

S10 E03 - Journey Into the Deep Transcript

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

Hello, and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast. Season 10, episode 3, we are going to talk about journeying into the deep, into the very, very, very deep places.

Heather Khym: Woo. rolling in the deep.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yes. And I just want everybody to know that somebody mentioned that - one of those two which shall remain nameless, mentioned the Adele song rolling in the deep. Now I can't get it out of my head. So yeah.

Michelle Benzinger: Once again. Well, thank you. It was me. You're welcome. But once again, I'll just put it on the song link for Abiding Together karaoke. So all of our groups, people that meet in a group, if someone would like to make a little

Spotify Abiding Together Groups Karaoke list. That feels really good. And you can join together with your nearest and dearest and sing all the different songs that we mention on Abiding Together Podcast. Thank you. It will be a good time had by all.

Heather Khym: I see it now. We're going to go on tour and then Michelle's going to break into song towards the end. Michelle I'm really excited about that idea.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh, yeah. If you go first Heather... Actually Sister is the one that breaks out in the song really well, but it's okay.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I do. I do think in songs at times. It happens. So good. Yes. But today will not be one of those. Well, it might be one of those days. We'll see the podcast just started. We're one minute in and there's so much time to be had where a song could emerge from one of us.

Michelle Benzinger: Yes. Okay, okay good.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: But we do know that something will emerge next Monday that you do not want to me. It is unprecedented in the history of the Abiding Together Podcast. You will not want to miss. You don't want to miss today's of course, but next Monday you will not want to miss what is about to happen.

Heather Khym: It is unprecedented.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It is unprecedented. It is dare we say epic. We don't use that word lightly, but it is, it is epic.

Michelle Benzinger: At least in our world it's epic.

Heather Khym: Too much? Too much? Building it up too much? No, no.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: So we're going to let you sit for a week and think about what that might be, but we're very, very excited.

Okay. But today we're going to, as we mentioned, we're going to talk about journeying into the deep, and I love this quote from Saint Teresa of Avila that says the feeling remains that God is on the journey too, that God is on the journey. From Psalm 42, where it says deep calls to deep in the roar of your torrents and all your waves and breakers sweep over me. And so Jesus is always calling us into the deep places. And Heather or Michelle, I love the quote that you pulled out here from Dr. Larry Crab, which I think is just going to blow our podcast open today where he says, and we'll talk about it. He says, God meets us where we are not where we

pretend to be. God meets us where we are, not where we pretend to be and do we not all pretend to be in a variety of places. Isn't that so wonderful? So where'd you come across that quote, Michelle?

Michelle Benzinger: It was in my counseling homework. Thank you very much, people. Y'all all can pay me money cause I'm giving y'all cheap therapy anyway, just kidding. You're welcome. And so, but I love that because really, even that quote opened up something in my heart, it's really to go into it deeper, no pun intended into a deeper area of my heart to really see like, okay, what is the terrain in my heart and what areas and what places and what places has my heart been closed. And I just, I think this journey the last year and a half for me emotionally and spiritually has been like looking at the parts of myself that I just don't like about myself: my humanity, my littleness, my poverty. And that I've been aware of, but I think this is the difference, where I've actually now invited the Lord and other people into these places also, and for him to move in power. And for me to treat these places, not as hostile enemies, but as just little parts of myself that needed to be integrated into myself and to be okay, like, this is where I'm at. And the Lord is transforming it and changing it, but this is where I'm at also and be okay about it. It is what it is. Yeah.

Heather Khym: I love it that in that quote too, it's that God is there, you know, in the places where we're... we like to live maybe sometimes with a lot of excuses or denial or just numbness or avoidance or whatever, but it's like, we're avoiding a place where God is. But it says in scripture that he draws close to the broken hearted. Like he's always where people are broken in the scriptures. If we look like he specifically seeks them out, like the woman at the well. Like why was he there at midday when no one else is there? Because he knew she'd be there. There's only one reason why he was there. And it was to meet her there. And that's a good reminder for me. It's like, God desperately wants me to meet him there in my little places where I actually am, not where I've convinced myself I am or where I wish I was, you know, or where I feel guilty that I'm not. Like instead of living in just the guilt of like, oh, I wish I was at a different place, but, but yeah to just hold that like Jesus is there in the place that I actually am. And usually that's very little and broken, but also the places where I have dreams that aren't met yet, or hopes or desires or passion or whatever it might be. Jesus is there. Yeah, that's super hopeful. What about you Sister? What comes up for you?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well the invitation always to go deeper too, that love never ends. Which is why, you know, we say that every fairy tale in the Western world ends with "and they lived happily ever after," because that's the desire for eternity. That's the desire for heaven. And that's the kind of love that we all want to live. We want a love that continues a love that grows a love that cherishes, a love that... like CS Lewis says is like a book which no one on earth has ever read, which goes on forever, and which every chapter is better than the one before. And so I just

