

## PODCAST START:

Brian: Welcome to the Queer Theology podcast!

Fr. Shay: Where each episode, we take a queer look at the week's lectionary readings. We're the co-founders of QueerTheology.com and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns

B: And I'm Brian G. Murphy.

B: Good morning! Today is Sunday, September 22nd and I'm so glad to have you all hear for another episode of the Queer Theology podcast. We're going to break from the lectionary today to do another Q&A episode and we've got an exciting announcement. In this episode, we're gonna touch upon some of the Christian books that were influential to us. You know, when Shay and I first were growing up and coming up, there just weren't many, if any, books that were written by and for LGBT Christians. Thankfully, that is changing and so we reached out to a bunch of our friends who have written some books that we think are stellar. We are putting together a mega giveaway! So you can see everything that's included, and enter at [queertheology.com/giveaway](http://queertheology.com/giveaway). The grand prize is a powerpack of seven books, most of them we got signed by the authors for you, and they are:

1. Radical Love by Patrick Cheng
2. Queer Virtue by Liz Edman
3. Transforming by Austen Hartke
4. One Coin Found by Emmy Kegler
5. Outside the Lines by Mihee Kim-Kort
6. Our Lives Matter by Pamela R. Lightsey
7. Transgender Theology Ministry and Communities of Faith by Justin Tanis

It's a really awesome collection of books, I think. The grand prize also includes a "God is Love" shirt, some LGBTQ Christian theme stickers, and a year of subscription to Sanctuary Collective. Which if you don't already know, in addition to being a supported international online community, also comes with resources like: Resurrecting Faith, An LGBTQ Christian Guide to Self Care, all 12 issues of our digital magazine Spit & Spirit which covers everything, from Sin & Grace, to Pride & Shame, to Sex & Bodies, to Crucifixion & Resurrection, and more. We are constantly adding to Sanctuary Collective, we got a really cool lineup of stuff coming out next year, so the prize pack is gonna be pretty awesome. So the giveaway is totally free to enter. All you have to do is go to [queertheology.com/giveaway](http://queertheology.com/giveaway). So pause the podcast right now and go do that! Tell your friends. There will be a few runner up prizes, so make sure that you head over to [queertheology.com/giveaway](http://queertheology.com/giveaway) and enter now. Now that that's out of the way, let's jump into the questions.

I am excited to be doing another Q&A episode today we've got a few good questions to dive into. This is something we're gonna be doing from time to time in the podcast. So if you have a question that you would like featured, just shoot us an email at [connect@queertheology.com](mailto:connect@queertheology.com). Let us know if it's a question for the podcast and we will include it here.

So this first question is from Sarah whose a member of Sanctuary Collective, which you can learn more about at [queertheology.com/community](http://queertheology.com/community), and she asks: "Do you have any attachments to specific saints or theologians, who are they and why?" Shay, I know you've got a bug I think, but what's your response to this?

FS: I do! You know, growing up I was in a tradition that did not do saints, right? So it's been fun over the last couple of years to discover the meaning of saints and figuring out how to connect to that. I think that my saints are, some of them are actual canonized by the Roman Catholic church saints and some of them are just people that I consider meaningful and have had an impact on my life. So I think of folks like Dorothy Day, Daniel and Philip Berrigan, all Roman Catholics who did a ton of work around justice issues, and caring for the poor. Those folks are super important to my life and have impacted my journey. So those are probably some of my favorite, more modern saints. I'm a big fan of Doubting Thomas, and his story, and I've written a lot about Thomas and Jesus' scars in the midst of that. So yeah, those are the saints that come first to mind. Do you have any particular saints, Brian?

B: Before I get into that though, you wrote a little bit about doubting Thomas in your book, *Walking Towards Resurrection*. Where can folks get that?

FS: That's on our website, we have a bunch of different options there. We did an ebook version, I read an audiobook version you can do a bundle that will get you all of that, and that's at [queertheology.com/resurrection](http://queertheology.com/resurrection). Folks have seemed to really resonate with it and found it meaningful, both trans and non trans folks. So yeah, if you wanna pick that up.

B: Yeah! I remember the first time I heard you talk about Doubting Thomas and also this passage from Ezekiel, I was like, "Holy shit! Shay is not just regurgitating stuff other people have said before he is creating new theology right here in front of me." It was amazing and I love it! I highly recommend that. I would also second Dorothy Day, I think for me some theologians that have been super influential in me, Dr. James Cone for sure, one of the founders of liberation theology, definitely Black Liberation theology here in America and abroad. Like, hugely transformative in a way that I understand the gospel, and reminds me of that scene in the scriptures were like, the scales fall off of Paul's eyes. And I was like, oh yeah! I can see this all in a new way now. What was so clearly there all along and I somehow missed before. I think that our work at Queer Theology is definitely, forever indebted to the work of Cone and other Liberation Theologians. More recently in my journey, Patrick Cheng and Marcella Althaus-Reid, to queer theologians, Patrick's big book is *Radical Love* and Maricela's book is *The queer God* which is super, super dense. I'm like, a lot to get through, but really expanding the way that I think about God, and sex, and relationships, and how that all puts together in the ways in which things already queer. Christianity has always been queer, so those have been huge for me I think.

