

AT S9 E13 Lent Part 6 Transcript

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hi friends. This episode is brought to you by SpiritualDirection.com, the largest website dedicated to authentic Catholic spirituality in the world. An apostolate of the Avila Foundation, SpiritualDirection.com is a source of all things good, true and beautiful in the Church today. It features webinars with best-selling authors, powerful reflections, teachings, videos and podcasts on the scriptures as well as the saints, spiritual warfare, and discernment of spirits, as well as news about upcoming courses in spiritual theology—including some of your favorite Carmelite saints! Right now, for a limited time, if you go to spiritualdirection.com/Elizabeth, you can get a free download of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity's most beautiful quotes. You can print them, frame them, and share them—and be reminded of God's immense and unfailing love. So check out spiritualdirection.com.

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 us 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 this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast, part six of our wonderful Lenten study on the book *This Present Paradise*. And we are so excited, so excited, so excited to have the author of the book Claire on with us today. And so we're just going to have her sit tight just for a second. And we're going to ask her about coffee, but Heather and Michelle, like we've come to the end of our journey here. How has, just really briefly here how has it been for you, Heather, just going through this book and as we welcome Claire on the show of just what that journey's been like for you.

Heather Khym: Yeah. I didn't know anything about St. Elizabeth. So this was my first introduction to her and it was very easy to just fall in love with her, you know. I think sometimes we get the idea that there are certain people or there are certain ways that they live, that we just can't relate to at all. I mean this little nun living in a cloistered monastery, and I just found her, so yeah, like relatable in so many ways, even though I am married and have three kids and I'm definitely not living in a cloister, especially. Yeah. Just the cloister within and finding Jesus in the little things and in the, in the daily like messes of life. So it's been a wonderful journey and I'm so grateful to have been introduced to this lovely little Saint. It was actually yesterday that I was thinking I was reading and I was like, Wait, this isn't just a story about someone like she's still with us, like in heaven, like, duh, I know, I know you guys, duh, but it just crossed my mind in a very real way. And I was like, Oh, I can ask her to intercede for me in certain places. And so it just felt like an actual personal connection with her that occurred yesterday.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It's been a delightful journey and I'm happy that Claire's on the show today because I just loved the way she's written the book and has opened it up for

me. And I've heard, I've heard Elizabeth of the Trinity, but I hadn't read any of her writings. Of course, St. Terese is much more well known and St. Teresa of Avila as well. So it was just an absolute delight just to see the beauty of her life incorporated into the lives of all of us. I'm not, I mean, I'm a religious sister, but I'm not cloistered. And so my life looks very different than Sister, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity's life. And so it's just beautiful to see a glimpse into that, and then into her humanity and in her love. And I'm just so excited that Claire is with us today. So the topic of our, this last episode of our series is going to be the guiding quote from Saint Elizabeth is let yourself be loved. And so we are delighted to welcome Claire Dwyer to the show. We are just so happy to have you, Claire. We can't wait to hear your heart and the book and all things beautiful. But first of all, we have to ask you, how do you like your coffee? How do you take your coffee?

Claire Dwyer: Black. Strong and black.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: and probably lots of it. Yeah. Well welcome. Thank you for coming on the Abiding Together Podcast. We're happy to have you.

Claire Dwyer: Well, you're happy. Gosh, I am so happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

Heather Khym: Yeah, Claire. I would love to just know, like where are you from and what, what's your family dynamics? Like? Can you just share a little bit about yourself with us?

Claire Dwyer: Yeah, absolutely. I'm originally from Wisconsin. I have a great family of origin. And I was raised in the faith. So praise God for that, my parents were involved in the charismatic renewal when I was a young teenager and through their involvement, I came across a book on their shelf called let the fire fall by Fr. Mike Scanlan. And I read that and devoured it when I was just, you know, probably 15, 16 years old. And I said, I think I want to go to Franciscan University. So we share that in common and that was a great blessing in my life. I got a degree in theology there and I met my husband there, moved to Phoenix and we have six children. I work full time for the Avila Foundation, mainly on their website, spiritualdirection.com. And then in my few minutes of spare time, I do like to write. And so that's how the book came to be. And I have a blog and all that. So. Yeah. In a nutshell.

