

Speaker 1:

Habits are who we are. And we get to choose every day. Who that is. What's remarkable about these women is that their habits are changing the world. Hi and welcome to habits, the good, the bad, and the Holly. I'm Molly and I'm sitting down every week with the doors of the blood of Christ religious sisters to hear their stories and learn how habits have become more than a symbol for their vocation. They become the means to which they change lives. Hello and welcome back to habits.

Speaker 2:

Today we are talking with sister Edwin, a pope a at one of the thanks so much for taking some time to chat to us. Thank you. You're welcome. Awesome. So, uh, when I was, uh, learning about you, uh, in preparation of this interview, something I found it was incredibly interesting is you were a cyclist for many years. Can you talk about that? Yeah. So I might to cross Kansas from Colorado border to Missouri border. It took us a week. I did that 11 times, 11 times. And was biking something that you stumbled into? Was it something that you always love? Well, when I got out of graduate school, I saw the year before that they had this bike across Kansas and it was just a fun thing for anybody who wrote a bike. And I thought, I'm willing to do that next year. That's my week's vacation to myself. So I did that for 11 years, you know, uh, we rode up close to 500, 500 miles every week, the whole length of the Kansas. That's incredible. And then I have, I've been a runner for, oh, I started in 1982 and I w I quit in 90, in 2000 because I, various reasons. But, um, I've ran three marathons in Chicago. I've done half marathons. I've done by half the loans and everything, and I went through my trophies the other day and took them over to a trophy place so they could use them for parts. Yeah, I took pictures first.

Speaker 2:

So were you competitive with yourself or was it really just getting to the finish? No, I was competitive too with myself and with others. Or do you, do you still miss it? Oh yeah. I miss it because I got, I hurt my neck and I can't do that 2014 too. And I hurt my neck after I got home. I had gotten up during the night and somehow, well fail in my sleep in gave myself a whiplash. So then now I have two plates and eight screws back there. Oh my gosh. That must've been an intense, oh, it was almost instantaneous life change for you. Yeah, it was horrible because then, then I couldn't run. I couldn't bike, I couldn't do anything physically. I just said to Manny, the knack that, so that's, I mean that's a huge thing to work through. How did you,

Speaker 3:

I know a lot of people in their life, their, uh, instinct, you know, when something bad happens to them is that they get mad at God or they get mad at their faith. How dare this happened to me?

Speaker 2:

Did you have those moments? How did you, you know, work through this kind of new life that you were going to have to live? Okay. I think the pain was the main thing that, you know, and then I, my neck did not set up quite right. I don't think the doctor realized that my head went back further. And that's been a real problem for me. But, um, I just had to accept it and just okay. A Wa at the end of, uh, F ran off to surgery system Marriott. Um, Janet McCann brought this gold package to my sister's house. I was over in St Louis Cause it was pretty rough my neck. Uh, so I stayed with my sister for over a month. They are, because of the circumstances, the neck was just unbearable to live with in a, So Dan came in by, excuse me, Janet came by and it had his go package in.

Speaker 2:

No, she didn't give it to me to the last, after we visited and everything. And it was the best thing that could have happened because it was a book on Monday dollars. Yeah. And uh, pencils and crayons. So yeah, I'm not so crazy about crayons, but I did pencils in the, I couldn't sleep at night because of the pain. It was just, and, uh, it was just unbearable. I was not comfortable in my, and myself and, and, uh, I just, I would just in so much, I had this apparatus around my neck and that was just so tight. [inaudible] it was horrible. But anyway, so the first night I didn't sleep, so I was in a chair and I started in, I did the most beautiful picture in my, showed my sister be the smaller she's, wow, that's beautiful. So, uh, I've, I've grown from then and that was five years ago.

Speaker 2:

I still have some pain in my neck, but anyway, I live with it. That's, that's the way it is. But I mean, I think with [inaudible] the art coming in there has helped a lot. No, I mean, I, I prayed so much that it's like two Lord, why can I get out of this pain? So then I had physical therapy and everything and I can manage pretty well. [inaudible] I just, you know, I just wanted those seats you have to accept. Yeah. So it sounds to me that this art was, was how you healed spiritually and emotionally from that. That sounds like a really profound experience. Do you still find that it gives you, hearing you, Oh, you have years later? Sure do. Because I'm doing things now that I would never dreamed that I could do, you know, in, in our work. And so,

