

## AT S9 E17 You are so Beautiful to Me Transcript

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Hello, and welcome to the Abiding Together Podcast Abiding Together as 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 Abiding Together Podcast dot 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. I think y'all are going to love this episode, especially because we're gonna talk about beauty and about all things wonderful. It's really going to be about Heather and Michelle. Okay. Let's just talk about that for a second. About how wonderful, how wonderful they are.

And we all know it's spring and it's wonderful outside. And I do have to say though, that Heather and or Michelle and I are together this week. We're actually recording this in two different rooms. So it's almost like normal, but we are in the same house. That's what's happening.

**Heather Khym:** It's almost like normal, but you get to eat queso together after.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We ate queso last night Heather.

**Heather Khym:** Aw good for you. Good for you, as you should. I was just saying to you both. And I think it's just so great that this week hasn't been like work stuff that you're doing together, but you just get to hang out and have like the normal pace of just doing a week of life together. It's so great.

**Michelle Benzinger:** It is. It has been amazing. And sister is here to help me clean my kitchen and all those other things. And she's just amazing that way, but we've taken a lot of walks, it has been beautiful. A good priest friend of ours has been here also visiting. So it has been a fun week. And my kids, my littles, had spring break, so it has been all around good. Some goodness and beauty truth. Lots of goodness. And queso so all good.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Indeed. Well, I think that's the blessing of it, Heather, what are you up to?

**Heather Khym:** Well, right now I'm drinking a bubbly. Um,

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh, what flavor? So we're all doing that. This thing right now, all the men that are listening right now are like, Oh my gosh, get on with it.

**Heather Khym:** Blackberry bubbly. They have a whole new pack at Costco. I mean, Canadian Costco. Everything's different here than down there. Michelle, you've got yours too. Yeah. So the other day I reached in to grab an orange one and I was like all set for it and opened it up.

And I was like, yes. And I go to take a big sip. It wasn't orange bubbly. It was another can of something called iron brew. Cause my parents are Scottish. It's like this Scottish pop. And it was so sweet. Like it was just not what I was expecting to go into my mouth. And I had quite a strong reaction. I was like, Oh my goodness. Anyway. Glad to be back with the bubbly and with you.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** The Scottish soda, we should try that next time we're hanging out at your house. That's what we're trying, what we are trying. All right. So we are going to talk today about, well, not everybody. We can't take this for granted, but there's a very famous letter that John Paul the second wrote to artists, his letter to artists, which is very well known and people often quote it. But what a lot of people don't know is that Pope Benedict wrote a letter to artists as well. He had a meeting with artists in 2009 in the Sistine chapel of all places, because you know, Why not.

**Heather Khym:** Wouldn't that be fun? Let's just talk about the reality of that. Like, can we have a meeting in the Sistine chapel that would be,

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** yeah, I'll see you in the Sistine chapel about 15 minutes, right? Well, meet about the last judgment, all right. So, but most people don't know that he wrote this a stunning, which I think we could we're all going to talk about this, but a stunning letter to artists, which there's so much in it, it's not very long. So we're going to include the link that you can download it and read it with us or afterward. We just want to invite you to spend some time with it. It's so full of so much beauty, literally that it's just stunning. I remember when I first read it, I was like that man is a lover, Pope Benedict. He is a, his heart is so beautiful. And we've talked about him a lot, but we're going to talk about his revelation of what beauty does and why, why we as human beings. And, you know, this is like we could do a whole series on beauty and you know, why human beings respond so deeply to beauty the transcendental of, you know, the good, the true and the beautiful, but I think especially for us as women, what, and what beauty means to us and just that reality of, not only philosophically, but theologically, like what beauty is a sign of. So Heather for you, had you come across this article before this letter, before by Pope Benedict?