Michelle Benzinger: For our listeners, like you can see the beauty of Claire's writing in this book, but she also has a blog and writes other articles. And I came across her writing a couple of months ago and I was like, Oh, I love the way she writes and incorporates deep spiritual truths, but yet makes them so applicable to each and every one of us and our everyday life. And a good friend of ours told us that we should connect. And so Claire and I met. Basically never have met in person, but we met like via on the phone and online and stuff, probably about six, maybe a little bit longer, eight months ago. And it was just this instant kinship. And I was like, Oh, I love her. You know, just similar states of life, similar all of that. But Claire is such a beautiful teacher and she teaches so beautifully and writes what she teaches so beautifully. So we're just so excited to hear her heart and hear all of that so.

Claire Dwyer: Thank you, Michelle. Well the feeling was mutual. Yeah, I think you're right. There was an instant connection.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That is beautiful. Well maybe Claire, you could kind of just talk about the development of the book and like, I think we were speaking of earlier that a lot of people know about St. Therese, but a lot of people don't know about St. Elizabeth. So

could you tell us just about, a little bit about the difference between the two and kind of what captivated your heart with St. Elizabeth.

Claire Dwyer: Yeah, absolutely. And I think this is perfect, you know, as we are coming to a close of this study and this final show to really talk about why she is making herself known today and why the church is just kind of acknowledging the presence of this little dynamo. You know, I was saying there's like two kinds of people. I feel like there's two camps. When I would talk about Elizabeth of the Trinity. Some people, the minority, I think, would say, well, I've known about her for decades. She's just been in my camp, my personal little Canon of saints. And like Michelle said, the priests with, "she was my girlfriend." He, I, another priest, a Benedictine told me the same thing. "She was my first girlfriend, you know, saintly girlfriend." And I was like, what? Where have you all been? Um, and then there's the majority who maybe have heard of her, more likely have never heard of her. And there's a reason for that I think. So in the book I was talking about St. Elizabeth and the way that she just loves St. Therese. And from the first, they just had this connection. I think in part it was because the spirituality in France at the time was very Jansenistic. It was very about checking all the boxes about seeing God as more of a judge than as like a merciful lover. And when Elizabeth read the writings of Therese, she thought, Oh, You know the God that I know. I'm experiencing God this way in prayer, I totally relate to this. And so they really were spiritual sisters from the beginning, although they never met of course, but the nuns in Dijon would have been the first to hear about Therese. And they knew what Therese said in story of a soul that she was going to spend her heaven on earth. She was coming right back, you know, showers of roses everywhere. Remember she was appearing on battlefields in France, like during world war one, like almost immediately, she was making her presence known. She was canonized right away. There were churches being named after her. I mean, immediately, it was just like, she was back. While the nuns, when Elizabeth was dying, asked her, um, and we talked about this in the book, you know, Are you going to come back? Are you going to be like Therese? And Elizabeth said, Oh no, I'm going to bury myself in the Trinity. And then she says and she thinks about it a little bit. She says, but if I do come back, it will be to draw souls out of themselves to find communion with the Lord. I'm paraphrasing. But the idea is that Elizabeth comes back to draw us deeper into the heart of Christ and she does so in an entirely hidden way. And that is her signature. And so if you find yourself closer to God and you don't know quite how you got there, and then you meet Elizabeth, it's a pretty sure bet that she's been the one behind it all. Because it's true. Like we think that we choose our saints. We think that we find them and we're like, Oh, I just found this great, you know, hidden secret. And the reality is I think the saints have had their eye on us for awhile. And so they really choose us. And so allow yourself to be chosen by Elizabeth. Allow her to lead you deeper into the heart of the Trinity, harder into the, deeper into the love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is so much more there. She cannot wait for you to know and experience that kind of love.