love Christ's heart there - of him calling us out into the deep and God continually walks with us in the place - it's so great - in the places where we are not where we pretend to be. And we all have those rooms in our heart where we are pretending to be either greater or in a sense smaller too. God convicted me of something a couple of years ago, where I found myself just. I found myself just - see - saying, oh, it's just this, oh, it's just this. Oh the reason why I'm not happy, It's just this. Or the reason why I didn't do that, it's just this and the Lord very lovingly convicted me one day. And he said, it's not *just* anything. This is what a *just* thing. This is an undercurrent in your life that I want to come to meet you here. And it was such a strong conviction that every time now that I've caught myself saying that I, I can't say that to the Lord anymore. Because it's not just anything. It is such a deeper story that current events might be pressing on that are revealing, but it was a place where I was. Um, what's the word I'm looking for? I was like dissipating. So it was like these current situations would come and I was trying to dissipate what was really happening in my heart into that saying, it's just this, it's just this thing. And the Lord was like, that's not what's happening. And so for me, yeah. Ooh. Yes. And it's a very loving thing. Like he loves us so much that he wants us to live in the truth and the truth makes us free. It makes us free over and over and over again. So then we can, we can live in his love and the truth of who he is.

Michelle Benzinger: I think there's something about going into the deep and going deeper and saying, okay, this is where I really am, not where I pretend to be, but Lord, where do you want to unfold or reveal to me in what is going on? Like, what are the deeper things going on in my heart right here? And what am I covering up? But also even going deeper than that, what is the true, longing and desire of my heart here that I'm trying to cover up with other things? Like I realize we've mentioned this book before, by Dr. Gregory Popcak, but is it called Broken Gods? Yes, but he talks about the seven, basically seven longings of a person's heart that come out of the seven sins. You know, and what's the deeper issue. And that has just like really reframed how I even approach myself. If it is like looking like, I like think he uses lust. Like if you're struggling with lust, the deeper desire is communion. You know, if you struggle with gluttony, it's like another deeper desire. And so I'm like, okay. But I think most of us, I'm speaking about myself. I mean, I'm speaking kind of for all of us, but I really can just only speak about myself. I think that one of the challenging things is to put names to our deepest longings and desires, you know, like what is really going on. And Lord take me into the deep places of my heart and don't let me be scared or fearful of what I find. But we say this often, but approach it with holy curiosity. But Lord help me name my desires, you know, because you place them within my heart and help me align them to the good of you. You know, transform them in any areas they're disordered. But Lord, you bring goodness, you have planted these desires in my heart for a reason. Why? What? I think we're almost afraid of what the things we desire, we're afraid of almost goodness. You know, wouldn't you think so Sister?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Oh, I do. I think we're terrified of our deepest desires. I think because of where we feel their lack, where we've also misused them. So we say, if I live into my desire, see this is what happens. So it just seems easier.

Heather Khym: Yeah. That twist of the desire.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It's easier in a sense, quote, unquote, easier just to cut the whole thing off and then pretend we don't have any desires or to kind of grasp at this forbidden fruit. And it's like with this really, you know, a negligible level of satiability, which is just really destructive. And that's really the key cause of Christ. You know, God is bringing us into the fulfillment. You know, that's what heaven is: the fulfillment of all desires. Dr. Ralph Martin has that book fulfillment of all desires. And I think a lot of times we don't even know we are pretending. We have no, we don't know that until God's so deeply in his loving mercy, reveals that to us in his tenderness, which everyday life will often reveal where we are pretending. And amen to it. It's so wonderful because then we can have a conversation with him about where am I going and what are my deeper desires? And Lord bring me more deeply into the true intimacy, which I long for, which is you.