**Heather Khym:** No, I hadn't. And you know the thing about Pope Benedict, I feel like he totally gets the bad rap. Like he was called like the bulldog or whatever, like he was called like of the Catholic church. And, and yet whenever I read him and he's talking about the love of God, or when I was reading this, I was like, Oh my gosh, like your heart is just like, so docile like to being influenced by love and beauty and all these things. So I so appreciated hearing from him. And although he was quoting like Pope Paul VI or Pope John Paul II like his own words in here were, were really impactful for me. So yeah. I appreciated reading it. How about you, Michelle?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah, I knew the document existed and I had read it before, but John Paul II's letter to artists was. When I read that document, it was huge for me because it was, I did not feel like the creative parts of me or the design parts of me before, like had a place in the church. And so when this document came out, I was like, Oh my goodness, he's speaking to me. And Pope Benedict even quotes it when he says, you know, what Pope John Paul the second said to the artists, like, we need you, like, we need you in the church. And it was one of those almost like calls from the Holy spirit. Like, okay, you belong. Like these gifts belong in the service of the church. And just, if anyone has ever been to Rome, just being in the

Sistine chapel or seeing the art there and seeing the Pieta in person or coming across that just the power of art and beauty and music to move you. It is just amazing. And it is one of the most, I think, real tools that the Lord and the Holy spirit are going to use for the new evangelization is art. And so, and beauty. So I just loved this whole document that we have here. And like you were saying, Heather Pope Benedict does get a bad rap, but he is such a lover. He is such a lover and I love that.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh, I agree with you. And when I first came across this article, I was just, I was pierced by it. And there's a particular part that I absolutely love, which I'll expand upon today, but that truth of why we respond so deeply to beauty and. You know, that we, I think in the Western world often view beauty as kind of a luxury or beauty is kind of a superficial thing. Whereas we value productivity over beauty, which you look at our churches versus European churches. Let's just talk about that for a second. You know, just the difference between that and the profundity of what beauty does. I mean, even people like Dr. Jordan Peterson in one of his books, he talks about making one room in your house, the most beautiful room you can make it because just the aesthetics of what beauty, beauty does. And, and Pope Benedict in his letter, he talks about the link between beauty and hope. Yeah, that that's a true thing. That beautiful things give rise to hope in our heart because it brings us to something beyond ourselves, which is what we're going to talk about today. So I particularly appreciate in the, in the letter that he's quoting Pope Paul the sixth, and he's talking to artists and he says the profound bond between beauty and hope was the essential content of the evocative message Pope Paul IV addressed to artists at the conclusion of the second Vatican council. Uh, he says to all of you. The church of the council declares through our lips. If you are trends of true art, you are our friends. And he says, remember that you are the custodians of beauty in the world. And so you think of art of just the, the beauty of art itself. Of visual art, but then we also forget to kind of expand art to include something like we talked about during play, like the recreation, the beauty that brings us beyond ourself into joy, which is really a great kind of working of, of what art does. But when we talk about the philosophical definition of beauty or Thomas Aquinas would define beauty as that which pleases upon being seen, but a deeper, not a deeper, but a different way you could look at that is that which delights the soul upon being known. And so. Beauty brings delight. It brings us beyond ourself, which is what we're going to find out today of those parts of our hearts and our stories and our really it's, it's the eschatological icon of today's world of, of a heavenly reality, because God is very beautiful. He is all things that, he is beauty itself. And so I think that reality of, of the necessity of beauty in our life, it's not something superfluous and it's not superficial. It's not kind of a, you know, a luxury it's a necessity. Don't you think?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes.