Michelle Benzinger: I love that. And I think that's one of the beautiful teachings about that we have in the Catholic church is this communion of saints. That it is really the communion of saints is this family, and they want to bring us deeper into family. And I love that about, there's something about her that you want to almost hide with her and keep her like a little secret, because she's such a jewel. You know, she's such a thing. I just have to read you all this brother John Mary is one of the Carmelite friars that works with the Institute of Carmelite publications. And he wrote to me, uh, about our series that we are doing on

Elizabeth of Trinity. And he's just really. So, uh, kind and funny. And he said, funny story about this. When I first entered Carmel, I completely fell in love with St. Elizabeth. She just gets me. I remember saying to someone in the monastery that I was kind of happy that she isn't very well known because that means I get her all to myself. Well, a week later it was announced that she was going to be canonized and I must admit I was a bit reluctant about the idea of sharing her. Now I can say that I've gotten over my jealousy and I'm happy to tell the whole world about the beauty and richness of her spiritual teachings. I just thought that was so precious, you know, and I thought one, it speaks to the beauty of her love for the priesthood. You know, that all these priests feel like that, but two that she just seeks people out and that she's such a jewel that people want to almost like hold her close because she's so precious and tender, you know, and she leads us deeper into family. Um, and the family of the Trinity, you know, which is this deep mystery, but she makes it so beautiful that you want to, and then so inviting that we want to go deeper into that mystery and our prayer life, which I think is amazing.

Claire Dwyer: I think it's such a beautiful witness to that the church says by canonizing her now it's time. Yes. Like Elizabeth come out, you know, you've been hiding long enough. Let's show the world who's been praying and interceding for us all this time that we would know prayer the way that you know prayer/ I think it's time because of where the church is right now. And I think that she's a prophetic voice for what we're experiencing collectively. And that is, I mean, I think there's just this stirring within our hearts. We know there's more, we know that the Lord has more for us. We know that there's more intimacy, there's more surrender, there's more grace, there's more healing. And we sense it and we know it and here's the Saint that can help us draw so close to God that he can do all those things in our heart that we're longing for.

Heather Khym: Yeah. One of the things that I found, so striking Claire was in chapter 37 when it really gets into just letting ourselves be loved by the Trinity, you know, and I think it's easier for many of us to love, like to look at extending ourselves out, to serve other people, to pour ourselves out in all of these different ways, but it's hard for a lot of us to just allow ourselves to be loved, not because of what we do. But just because of who we are. And I think there's a deep lie and wound in there for many of us is that we have to perform to be loved, or we have to be good. We have to perform all these good works. We have to show how great we are, how many things we're doing to experience love. And maybe that's been our experience with people on earth, but that God just wants to love us just for who we are. Without doing anything. And that was what I heard loud and clear in this chapter is she's saying, or you were saying, our universal vocation is to love. Ask him to make me live for love alone. This is my vocation Elizabeth wrote, but even more fundamentally it is to be loved. Our primary vocation is to be loved by God. What a radically freeing idea. If we simply allow God to love us, then we have done the most important work of our lives, which is just the complete opposite of what the world says. Like the world is all about striving. And we talk about this a lot on our podcast as striving, striving versus abiding. And I love this theme just coming out so clearly here. That if we talk about work, the most important work is to do nothing, but allow ourselves to be loved. And I, and I would just love to hear what everybody thinks about that, because that, that struck me. Yeah. Very. In a really good way.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, that's great. I love that point, Heather, and that's really the, that's the eternal disposition of every soul is receiving, you know, God is the bridegroom. God is the one who initiates the gift. And so I agree with you. I think it's so