Speaker 3:

so I know a lot of, especially, um, with creative arts, a lot of people seem to think that if you don't do it in your youth, you can't, you'll never be good. You'll never find joy out of it. Can you speak to what it was like to have, um, really a full life of, you know, identifying yourself as a biker and a runner and then, um, you know, switching to now identify yourself as really an artist, um, because you know, your art hangs along the halls in this building.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Um, I just find it life-giving. I can sit down and just draw a picture almost instantly. Uh, it may take me awhile to, to find point it, but, um, I, I'm just amazed at what's come out of me. And that, that gives me lots of life and I enjoy it. And it's life giving. Yeah. You know, so some other interesting thing about you, you were a chauffeur for a period of time. Yes. How did you end up there? How did you, uh, y before I entered, I entered when I was 33. Okay. Because I'm a convert in, uh, I just, I didn't know sisters. Uh, the first sister I met was the, was the one who was at my grandpa's dead bed. And then as I grew up, then I met her probably, oh 20, about 20 years later. And then, um, from there, uh, I went into the Catholic church right after high school and something said for me to be a sister.

Speaker 2:

Well, I wanted to get my education, so I, I had to work my way through school, pay my way. So I drove a taxi cab here in Wichita. I drove a school bus and a tech and a mail truck. I do delivered the Mayo from Wichita out to Marlon veal. Um, I had four different routes I could ride, could drive, and then, uh, I was at 20 at Newman for 24 years in the library. So then it was like time we are building fell apart and it was like time to move on. And I wanted to do 25 at Newman, but that was not right. So I, uh, so sister Janet Raleigh asked me if I would go to Columbia. I had been up there two years before for retreat, so at least I knew that area. And I was talking about Columbia, Pennsylvania, not Columbia, the country, Columbia, Pennsylvania.

Speaker 2:

And I said, she says, are you sitting down? I said, yeah, I will. And uh, she says, uh, you want to go to Pennsylvania, Columbia and be the driver? And I said, sure. With the little bit of brake, the like guy, I got up to Columbia. It didn't start off my drive and immediately, but I did many other things there for community. And then I was the only real able body, a person at night to take care of the sisters. So I had a pretty good responsibility cause I had, I had two or three that had fallen during the night. I had to take care of mine and take them into emergency room or by house by ambulance. So that was, I felt the responsibility. But I also felt that I had somebody who was directing me to take care of him because Virginia was a nurse.

Speaker 2:

It choose by good period. She died shortly before I left here for 2000 and by was when I went up to Columbia. My sister Becky was going to get married and so she went with me up to Columbia and just see what it was like. She says, well since you go and I'm going to get married or we're moving on. So, uh, she, we, we both agreed that the job, that the new place was going to be super for me. And uh, so then I ended up in the five years there, three months in 14 days, I ended up driving a hundred thousand miles. Wow. I had it one car. Once I got to be in the driver position, I had one car and night I go, oh many. In those days we had a lot more activity up there cause we had lots of people coming in for retreat and such.

Speaker 2:

And we had the airports who are like two hours away. And so I did a lot to drive and plus going with the sisters to the doctors and the and wherever they needed to go. Have you not made trips across Pennsylvania? Several times out to John John's town and I took sisters home to the visit and stuff like that. So I mean I really did do a lot of traveling there. I loved it. And I never had a wreck. Never in a hundred thousand miles, it's dry. I never had her back. That's expressive. I was, you know, when I drove in all kinds of conditions. So, but yeah, I you really truly, I enjoyed that. Then it helped me a great deal because then I understood Colombia because then we sit home. Then they asked me to be the archivist here and I've been the archivist for community for 10 years and they asked me to come home and be the archivist. So by learning the sisters in living with them and their stories, I was able to process the third of a full of artifacts and papers in history and everything that they sent out back here. Cause we, we had to close, um, the big mother house in the spiritual life center cause there were so few of the sisters there that, um, we couldn't afford to have the buildings.

Speaker 3:

So I do want to, I really want to dig into your archivists role, but I want to talk just for a second, give some background to the listeners. Um, we've talked previously about, you know, how we used to be three provinces and we combined into, uh, one region with three centers and each of those centers had, um, a bunch of history, physical history, artifacts, papers, things like that. Um, that came with them. And you are really the queen of the archives here. You have an incredible

Speaker 2:

[inaudible].

Speaker 3:

I mean it's a, it's a really incredible setup in the archives. You, they are really high quality. So can you talk about, um, because that was your brainchild. You, you know, consulted on the design of, of those archives. You, that was really your, um, your brainchild, like I said. So can you talk about, um, what those archives mean and how they're set up and, and what that's like being an archivist for something that's been around since 18? Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yes. [inaudible] and I n I was, uh, I graduated from Newman. Oh well was sake hard college. Then we were the last class and I had my history degree. So I have a little bit of background for history. Um, I walked into a beautiful situation cause sister Helen started the archives back in the 60s, and I have beautiful notebooks of things that they have done. But, um, when I got here is like, well, we need to rearrange the whole system downstairs. So when when we found that our pipes were so bad, they had to completely put in brand new air conditioning pipes and such because they were like mincemeat they were so rotten and so rested out that it would've been a disaster for with started. So while the guys who were working on the pipes and getting all the rooms ready, I painted all the rooms in the hallway and doors and all that just to, just to help along with the process because it's like, I can't care logo or anything because we don't have the space.

Speaker 2:

But anyways, so I designed the three rooms. We had, um, we had two brand new cold rooms that went from an exhibit room to cold rooms. Now can you explain cold water? Cold Room is a controlled air conditioner, humidity. Um, we have certain limits that we put on, on our machinery and they have to stay within those boundaries to preserve the paper. The products, the, um, our artifacts. It's a cold room is just so that they don't deteriorate. Um, how the national archives in DC keep their I fax. It's why, you know, all the important documents and constitution are kept under such, um, specific requirements that otherwise they would deteriorate. And that's true. And I got to see those up in Digi Ocean to new C. Oh, that's amazing. What was that like? Oh, it was beautiful. We were there for a special showing that night. We were at an archives, um, meeting, uh, we had the big national and we had people from everywhere, but, uh, we, we took a bus tour down to the national honor cause and it was just amazing to see the constitution and everything under glass under preserved conditions.

Speaker 2:

Then we got to go back into some of the vault area and uh, just to look around, you know, to see something that we have never seen before. What was your favorite thing you saw when you were in there? I, I think, uh, just the preservation of the constitution. Yeah. You know, how, how the, uh, we, we saw films on how they brought it in at different times. It's not always kept out right. And, um, and how, how they worked with it. Um, then I also went over to the conservation in Philadelphia and now we went through the conservatory and I had just talked to the lady that was in my class that morning that, uh, she had brought her baptismal records over to be repaired. This was the first church in the United States in Philadelphia. Right. And, uh, we walked in and there, there it is being worked on. It was like, wow.

Speaker 3:

It was something else in your face lit up talking about that. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And, and then I mean they had great big, huge maps that they repairing in. I mean, just the intensity, you, how people love to restore the history. It was just, I mean, I wouldn't never gotten to seen in if I had not been in Columbia.

Speaker 3:

Right. So we were talking about, um, you really worked on the design creating those cold rooms to preserve the artifacts. And now you have, you know, a whole world down here, um, archives, you do, you have a dozen rooms. It feels like just full eight rooms, eight rooms, eight rooms full of really the history of everything about who we are. What is your favorite thing that you have

Speaker 2:

sound in your time archiving of? For one thing, I think my, my most favorite is to understand, oh, Pauline SNI booker sheet. She started in a Kudo when w when they first came over from Bosnia Herzegovina, um, they had, oh at rumor was was 50 miles away and Alton was 50 miles away so they could not have the two, um, by carry it's in the same place. And what is a bike carrier like Carrie? It was like the beginning of our communities. Okay. So they, so then mother Pauline, they were Croatian so they, so she decided she would take our sisters from, from Alton over to Columbia, Pennsylvania. That's how our sisters got in Columbia. Um, and there was a group of Croatian people there that our sisters helped a lot. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Hey everyone. Molly here. I wanted to clarify just one thing and when it just mentioned that the first Columbian sisters were Croatian when actually they were German sisters who had been in Croatia and came to the United States to serve with Croatian immigrants since they knew the language. Consequently, many early vocations were from among the Croatian parishes. Okay. Now, back to the interview,