Heather Khym: Yeah. I think, you know, there's lots of things that we can manage well in our life and convince ourselves that we're managing on our own, you know, a lot of little things we can take care of, but when it gets to desire and these places where it's deep, deep, deep, deep, deep, you know, we feel like very quickly like, oh my gosh, like, I don't know. I can't get a handle on that, you know, and for some people, yeah, there is rampant twists for most of us, you know, in various areas to various degrees, you know, there's twists of the desire that the enemy will take something good and twist it into something not good. And usually when we do that and when we go down a path of living out of this twisted desire, we will shut that place off and almost like compartmentalize it into something else. It's like, well, I'm still going to church. I'm still... I'm really struggling over here, but I'm kind of just like, not addressing this. I'm just sort of avoiding it because I don't know what to do. And it's like, so scary and big that will just sort of like cut off, like one ourselves to that part. Like it's like we dissociate from it, but we also don't allow the grace of God to come in there and purify it. And it can like, no matter how twisted our desires have become, God can purify, heal, and restore anything. Like it's never too far gone. And, and we may have to like, make some big decisions, you know, to get certain things in place for healing to occur, but it's not too far gone. I think that some people are so scared. Like you said, Michelle of their desire, you know, they're just - and sister you said that too - petrified because we've often dealt with it without God's grace really active there. And I think when we open wide the door to let God handle the big things within us, he should handle the little things too.

But I think he meets us with so much care and that he wants to become the fulfillment of that desire like you said. So this is why, you know, we often hear about people who have this double life sort of going on. Where they're like, yeah, part of my heart, I'm living for God. And this other part is like, so messed up that I can't even come to grips with it myself, you know? And I often wonder I'm like, how can people live like that? How can they sleep at night? It's like, well, it's amazing what we can do. You know? And I think back at certain places in my own life, like earlier on when, yeah, so far away from the Lord yet trying to convince myself it wasn't that bad, but those are these precise moments that we can allow God to show his greatness and who he really is. Like, that's where we need a savior where we need God to be big, where we need him to be the capable God that he is to handle. And what I mean by handle is to gently come in. And also break chains like he's coming in gently with us, but with his power and his might to set us free.

Michelle Benzinger: It makes me think, because I was laughing about this because when I was typing up the show notes, it was right around St. Augustine's feast day. And I was like, you know, if there was ever a person, a Saint, and in the church's tradition that has some really disordered desires people like, you know. What was his prayer? Lord make me chaste, just not yet. I mean, come on. Like, but I love his honesty and that line, like, just not yet, like, but this is where I'm at. And I was reading another book on St. Augustine and someone said that he's like the perfect AA sponsor, you know of like, there's nothing you could do. Tell me, you want to say, this is all the bad stuff you've done, or the things that you feel are sinful. Let me tell you my story. Like I can one up you, you know, but not in that but He turned everything to grace. In the most wounded places, Saint Augustine, allowed God's glory to shine through and to redeem and to order correctly and to restore. And I look back on my own life. And I think about this and Chris and I, my husband and I were talking about something last week and just about marriage and family and everything. And I think one of my biggest fears was becoming a wife. I had like terrible anxiety about getting married, not about Chris, but about me and the ability to be a wife and to get married, because I honestly did not see that many happy marriages. And my parents were in the process of a divorce as I was preparing for marriage. So it was just a super place of hard for me. And I just didn't trust that the Lord's goodness could be in a lot of marriages, you know, or what it looked like. And I didn't trust that I had what it took. I was like, I felt like everyone else had this toolbox full of tools and that I was missing all the tools and that everyone had lessons that they went to school for. And I was like, was I absent for like a month or two when they talked about marriage school or wife school or whatever, and that realizing now, like I didn't have the tools, but I had the toolbox because the sacrament and marriage, and I've picked up the tools as I've gone along and I've allowed the Lord's grace to meet me every single place in our marriage to pick up the places, you know, and this makes me tear up.

Like I was even having a conversation with Chris last night, he's out of town and we just had a funny disagreement and we were just laughing. And we were just laughing at one another and coming back and he's like, we're together. Like that's not going to separate, like so stop. You want to hide and just, I was like, I don't want to hide. I'm just tired. I don't want to talk about it. He's like, but I'm not going to let you run. So let's get it. And we, and like the quickness of the repair, the quickness of the reconciliation, I mean, we're talking minutes instead of something that would have lasted days. And I was thinking to myself, Lord, you taught this girl that didn't know how you know how to love, how to do this. But it's if not by grace, but it's a response to grace. And one of the things I'm most proud of is my marriage, but not in a prideful way. But in a God displaying his glory, teaching me little by little, this is how you do it. Holy by holy, little by little, this is how you build a marriage. This is how you build family. And I think the Lord wants to do that in all the places in my life, not just that area. And so, but do I respond to grace in the same ways in the different areas of my life?