much easier for us to give out and to pour out and then to allow ourselves to be vulnerable enough to be loved and to be cared for and to be attended to and to be seen and to receive it. Receiving is the deepest gift, but it's also, I think one of the deepest, uh, difficulties we have. And I, I love St. Elizabeth's revelation of the truth of what matters most. And also our eternal reality, because that's what we ache for. We just ache to be unconditionally and completely and totally loved forever, forever, happily ever after, like we all ache for that. And, and that's, we ache for it because that's our destiny. Like that's, that's how we were created. So I, tapping into that and coming to those places where the Lord uncovers gently the places where we aren't receptive, where we push Him away, or we are defensive or dismissive, or we're detached from our own selves. And the Lord is such a gentle grace leading to deeper union and an experience of His authentic love.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. And I think really looking at, just asking yourself is where are the areas that I'm blocking this receptivity? You know, being self-aware and looking to ourselves and asking the Holy spirit, like where are the areas that I am blocking, you know, this receptivity to love? Like I'm always amazed at the deeper the Lord draws you in. Like you were saying earlier, Claire, there's always more. There's more surrender. There's more intimacy. There's more awe. There's more wonder, you know, of our Lord and that he is constantly showing me like, okay, like you cannot outdo him in generosity, but you can't out love him either. And I think it's very hard, you know, this in your head, but when you start to experience it personally, like he doesn't want to love us for what we do. He just loves us because who we are. And we don't have to earn or be and we say that, and we've said it often on this podcast, but really it's the truth. Like, you know, Lord, you mean just as I am really just as I am? Like Sister, like quoting your book. just as I am loved as I am. But you know, but like, it's so true. And you're like, no, like, let me, you know, in this almost like it would be easier, you know, in our mind, because you're like, let me just earn it for you. Let me just earn it, if I do this, then you could really love me. And he's like, no, his love is so audacious. And so scandalous and so beautiful that I'm just going to love you, even in your, you know, all your mess. And you're like, wow, how do I receive this gift? And therefore, how do I give it? So, yeah, Claire, I would love to hear your thoughts on the whole love and be loved.

Claire Dwyer: Well, I just love the context of that letter that she wrote. If you think about it, she was writing this to her prioress, who was a young woman in her thirties at the time who had already given her entire life to Christ, who had left everything behind to follow him, who was leading these other women in the convent at a time that was extremely stressful in France. They didn't even know if they were going to be allowed to stay. She was doing so much, she was doing so much, and she was a loving person, but in her last months of like suffering, I think it's such a testament that Elizabeth notices something that her mother superior needs. She needs to know the love of God. She needs to simply be in that relationship of love and allow herself to be loved. And so she writes this letter in this period where she could barely hold a pencil and she just repeats this over and over and over and then hides it so that she can find it. You know, mother Germaine can find it after her death. And then the church finds it after mother Germaine dies and it becomes a love letter to us. And it's Elizabeth's letter to us saying, look, you were called into existence to love and to be loved primarily to be loved. You cannot love without receiving the love of God. We can do nothing without existing. We are held in existence by his love. And it's a radical idea, like I said, but it is so true. It's the fundamental call in every human life. I mean, Saint Therese said

my vocation is love and Elizabeth said it too, and it's true, but primarily. And first of all, we have to simply receive the love of God. And it is hard. Like you said, Michelle, I think it's a constant turning back to that posture of receiving. It's a constant. It's not one and done. We're not going to suddenly get it, you know? Okay. I'm loved now, you know, it's just a constant turning back to God and begging for the grace to receive the love that he so desperately wants to pour out on all of us.

Michelle Benzinger: I love that.

Heather Khym: And we can see that within marriages, you know, more clearly, like sometimes it's easier for us to grasp something that we can see tangibly. So when you look at a marriage and a couple, they can't just pour out love. They have to receive the love of the other. And those are the most beautiful marriages that we can encounter is when you see, wow, this person has really allowed themselves to be loved, to be transformed by this love. And they also were pouring out love. That's how we image the Trinity. And I think that's, what's so upside down in the kingdom is like, you want to really change the world, allow yourself to be loved by God, and that's going to transform you and thus transform other people. Like those are the people that are most captivating to me. And I think to all of us is when we look at them and we're like, wow, they're just like in a relationship with a lover, Jesus, the lover. And it's a reciprocal relationship where they're not just doing things for him, but they're allowing him to transform and touch those deepest parts, which is like really hopeful at the same time.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Claire I wonder as I listened to this. And, um, Heather brought up the, just the icon of marriage and I just reading some of our Facebook comments about this study. So many of the women on our Facebook group are moms, they're married and they're moms. And they've commented so often on just your ability to reveal the simplicity of picking up Cheerios in the kitchen at night and having Jesus come to you. Can you just share with us what has been your feedback from moms of kids and in a life and just really in the trenches and just loving people and then their encounter with Saint Elizabeth of here's somebody they can relate to even as she's in a very different life, but that gives them such hope. Can you share a bit about that? Because I just, that was so touching for me. So many women commented on that of like, kneeling, picking up Cheerios and they're like lie there at crying, you know, like, Oh girl. Yeah. Don't we all have our own variation of that, but yeah,