**Heather Khym:** I was just thinking like later on Pope John Paul talks about even beauty can draw us in. Like we often think of beauty and like the pleasurable sense he said, but sometimes it even like is unsettling. Like it causes this ache within us. He said, because it's appealing to the mystery and like to this, to transcendence. And I'm noticing that even with my. And living in this new home that we're in. Like we have this amazing view. Our last home was great, so grateful that we live there. We just had this lovely little view of trees and stuff, but here we're looking at mountains and all this stuff. My whole disposition has changed this year. Like, as I've just been immersed in beauty and even in the dark seasons, when I couldn't see the mountains and, and everything was kind of gloomy, there was still something there where you just ached, you know, for more of what was there. So I think it is essential for, for

us, for our wellbeing, for our health, for our mental health, like all those things. But, but just as human beings, this is what we were made for. Like, God is all things that are true, good and beautiful. And when we expose ourselves to beauty and let it actually seep into our hearts, like we've talked about this before in the podcast, but pausing to really let these moments of beauty or things of beauty seep into our hearts. I think it reminds us of, of everything that we were made for, to be in union with. Yeah.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah. And I think that it's that ache in each of our hearts that we know that is there, but that it has to be reawakened. Well, it has to be constantly reawakened. And there's that quote that says the encounter, the encounter with a beautiful can become the wound of the arrow that strikes the heart and in the way opens our eyes draws man, out of himself, wrenches him away from him resignation and from being content with the humdrum. It even makes him suffer, piercing him like a dart, but in doing so it reawakens him, opens a fresh the eyes of the heart and mind and gives him wings. And every time this like, I, one of my favorite Ratzinger quotes, but every time I think of that, I think of the scene from Shawshank Redemption. When they hear the beautiful opera come over the loudspeakers and all of them totally pause what they're doing. And some of them weep. But they hear this beauty and this mystery and it really does. It gives them wings, even though they are imprisoned, even though that they are in jail, even though you can see the barbed wires, it just really, it does, it gives them wings and it pierces them. It hurts because, you know, you could see like, there's this longing. Like I want to, you know, C.S. Lewis says, you know, I want to seek where all beauty comes from. There's this just desperate, longing to see where it comes because it's imprinted on our heart because true beauty himself as the Lord. And it is almost like I call it like the Holy Spirit siren call is beauty, like, cause he's singing to us saying Come up, look up, gaze up. And bestow my beauty and I think that's just a powerful thing, but what you said, Heather, like you need to stop and pause because, uh, the Lord wants to reawaken something in us with beauty, but we have to pay attention. We have to take that, like we've talked about before that, Holy curiosity say, okay, where is it going on? What's happening? What is stirring? And that's a powerful thing in our lives when we can do it.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. And I think it begins with just acknowledging that, that because God is all things beautiful. When we encounter beauty, we are encountering him and he's worth pausing for. He is worth like, just like calming our hearts for, I love when, um, he just quotes Pope Paul, the six who says it's your task, your mission and your art consists in grasping treasures from the heavenly realm and of the spirit and clothing them, in words, colors, forms, and making them accessible. So like the whole goal of, of art really should be to, to make the treasures of heaven accessible to us. And that's worth pausing for what were you going to say, Sister?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh gosh. That's just such, so resonating what you both are talking about. And I think sometimes we're afraid. I think sometimes we're afraid of beauty because we're afraid of the wounding. Hmm, we, I think we're afraid of the longing, that beauty evokes. And so we. We've we've all talked about this before, but in humanity, out of our brokenness, we either go to excess or defect. We go to either to indulge in something or to be a stoic about it. And there's something about beauty that is like Bishop Barron says it bypasses the intellect and the will. It is the transcendental. It just goes right to the heart. And so it's so powerful. And I think we're afraid of that. I think we're afraid of what's truly beautiful because it does, it makes us ache. It makes us ache for eternity. It reveals our

hearts where we lack, but also where we ache, where we long, and I love it in this letter. Pope Benedict says, dear friends. He says, as artist, you know well the experience of beauty. Beauty that is authentic, not merely transient or artificial, is by no means a supplementary or secondary factor in our search for meaning and happiness. The experience of beauty does not remove us from reality. On the contrary, it leads to a direct encounter with the daily reality of our lives, liberating it from darkness, transfiguring it, and making it radiant and beautiful. And there's something so powerful about the reality of beauty, about the power of beauty that like he's saying, that brings us beyond ourselves. And it adds something to us, but it also wounds us at the same time. I think that's the rub. I think that's the rub of real beauty is either I don't have time for it, or I'm going to, I'm going to grasp it in artificial beauty in different ways, or I'm going to push it away. But to allow to allow, like, you're both saying the Holy space where beauty can come into wound me and bring to the surface, all these, we brought to the surface and to allow Jesus to come and untangle that and make it powerful and order it toward himself. That is a beautiful life. No pun intended.