FS: Yeah, I am really indebted to, and frankly these books are a little bit dated, but Robert Goss' *Jesus Acted Up* and the *Queer Christ*, were really transformative for me. Especially in shifting out of this sense of apologetics and the clober passages, to a more expansive understanding of what theology could be and what queer theology could be. So his books are, like I said, some of the language is a little bit dated specially around gender identity, but a really great first intro into queer theology. Also, Justin Tanis' book on *Transgender in the Church* is still

the best book that I've read around trans 101 theology and also about how to make your church more inclusive for trans folks. That book was just republished, so it's available again which means we're so excited to have it. So I highly recommend that one too. Those books were really transformative for me, and then I think, even deeper than that I'm really enjoying the Rob Bell's newest book on the Bible, that's been super helpful. And I think a lot of the folks that came out of the radical left in the 60's and 70's, their theology still speaks and screams today at the American church in particular. So the writings of Dorothy Day and the Berrigan brothers are still super influential for me.

B: Yeah, I think for me, the years before I came out and the first years after I came out, I spent a lot of time hashing and rehashing those clobber passages and reading all these books about apologetics. I didn't really make much movement, from the time that I first had this inkling that I liked boys until a few years after I came out. It was really starting to look at moving away from apologetics and into queer theology, liberation theology. Listening to actual queer people talk about their faith, rather than just constantly defending at against or what I am not, made all of the difference and how things started to click into place. So I definitely recommend that for you.

So let's move on to the next question, shall we?

FS: Yeah! Let's do it. This one comes from Miranda and the question is: "How can we love our neighbors when our opinions and beliefs are so different? It's so hard to find the good when our heads are butting so much."

B: Oh! I feel this!

FS: Yes!

B: Friends, neighbors, family altogether. I think one thing, sort of mental shifts that's been helpful for me is switching from the idea of there are good people and there are bad people, to we are all people doing our best, hopefully with what we've got. All of us, whether the people that we might traditionally label as good or bad have redeeming qualities, and they do stuff that's hurtful and harmful. I like to think of myself as a good person, but if I only ever think of myself and my loved ones as good people, then I don't notice the ways in which I participate in white supremacy, sexism, even cis-supremacy right? So focusing less on judging the person's whole entire character, and more about getting specific on actions and impact has been helpful for me. So then I can love in whatever ways that looks like the person while not condoning bad stuff that they do, I think. What about you Shay?

FS: I think for me, it's figuring out what this relationship look like with folks that have harmful and oppressive views, and realizing that a) I don't have to be in relationship with everyone. That's been really impactful even thinking around family, right? My family is not owed a relationship with me if they continue to react in ways that are harmful to my well-being. I think also figuring out that there are places where I can have conversations and be in some type of relationships with folks, but I am no longer willing to engage around certain issues because I know that folks minds are unwilling to change. So that it is unhealthy for me to continue to engage around those things. I also think that sometimes frictive relationships are important

when we're doing the work of justice, meaning that if white people are called to confront white supremacy all the time, and then it's our job to do that so that people of color don't have to do that. So it's important that we don't sweep bad views under the rug so that we can have a happy relationship with our neighbors or with our racist Uncle. You also have to figure out the safety and what is healthy for you. We have some great resources on our website around self-care, you can go to [queertheology.com/selfcare](http://queertheology.com/selfcare). There are some courses and workbooks and articles, and if you think that you might need that. Especially around dealing with family and unaffirming family, I recommend that you check out those resources.

B: Yeah, all of what you said and I think like, to be in a relationship with someone, vulnerability is so important and also people have to earn our vulnerability. So, like you were saying, not everyone is owed that. Also to your point of that sometimes some friction and tension in relationships is good and important thing. Knowing when you've got that to give and when you don't, and I know for me, sometimes I'm just unwilling or unable to debate the rightness of my queerness or my polyness. So I'm probably more likely to take a bow out on that one, and then recognizing that sometimes it will be hard to confront family and friends about racism and transphobia, but I'm not personally affected by it. It's not my character or life on the line there, so I feel called into that space to have those conversations and step into that conflict. So figuring out when those moments that you want to lean in and when are the moments when you wanna tap out all the while, like Shay said, figuring out the important boundaries, healthy boundaries. There's all that at [queertheology.com/selfcare](http://queertheology.com/selfcare). All the while that you're doing all of that, sort of trying to see the good in people even while identifying the real harm that comes from their actions or their policies or their votes sometimes.

FS: Yes. So those are the questions for this time. Reminder if you've got questions that you want us to feature on the podcast, [connect@queertheology.com](mailto:connect@queertheology.com). Let us know that it's a question for the podcast and we'll do one of these again soon.

B: Remember to go to [queertheology.com/giveaway](http://queertheology.com/giveaway) to enter our LGBTQ Christian book giveaway.

[outro music plays]

B: The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at [QueerTheology.com](http://QueerTheology.com) which provides resources, community, and inspiration for LGBTQ Christians and straight cisgender supporters.

FS: To dive into more of the action, visit us at [QueerTheology.com](http://QueerTheology.com). You can also connect with us online: on Facebook, Tumbler, Twitter, and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

**PODCAST END**