EVERYTHING BELONGS

Bonaventure

with Sr. Margaret Carney

Paul Swanson: Everybody, welcome back to Everything Belongs where we are focusing this season on Richard's book, Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi. And again, you do not have to read along with us, but we'll go through it chapter by chapter. Those who get the added benefit of reading will be steeping in this content, but if it's not your bailiwick to read along, there's no pressure to do so because these conversations are more than enough. Today we're going to talk about Chapter 12 John Duns Scotus, Anything but a Dunce. I'm here with Drew Jackson. Drew, good to see you this morning. How are you doing?

Drew Jackson: I'm doing well, Paul. Good to be with you.

Paul Swanson: Always great to be together. So you're not featured on this episode as a host, but I know that you've mentioned many times that Eager to Love is kind of a gateway book for you about how you got introduced to Richard's work. What do you remember about this chapter on John Duns Scotus and his work and life and theology? What kind of remains as you've sat with his work, what sticks out for you?

Drew Jackson: Yeah, Paul. I mean, Eager to Love, like you said, was really an intro and a gateway into Richard's work for me. And even as I say that, I'm pretty sure that his work was the first place that I encountered Scotus. I think in particular there was, I remember Richard's talking about Scotus's focus on the univocity of being in his work. This whole idea of the oneness of everything, sort of the one voice of creation and our participation inside of this one creation of all things. And I think in particular, I remember him saying something along the lines of salvation not being a divine transaction, but this sort of ever organic unfolding that we wake up to, become conscious of, almost as if it's us becoming who we already are. And that was something that really just stuck with me and I was like, "I want to hear more about this. This is resonating with something in my soul."

Paul Swanson: I love that you mentioned that because it's like you're reading my highlights from this chapter. Because that's one of the things that certainly I think connects for me, we go in depth with Father Richard on that theme in our conversation. And we also talk about haecceity, which is a word I struggle saying, but I think is important and how Scotus use it on this idea of thisness and then also on the incarnation as the first idea in the mind of God. And it's really fun to wrestle these ideas out with Richard and hear his not only past ruminations of it, but how it's evolved since he's written this book. And the title of course is a little bit humorous, Anything but a Dunce.

And in the second half of this episode, Mike and I are in conversation with Sister Mary Beth Ingham who wrote a book called Scotus for Dunces and the playfulness of both her title and also Richard's title of this chapter I think is fun to just mention and name note that John Duns Scotus was a huge thinker and complex thinker, and his work was really difficult to understand and part of my own theorizing around why that is because he died so young and so he didn't have time to distill it in a clear, easier to understand.

There was no systems thinking built into that where we get with some of these other great theological doctors of the church. With him, it's just so subtle. And part of the humor of it to me is, as I understand it, I think Sister Mary Beth goes into it as well, is those who followed the work of John Duns Scotus and tried to emulate his way of teaching and the theology that he was espousing became known as dunces. But like so often happens when

the next generation behind a luminary, they can't articulate it quite as well, especially somebody who didn't have time to develop it more fully.

And so their names were nicked as dunces, and so then dunces became equated to those who are unintelligent. And so here we are in our times thinking of dunces as someone sitting in the corner with the dunce hat on or somebody who is a fool when in reality John Duns Scotus was this larger than life intellect trying to marry it within this Franciscan tradition and the best of Christianity. So it's a fun swirling conversation to be a part of. I know it touches I think our hearts and our actions, but also how we bring our intellect and our mind into our hearts. And so with that, I got nothing left to say, but let's hear Richard talk about this because there's no one I would rather hear talk about this beyond Richard and Sister Mary Beth Ingham. It's a win-win conversation.

Mike Petrow: From the Center for Action and Contemplation, I'm Mike Petrow.

Paul Swanson: I'm Paul Swanson.

Drew Jackson: And I'm Drew Jackson.

Mike Petrow: And this is Everything Belongs.

Richard, Paul, it's great to be back with you again here in the hermitage.

Richard Rohr: A new year. Welcome.

Mike Petrow: Thank you so much.

Paul Swanson: Thanks, Richard. Yeah, it's so nice to be somewhere warm. It's so cold out in the Albuquerque right now.

Richard Rohr: Yeah.

Mike Petrow: Richard, I was thinking, and one of the things I really love about your teaching, Richard, is I think you give all of us permission to be in our heads and in our hearts and to bring them together. But I'm curious, how did you get there? You told us in one of our episodes that you started your seminary education at, was it 14?

Richard Rohr: Well, high school, yeah.

Mike Petrow: High school?

Richard Rohr: But it was a classic liberal arts seminary education.

Mike Petrow: And you've said you really got a lot out of that.

Richard Rohr: Oh, God. We had to spend hours in the study hall and then from the study hall we went to the chapel. It was just back and forth between study hall and chapel. There it is, what you're just saying.

Paul Swanson: Was it torture or did you enjoy both?

Richard Rohr: Oh, I loved it.

Paul Swanson: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: As a young man, you don't know what your focus is, where wisdom is to be found and to find a discipline forum is very satisfying. At least it was in the late '50s.

Mike Petrow: Were you encouraged to bring your spiritual whole self to it?

Richard Rohr: I think so. Mainly by the example of the friars who were all very liberally educated men themselves, they could quote poetry, philosophy, history. Once you have a living example of a certain kind of wholeness, you want that, you want to be that way, that you can quote poetry and literature and history.

Mike Petrow: Well, for those of our listening folks who maybe they don't have a graduate degree in theology, but they're interested, they're curious, they like to use their mind and they like to use their heart, what advice would you give for us, especially today, we're going to talk about pretty robust theologian.

Richard Rohr: You have to not be afraid to self-educate by reading and interested in something, I'm going to say it, beyond contemporary culture, which is so big and fascinating and colorful and delightful, it just sucks everybody into the truth is to be found here in common culture. These are our heroes along with sports athletes.

Paul Swanson: There's a question when it comes to self-education that I always think about of what has stood the test of time. What are these repeatable lessons?

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Paul Swanson: Do you see some of those enduring questions in your own integration of head and heart about how you approach your own self-education? Because you've done that your entire life. It seems like you've dipped into different interests and themes throughout your teaching life that it always stems from curiosity, but as Mike was saying, you bring the head and the heart to it. Are there overarching questions-

Richard Rohr: I hope so.

Paul Swanson: ... that have brought you from curiosity into those discoveries?