Claire Dwyer: That surprised me too. Cause I read some of those comments too. Like really? That was the, that really struck you, but really what's behind that experience is the fact that even in my most menial tasks, like literally on the floor, you know, cleaning that Christ came to me. And that was the moment that was one of the most real moments of my life. Right. Um, we can be tempted to write those off and say it was my imagination or whatever, but when, when you have an encounter with God like that, you don't forget it. And that actually happened before I met Elizabeth. And so when I encountered her, she was putting towards my own experience. And I think that's why I was so drawn to her, you know? And I know you had talked about the season of waiting in some of the earlier episodes, what the Lord allowed Elizabeth to experience in those years before she entered Carmel was very, I believe his plan for her because he was teaching her to have that intimacy with him. He was teaching her to be a Carmelite in her heart, in the world because he knew that she had a message for the world. And so when she entered Carmel and she corresponded with all

these lay people, she was telling them something she knew because she had lived it. She knew it was possible to encounter Christ in the day-to-day. She knew it was possible to live in the world in the midst of the noise, in the midst of the distractions, in the midst of all the social activities and have a deep and profound place of encounter with him, where she could remain with him in the midst of that. And so for me as a mom, When I found her writings, I found somebody whose life in the end looked very different than mine, but who could tell me how to have what she had because she had lived it herself. And I was so attracted to that and so drawn to that. And it really was a confirmation of my own experience kind of, I think like Elizabeth found Therese and it was like, Oh, I so get you or you get me really. I think that was kind of my reaction to Elizabeth. Like you get me and I like Michelle have a very, I naturally have a Carmelite spirituality, so I love all the Carmelites. There isn't one that I don't, you know, wouldn't claim as my own - Elizabeth in particular, just because I think of that experience of hers, of being in the world for so long, really drew me in.

Michelle Benzinger: And Claire, I love what she said, but she has such a prophetic gift and she was discovered now there's not, you know, the Lord is providential. He doesn't do anything by accident. So the fact that she was just canonized, you know, a few years back and years and years later after her death that she was just canonized. Like, what do you think, like we were talking about before that there's really two prophetic messages that she has for us at this time. You know, the Lord has given us as, her as a great intercessor for us, you know? And so what do you think those messages are for such a time as this, as the Lord has brought her out of her hiddenness as you like to say?

Claire Dwyer: Yes. And it goes back to this gift that women have to be prophetic voices. She is one of the icons I think of that idea. So, first of all, I think Elizabeth as a prophet of the universal call to holiness in the sense that she was talking about this reality, and you pointed this out before that before Vatican II made this something that rolls off of our tongues very easily. When we say universal called the holiness, you're called a holiness. You don't have to be a nun or a priest to live a life completely given over to God. And Vatican II really, the church has never not taught that, but Vatican II really made it part of our vocabulary and really brought it to the forefront of our, you know, spirituality. And we took it and we ran with it. And I think the church has done a beautiful job of proclaiming this gospel of this call to holiness for every single person, no matter what your state in life. And so I think in that sense, she was a prophet because she was writing about that saying it, proclaiming it over and over before that was really common. The other thing that I've really been thinking about is I think that Elizabeth's call to not just holiness, but union is prophetic in the sense that the reason that the church has recognized her now publicly has raised her to the alters, who has said to us really in effect, now's the time to venerate this Saint. Now's the time to pray to her, to hold her up as an example, to come to know her in your own life is because she was talking about something else that we are now collectively beginning to experience as a church. And that is this deep, deep life of prayer and intimacy. Prayer that is not just vocal. That even goes beyond meditating. That is this silent receptivity to the love of God and answering him without words that is feeling the weight of his gaze on us and allowing ourselves to be shaped and loved by that. And if you sense that stirring in your heart, I just think Elizabeth is your girl. I think that she is the Saint for our time because she knew that. And we have been as a church walking this road to Emma's and we have been breaking open scripture and we have been, you know, revolutionizing catechesis, and we have been doing so much work in healing, and there are so many souls that have been walking this road