**Heather Khym:** No doubt. No doubt. I was thinking about my brother, who I love my brother. He's so much fun. He's an atheist. And he was telling me that when he was in Europe, he lived in Europe for a while and he went and saw the David and he said, I just stood there and I cried. Like when I saw it and it's just like, it's like, he doesn't believe in God, he's not, but he's still having the experience. Like, just because we don't know, like you're saying it, it bypasses the intellect and all of that. And we can have these deep experiences that we can't explain. He said, I don't know what was going on for me, but I just cried because it was so beautiful. And I think like allowing ourselves to be disrupted by beauty is like, Is is amazing. Even when it goes into the darker parts of things, like where, where people are in songs or in art, like showing loss or sadness, or like this tearing away of things, like it's still is like the longing for God, the longing for wholeness and restoration and all of that, that I think draws our hearts still upward. Like even when it explores some of those darker elements.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah. I was thinking about that. Like even seeing the movie, the quiet place and watching the hell of the dad's sacrifices. Like, I, I love that movie. And I couldn't stand that movie. Sorry. Spoiler alert. I couldn't stand that movie because it bothered me so much. It bothered me so much. And it was interesting. I was listening to a book on audible, my way home, and I was like, driving from a trip with one of my kids this week and the mom in the book basically neglected the children and the author is really good. She has just such a way with words. And she's such a poet and such a wordsmith, but I was like literally having a physical reaction about the way the mom neglected the children. And I'm like, all right, what is the deeper thing in here? And me, like, what is this stirring up in? Like everything in me, like, I'm like, I have to remind myself, this is. This is fiction, Michelle, this isn't real, but it did. It disturbs me. And that's what he says in this document where you were talking about Heather. There's something that art can disturb and disrupt us. Like it makes us think it can lead us to the deeper things, because it does bypass the mind and go straight to the heart. So, what is it that is stirring in us? You know, what is the longing that you see in a romance? Maybe like, I mean, come on when Mr. Darcy comes across that. Yeah. Nothing like it, you know, like, come on. And so you're just like, okay, what is it in me that stirs this? You know, what are these deeper things? Because they're deeper longings and deep, deeper desires that are.

**Heather Khym:** We're all longing for the lover to come up and to come and meet us. Like, I mean, it does, it's in some ways we're being silly, like, Oh yeah, Mr. Darcy, whatever, but. Even those things are speaking to these deeper realities. Sorry, Michelle, I totally cut you off.