Speaker 2:

but, um, mother, Pauline, I mean I've ran it across her several times. I was able to look at, um, um, a very beginning paperwork of like the ship register. And, uh, I had that, I had this census that I've found. I also went to Alton, uh, um, several years ago when I was up, my sister's Becky's in a spin today, not only at, at the hospital, but I also went to the public library and they had in their library, they had, oh, microfilmed all of the newspapers in, I have so much information from, from that time period all about mother Pauline and all the different sisters who died during that time period because of the, um, influence, uh, and all that kind of stuff. So I have a great collection among the Pauline stains that I would have never had if I hadn't, you know, been curious about her and knew of Alton and wanted to go over there.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So you've had this, you know, really varied career with [inaudible]. Um, but you mentioned that you converted to Catholicism and then became a sister a little later in life. Can you talk about how you made the decision to join religious life and how you kind of, it seems, um, I think probably foreign to a lot of people to not grow up Catholic and to end up as a Catholic sister. Well, um, I was seven years old when I came a, I'm Protestant, I guess you'd say a Baptist because I was the church down the way from our house we could walk to. Um, so I I thought wouldn't seven years old. I like to go to Africa and be a

missionary. That was my thought. Okay. So then, I mean, life and family and all that, you have to just grow up and learn. And so I got my education.

Speaker 2:

Uh, then I got my, um, college degree from Juco. Then I went out to St Weaver's, the plains, the first Catholic college I had ever attended any kind of college Catholic school. And um, I ran out of money. So then I came back and dough the school bus. So then I could go to school at Newman. Well, sacred heart. And then, um, something always told me deep down in me that I was supposed to be a sister even though I didn't know much about them or what they were about. But I then I, I knew a lot of sisters cause I worked at the Pratt, um, hospital as the cook and bottle Washer, a dietician, everything. I did all kinds of jobs in, in that time period. And a sister, Lucy was a great teacher and, uh, she helped me a lot. And then, then I, then I told the sisters that I was going to become a Catholic and, and, uh, my parents, um, at the time I wrote them a letter and said, Oh, don't call me, you know, if you want to talk to me, just come and we'll, we'll talk.

Speaker 2:

So they did. And then they thought, my mom thought it was a crazy idea and it was even clear up to the last time we had Thanksgiving dinner at her home. Uh, she, the kids were always asked me, aren't you ever going to get married? And I says, no, I'm supposed to be a sister. And, um, my mom says to me, I'm washing dishes and she's dry. And she says, Oh, I thought she gave up that crazy idea a long time ago. And I says, oh no, I just had to shell but for awhile until things worked out. So then they had a weekend here for w what was the Christian moment about? And so I sat down and told Maria, Kevin My, my story and, uh, I waited a year because I needed to pay off my bills cause I have a car and everything.

Speaker 2:

Right. And I still had the feeling that I was supposed to be here and here I am like 30 years later, 38 years later. Um, that's, that's incredible. That's a really remarkable story that you kind of wound your, you've had so many jobs, so many things. What would you say your favorite job you've ever had has been? I think working with the city to sing Columbia, be in there, driver [inaudible] yeah, because I really, I really did a good job of taking care of them. Yeah. And they were very appreciative. I mean I love my archives, don't get me wrong, a lot of work but I know and we have made so much progress down there. But um, yeah I would say with the sisters up in Columbia cause that was really life giving. Yeah. The one question we ask everyone on the podcast is about habits, which is of course the namesake of the podcast.

Speaker 2:

What would you say your best habit is? My best habit I would say is helping people. Yeah. Yeah. And what is your worst habit? My worst habit is probably drinking a Pepsi a day. Yes. And it's sitting right in front of you right now. See I'm going to take two sips. I've only taken two sips most of the time it's only have except for by, by noon, you know, so I don't see your out. You're a big Pepsi Fan. Do you have a preference? Pepsi or coke? I use you use coke. Coke. Okay. I know there's Pepsi here in the House so yeah, that's convenient. But that's, that's my only one cause I don't, I don't call, I don't do coffee cause it gives me headaches. I don't do tea, you know, so someone cokes a fine, fine. Yeah. It's just a little bit of weight about eyeopener in the morning because no coffee. Yeah. Yeah. Get your jumpstart some way. Yeah. Well I want to thank so much for coming and talking to us. I met you down

Speaker 1:

in the archives for the first time when I came to visit, so I'm excited to hear more about your personal story and um, just all the amazing things you've done in your life. So thanks so much for joining us.

Speaker 2:

You're welcome. Thank you.

Speaker 1:

Thanks for joining us for show notes and behind the scenes check out our website adores.org habits is brought to you by the adores of the blood of Christ u s region, co-produced by Shera Whitney, our Laurie Benj and Molly McKinstry edited by Molly McKinstry. Thanks. We'll see you on next week.