Heather Khym: That's beautiful. Thanks for sharing that.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. Michelle, that's so very tender and you're speaking of the deep places, you're speaking of the deep places where you and Chris have gone into deep waters and it continues to get deeper and deeper. And I would imagine just like any other relationship or like a relationship with God or anybody else, there's always that choice of how will I respond? Cause you could have easily, even last night told Chris, I don't want to talk about this and you could have hung up the phone and still talked about it later, but you were uncomfortable and heart was hurting but you knew that he loved you. So you're letting him lead you into deeper waters and then comes the repair. And I was just thinking of that, the efficacy of grace and the timing of grace and our response to those moments. Our response to those moments and the deep ache that we have. I love the quote by St. John Chrysostom, uh, that says longing in itself is a prayer of deep intimacy and intensity but longing for God is a love too deep for words, right? I'll read that whole thing again. Longing in itself is a prayer of deep intimacy and intensity longing for God is a love too deep for words, and that desire that we have, that every human person has for connection, for attachment, for softness, for kindness, for stability, for love, for understanding, for acceptance, for being received and allowing ourselves to be received by another. And, oh my gosh, we ache for that. Gosh, we ache for that. And we have so many of our own self defense mechanisms and we have so many life experiences that tell us that that's not for me or that's not going to happen, or that's not what love is, but yet the ache remains. And we know it, cause it's eternal. So I think being able to articulate those things, of sitting in that ache at times when we find ourselves sinning or in, but not even that, much before that, of just what's happening in our hearts at a moment to moment level. And just coming to that reality, like Lord I'm aching deeply here, I would just I want to be

received or I just need some stability or I need some, somebody to pursue me or check on me or, you know, just that little things. And so then we say, well, this is stupid and it's not stupid because it matters. And Christ is always pursuing us. And so those are, those are the deep places. That's how any relationship grows first and foremost, our relationship with God who is perfectly receptive and attentive and then flowing off to others.

Heather Khym: Yeah. I remember this image that I had, um, which I think I shared on the podcast too, a couple of years ago of just feeling like I was in this deep, deep water and just my face was like above the water. Well, my whole body was like in the water and, and the water really was like, disappointment, anxiety, difficulty, hardship, sorrow grief, like all of these things. That was the water that I felt like I was just barely breathing in. And I had this experience of feeling like the Lord was just extending his hand and pulling me out of the water, which is like the scripture in Psalm 18, which I love so, so much where it says he drew me out of the waters too deep for me. He set my feet on the opening, he rescues me because he loves me. That experience contrasted with being enveloped in the ocean of God's mercy in his love, the love that remains, like the abiding love of God that he's inviting us into always. Like in that scripture, it's so beautiful in John where he's like, will you remain with me? Will you remain in my love? Like allow yourself to be totally consumed and enveloped by the ocean of my mercy and love. I'm like, oh my gosh. Like instead of it being a place of despair. And like, I don't know if I'm going to survive this to be really floating in the love of God. Like, so I don't know. There's just this image of like, floating with like, you know, your arms and legs, just like wide open to what God wants, you know, receptivity that's there. Like that's the place where I want to bring my desires. You know, is into that place where I'm so small in my desires, really, they feel so big for me, but they're so small in comparison to the greatness of God who wants to meet those desires. So even when things are disappointing on a natural human level, and even though I might experience grief, like when you can allow the Lord's love to envelop you there. And when I've experienced that in my own life, it changes everything. You know, his love heals, his love restores. Yeah. And I think there's life to be found like definitely life to be found on the other side of disappointment and grief. And so, yeah, I just think there's a, there's a place of hope there in these things that feel so big and unknown, things that feel mysterious in some ways that we can't figure out - our vocations our future, like all of these hopes that we have, but to just like allow ourselves to experience the stability of a God who is always faithful and his love never fails us.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Which I think you're so articulately, speaking of the difference between being in the deep and drowning. Because sometimes I think in life, we feel like we're drowning, we feel like we're drowning and it's a storm too big we can't swim out of it. And we have no life jacket. It feels like we have no life jacket and we feel so much like Peter and I, I think what you're saying there, Heather is like

the reaching out to the Lord saying this is bigger than me. But you're here with me and I'm just going to surrender. And even if it's just one small thing, Lord, you can take that and help me. I'm drowning. I need you. I need you to come save me. I need that. And those cries out to God are, he takes us very seriously and he attends to us. Right there.