**Michelle Benzinger:** No, go ahead. Go ahead, Sister. What were you thinking?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah, very much the same and that power of, of the art to disturb us, whether it's visual art or literature or music, or, I mean, you think about the arts, you think about ballet. You think about just all the different kinds of arts as symphony and all those beautiful things. But I was also thinking about Michelle and I were talking today about also the art of like Mother Teresa serving the poor cause that's beautiful. And people from all walks of life, atheist, Hindus, Muslims, uh, I mean, people of all walks of life could see the beauty of that. They could see the beauty of helping the poor. You look at like Henry Nouwen and look at how, what a broad audience Henry Nouwen has. Why, because he's revealing his heart, the vulnerabilities and his heart that everybody knows like, and the terrifying beauty of the crucifix of, of suffering. That there's something that we, we know, those things they're etched in us, and that's why those things have the power to, to move us into a nervous and, and we must let them do so, so that the Lord - like you both are saying so lovely - so the Lord can come and speak to the deepest places because that's what we're made for. You know, what is, what is eternal is what is most true and why those things move us in a certain way. And no matter where you come from in life, what, you know, whatever your beliefs are, we are all moved by certain things. And there's a reason for that is because we all came from God and we're going back to God. And so he's trying to speak to us in a language that we can understand.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, it's something interesting has been happening in me the last, I don't know, it's like month or so. Whereas I would normally, like when I'm having an ache from my day, or I'm feeling like really like, ah, like where you just started, like longing for something to comfort. Right? So like normally I would go to food or TV or whatever. It's like, Oh, I just want to eat Mac and cheese or have chocolate or whatever it might be to like ease that, I've been going to things that are beautiful and just sitting in front of something beautiful. And it's so interesting. That you don't think it will meet the ache. You don't, you think it's too simple, right? Like, I don't know. It never even crossed my mind before. I'm like, I'll just go to what I always go to for, for comfort or whatever. And that's where I've been going. And it's been tremendously healing in many ways. Oh, it's so nice. Just something new I'm trying out.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I think there is. But I think for me, since I've switched the schedule, my schedule around and taken more time just to make room and pause and really take care of my health and some areas that I, Sister can attest, that I love to be outside, but it's like, I'm learning the language of creation, you know, really learning the language of creation and the quote that says contemplating the beauty of it. Creation inspires us to recognize the love of the creator that love, which moves the sun and the other stars, you know? And like he is the creator that made the sun and the stars and all of that. But it's funny because once you slow down and like we were talking about like, all right, you think it's simple, but it does. It fills an ache. It fills a comfort. And we're laughing. We have these birds. In my backyard. And like, literally like I'll know where this one bird is and how he'll move around and like his voice and his language and Sister Miriam was like, Oh, there's the bird. Oh there he goes. Like, do you hear it? But I'm like do you hear him, he's talking to you Sister.

And she's like, okay, we're in the enchanted movie. And

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It's snow white and Michelle is speaking to birds, like that's, what's happening.

**Michelle Benzinger:** That's what's happening. And so she's laughing and she's like, is this a snow white? But it is. But it's like, but now I'm listening to creation. I am looking at creation and yeah. We were going for a walk and there was this most beautiful bird and the blue on his back. I'm like, have you ever seen that color blue? And my husband and his good friend, father Joe were kayaking and dolphins came up next to them. And you should've seen the two of them. Here are two grown men. And they were like, giddy little boys, like y'all dolphins came and swam by us. Like after we didn't have a heart attack, knowing that they were sharks, you know, but. It was just so cute because it was, it was something about the dolphins and that wonder of creation that made them childlike, not childish, but the wonder of creation. And I think, yeah, it's just stopping to pay attention to that and stopping to ask the question. Okay. Where is the true comfort? The true comfort is in the creator and what he, what he has created and beauty and truth and goodness.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Well, and that's the authentic beauty that Pope Benedict talks about. And that's, that's the truth. I think we can discern, especially with women as women. I think we have a love, hate relationship with beauty, especially when it comes to ourselves and about. Society standards of beauty. And Michelle are just talking about today. You know, if you look at, so look, if you look at art, you go to an art museum and go look at the women who painted in the, you know, 16, 17, 18, 19 hundreds, like, you know, they're, they're voluptuous women. And I think for us, we're told they should.

