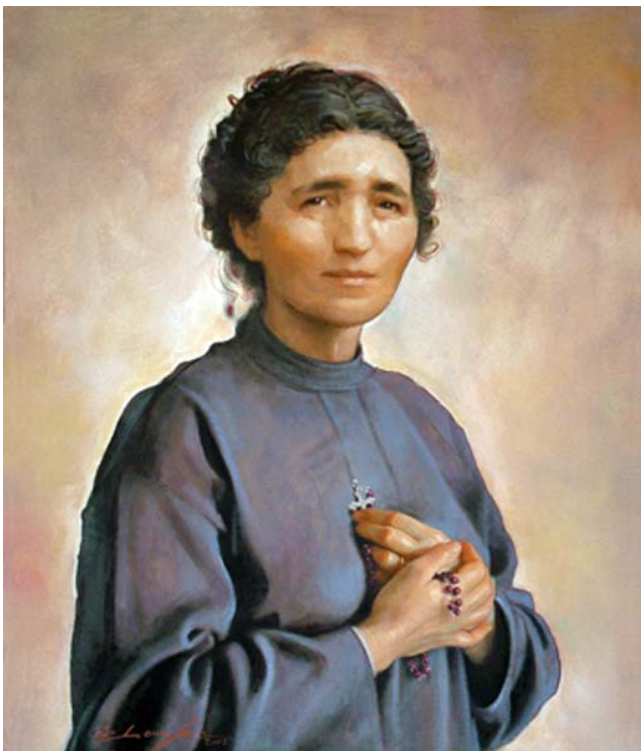




Welcome to *Sisters and Friends: Refresh Your Soul with Melanie Rigney*. Each month, I'll share something about a woman living today and a Catholic saint who will inspire you, spiritual resources, and a brief note of where I'll be in the coming month. In between newsletters, I hope you'll check out my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

## ***Mama Rosa Fabris: Where Did She Find the Time?***

It's summer, and the living is easy... or at least, it's supposed to be. For me, it's proving to be a time of overloaded joy and trust, but more on that in a bit. Some days, my to-do list is so long that I break it into mini-lists!



I find inspiration in the story of Blessed Eurosia Fabris, who lived in the same Italian town from her birth in 1866 until her death in 1932. Still, her life was anything but boring. Mama Rosa, as she was known, was still in her teens when she became the mother figure for two girls whose mother had died. When she was twenty, