



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.

***"... just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with Him." --St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross***

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross was born Edith Stein on Yom Kippur in 1891 to Jewish parents. She abandoned a faith life at an early age. She was an ardent student of philosophy, and chose to become Catholic just before she was thirty, after reading St. Teresa of Avila's autobiography. Like Teresa, she became a Carmelite nun. She and her sister, who also converted, died at Auschwitz.



I've been frazzled and scattered the past couple of months, and this quote from Teresa Benedicta gives me comfort and hope: "... when night comes, and you look back over the day and see how fragmentary everything has been, and how much you planned that has gone undone, and all the reasons you have to be embarrassed and ashamed: just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with Him. Then you will be able to rest in Him -- really rest -- and start the next day as a new life."

More about this wonderful woman a little later in the newsletter.

## ***Daily Lenten Reflections in the Home Stretch***

It's been good discipline to prepare a short post and video about a female saint or blessed (some feast days, some not) each day during Lent. Each entry features an image and brief description of the woman, along with a relevant Scripture reading or other writing and a challenge item. I'll wrap things up on Easter.

If you'd like a daily reminder to read the reflection, you can sign up [here](#). You can subscribe a reminder to view a short daily YouTube video about the woman [here](#).

## ***Being Christ in Our Lives: Linda M. Au***

[Linda M. Au](#) is one of the funniest people I know. I call her the Erma Bombeck of our generation. To see if you agree, check out her books: *Head in the Sand ... and other unpopular positions*, and *Fork in the Road ... and other pointless discussions*. A few things you might not know from



her writing: Linda is painfully shy, but has followed the Lord's call to some leadership positions nonetheless. Linda is the pickiest proofreader I've ever known (which is why I recommend her... and cringe every time I post on Facebook, knowing her eagle eye will find any mistake and "helpfully" point it out; the girl can't help it). Most

importantly, Linda placed her trust in God at a time it would have been very easy to reject Him forever... and has been amply rewarded. Even if she hadn't been, I know she'd do it again. Her rock-solid faith amid trial inspires me. [Who reflects Christ to you?](#)

## ***On the Nightstand***

This month, it's really the DVD rack instead! Last month, I finally found the

DVD version of *The Seventh Chamber*, which is about St. Teresa Benedicta. I loved it on VHS. (Interesting fact: The lead actress also played Mary in *The Passion of Christ*.) I also scored a copy of *Jesus of Nazareth*, which I've never seen but many say is among the best contemporary movies about Christ. So, my Holy Week plans outside of church are pretty much set. [What's on your nightstand?](#)



## [Where to Find Me](#)

Thanks to everyone for turning out for the March events! What spirit-filled connections were renewed or established.

Two friends and I this week will be talking about the female saints and blessed on Catholic Life, a public-access TV show that can be seen in Arlington and Fairfax counties. More via social media about when the episode will run.

On April 27, I'll be in Berkeley Springs, WV, as the speaker for the annual Altar & Rosary Society mother-daughter luncheon at [St. Vincent de Paul Church](#).

And on May 6, I'll be talking about the female saints and blessed at a [Dominican Retreat House](#) fundraiser in McLean, VA, just up the road from where I live.

May God bless you exceedingly!  
Melanie

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