**Heather Khym:** They've got some junk in the trunk.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** And. I was just saying that Michelle I'm like, we don't even know what a real woman's body is supposed to look like. We don't we're so used to the Instagrammed, no body fat fit. Like that's what it means to be. That's the only version I could. Some people are genetically, they look like that and they worked really hard. I'm not knocking on that cause, but it's like, that's the only way of beauty and or pornography or plastic surgery, or so I think we as women. And I think that's one of the ways the enemy gets us is where he tries to mess with our version of beauty, what beauty means, or for us to have like a superficial idea of beauty or only like a shallow version versus what the, what the truth is. And, and what Pope Benedict is saying here is this authentic beauty unlocks the yearning of the human heart, the profound desire to know, to love and to go towards the other and to reach for the beyond. And that's the power like when he used, we can discern between false beauty and true beauty because that false beauty is illusory. It turns you in on yourself. And we know the difference. When you look at false beauty and you look at true beauty or you experience false beauty or what the evil one presents as something beautiful. And you, you know, it's, it's illusory and you can tell the way that. That it affects your heart with pornography or just different things in life. You're like, Oh, that, that looks one thing, but that's not true. Like it's a distortion. And so I think for us as women, we have to preach and to teach our young daughters and other women in our life. Like we have to have a healing of our relationship with beauty. We have to, you know,

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah. And I think what I love how Pope Benedict kind of piggybacks off of Pope John Paul, the second, his letter to artists when Pope John Paul, the second talks

about discovering these new epiphanies in our daily lives. And he's really big about making our lives a work of art and masterpieces. And I love Joseph Piper. If you've ever read any of his stuff on leisure or anything like that. That. And he has something that says like, well, not everyone is an artist. Everyone is invited to participate in beauty in order to be fully human. And so there's something about beauty that allows us to become who we're supposed to be. And like you were saying earlier, Sister is not a luxury. It is a necessity to our hearts to become fully alive. It helps us become human and. We've had a couple of conversations. We'll probably like a hundred of our last couple of days, Sister and I, but just about what does it mean to live well, what does it mean for our lives to be works of art? You know, what does it mean? Like we talked about earlier on the podcast. So what does it mean to pray well, to play well, to dine well, to serve well, you know, to sacrifice well, like what does it look like for our whole lives to be a work of art and really allow. God to chisel us into the masterpiece that we were created to be, and to do that. And we, you know, and it sounds like, Oh, that's just a really great theory, but what would it look like? I mean, really just to stop, to pray. What does your life look like? Almost have a vision of what does a masterpiece in your mind look like? You know, and invite the Holy spirit into that. What does your life look like as a masterpiece created by the creator, where are the areas that he needs to chisel out and form? Where are the areas that we keep on taking the hammer out of his hand? So our lives are becoming a work of art.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. I think there's something too about one of the thieves of this full life is mediocrity and settling. And I think that beauty and exposing ourselves to beauty and like that pausing to let it seep in is something that breaks through that. And I think like a life quote for me was from Pope John Paul, the second. I think it was at like one of the world youth days. And he says many people have heard this, but I think it's just incredibly profound. He said, it's Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness, he's waiting for you when nothing else will satisfy you. He is the beauty to which you are so attracted. And it is he who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise. And he goes, there's so many good things in there. And then he goes on to say like, it's a refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity. And this is something that like, I've really asked God for years. Like, I'm like, God. Don't let me live a mediocre life. Like don't let me fall into, to settling or being like, Oh, well it is what it is. I hate, I hate that phrase. I hate that. It is what it is. I'm like, no, that is like anti gospel. It is not what it is. Like God has taken everything that looks like something. Flips it on its head and turns it into something else because that's the kind of God we have. I'm like, and that's the kind of life that I want. I want them to take the things that seem to be, they are what they are and to make it into something beautiful things that I can not do on my own. Like I can't take dirt and make flowers come out of it. Like only God can do that. And it's the same, I think with the fertile soil in our heart, it's like when we allow beauty to be planted there, when we pause and let it seep in and we feed it and we pour water in there and we like tend to it, like. God can do amazing things when we let beauty in

**Michelle Benzinger:** I agree. Amen girl. Amen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Preach. I just want to drop the mic right there, Heather. Khym yeah,

**Heather Khym:** there you go. Yes. Sorry. I gotta be, I gotta bee in my bonnet there as you should, but not in my knickers. We were just going through this before we started. It's such a Scottish thing. I think

