



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.

"A divine voice spoke to my soul, saying, 'I did not love you as a joke.'" --St. Angela of Foligno

Born in Foligno, Italy, in 1248 to an affluent, non-Christian family, Angela lived hard in her first thirty or so years, not letting her husband or her children keep her from, as some delicately put it, "the world and its pleasures." It's said her spirituality was kindled by prayers to St. Francis of Assisi, a spirituality that would sustain her through the deaths in short order of her husband, children, and mother. Angela founded a religious community and was known as the "mistress of theologians" for her writings. Still, Angela wasn't beatified until 1701... and it was just last October that Pope Francis declared her a saint. While her feast day is January 4, I'm thinking of her as Lent approaches with its opportunity to examine how we can leave behind "the world and its pleasures" as we strive to offer ourselves up to Christ and community.



Sign Up for Daily Lenten Reflections!

Speaking of Lent, I'm going to attempt to feature each day a female saint or blessed (some feast days, some not) ending on Easter. Each entry will include an image and brief description of the woman, along with a relevant Scripture reading or other writing and a challenge item for you.

If you'd like a daily reminder to visit the site to read the reflection, you can sign up [here](#). A short daily YouTube video also will be available, and you can subscribe for a reminder on that [here](#).

Being Christ in Our Lives: Janet Spurr



This has been one long, cold winter for most of us, physically and perhaps spiritually as well. And yet, my friend Janet Spurr is always about the beach and joy. When I met Spurr, she had just arrived in Maui after a 30 or so hour travel odyssey from her home in Massachusetts. Instead of complaining and whining, she was cracking jokes. I learn from Spurr's passion and her total presence in the moment, whether she's promoting her book, [*Beach Chair Diaries*](#); walking on the beach; working her day job; or sitting quietly and drinking in the Lord, as I once had the privilege of doing with her at [St. John's](#)

[church](#) across from the White House. Never mind the weather; any moment spent with Spurr brings peace and happiness. [*Who reflects Christ to you?*](#)

On the Nightstand

"I do not know you God because I am in the way. Please help me to push myself aside." That humble statement is on the back cover of Flannery

O'Connor's *A Prayer Journal*, published last year. In case you're not familiar with this Catholic, Flannery O'Connor was a gifted short-story writer and essayist who was just thirty-nine when she died in 1964. This thin volume will be my reading this Lent, and I'm itching for Wednesday so I can get started! [What's on your nightstand?](#)

All You Holy Women Quiz Results

Thanks to everyone who participated! Four people scored 75% or higher, and each will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card. Congratulations to Donna Miller and Pam Michalegko of Arlington, Virginia; Bernadette Fox of Newaygo, Michigan; and Kathy McCormick of Banner Elk, North Carolina. Curious just which saint was which in the quiz? The answers will be posted shortly at my [Web site](#).

Quotes Winner: Catherine of Siena

"Everything you do can be a prayer" from Catherine of Siena was the runaway favorite of the five quotes in the poll at 61 percent. Thanks to everyone who voted; I'm working on getting some coffee mugs and related saints merchandise into production and will keep you posted.

Where to Find Me

Big month ahead!

On March 10, I'll be doing a presentation on devotions writing at 7 P.M. ET at the [Catholic Writers Conference Online](#).

I'm very excited about a road trip later in the month. On Thursday, March 20, I'll be speaking about the female saints and blessed at [St. Mary Immaculate Parish](#) in Plainfield, IL, at 7 P.M. CT. The next day, I'll be doing the same presentation in Chicago at 12:10 P.M. at [St. Peter's in the Loop](#). Then on Saturday, March 22, I'll be speaking about the female saints at 11 A.M. at the [Marian Center](#) in Milwaukee, WI. It's going to be wonderful to

see some longtime friends, and meet some new ones.

May God bless you exceedingly!

Melanie

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