and know there's yet even more for them. And Elizabeth is a Saint of the deep kind of prayer life that God may be calling you to now - is calling you to, is calling all of us to. So I think that the reason that she waited a hundred years to be canonized is because she is a Saint exactly for what we're experiencing as a church right now.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah, I love that. Wow. And I just think that whole call to union and her receptivity to the Holy Spirit, like Elizabeth embodies and examples. She gives us an example of that, that just whole receptivity to the Holy spirit and her yes to that, to go deeper, you know, her fiat and her yes to go deeper, I think is yeah. Just amazing. Yes. And this is what the church it needs now. This is what we need now. Yeah. That's what I need now. So all of that. Yeah. Sister, what are your thoughts?

Sister Miriam James Heidland: I just want to frame what you just said. Cause you, you just, This spoke so beautifully about feeling the weight of his gaze upon us and allowing our hearts to be shaped. I was like, Oh, come on girl. Bring it. That is so stunning. And it's true, Claire. I really believe what you're saying is a sign of the times. It really is. It is a sign. I mean, look at what Vatican II has brought. Look at what John Paul the second's theology of the body has brought. Look at what the nuptial meaning of every vocation has brought and the heart made for Christ, the bridegroom. Like our heart, the church is the bride and Christ is the bridegroom. And it is for a time such as this. And you can see it on the inverse way of all the distortions of that very thing in society today. It's not coincidence that, so that the answer to that disorder, the answer to that brokenness is union with Christ. Of every soul. There is no other way there. Like there is nothing else. Like what else, you know, to whom shall we go? Like, what else is there? And I so appreciate your highlighting that beautiful melody, because that's very true. And I think inside our hearts, our bones ache for it. Oh gosh. Don't we ache for it.

Claire Dwyer: Yes. I think it's the next movement of the Holy spirit. Amen. You know, I think it's going to be like Elizabeth, it's going to be a hidden one. It's going to be an interior one, it's going to happen in the hearts of the faithful. And it's going to be this instead of a downpour instead of fire from above, it's going to be fire from within it's welling up from within the faithful. We might be a smaller church, but man, we're going to be on fire. Amen.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. Oh gosh. Should we just, This. So beautiful. Uh, there's so much more we could say about this, but I'm just wondering Claire as an author. And obviously there's, it's just so lovely to hear you talk about your work, because it's probably interesting to hear other people talk about your work. I wonder how that is to have somebody do a book study on your book.

Michelle Benzinger: Yeah. All of us talking about your book.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It's wonderful to see your beautiful heart and you're just lovely to behold by the way and just to see your beautiful heart unfolds in this, but I wonder just before we jump into our one things for the week, what is your hope when, when somebody reads your book. Whether they're familiar with St. Elizabeth or not. What is your heart as an author, as somebody who has brought us, who set the table for us to really encounter the beautiful richness of St. Elizabeth, what is your hope? What is like your one hope when somebody finishes your book and they close the cover and they put it down on their nightstand, what is your hope that arises for their hearts? What, what do you want them to have? What, what, what's your hope for their experience?