Michelle Benzinger: Because he tends to us right here. It tells us in the scripture, the Lord hears the cries of the poor and he is a God that will come, you know, he hears our cries. He comes and he'll become close to us. Like we said earlier in the previous episode, he's close to the broken hearted. So he wants us to, you know, just come to him in all these places. But Heather, I love what you were saying. I mean, Sister, what you were saying about the distinction between drowning, you know, or in the deep. You know, I feel like when you're in the deep, there's almost not an ease, but a trust where you can almost like where you're floating. You know, when you're trying to swim or especially if you're trying to swim upstream, you're exhausted and you're tired, but there's something when you flip on your back and you're just floating and you can get the air in your lungs, you can do all these things. There's an ease when you're just floating on your back. You know, I was watching my nephew who was two last year, getting swim lessons. They taught them how to, there was the swimming lessons where they taught him how to, you know, they immerse them and teach them how to swim in case they fall in. I was totally traumatized watching these lessons, but anyway, but they teach him first to flip on your back, but when you're on your back and you can float and I was asking him like, MJ, were you ever scared? He goes, no. Cause you always know you can float. Amen boy. Always know you can flip and float, but we're supposed to float in God's grace, you know, where there's an ease to that. And, um, it comes with trust and surrender, like we've said earlier.

Heather Khym: Yeah. And I think there's also a maturing process that has to occur to stop fighting, you know, in the water to, sometimes you need to stop treading the water and you just need a float. You just need to like surrender to what God wants to do there, not surrender to disordered desires, of course, we're kind of talking about a lot of different things here, but, to surrender to him and what he wants to do in us, and I'm excited about this season because we are going to be going deeper into maturing processes and maturing themes, to help us all grow, which is really exciting. I mean like the Christian life is meant to be fully lived and we don't want to stay, you know, at an immature place, but really grow into mature followers of Jesus.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And speaking of that, Michelle, do you want to speak with our listeners about, cause we are about to go into the deep in a very deep way, which is why you will not want to miss next Monday's episode. In the beginning of we're going to kick off some really awesome things, but Michelle, do you want to

paint the vision for that to kind of help our listeners open their hearts to what we're about to dive into?

Michelle Benzinger: Sure I would love to. Okay listeners, next week, we are going to start something that is unprecedented and not like 2020 unprecedented, but unprecedented, we are going to take you on a journey. We have really been praying about the podcast and we've been really praying about where we need to go as a community, a podcast community, and we feel like we need to go deeper into identity. You know, we feel like our roots need to go deeper and we feel like that we want to give you also building blocks and tools to really just discover. For the Lord to meet you where you're really at and to see where you need to grow, to see where he needs to come in, where he needs to love you, and where you have grown and to see. So we are going to be focusing on the next two seasons. Um, the rest of season 10 and 11, there'll be a little breaks, advent and lent, but there'll be building blocks and they'll build upon one another. So we're going to start with the identities of women and we will be starting next week with some other amazing surprises on the identity of daughter. And it will be a four-part series. And then we'll build on sister and then we have Advent and then we'll come back for season 11 and build on mother and then bride. And so each identity has four parts to it and we're going to go on a journey and it is going to be a little bit different than we've done before, but we really feel like this is the heart that the Lord has for us as a community. And we're really excited. And for the men folk. You need to join us also. For our male listeners, like, Hey, we are giving you a blueprint into women's hearts. Like, come on.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: You can thank us later.

Michelle Benzinger: You can thank us later.

Heather Khym: This is your best vocational prep you can get.

Michelle Benzinger: Yes. And so whatever vocation you're in, we're helping you.

Heather Khym: Yeah. priests who in ministry to women.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah whatever! So we are here for you, men folks. So this is a journey and don't feel like if you miss an episode, like you can always go back. They build upon one another, but you can listen to them separately also, but they do build. But we really want to go on a journey with you. We want to go deep into the heart of the father and deep into each of our own hearts. So we're so excited.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: We are excited. And we often say, if you've been listening to our seasons, that we will get into episodes and we'll say we could talk on this for four hours. And so that's pretty much what we do. So we actually literally took it seriously. And we're like, no, we're actually going to talk about these things extensively and allow them to unfold. And we're going to do so in a way that I think is just really going to bless you. We're very excited. We're very excited about this, so we can't wait for you to experience what is about to drop next Monday. So please don't miss it. And I think it's going to be a great also facilitation for small group. And moms and daughters and sisters and husbands and wives and people in communities, religious communities. I just think it's going to be a great entryway into some deeper conversations that need to happen. And also a deeper discovery of our own hearts and the hearts of our sisters near us.

