



Welcome to *Sisters and Friends: Refresh Your Soul with Melanie Rigney*. Each month, I'll share something about a woman living today and a Catholic saint who will inspire you, spiritual resources, and a brief note of where I'll be in the coming month. In between newsletters, I hope you'll check out my [Web site](#) for my blog and other updates.

***"Forgive what I have been, correct what I am and direct what I shall be" --St. Elizabeth Ann Seton***

I recently visited the nearby [National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton](#), the first native-born U.S. citizen to be canonized. The photo is what's now known as the "White House," where she and the Sisters of Charity moved less than a year after



arriving in Emmitsburg, Md. Elizabeth began life as an Episcopalian and converted to Catholicism in part due to the strong support and faith of friends at the time of her husband's death in Italy. Her feast day is January 4, on the anniversary of her death in 1821. She was just 46.

***Being Christ in Our Lives: Lora Zill***

On the surface, Lora Zill and I don't have much in common. Our politics are different. She publishes a respected Christian poetry journal, [Time of Singing](#); I've written one poem in forty-plus years. At [The Blue Collar Artist](#), she blogs about the creativity process; I'm not much about process about anything. She's an evangelical Christian; I'm a returned Catholic. Yet she's

one of my closest friends, in no small part due to the conversations we have about God and how He's working in our lives. In fact, we'll be holed up together later this month in West Virginia to have some of those long talks (and listen to Neil Diamond, Jon Bon Jovi, and Waylon Jennings). I learn from Lora's strong faith amid personal challenges, and her willingness to speak up for God.



[Who has reflected Christ on your journey?](#) Be one of the first two people to respond on my blog via the link, and win a free copy of *Sisterhood of Saints*.

## ***On the Nightstand***

I'm spending time in discernment this month, and so have returned to one of my favorite spiritual resources: [Evelyn Underhill's \*The Spiritual Life\*](#). It's a short book--128 pages--but by no means slight. Plenty to ponder, including thoughts such as this: "Our place is not the auditorium but the stage--or, as the case may be, the field, workshop, study, laboratory--because we ourselves form part of the creative apparatus of God, or at least are meant to form part of the creative apparatus of God." The book, published in 1936, is a reprint of four radio talks. [What's on your nightstand?](#)

## ***Where to Find Me***

In addition to my mini-retreat with Lora Zill, I'll be spending much of the month on behind-the-scenes stuff in preparation for Lent.

I'm doing another *Sisterhood of Saints* giveaway at [Goodreads](#) that ends January 6. And, if you're a writer in the DC area, you may be interested in my January 13 presentation to [Capital Christian Writers](#) on finding where your target audience "lives," 7 p.m., Gunnell House at Truro Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax, VA.

God bless! Happy New Year!

Melanie

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