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Dominican Srs. of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist Miriam Holzman (right) and John Dominic Rasmussen sit in the studio for "Dominican Sisters Open Mic" podcast in September 2026 (Courtesy of Openlight Media)



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September 24, 2026

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Sr. Miriam Holzman did not set out to go viral.

The 44-year-old Dominican Sister of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist — a pharmacist in Toronto before becoming a sister 20 years ago — doesn't have a smartphone and isn't on social media.

As a sister, she taught high school chemistry and biology, but this year she was asked to wear a different hat (or veil in her case) to host the weekly podcast "Dominican Sisters Open Mic," produced by her order's production company, Openlight Media. The show is recorded in the studio in their school, right next to their motherhouse, in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

In each episode, Miriam sits at a wooden table, in a quasi dining room/office with blue-gray walls and a built-in, very neat bookshelf. The table is empty, except for two microphones and a cup for each sister with the Openlight Media logo. The sisters talk for about an hour each episode, discussing prayer, religious life, teaching science or catechism and occasionally veering into their love of basketball or playing Frisbee.

In these recorded conversations, Miriam gently asks these sisters, all from her order, to share some details she already seems to know a little bit about. If they mention a particular skill they have, she responds with genuine praise, which is what online viewers and listeners this summer jumped onto, en masse, so to speak.

In a discussion on prayer early on, [in Episode 3](#), Sr. Mary Bethany mentioned how much the sisters enjoy games of Ultimate Frisbee, and Miriam came right back with: "Sister, yes, and you're so good at that!"

In [Episode 12](#), which focuses on discerning a religious vocation, Sr. Mercedes acknowledged that one of her hobbies was cooking and Miriam, who seemed to know of this expertise firsthand, responded with an enthusiastic, "Yes, sister!" which viewers ate up.

TikTok comments and Instagram reels from a broad spectrum of viewers, not just Catholics, raved about the sisters' vibe: how they seemed so genuine and supportive of one another.



Natalie Kolano, an Openlight Media staff member who edits clips of "Dominican Sisters Open Mic" podcast for TikTok and Instagram, listens to a podcast in the production room in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with Sr. John Dominic Rasmussen. (Courtesy of Openlight Media)

"We could not have planned all of this to happen," Miriam told the National Catholic Reporter, not just about the online reaction to their show, but to stories about this reaction from news outlets around the [world](#) along with comments linking them to what was called a "[nun girl summer](#)" trend.

Miriam takes all this in stride and views it as a sign of how God works in unusual ways — even through social media.

As of mid-September, the show had 100,000 weekly listeners on its combined podcast platforms, over 8 million likes on TikTok and more than 450,000 followers on social media.

But Miriam is not one to put her faith in numbers or trends. "At some point, 'nun girl summer' will come to an end," she told NCR. "Will there be a 'nun girl winter'? It's OK if there isn't. It gives me freedom and I bring it to prayer."

Praying about the episodes

In fact, Miriam prays about each episode and also prays for the show's listeners, either in the chapel or when she is riding her bike. "It's a lot to process," she said, but sometimes things will come to her mind that she wants to discuss in the show. She views her dedication to this ministry as part of her spiritual motherhood, saying the sisters are "spiritual mothers to the world."

And she's not the only one praying. The sisters as a group pray for all those who ask questions or bring their concerns to the comments sections. Their days are rooted in prayer, beginning together at 5 a.m. and ending with evening prayer in their chapel. When they are not in their respective roles, mostly teaching, and not sharing meals or doing some kind of evening recreation, these sisters spend most of their time in silence.



Sr Miriam Holzman, of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, sits in the order's Openlight Media studio in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where they produce "Dominican Sisters Open Mic" podcast. (Courtesy of Openlight Media)

About 35 sisters currently live at the Ann Arbor residence and more than 100 serve in teaching jobs around the country in Texas, Arizona, Ohio, California and New York. They each have unique stories to tell about their own faith journey, spiritual understanding or varied backgrounds which comes across in the weekly episodes. The concept of telling these stories was the brainchild of Sr. John Dominic Rasmussen, one of the order's founders almost 20 years ago and the executive director of its apostolate, Openlight Media, who wanted to "give the sisters an opportunity to sit down and talk."

She thought Miriam would be a great host because of her natural way of talking and her gift of being genuine and approachable.

Miriam agreed to it, but was not convinced she could do it. What she was sure of, though, was that God could "make it what he wants and reach the souls he wants to." The launch was its own leap of faith. She said she wondered if her mom would be the only one listening, and would have been fine with that. But she also said at the time: "OK Lord, I will accept whatever comes."

But what happened was in fact more than the sisters had imagined. John Dominic said she has been "totally shocked with the response, but rejoicing at the same time."

And for all the attention the sisters have received for their pleasant banter and the willingness for some to admit they didn't always pray or they gave up speeding for Lent, or a zombie movie led to their conversion, there is plenty of serious discussion as well.

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That's not lost on the host, who said she is most proud of [Episode 23](#): "When Sorrow Meets Hope — Suicide, Grief, and Eternal Life" because it "touched on something so

real." In the episode, Sr. Veronica talks about her older brother's suicide the year she entered the convent. She spoke candidly about her own sadness, the range of "what if questions" she asked herself, her concern about her brother's salvation and frustration that God hadn't healed him of his addiction. She also shared how she ultimately found peace through the catechism, Scripture, prayer and even a dream she had about her brother.

In the show, Miriam acknowledged that it would be "easier to not talk about it," but she also said it might help others going through something similar. At the end she simply said, "Wow, sister." She thanked Veronica for her courage and also invited her to come back, saying there are "so many other facets to explore."

She told NCR the episode "took a lot of prayer and preparation" but she felt Veronica's words were uplifting and encouraging for their listeners and the comments they received reflected that with many saying how much this helped them.

And that's what the sisters' podcast is ultimately about. As John Dominic said, "Each conversation will strike a chord," and in that, the sisters are doing the work they feel called to do, to both educate and evangelize. In the comments section, she said, people are often unsure what they are searching for, but that's OK, because the sisters have some answers.

Editor's note: This story mentions suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org.