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** we digressed, but I think also one of the things about this journey that we're talking about is that it is a messy journey and that's okay. It's a messy, the gardens are messy. They have dirt and, um, and the dirt doesn't always stay inside the wall. Yep. Yep. Okay. And we are going along the way. If we make this journey, we are going to experience places where we live in both excess and defect, where we like Heather, you're saying we go to numb our hearts someplace else, other than, you know, bringing our hearts to the Lord where we don't want to, we want to take the chisel out of God's hand and do it ourselves, or have him not do it at all. I mean, and I think that that reality of. Coming to terms and continuing to allow this journey of love and the journey of beauty to wound us to allow what's coming out. And I was very struck by the Easter vigil, man. I love this part of the Easter vigil mass of, of the blessing of the candle at the fire. And I just, I was very struck by the prayer. I I, in a new way, I've been thinking about it everyday. Since of the prayer, as the priest finishes the blessing of the fire and blessing of the Pascal candle, he says, may the wounds may the glorious wounds of Christ guard and protect us. And I was thinking of how beautiful the wounds of Christ are and allowing ourselves to be wounded by the beautiful one, which. Oh, gosh, I can. We even, I can't even put that into words, allowing ourselves to be wounded by the beautiful one to bring beauty out of our lives and our garden. And. And that's the journey. Like what other journey can we make?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Amen friend. Amen. Good word.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** So, yeah, but I, there there's so much more, I think we'll probably we'll have to do a series sometime on beauty, like a four, six part series, because there's so much we could talk about here today, but we really hope that this letter blesses you. And I just, I just want to read a little bit more of it. If I could. Uh, when he talks about Pope Benedict talks about authentic beauty unlocking our heart. And he says, if we acknowledge this is so lovely. If we acknowledge that beauty touches us intimately, that it wounds us, that it opens our eyes. Then we rediscover the joy of seeing of being able to grasp the profound meaning of our existence. The mystery of which we are apart and from this mystery, which we can draw fullness, happiness, and the passion to engage with it every day. I love that. Yeah. So maybe that's something we could do this week is to acknowledge that beauty touches us intimately, that it wounds us and that's okay. That's the beautiful one, wounding us. and calling us home to heaven, to his HeartWare. It will never end, right. It will never end so

**Michelle Benzinger:** well, I would like to just encourage our listeners. It is the document is only five pages, so it's so easy just to print out and just to sit with it and pray with it because it is power packed with a lot of just goodness in those five pages. And I mean, you could sit and just ponder and pray on any one line or phrase or paragraph and just see it as the Holy spirit does and stirs within you and just. Yeah, like really take it in meditate and chew on it and ponder it in your heart and see what, see what seeds the Holy Spirit's trying to plant and bloom in your heart with beauty and this next Easter, see, I mean, we're in the Easter season, you know, so this is a powerful season in the church. So how does God want to resurrect beauty in each of our lives? Where has beauty been dead and how does he want to resurrect it in each of our lives this Easter season?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Well, I want to tell, I want it to be resurrected, so bring it on Lord. The beautiful one. Well, with that being said, Well, did we talk, I'd like to talk about our one thing is for the week. Uh, I just want everybody to know Heather Khym told us that we would love her one thing. So I'd like to hear her one thing. Cause I want to know, tell me everything. Tell me about it.

**Heather Khym:** Okay. So, so excited because our new house, we didn't get all of the landscaping so right now where we are planting trees. Like the bulk of them are coming next week. I can't wait. Like it's everything from like. Cherry blossoms to red Maples lining the driveway, Japanese Maples, some weeping willows there's yeah, a Redwood like a giant redwoods going. I can't wait for all that. Anyway, that's not the thing. Then I went to Costco, little old Costco. And I'm like going, Oh, and like, Ooh, garden centers open. So me and my mom we tootle in there. And what did we find? But some fruit trees, which I'm super excited about, but one we found was called fruit salad. And it has five different fruits on the one tree. And I was like, what a time to be alive. They're like grafted into the one tree. There is like cherries and plums and like two different kinds of cherries, plums, and two different kinds of apricots on one tree. Oh my gosh.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I've never heard of us. Can you please post a photo of that? I've never heard of such things. I can't even, my little mind can even fathom that right now.