Richard Rohr: I think it was studying philosophy for four years, giving you a fascination with thinking and with good thinking and being given tools to critique not so good thinking and to admire superb thinking. It was four years of the entire history of philosophy. That was good stuff. A lot of it was boring, but most of it wasn't. You recognized, wow, those are good questions that Immanuel Kant and Leipzig, as bored as I was by them, were trying to pursue. I remember actually getting a headache, trying to understand Immanuel Kant.

Mike Petrow: Yeah, not the first person.

Richard Rohr: Just one paragraph, but we had to keep our nose to the grindstone because we were

tested every week on the material. It was rigid.

Mike Petrow: Well, what do you think good thinking looks like?

Richard Rohr: Well, I guess it's reflected in my last book, capacity for self-criticism.

Mike Petrow: Oh, that's good.

Richard Rohr: To critique your own thoughts, to see through your own illusions, which then fascinates you with psychology and to understand the human person and history, to understand the phases of history, why that idea emerged in the 13th century and why this one in the 17th. All of that gave you perspective.

Mike Petrow: I remember you telling us once that you took a class in philosophical psychology and it sort of set the tone-

Richard Rohr: One of the best.

Mike Petrow: ... for all your work, and yet it seems like some of these theologians stayed with you. So this chapter is about Duns Scotus. I'm going to be honest with you. I have tried. Scotus is very dense.

Richard Rohr: Very, he's called a Subtle Doctor, that's his official title.

Mike Petrow: Subtle is one word for it. I feel like Scotus-

Richard Rohr: Rarefied is another.

Mike Petrow: Yes. I feel like Scotus is a friend of my friend. I have no great love of Scotus, but I love how much you love Scotus.

Richard Rohr: Oh, thank you-

Mike Petrow: It's like it's your-

Richard Rohr: ... for your trust.

Mike Petrow: ... precious friend's friend.

Richard Rohr: Yes.

Mike Petrow: And I suspect I don't want to project, but a lot of our readers are probably going to feel the same way.

Richard Rohr: Just the same.

Mike Petrow: They may not want to tackle Scotus on their own, but can love how much you love Scotus.

Richard Rohr: Until Mary Beth Ingham wrote her book, there was no one who attempted a popularization of Duns Scotus. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: Someone in Albuquerque has a copy of Scotus for Dunces, because I left my copy at Java Joe's coffee last week.

Richard Rohr: No.

Mike Petrow: I don't know where it is.

Richard Rohr: Was it all marked up?

Mike Petrow: Yeah. So I'm going to have to start over. Whoosh, woof. But I love that you love Scotus.

Richard Rohr: Thank you.

Mike Petrow: So before Paul, you know Scotus better than I do, before you take us in, what do you love about this subtle doctor that's been your friend all these years?

Richard Rohr: Well, first what led us to trust him was of course in the community, he was one of us. He was a Franciscan and an underappreciated Franciscan at that. So we sort of felt it was our job to popularize him. Our college where I went for philosophy was named after him, and most of the church was Thomas, diocese and seminaries, religious orders almost all studied Thomas Aquinas called Thomism. We were a subset, the only strong subset, that studied another doctor of the church, John Duns Scotus, yeah.

Mike Petrow: Do you feel like with some of these theologians that they are like a friend after a while you get so immersed in their ideas? Does it feel like they're just kind of around?

Richard Rohr: In the wonderful grand staircase at Duns Scotus College where I'd walk from my room to chapel seven times a day or whatever. You came down the grand staircase and there was a giant painting of Duns Scotus and studying him during the day and seeing his picture so often. I did, I began to feel he was a friend, an underappreciated friend. Yeah.

Mike Petrow: That's really lovely. Oh, that makes me appreciate that much more how you've sort of introduced his thought to a broader audience.

Richard Rohr: Yes. It almost became an obligation. You've got to know what I know. This man holds some big secrets that shouldn't be secret as you'll see if you ask me the right questions.

Paul Swanson: That's right. Well, now it's up to us.

Mike Petrow: Bring your awkward, nerdy friend to the party with us. Let's do it.

Paul Swanson: But I do love that imagery of like, if Richard's hosting a party, he wants to introduce everyone to Scotus. And one thing that Mary Beth Ingham said was that because Scotus died so young, he never got the chance to distill it or to nuance it in a way that was more accessible to more common folk. So I don't want to completely throw Scotus under the bus for dying early. He's the victim of his own timeline in that way. And so thanks to you and Mary Beth, folks who are taking the work of Scotus and trying to offer it so those of us as Plebeians can have a chance at it.

Richard Rohr: Good.

Paul Swanson: So we talked about Bonaventure in our last conversation and like that chapter you named three significant contributing ideas from John Duns Scotus that we love to bring out here and circle around for a little bit. I'm going to name them first the univocity of being thisness also and a word that I have a hard time saying, but it's haecceity?

Richard Rohr: Haecceity.

Paul Swanson: Haecceity.

Richard Rohr: Haecceity.

Paul Swanson: And then the third idea is the incarnation as the first idea in the mind of God. And I'm going to quote you on this where you say that these are three world-changing ideas that one changes your philosophy, the second your cosmology, and the last your foundational Christian theology. So I think these are worthwhile.

Richard Rohr: Wow, I'm glad I said that.

Paul Swanson: Me too. And so you've set this up well through your own words, can we just briefly walk through each one individually and then talk how they compliment one another?

Richard Rohr: They do.

Paul Swanson: All right, let's start with the univocity of being. What are we talking about when we're talking about the univocity of being?

Richard Rohr: The general opinion in the 13th century thinking it was a real breakthrough and it was, was called the analogy of being, that we could find an analogy between things in this created world and God, but it was at best an analogy. And that's what Thomas Aquinas taught and I'd be grateful for that. That gets you pretty far. But Scotus breaks through and makes his rarefied step-by-step argument for the univocity of being that you may speak with unis vox one voice or is it unum, I forget the agenders, of the being of a ant, the being of a tree, the being of an angel, the being of a human, the being of God. It's one voice, univocity, they're all being in the same way, although God is not a being. He laid the ground for what was 20th century called the ground of being. God is the ground of all being but still participates in the same existence that we do.

We participate better said in the same being our existence as God does. Well, that's what the mystics are saying. That's what John's gospel is trying desperately to say. "I and the Father are one." So Duns Scotus for me laid the foundation for a very concrete, lovable, believable mysticism. The being of God and my being and your being are the same being.

Paul Swanson: That's what we're saying.