Claire Dwyer: I loved that you used that image of the table, because I think if I could summarize it would be for that reader to take her place at the table to take her seat at the table with the communion of saints and have Elizabeth pass you the Ketchup, you know. I just, I, I imagine heaven as just this big banquet table and we're all sitting around sharing about the incredible work that God has done in each one of us. And I can imagine Elizabeth pointing to Saint Therese and Saint Therese saying, yeah, but look at what he did in your life. And the saints just inviting us into this communion of love and the glory of the father and this family that, um, that we are all a part of. Like, we are part of this incredible family here in Elizabeth is one Sister, but she invites you through a relationship with her to get to know the love of the father, to get to know your place at the table, to get to know that there is a call on your life to love and be loved. But in addition to that, to love in a specific way, that is unique to you, that God has created you. Like he created Elizabeth, like he created Therese in a unique and unrepeatable way, and that there's a call on your life to show his love to the world in a way that only you can. And, uh, I think Elizabeth would say amen to that too.

Michelle Benzinger: I would love for us Sister, if you have your book close to you, I would love for us on page 216 in the book, Claire writes this beautiful message about let yourself be vulnerable, you know, let yourself be loved in the middle of the page. And I think that is just like the perfect that paragraph, the perfect prayer almost to pray to end the series. This is, I think, embodies everything Claire was trying to birth out of this book, but it also embodies the message of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity and our prayer for each one of us and for our listeners, the beautiful pilgrimage of faith.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. Claire, would you like to read that for us? We would love to have you read it.

Michelle Benzinger: Actually, it would be beautiful for Claire to read it - her own words. That's true.

Claire Dwyer: I can do that. This is about the call to let yourself be loved. Let yourself be vulnerable. Let your walls down your carefully constructed fortresses breached. Your fiercely guarded heart laid bare. Let your wounds be touched, your fears revealed, your deepest desires, damaged dreams, and most daring hopes unveiled before the bride groom, who has the power to redeem, restore and resurrect them. Drop your independence and the idea which you clutch so tightly, that you can do anything to protect and save yourself and let him love you.

Heather Khym: Claire, I just want to say, It's been a real pleasure to sit at your feet and Elizabeth's feet during this Lent. It's one of my favorite things like is to sit at the feet of other people and just like receive like the beauty that God has revealed to them. And I get to do that with Sister and Michelle, you know, every time we do a podcast, but it really has been a pleasure to sit at your feet and Elizabeth's feet during this Lent. I feel like I've just received so much. And I know that I'm not just speaking for myself, but for all of our listeners as well. So I just want to say thank you for this labor of love. And, and thank you for teaching us about this beautiful saint and about, uh, deeper union with the Lord.

Claire Dwyer: Thank you so much. Thank you.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Well, Claire, we have at the end of our podcast, a little tradition where we offer our listeners, just one thing for the week. It can be everything from

the sublime to the simple, whatever is captivating our hearts. And so I'm just gonna let you think about yours for a second. And we'll have you go last just to let you give you a few more minutes, but Michelle, do you want to tell our listeners about your one thing for the week?

Michelle Benzinger: Yes. My one thing is a book from Corrine and the Catholic women have put together and it has just come out from Pauline media, uh, called a place to belong. And it is a book of which fits perfectly with what we're talking about on this podcast episode. It is a book of letters written by different women, 25 different women, including mothers and religious sisters and artists and entrepreneurs. And they write about their different feminine genius in their own unique way. And I'm a big, big fan of Corrine and the Catholic women, because I love that they bring such a beautiful and unique display of what Catholic women looks like, that it is not a one size fits all. It is a very unique masterpiece each person. And like Claire was saying earlier in the podcast that each person has a place at the table that there is room for everyone and each person has a place at the table. So I will put the link here for the beautiful book, a place to belong.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Hmm. That sounds very good. Heather, what about you?