Heather Khym: Yeah. So some of you might be thinking, oh, I've been wanting to do a short series or something. Now is your time. Gather your small group, be like, Hey, do you want to meet for the next four weeks and dive into identity and daughter.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Like always we have show notes for you. We have discussion questions. So we've made it as easy as we can, so you can jump right in, you know, no pun intended. So we're using a lot of water metaphors today, like diving and jumping in, floating, you know.

Michelle Benzinger: So if you haven't already subscribe to our podcast and so you can get our show notes and get all the links that you need and we'll have the weekly emails, the links are in the podcast description.

Heather Khym: And just a shout out to our patrons on Patreon. That's where people can donate. We're just so grateful for your generosity and we pray for you that God would bless you, but you really are helping us go where we want to go this season. I'm super excited about that. I just want to remind all our patrons in case you don't know, log into your Patreon account because there are videos every month from Sister Miriam, Michelle, and I. Just individual videos on various topics that we feel like talking about, but you can access those any time on your Patreon. You just have to log into your account.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: And more fun surprises coming soon, I think. The word on the street. So, so yes, we are very excited about that. So as we. Should we continue the metaphor. What's another water metaphor we could use?

Heather Khym: We're going to slide into our one thing.

Michelle Benzinger: Oh my gosh. Wow.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well done!

Heather Khym: Like a water slide?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: My brain is like what. Alright Heather Khym you go for it. You go girl.

Heather Khym: Well we had just the sweetest email from two young boys named Will and Walker. These young men are awesome. And they are actually making handmade rosaries. Their website is called Rings of the Lord. Is that not genius? That's great! Way to go guys. And they're making just these sweet, handmade rosaries. So I just want to encourage everybody to check out and support these young guys and what they're doing, making a gift of themselves to the church in this way, ringsofthelord.com. You can check them out!

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Rings of the Lord! Michelle?

Michelle Benzinger: My one thing this week is I talked about it a little in some of the episodes, but I just want to give a shout out because it happened in the summer is the Given forum. And it is an amazing initiative for young adult women that want to release something that the Lord is doing in them, and they give you mentors and support. And I absolutely loved the forum in Washington, DC in June. And they will have another one coming up this summer, but I will send the link to that. If you're a young adult woman, check this out, you know, I just absolutely love it. Heather will be there this upcoming summer. I love the girls that I get to mentor with this. And it was so much fun with the lay mentors. And the religious sisters together. I've never seen a combination of just laity and religious sisters and just the gift of spiritual motherhood together and Rachel and the whole crew, Cynthia, and the whole crew do such a great job. So I will post the link to Given Forum in our show notes. Sister!

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Awesome. Well, that's very fitting because speaking of religious sisters, I just want to give a shout out to all of our religious sisters. Y'all are just such beautiful representations of the bride. I just want to say thank you as one sister to another, one mother to another. Thank you so much for your yes to your spouse, Jesus Christ. Just such a gift and I want to, in particular, I want to give a shout out to the Carmelite sisters in Alhambra, outside of Los Angeles. And they are so fun. So wonderful. So they have been working through Dr. Bob Schuchts' Be Healed as a community. Could you imagine that? Over a hundred sisters for an entire year, working through Bob's program be healed and then they invited Kim Glass and Fr. John and myself to give a healing retreat to their community. So we were there for five days over the summer, and they're so lovely. Mother Gloria Therese and her whole community. And I felt like I was in a movie. A lot of the times

we went to their final vows. We like roasted a pig. They had, they had mariachi. Like, it was just so wonderful and they sang beautifully and they prayed beautifully. And they're just such beautiful women. And I was personally edified by them. So I'll put their website, you can check out the Carmelite sisters. They are absolutely wonderful community. It was a true blessing.

Michelle Benzinger: Can we just talk about their habits for a minute? Like their habits when they go to Mass. Like when I was at the Given Forum, when they would come from us, they had the capes and I was like, yeah, great fashion choice, ladies. Great fashion choice. I mean, that's the reason why they do that's it, you know, I feel like it's a good fashion choice.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Don't we all.

Michelle Benzinger: but I was like, they are just stunning, like, you know, inside and out. Beautiful. Beautiful.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. Alhambra Carmelite Sisters you guys are great. Well, dear friends, it has been a joy to dive into the deep with you and to allow the Lord to come and continue to find you wherever you are. Not where we're pretending to be. Right. But where we truly are. So until next week and our amazing surprise, and we can't wait to see you there - we will be Abiding Together. God bless y'all have a wonderful week.

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And God bless you.