Mike Petrow: And so then the world that I can see and touch and taste and smell and you and you and Opie and you is not less than God, right? It's not. All this is just a pale reflection to point to something more important. This matters.

Richard Rohr: Very well said.

Mike Petrow: Okay.

Richard Rohr: You take it to its logical conclusion.

Mike Petrow: Okay.

Richard Rohr: We're not just an analogy.

Mike Petrow: Yeah, I like that.

Richard Rohr: We're a participation, which I found myself using that word much more after I studied Scotus and why the doctrine of the Trinity became so attractive to me. It is a doctrine of universal participation in this flow of love and life that we call God. It's one flow. Now, modern cosmology is coming at the same thing from another angle, at the flow of the atom and the flow of the galaxy is the same self-affirming flow that lives itself, does itself. I should have brought the poem of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Both Hopkins and Thomas Merton were rabid Scotus and this was one reason why. What I do is me, for that I came, everything is doing itself and this became one reason after the enlightenment for a lot of Christians to reject Scotus. I think it was Ratzinger, God bless him, Pope Benedict who said Scotus created the basis for western individualism and thus should be condemned.

Paul Swanson: Wow.

Richard Rohr: I would realize why you could say that, you interpret it negatively in its individualism. Interpret it positively, it's mysticism. Does that make sense?

Paul Swanson: Yeah, a hundred percent. And the risk he took in that not knowing what was possible.

Richard Rohr: Not knowing what was coming. Yeah. Saying the individual could be spoken of with the same voice as God or an angel or a dog. Did you hear that, Opie?

Mike Petrow: And you've heard me say this before. I love this passage. It's from Origen to love God and to love good things is one and the same.

Richard Rohr: There, that's univocity of being.

Mike Petrow: Which that's really cool.

Richard Rohr: Did you look up that?

Mike Petrow: Oh, As Kingfishers Catch Fire.

Richard Rohr: As Kingfishers Catch Fire. That's one portion of a longer poem. Read the last verses.

Mike Petrow: Well, I'll read the whole thing. "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame; as tumbled over rim and roundly wells stones. Ring like each tucked string tells each hung bells. Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name. Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: deals out that being indoors, each one dwells; selves goes itself; myself it speaks and spells, crying what I do is me: for that I came."

Richard Rohr: There it is. That's the most succinct, poetic statement of univocity of being and haecceity put together. By the way, we're already moving into the next one.

Mike Petrow: Well, let me give you the end of this and then I'd love to hear you ask about haecceity. "I say more: the just man justices; keeps grace that keeps all his goings graces; acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is, Christ, for Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not his to the Father through the features of men's faces."

Richard Rohr: In that-

Mike Petrow: Christ plays in ten thousand places.

Richard Rohr: It might be my most favorite poem of all time.

Mike Petrow: So good.

Richard Rohr: Oh, so good.

Paul Swanson: Poetry I feel like can distill so much-

Richard Rohr: It can.

Paul Swanson: ... just to make you love the idea.

Richard Rohr: Yeah.

Paul Swanson: That is the mind and heart coming together. I feel like in a poem like that, that exemplifies the education of the arts right there. Richard would love, as you've mentioned, we dipped into haecceity. Can you go a step further of what is it thisness, this haecceity that Scotus would talk about? You've talked about how it's related to the univocity of being. Can you take it a step further to hold it on its own and then maybe dip back into how it's related to univocity of being?

Richard Rohr: Well, you see, once he develops his univocity idea, you could get into a big mass. The monad theories of philosophy. Everything's just one. Everything's one. To say that too glibly is dangerous. You have to protect the other end of the spectrum. Once you've created oneness, you have to provide a philosophical basis for differentiation. And that's haecceity, so H-A-E-C is the Latin word for this and he called it thisness. That God doesn't just create universals, which was the term in scholastic philosophy. Let there be angels, let there be cattle, let there be maple trees or trees. Now he developed, and I can't even remember the development because it was that rarefied thinking that gave me a headache step by step. No, God only creates this maple tree and loves it and holds it in existence by His love of it as it is in its isness, in its univocity.

So its universality, its union with universality keeps it living, but its haecceity keeps it special and persistent in not just monadic existence, but God loves this tree for being this tree. And then Christ becomes the stamp of that, the incarnation in one little baby boy in Judea in the first century. It's almost too much thisness. Come on, come on. We're supposed to believe this little child is the son of God. I mean it's a daring proposition, but that's the holding of

the two together where you have we are Christ and yet Christ is everything which became my book, The Universal Christ. Most people were never... I'm already jumping into the third.

Paul Swanson: That's all right.

Richard Rohr: Most people weren't trained in the Cosmic Christ. It was simply Jesus of Nazareth. So they got the specific, but they didn't get the universal. And to understand Jesus the specific, Christ the universal is to hold the whole of creation together. Now, by the way, there's verses in Colossians and Ephesians which state this very specifically that the Christ is the image of the invisible God, in Him all things cohere in existence. He holds together the specific with the universal.

So read over the hymn in the first chapter of Ephesians and the hymn in the first chapter of Colossians, how Paul of a first-century Jew, came to that realization. That's enough to make him a first-rate mystic, theologian, poet. You wonder, did he write those two poems or hymns as we call them now? Hymns.

Mike Petrow: Yeah.

Richard Rohr: We don't know.

Mike Petrow: It's wild. Again, I'm thinking of Origen who talks about, it says God inhabits the entire universe like the soul of a body, but also says that each person is a universe within themselves, but leans into Paul and says, "And it is and becoming more and more that God is all in all."

Richard Rohr: That's in the same letter. Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Mike Petrow: Well, I know this. I still can't say the word haecceity.

Richard Rohr: Haec-

Mike Petrow: Haec.

Richard Rohr: ... ceity.

Mike Petrow: Haecceity. Sometimes it's translated as individuation, which I know had a huge influence on Carl Jung who used the word individuation.

Richard Rohr: That's right.

Mike Petrow: That each thing matters is created to be what it is. And yet we are not the center of the universe at the same time and that God is everywhere in everything. That's such a... What a wild paradox to hold.

Richard Rohr: It's close to our contemporary astrophysical word, fractals, where the part replicates the whole and yet is whole in itself. We see it in art now and artistic attempts to make pictures that you have a bunch of little patterns and then the whole thing is a pattern that replicates

the little pattern.

Mike Petrow: I love that. I know we're just about out of time, but I think about if that fractal shape of reality and where we find our place in God is real, what does that mean for each one of us and how we live our lives every day?

Richard Rohr: It makes incarnation the only believable way that this physical world has to have specific glory and goodness and meaning to it. It's a non-spiritual religion. It's an incarnational religion. Christianity. That tree is a fractal and I'm a fractal. It makes you not afraid of science, not afraid of physics, not afraid of mysticism, all of which we've largely been afraid of in favor of so-called theology. He is the image of the unseen God. This is Colossians. He is the firstborn of all creation. So the first idea in the mind of God, Scotus called it, was one living image of matter and spirit coexisting as one. In him were created all things, all things, in heaven and on earth, everything visible and everything invisible. Thrones, domination, sovereignty, powers, all things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed and he holds all things in unity. It's just like there's the whole Christian religion. He is the beginning. He was the first to be born from the dead, implying we're the second or the follow-up so that he should be first in everywhere because God wanted all wholeness.

The word was pleroma, the fullness to be found in him. He is the whole, we are the parts and all things are reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth when he made peace through the blood of the cross. Now I know we get right into our redemption theories, but don't rush there. He's just saying the price of realizing that is a bloody one, it's a suffering one to realizing you're a part of the whole.

Paul Swanson: They're so beautiful.

Richard Rohr: It really is. Once you let it be a cosmic message and know that the problem is solved at the beginning, Jesus didn't solve it on the cross. He revealed it on the cross. Cur Deus Homo, why did God become a human being? Because he needed one human to reveal to us our own humanity, not our own sinfulness, dang it. We spent so much time trying to get rid of this horrible notion of sin.

Mike Petrow: All this time focused on what not to do.

Richard Rohr: What not to do.

Mike Petrow: Instead of what to do, which is to follow the imitation of Christ.

Richard Rohr: Sin-centered religion is what we were all raised in. And that's more than anything why say we're only in baby Christianity. It's all been problem centered, sin centered, it built on the negative. And when you built on the solving a problem that's negative, you never get much beyond it. There's always that dark side showing itself, which is true, but allow it to be the shadow, which again, Jung understands not the substance. The substance is Genesis 1. "God created it and it was good. Very good." So my shorthand way of saying it was we began with Genesis 3, the fall, where Scotus begins with Genesis 1. And it was good and it was very good and all created in the image of the beloved Son. We also are the beloved son of God.

Now it's just a positive journey to be replicated and it's already written in our DNA.

Mike Petrow: Well, and it's again such a different thing to see the image of Christ and to grow into that, to see the good and have more of that as opposed to see sin or focus on the bad and only focus on having less bad.

Paul Swanson: Or to start with a Christ-soaked universe and a Christ-soaked world. And then even before I am, I am in Christ in this Christ-soaked universe, this Christ-soaked world, how can I grow into being that fractal of Christ and that revolution?

Richard Rohr: You guys get it.

Paul Swanson: I was going to say revelation, but I said revolution. I think both are true for what Jesus revealed about how to be human and what does that call to us? And this is where I get excited about Scotus because of you take these three ideas together and you start to get a very beautiful universe that we're be invited to participate in.

Richard Rohr: It's a wedding banquet instead of a judicial court.

Mike Petrow: Wow.

Paul Swanson: Yes.

Mike Petrow: I mean that's a note to go out on. Holy moly. It's a wedding banquet instead of a judicial court.

Richard Rohr: And that's what Jesus read how often, Jesus talks about the wedding banquet, only Matthew 25 is a courtroom scene. And that's the one we were all raised on, even though I'm glad he said it because it was to make the point of the poor.

Mike Petrow: Goodness gracious. Well, thank you for introducing your friend to us.

Richard Rohr: Wow. Thank you for wanting it.

Mike Petrow: Duns Scotus. That's pretty awesome.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, thank you, Richard. This is great.

Mike Petrow: Yeah, thank you, Richard. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: Thank you.

Richard Rohr: You're welcome. And I'm looking at a big black crow that just flew into my tree in the front yard.

Mike Petrow: There you go.

Richard Rohr: They only come this time of year. They rest here for a while in the cold month of January. And when you let that one crow, I only see one, be every crow and everything. I don't need to go to philosophy class to appreciate reality or love reality. I just need to be a biologist and

a poet.

Mike Petrow: Wow.

Richard Rohr: Yeah. And it's enough. So you stop thinking theology is the best or quickest path. If you have a fully incarnational theology, it is. But if you have a spiritual theology trying to make you spiritual, it's more a part of the problem than the solution. So thank you, Mr. Crow. Are you still there? Okay, I'll stop.

Paul Swanson: No, that's great.

Mike Petrow: Our teacher-

Richard Rohr: It flew away.

Paul Swanson: Our teacher has left. We can go now.

Mike Petrow: All right.

Everything Belongs will continue in a moment.

Drew Jackson: Sister Mary Beth Ingham CSJ currently serves as congregational leader of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, California. She has published widely on the thoughts of Franciscan Master Blessed John Duns Scotus. Among her many works are Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor. In her research, she argues that the spirituality of beauty is at the hearts of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. To learn more about Sister Mary Beth, please see the show notes for this episode.

Paul Swanson: Sister Mary Beth, we are so grateful and thrilled to be talking with you today. There is no one else that we would want to have this conversation with on blessed John Duns Scotus. You have done such extensive work on this Franciscan master like nobody else. And whenever a scholar like yourself has spent so much attention and care in working to understand and share the ideas of a master like Scotus, I'm always curious to know how did that start? What's the origin story?

Sr Ingham: When I was doing my doctoral work, I was very interested in medieval thinkers, medieval philosophers and theologians and so I was speaking with my doctoral advisor about moving into the doctoral research itself. And he had had a dream. And in his dream he thought about Franciscan ethics and he said to me, "Why don't you think about Franciscan ethics?" Now, at the time, of course, I knew only two Franciscans that would fall into the category of ethics. One would be Scotus of course, and the other would be William of Ockham who did a lot with the divine will. So I wasn't entirely excited about that. And then I went and spoke to my spiritual director about this, who is a professor at the university, and he said, "Oh, absolutely, you need to take a look at Franciscan ethics because somebody needs to nail those people." So that was not why I began to work on Scotus, but it did say to me, there's something important here that you need to look at.