Heather Khym: Well, I know that this is Holy week, but I do want to just in anticipation of Easter coming, there is a playlist for everybody to celebrate Easter that I have on Spotify. And you can find in the show notes called. Well, I can say it. I can say the word because it's not in liturgy, right? Hallelujah is our song is the name of the playlist. So I have this distinct memory of being a child and I was probably mortified at the time, but it is just lodged in my brain of waking up on Easter morning. And my mom blasting Victory Chant. Uh, this like praise song, first thing in the morning on Easter, we'd like wake up to Victory Chant and I was like, that's hilarious. Anyways, so there's this playlist. If people want to enter into Easter and just have some, declare some victory and. And praise the Lord that way. So you can find it in the show notes.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That sounds good. My one thing for the week is actually just an all natural tea that I've been consuming, vast amounts of because I'm trying to stay healthy, but you can make variations of it, but it's fresh ginger and fresh tumeric. So you can find the tumeric in the root aisle. Tumeric is used in a lot of Indian dishes as a bright orange dish, or it's a bright orange root, and it will turn your fingers yellow when you grate it into your tea. So just to let you know, and there's the chemical in that called curcumin, which actually helps with inflammation and it keeps you healthy, so fresh ginger, fresh tumeric. And then I put, um, if you feel crazy, you can put a little of black pepper in it, or Apple cider vinegar and lemon, or you could also do a bit of honey to make it sweet. And so just to let it steep for a while, and it's, it's intense just to let you know, and you can continue to water it down, but if you're looking for a good tea, just that's really good for you and all natural, I'll put all that, just the different steps in that to you, but I really liked it. It was, it was intense at first. I'm like, I think I kind of liked this, so that's awesome.

Heather Khym: It's just so like you Sister, all in with everything you do, like, you're like, I am not even going to do it if I'm not going all in.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: Yeah. You know, a nun's got to stay healthy. All right. Oh my gosh. Yes. Claire, what about for you friend? What is your one thing for the week?

Claire Dwyer: Okay. I just had to grab this off my bedside table. Um, so if you're looking for something to read, I would recommend this book, personal prayer a guide for receiving the father's love. So talk about receiving, like how do we receive the love of God? It's easy to say. We need to allow ourselves to be loved but how do you do that? It's by Fr. Thomas Acklin and Fr. Boniface Hicks. And they're amazing Benedictines who are doing some incredible work. And I just started their spiritual direction program, um, at St. Francis Abbey. So I, they have also a book on spiritual direction, but this, I would start with this one and it's just incredible. Wonderful reading.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: That's wonderful. Well, Claire Dwyer, thank you so much. Thank you so much for your book. Thank you for your heart and thank you for coming on with us today and just sharing your heart with our listeners. I can't wait for everybody to encounter you.

Claire Dwyer: No, there's no words. Thank you though. It's inadequate, but thank you.

Sister Miriam James Heidland: It's been wonderful. And this will conclude our Lenten series friends. So next week we will be in the Easter season and we've got a beautiful episode for you then as well. So we just pray and we know it has, but we just pray that this Lenten journey has been a blessing to you. And as Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity has encountered you that she's helped open up new parts of your heart for the Lord. And we wish you just a beautiful Holy week, a beautiful time of intimacy with the Lord as he suffers and he dies and he rises again for each one of us. So happy Lent, and we'll see you next week. And until then we will be Abiding Together.

Thank you so much for listening to this week's episode. If you liked it, would you please share it with a friend? We encourage you to head over to our website, abidingtogetherpodcast.com where you can find all the show notes, links to our one things, transcripts, group discussion questions for each episode and beautiful mugs, t-shirts, journals, and prints in our shop. There you can also subscribe to receive our weekly email with links to each new episode and all of this content. We'd love to connect on social media and invite you to follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, so you can catch inspiring and reflections every day. You're also welcome to join our private Facebook group and dive deeper into discussions with our fellow listeners. If the podcast is blessed, would you prayerfully consider financially supporting us? The abiding together podcast is only available due to the generous support of our listeners. There are significant costs associated with creating this content such as tech support, design, website, equipment, and hired staff that we need to be able to continue offering great content to you. Abiding Together is a non-profit 501c3 and all donations are tax-deductible. You can make donations of any amount through a website called Patreon, or you can send us a check directly. If that's easier. If you donate \$15 or more per month on our Patreon page, you become a tribe member and you will receive monthly individual videos from Michelle, Heather and I, as well as other exclusive content recipes, playlists, downloadable prints, and more, you can find all the information about Patreon at patreon.com/abidingtogetherpodcast. Thank you. And God bless you.