song I saw, I always I'll say something else, but this is maybe a 0.2, five thing quick. Um, you know, the band reliant. K. Do you remember, uh, had a Christmas album? I'm not sure when it came out, but one of their songs that they it's an original that they wrote is called. I celebrate the day. And I just encourage anybody to, um, ever they it's, it's, it's new, obviously non traditional Christmas song, but, uh, I can't ha I can't even like recite some of the lyrics without choking up, so I'm going to fight my way through that and try to get there. Um, so one of the last lyric is. Huh. Okay. We'll work our way through this. It'll be fine. They don't say it. And I celebrate the day that you were born to die. So I could one day pray for you to save my life. Celebrate the day you were born to die. So I could one day pray for you to save my life. Like, ah, it's so good. I love it. But my one thing. Can't be that two songs in a row. Um, I've been getting into, uh, I get these kicks where I'm like, I need to have less things. And so I have been not Marie Kondo Life, but I don't think the articles of clothing, but, uh, the more thing is, are they useful or are they, are they not useful? And I just was like, wow, I hold onto it. A lot of things, uh, with the idea that maybe someday, maybe this will be necessary, maybe this'll be helpful. Maybe this will be whatever, as opposed to, I think there's something really profoundly. That I'm being moved to trust, uh, in a different way of just saying like, no, I, I can, I can be, I can have less. And I can not just to assume that there's no clutter, not just so it's easier to clean, but because it's easier to trust when, when I'm willing to get support with something that I, even if it's, uh, For some, some things, even if it's a sentimental thing, just to be able to say it, but it's okay. I can let go of this. And still still know that this gift that was given to me was a gift of love. And I, I still have the love, even if I don't have the gift, there's something in there about that that just, uh, I've been reflecting on. So it's been a reflective kind of process of, uh, clearing out some things and giving away some things. And, but it's been, uh, also, yeah, a good kind of spiritual practice as well. I think.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:49:13] Amen to it. I think it just in spite of alerts, there's a clean up there. It's like, we need to, we just need it. We just need to get rid of stuff, father. Thank you so much for joining us. It's always a delight to have you with us on the show. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. And thank you for just pouring out. Your heart out is such a good bridegroom is such a good father. Like we're so grateful for the gift of you and your continued. Yes. And your priesthood and just who you are as a man and a brother and a son and a friend. And so. We're just really grateful. So thank you so much. And thank you for this new initiative. I can't wait to sign up. I want to sign up today. So, wow.

Fr. Mike Schmitz: [00:49:45] One last thing is that it's so funny, cause this is only my second time on together abiding podcast. But, um, but one of the things that you, you, the three of you do so well is just Affirming fatherhood affirming individuals. Like they're just, they're there, it's so clear, uh, the way in which you actively communicate love and respect. Um, and so I just it's it's so upbuilding even to just visit because I'm like, wow. Wow. They, they really, really. Communicate so clearly and just convey so clearly the depth of love and respect and upbuilding as opposed to anything else. And I just am so, so grateful for that because it's like, what is it? Why is this so different talking with Heather, Michelle, and sister, it's like, Oh, it's because of that. Like, there's this profound way in which you, yeah, just love well and respect. Well, and, and build up anyways. I just wanted to pass it on to you. I can edit that out if you want. If it's too embarrassing,

Heather Khym: [00:50:48] I don't want to edit this out.

Michelle Benzinger: [00:50:51] Thank you. Listen to it over and over again, your affirmation just again.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: [00:50:59] Great. Well, thank you. Thank you. Well, thank you dear listeners. And we, we want to encourage you to sign up, sign up for the year of the word and, and join the journey of going through the Bible with the mic and just allowing the Lord to transform your heart and go to and press I'm checking on the podcast app and come along, come along on the journey. Maybe we'll have some discussions. Mid-year father, we'd love to have you back and just maybe see kind of how that works and, you know, we'll see how we can coordinate our schedules. Yeah. But thank you so much. And we're in it to win it. Friends, welcome to season nine. And until next week we will be abiding together. God bless you. Have a wonderful week.

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