So completed my doctorate, always struggling with trying to understand what he was trying to say because he's both intricate and expansive. He goes to the most minute detail about

the dignity of the individual, and I'm sure we'll talk about that in a little bit. But he's also got this enormously global vision that incorporates everything. And I really struggled to try to understand it because it never made sense to me. I mean, it made sense and it didn't make sense. So this one day I was looking at a text that he had written and struggling with it, trying to map it out. It didn't make logical sense or at least it wasn't what I was expecting. And I said to myself, "Okay, I'm just terribly frustrated, so I'm going to go out for a walk." I went out for a walk and it was a beautiful day.

So I was out walking in the neighborhood, a lot of trees, a lot of birds, just kind of your beautiful afternoon. All of a sudden the thought struck me that maybe what he was doing was describing an experience and describing an experience of beauty. So I went back to my room, looked at the text again, and suddenly it made perfect sense. So that was the introduction to Scotus, which was remarkable in itself because of a dream. I never would've chosen to do Scotus on my own, but I think I turned the corner in my understanding of Scotus when I completely reframed what he was talking about, and I reframed it through my own experience of beauty. And then of course, that beauty just led to more and more insights about beauty among them, harmony, musical harmony, and the way in which we hear things and we know things because we hear them, not because we see them or not because we understand them.

Just really one thing just led to another. It's rather mundane in its own remarkable nature. But I think that's something Scotus would say, yes, reality is remarkably mundane. And if we can really grasp the dignity of the ordinary, then we're able to understand God's love, God's love for the world. To get in touch with that kind of a shift in looking at reality, it's not our love for God that matters. It's God's love for us. And once you've done that, then of course then you can understand the incarnation differently. Then you can look at a paradigm shift that really relates to our own spiritual journey as a journey of gratitude that all is gift. To come back to your question, yes, it was my experience of beauty that helped me understand his experience of beauty. And then of course, through all of this, through all these years, I began to meet Franciscans.

And the Franciscans I met simply gave me evidence of the truth of my experience and the truth of what Scotus was trying to say. So it's pretty remarkable and it is not a journey I would've chosen to make. I walked the Camino several years ago, the Camino de Compostela, and a colleague of mine who has walked the Camino many times said, "Don't worry when it's your time to walk the Camino, the Camino will call you." And that's been my experience. And so I think it's a metaphor for God, really, that we're drawn into a reality that we are meant to experience, not because we've figured it out, but because we've been invited.

Paul Swanson: As you've spent so much time and energy with Scotus and Franciscans and living and being with these pieces, how has Scotus's genius or particular insight revealed itself that you didn't see earlier on, but maybe has become more transparent or luminous later after spending so much time with them? Is there something that's become more evocative the more time you've spent with Scotus's work?

Sr Ingham: I became more and more aware, more and more appreciative of what Scotus was up to when I began to teach at the Franciscan School of Theology, first in Berkeley and now affiliated

with the University of San Diego because the more we read around in the tradition, you read around in, well, the stories of course, Francis, but you read around Claire, you read around Bonaventure, you read around Peter John O'Leavy, who's becoming increasingly more important now in of his influence on these later friars. And even you read around Ockham and it becomes clearer that Scotus is not just a one-off voice in a tradition. Originally you think, "Oh, he's novel, he's different, he's doing this. Nobody else is doing this." And then you read Franciscans through the lens of beauty, for example. Well, it's remarkable.

They are all talking, grosso modo, right, more or less. They're all talking about the same experience, and it's this experience of their Franciscan vocation, insight, tradition, spirituality, all of the ways they're talking with each other about what they know to be true of God's love for the world and their own journey that they're on as pilgrims, as Francis says, "Pilgrims in the world." Well, if you really embrace what it means to be a pilgrim in the world, then you never complain, right? Because what's the saying? "Tourists complain and pilgrims give thanks." So no matter what happens, you don't complain. You give thanks because this is another way of God's love being revealed in our lives. So I hate to use the word optimistic because it can be trivialized into Pollyanna, but I think rather it's such a hope-filled vision of what it means to be human, what it means to be on this earth.

What it means to be in this time and place. Is a colleague of mine, Father Joe Chinnici, teaches at the Franciscan School, often gives retreats to Franciscan groups. And he says he's frequently encountering the question, "Well, what would Francis do? What would Claire do?" And his response is, "They're dead. The question is, what are you going to do?"

Mike Petrow: Oh, that's good.

Sr Ingham: What are you going to do with the insights of this tradition in this time and place, at this moment in history? What are you called to do? It's not about looking at the past as if it was some incredibly romantic time when everybody was holy and everybody looked after the poor. They were times like we are living in right now. And so they did what was theirs to do. What is it Francis says at the end of his life, "I've done what was mine to do and God will show you what's yours to do."

Mike Petrow: Years ago I was a living school student and Richard shared his love of Scotus and I emailed him and I said, "Okay, I want to read more. Where do I go?" And he said, "You have to read Sister Mary Beth's books on Scotus. That is absolutely where you have to go." So I fetched a copy of Scotus for Dunces, which I've had for years, and I told you both before we started recording, moments before we started this recording, I was at a coffee shop reviewing everything for our conversation. I zipped over here to get online all of you, and I realize I've left my copy of Scotus for Dunces on the table in Java Joe's, my favorite coffee shop in Albuquerque. So right now while we're talking about this-

Sr Ingham: Someone.

Mike Petrow: ... someone is picking up that book and looking at the title and reading Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor.

Sr Ingham: Right.

Mike Petrow: In solidarity with that person. And I'm friends with all the folks that work there so I'm imagining who it is, looking at that book. I have two questions. The first one is, what does the title mean? It's such a great play on words.

Sr Ingham: I know, I know.

Mike Petrow: Scotus for Dunces and then a Subtle Doctor. What can you tell us about the title?

Sr Ingham: Okay, so I had to fight for the title, by the way, because serious scholars thought it was trivializing, but I actually thought it was the pun because the word dunce actually is derived from his name because in the Middle Ages, all these great teachers had followers and he had these students, these followers who got so... I mean he's really, if you get into his thinking, it's so confusing because you never know where he's going to land. He's someone... Father Allan Wolter, great Franciscan scholar of Scotus said, when you read Scotus, what you're doing is you're listening to his mind work.

And you never know if and when he's going to resolve. He's going to come up with the answer to whatever question he's looking at because he considers every answer and he'll backtrack and go back and forth. So his students tried to do the same thing, and of course, not having the razor sharp mind that he did, they just made more smoke than light. It was just more and more confusing. So over time, they were called the Dunce men, right? Followers of Dunce. And then after that it became the dunces, the dunces with an S, and then it became dunce. So it's meant to be an insult, and there are all these something or other for dummies books. And I thought, well, you wouldn't have a Scotus for dummies, but you might have a Scotus for Dunces because the term has now come to mean someone who's not very smart. Now-

Mike Petrow: Oh my gosh.