**Heather Khym:** I know. Welcome to 2021 and like already, there's like little tiny, like blooms starting to come off. So it's, it's not a huge tree. It's just small, but some of them are pink on one branch and then the other branch they're white. I can't even get over it. I'm so excited about it.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I love it too. I didn't even know you could do that. It tells you how much I know.

**Heather Khym:** I think there's all kinds of spiritual analogies in there that I haven't discovered yet, but I'll get back to you on that. I love it.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** And you have bees now. Now let's just be honest about that. One million, a million literally like literally, a million bees.

**Heather Khym:** literally. It's amazing. I know, I know. So excited. I'm so excited for the honey. I'm so excited for the blossoms. So excited for the fruit. I'm going to have a mini orchard going on suddenly

**Michelle Benzinger:** That'd be awesome. Uh, okay. My one thing is I have two, one things, I guess I'm back to two. I gave you all a break for awhile, but now I'm back. It's Easter people. So I first is I have to give a shout out to my husband and Fr. Joe. My lights in my backyard. I had a beautiful white lights were destroyed in the hurricane. The hurricane was a long time ago, people. And so my husband found a way to put up new lights in my backyard and he got a beautiful post. And not only did he get a beautiful post. Then he put plant hangers on my post. So I would have hanging baskets and figured out how to do the electrical. So I just have to flip a light switch. I don't have to plug them on and off. Now I can just put the light. My whole backyard lights up people is beautiful thing. Let there be light. And there was

**Heather Khym:** Okay we want pictures of that too. Yeah.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And my second one thing is in the year of St. Joseph, I have to tell you when we have Claire on, she mentioned that the book by Fr. Boniface Hicks about prayer, and it is amazing. It is a great book. I highly recommend it, but he also has a book out called through the heart of St. Joseph by father Boniface Hicks and it, it y'all, it is so good. It is so good. And it is such a great resource to pray about as we are in this year of St. Joseph, and he tells different stories and just different attributes of St. Joseph that I had not read before. And I just really enjoying his writing in both books right now. So I will post the link to that. And Sister what's your one thing

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** He is lovely. Uh, my one thing is I been pursuing around Michelle's house and Michelle has lots of fun things at our house, but one thing that she had captivated my attention. Heather Khym Michelle has a Jane Austin coloring book. Okay. Which has quotes from Jane Austin and like costumes that you can color yourself. And the quotes are so pithy and so funny. I just absolutely like every woman would love this. I think I at our next women's conference. We have to have this color book available for women. Ladies seriously, it's your next afternoon tea. If you guys get together, pull out, get the where'd you get at Michelle?

**Michelle Benzinger:** And so I got off Amazon, it was in the Amazon -I'll post the link, but I was really fun.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I was laughing out loud. They have quotes from Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, from her own personal letters. And they're just fun. It's a tiny book. It's not like a huge coloring book. Um, but I loved it. So that is certainly I can't wait to color one of the pages. I'm like, Ooh, I want this one. Great.

**Heather Khym:** That is so great. Hey, Michelle, remember that one women's retreat we all did in Georgia with you and everybody could make hats and have a tea party. And there was like little tiny sandwiches and all that was so cute. Let's do that again.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. And so open the borders, people open the borders.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh, dear friends. Well, we wish much beauty this week and we pray that the beautiful one will wound you with his heart, that he'll bring you into his own glorious wounds and guard you and protect you and bring you evermore to, to his own heart and to the one who loves you, which is Christ himself. So have a beautiful week until then, and we will be Abiding Together.

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