Sr Ingham: ... having said that, I do want to say that Father Allan Wolter, who read Scotus for Dunces said to me in a very kind way, "There is no such thing as Scotus for Dunces because Scotus is so difficult," and that's true. So I can say yes. In Scotus for Dunces, I may have, I won't say trivialized him, but I might've watered him down a little bit to get across the main insight because I was working on this book after I had my insight about beauty. And of course, once I had my insight about beauty, I thought to myself, we're coming at this man and his thinking in the wrong way. We're coming at him as if he's a university professor in an ivory tower, never had a life, is just kind of abstractly creating a lot of these arguments. So let's come at this man as if he is very, very down to earth. He's brilliant, but he's down to earth. He pays attention to his experiences.

Mike Petrow: Yes.

Sr Ingham: And he's a teacher. So what he's trying to do is help his students learn how to think, so that helped me a lot. Then I said to myself, okay, in Scotus for Dunces, what I'm going to do is I'm going to slice his thought differently. I'm not going to do a chapter on cognition followed by a chapter on metaphysics, followed by a chapter on the existence of God, followed by a chapter... I mean, that's kind of the academic scholarly way you come at these things. I said, no, I'm going to slice it horizontally and I'm going to bring together things that are often not put together for him.

So I came up with the three kind of chapters, headings, creation, covenant, and communion. And in that way, I was able to reorganize a lot of his thought under a category like creation. And so you have insights around cognition in the chapter on creation, because that's how we encounter creation. We encounter creation by experiencing it cognitively. We study it. So it doesn't develop his thought in a logical way, in the way that I have done in a few other monographs on Scotus where I bit the bullet and just did the chapter, chapter, chapter.

Mike Petrow: I have to tell you, a three-point argument with alliteration is the language of my soul. So thank you for organizing it as such.

Sr Ingham: You're welcome. You're welcome.

Mike Petrow: The old preacher in me loves that.

Sr Ingham: Yes.

Mike Petrow: The second thing is, and then I have a question, but everything you're talking about, I can't help. I hope this is not an oversimplification, but it reminds me so much of my favorite little poem from Mary Oliver, which is Instructions for Living a Life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.

Sr Ingham: Right.

Mike Petrow: It feels like such a good way to approach Scotus's theology.

Sr Ingham: Yes. And then Scotus would say and make decisions on the basis of it and have it informed the next day. But definitely because it's not just about standing in awe. I mean, I know Richard Rohr, he talks about mysticism, and I think the mysticism of Scotus is not an out-of-body experience. It is not this kind of, "Whoa, I can't speak." It's not a Bonaventurian mysticism. If you look at the end of The Mind's Road to God, Bonaventure is just talked out. He is not going to say anything else because we're into that mystical night being beyond knowing where it's just we stand in awe before the grandeur of God.

If you look at Scotus's treatise on God as first principle, which is his equivalent journey to recognizing the existence of God, you get to the end of this thing and this man cannot shut up. He has pages after pages after pages of praise and talking about, "This is so wonderful, I just can't get over it. This is what God must be like." So it's almost as if Bonaventure brings us to a moment where we enter a kind of mystical night. Scotus brings us to a party, and the party is the life of the Trinity. So we can think about mysticism as an experience of reality in its fullness, and that can be life, not silence, but exuberance, gratitude.

Mike Petrow: That's so fantastic. The idea of mysticism as an experience of life and its fullness is fantastic. I think you answered the question which I was going to ask you, but I'm going to ask it anyway just for fun, which is when I go back in a few days or tomorrow to the coffee shop to get my book back, and they say to me, from no knowledge of anything, not the Christian tradition, not anything, "Who is Scotus and why do they matter?" What would be your elevator sales pitch to a complete outsider for why Scotus matters in helping us be human?

Sr Ingham: God, what a question. Well, you certainly want to say he's a follower of Francis of Assisi. You

might not want to say he's a Franciscan, especially for someone who perhaps has no religious or faith tradition. He's a follower of Francis of Assisi, very popular person to everybody, who has experienced God's love in such a way that he simply cannot stop talking about it. So go thou and do likewise, right? Go and have an experience of God and then just keep talking about it because what giving witness is all about, right? And Francis himself says, "Proclaim the gospel and use words if you have to." So in actions, in words, in songs, in poems, I mean really when you think about it, the Franciscan tradition has everything.

I have to say that one of the reasons I would not have chosen a Franciscan thinker is because I didn't think much of the Franciscan tradition for years because it was that birdbath image that trivializes the saint. It trivializes the tradition, and it's not helpful for one to understand how incredibly prophetic the tradition is. And I think what we're seeing with Pope Francis right now is the lived, what does it feel like to have somebody speaking from within an understanding of that tradition and how many enemies he's making, all the people that want him to fall on one side or the other of a debate, and he refuses to get caught in a rhetorical trap. He simply says, "Who am I to judge?"

Mike Petrow: We talked to Richard this morning a bit about Scotus, and then I was connecting with a colleague over lunch on a completely different topic. My training is Jungian psychology and comparative mythology. So I was talking to a colleague and they were talking about dissertation work that they were doing, and they said, "Yeah, this really is important to connect to the theology of John Duns Scotus." And I went, "Wait, what?" I didn't realize how much one of my great teachers, Carl Jung, was influenced by Scotus's teaching on individuation. I had no idea. And so this was so funny because I said, "Oh, this is wild. I am having three separate conversations about Scotus today. That's as many conversations as I've had about Scotus in the last eight years."

And so the synchronous... And I didn't mention it, I didn't bring it up at all. My colleague brought it up and I thought, "Gosh, that's so wild. I absolutely have to ask Sister Mary Beth about that today," because to think about this beautiful cosmology and then like you said, the dignity of the ordinary and the dignity of the individual living in such an individualistic society as the one that we live in today, I think it's hard for us to imagine how groundbreaking it was for a teacher to say that the individuals matter. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Sr Ingham: Well, yes. I mean, the medieval culture was a culture of the whole, not a culture of the part. And within the whole, Scotus saw the part. I was thinking about this earlier today, and maybe this is an apt example. If you look at a stained-glass window, the hole is a beautiful image. And yet each portion, each particle of glass is its own color, is its own shape, is doing its own work within the hole. And so the medieval cathedrals were being built before, during, and after Scotus lived. So talk about his experiences. He may have been walking into one of the cathedrals, but to see the whole image and yet to see that the whole would not be the whole if each particular part were not doing its part. And the same is true of music, harmony. Harmonies were emerging, polyphony was emerging in that era of the Middle Ages, moving from Gregorian chant, which is a single tone to the multiple voices, Gabriele and all of these beautiful voices that against each other and counterpoint all that.

But if you're in a choir and there's a harmony, you have to sing your part. You can't be

singing somebody else's part because the whole would not be the same. And the same is true of an orchestra and the instruments in an orchestra. So yes, the individual is important, but it's not more important than the role it's playing in a whole symphony, a cosmic symphony I think, which is the music of all reality together. And I think thinkers like Jung and others have brought us into this sense that there's a whole that has meaning. But Scotus would say yes, and the part has meaning.

Mike Petrow: That's so good.

Sr Ingham: Because in his time the parts didn't have meaning except in reference to the whole. Maybe he can help us get back to the greater whole because like us, he values the individual, but it's the individual in relationship. It's not the individual as a self-standing, autonomous being.

Mike Petrow: That's so helpful, the balance of knowing that our own individual dignity matters, but we're part of a community. We were talking this morning about there's the way to live where we think we're the only thing that matters and we're selfish and we're self-absorbed and then on the other side, we recognize that we're part of a community and we're part of the community earth, and there's so much hurt and there's so much brokenness, and there's so much work to do, and that can be overwhelming and exhausting unless we get back to what you already referenced, that notion of Francis saying, "I've done what is mine to do, now you do what is yours to do." I so appreciate for me personally, that image that you just gave of the piece of the stained-glass because it reminds me that I can do my part and trust that I am a part of a greater whole where everyone is doing their part. And that is the only way to sort of contribute to the healing of the world and the wholeness that Christ calls us into. Wow, this is really good.

Sr Ingham: And I think it's an invitation to find people like yourself who are not identical to you, but find people who have that same intuition and form communion or community in small, and then it replicates, replicates, replicates. You don't change the world all at once. You change it one day at a time.

Mike Petrow: So good. Thank you.

Paul Swanson: That's fantastic. And I think about Scotus point us towards a way that doesn't teeter on the extremes, but there is the, as you said, there's the part and there's the whole in the relationship within that and how we think about such language around the mystical body of Christ and what is mine to do as a part of that body. And there's this term of univocity being that Scotus has given the world. Can you share a bit about what that means?

Sr Ingham: Well, it's a tricky term to bring in to this moment because in a number of cases, it's being misunderstood. So let me explain how I understand univocity of being. It's really an insight, it's Scotus's insight about the relationship between our mind and reality. Scotus introduces the argument around the univocity of the term being, or the concept being is probably a better way of saying it, the concept being, when he's exploring how in the world theology can be a science in a strong sense, can give us real now, not science, like physics, but give us scientific knowledge, knowledge that we can be confident about. So he says, unless we were equipped with a concept that can bridge our experience of the world with our experience of God, nothing we say about God, based upon our experience of the world, is valid. Because if

there's this gigantic gap between my everyday experience of love, of goodness, of kindness, of people, it's how do we know what mercy is?

Well, we know it because we've experienced it, but we've experienced it through a human being. Now is that mercy, is my experience of mercy that I'm now really deeply committed to, can I say that about God? And Scotus says, well, folks, unless there is some way that our mind is framed to know reality, Allan Wolter uses the term isomorphic, that the mind and the world are isomorphic. And maybe Jung talks about this too, that the way the mind knows is the way the world is. And that's not naive. It simply says that we have a capacity that's a genuine capacity to know the world, and we need critical thinking. We need to analyze things so we're not just going to take things at face value, but there is a foundational connection that enables us to be able to use language to talk about our own experience and to talk about God.

In order to ground that logically, he says, well, there has to be a single concept that is used when I speak of my own experiences and when I speak of God. So for me, this is how I understand it. It's the word, what. What is it? What am I thinking about? What am I talking about? What am I doing? Now, of course, that's in English, and he was from Scotland, so he would've had a Anglo-Saxon English type of vocabulary and a frame of thinking that would be like English. So can I think about God in terms of what? In other words, what is God like? What is this big being? What is the source of all things? And if I can use that term for creation, what day is it? Right? And I can use that term when I speak of God, then language has a connection that enables me to make sense of my experience as a spiritual journey that leads me to God.

So what it doesn't mean is that I am God. What it doesn't mean is that God is creation. What it doesn't mean is that everything is everything else, right? It doesn't mean that because you couple univocity of being with haecceity, and then you've got the bridge from knowing to being, and you've got the particularity of every being that exists. I'm not saying God is me. I'm not saying I'm God. I'm not even saying that the way I am is the way God is. What I'm saying is I can think about myself and help my own experience of thinking about myself and my own life and my life experience to say something meaningful about God.

So to be able to say that God is love, that has no meaning unless I have myself experienced human love in my life, from my parents, in my family, from my friends, so that I know something about what it means to say that something is love. And then to say, "Okay, well, let me attribute that now to God," and I'll do it in a sentence I'll use the verb is, which is the univocal term. It's the way in which we think about reality and how we make sense in language. So the univocity of being is a very, very intricate complex part of Scotus's thought. I think it is absolutely foundational to understanding ourselves, understanding the world, and understanding God.

Mike Petrow: So what I've loved in our whole conversation up to this point is the dignity of the individual, the dignity of things, and then even the dignity of our experience. I know so many of our listeners, their journey is to learn what it means that they are loved. Like you said, this isn't about us loving God, it's about realizing that we are loved. And for so many of us, their journey is to figure out what that means if they've not experienced love in their life. But the dignifying of that real concrete, real-world experience mattering is so profound, and I think

the exact opposite of what a lot of our listeners might think about when they think about theology. Not to be too trite about it, but I think a lot of folks are intimidated by theology because they think it is so far removed from their lived experience. I love this notion of Scotus, not necessarily the easiest thinker to appreciate, but somewhat immersed in the celebration of experience, reality, and beauty. That's profound.

Sr Ingham: And gratitude.

Mike Petrow: And gratitude.

Sr Ingham: And it's all about, and now, what am I going to do with this insight? I'm not going to fold in on myself and just be me, myself, and I. No, it's about recognizing as Thomas Merton does in that beautiful reflection in Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander. I looked around and I saw that everybody was shining with light, and I hadn't noticed that before. And so it is this sense of when we get to the deepest part of our own experience of reality, we're suddenly connected with all these others in a way that we can't describe because we recognize the community that we are, the family that we are, that we are all brothers and sisters.

We're all equal in that way, and we're unequal in that we're not the same as each other. So it's the univocity of being haecceity together make this kind of explosion of a beautifully diverse world, which is a celebration of God's creativity. And it was Bonaventure that says that if the world were not this diverse, it would inhibit God's creative power. And so the fact that there's all of this diversity and more than we can even imagine is a testimony to how creative God is.

Mike Petrow: It's amazing. But as we leave our listeners, I'm struck by, in the Franciscan tradition, there is this celebration of beauty that is not a looking away from the suffering of the world, and there's a celebration of the individual and the thisness of each person and each thing and each animal and creation itself that is not a looking away from the wholeness. What would you leave our listeners with in living in the both and of that?

Sr Ingham: Well, I would say it's embrace the dynamism of reality. Nothing is static, so even the both and can become a kind of either or static, right? It's the moving back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. I live in California, and so you go out to the ocean and you watch the waves and it's so calming and soothing because they're going out, they're coming back and they're going out. They're coming back. And we talk about the perichoresis, which is the Trinity, the dance. It's all in movement. And so it's even beyond the both and, it's embracing a movement that we're inside of, not looking at from outside. It was a surprise to the fish to learn that he was in water. Well, I think when we enter eternal life, we're going to be surprised to discover that we may have been searching for God all our lives to understand more, to understand more.

But in actual fact, we were always surrounded by God and couldn't see it because we thought it was far away. So your point about people who think theology is something other than themselves, well, that's not theology or it is theology, but it's not good theology. It's more abstract. I mean, it's the experience of the divine all around us that unleashes the dynamism of life and love in the world, and we just have to put time aside every day to get back in touch with that dynamism so that it fuels us to go out. We don't stay with the... We go out

and we share it with others.

Mike Petrow: I mean, could we ask for a better way to end than that? That was-

Sr Ingham: Well, thank you.

Mike Petrow: ... perfect. Thank you.

Sr Ingham: That was a tough question.

Mike Petrow: That was a great answer. That was a great answer.

Sr Ingham: Thank you.

Mike Petrow: Oh my gosh.

Paul Swanson: That was a great answer.

Mike Petrow: This has been so good, Sister Mary Beth, thank you so much.

Sr Ingham: Thank you.

Mike Petrow: I've learned a bunch and been inspired by this conversation. We so appreciate you introducing our listeners and my friends at the coffee shop and everyone else to the importance of Scotus and oh my gosh, the invitation to slow down and pay attention to the divine all around us. Goodness.

Paul Swanson: Yeah, that's so beautifully said. And then also to act, to not just rest on your laurels, but there's the deeper invitation of deeper participation to see that.

Sr Ingham: Take a risk.

Paul Swanson: And take a risk and see that everywhere.

Sr Ingham: And risk being hurt.

Paul Swanson: I love it. Spirituality with teeth.

Sr Ingham: That's right.

Paul Swanson: Oh my gosh.

Sr Ingham: That's right.

Mike Petrow: And the willingness to risk being hurt. Wow. Goodness gracious.

Paul Swanson: Thank you so much, Mary Beth.

Sr Ingham: Well, thank you both.

Mike Petrow: So good. This has been awesome. Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

Sr Ingham: You're very welcome. Thanks for the invitation.

Paul Swanson: It was so fun to be in conversation with Sister Mary Beth Ingham. Her intellect and her approach from this multivaried way of seeing truth, beauty, and goodness in this world and in this theology, just really inspires me. And Drew, one thing that she said at the end that I just wanted to reiterate here, a quote that just really touched me is when she says, "It's the experience of the divine all around us that unleashes the dynamism of life and love in the world, and we just have to put time aside every day to get back in touch with that dynamism so that it fuels us to go out." And I love the grandiosity of that and our own small participation in that, and it just feels like an achingly beautiful way to seek to participate in the world. That's what struck me, Drew. I would love to hear, as you're sitting with this conversation, what drew you in because you started this out with this beautiful reflection on how the univocity of being really spoke to you.

Drew Jackson: I think what's really landing with me or sticking out to me is her reflections on beauty and the particular ways that she talked about her sort aha moment, talking about the walk that she went on and really struggling with the text of Scotus and not really understanding all that he was saying or how all of the things kind of made sense together. I mean, she said it made sense and it didn't make sense, but as she was on this walk and just witnessing the beauty of the world and something as mundane as a walk, that it struck her that maybe this is what Scotus was trying to do, was to describe an experience of beauty. And as I think about that, and I think about this idea, this grand idea of the univocity of being and the oneness of everything, and alongside of that, thisness, that is so central to Scotus's work, it's like the interplay between those two things is where this beauty, this harmony is seen right where it comes to life.

When you think about how me or any one of us or any particular creature being has its own uniqueness and distinctness, and yet as part of this larger whole, it is the harmony that exists between everything as each individual thing is singing its own note, is playing its own tune and how all of those things work together. That is the harmony is the beauty. And the beauty is also in the fact that not everything is the same. Not all of us are the same. There's this harmony in our distinctness, in our uniqueness brought together in this larger thing that the divine is working, has been working from the beginning and is continuing to unfold that we participate in.

If I sit with that, it prompts me to ask the question again, what is my note to sing? How do I participate in this larger thing that God is unfolding, that I'm a participant in? It's the question that we often ask here at the center, right? What is ours to do? What is mine to do? I think it's an invitation for all of us and for our listeners to consider the question, what is the note that I'm being invited to sing, the tune that I'm being invited to play in this larger orchestra that God is directing as all of eternity is unfolding, and that we're participating in, we're being invited to play that song. So how are we being invited to play our part and that God brings it together so it harmonizes and makes a beautiful, beautiful sound of love.

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Sara Palmer: Sara Palmer.

Dorothy Abraham...: Dorothy Abrahams.

Brandon Strange: Brandon Strange.

Vanessa Yee: Vanessa Yee.

Corey Wayne: And me, Corey Wayne. The music you hear is composed and provided by our friends Hammock, and we'd also like to thank Sound on Studios for all of their work in post-production. From the high desert of New Mexico, we wish you peace and every good.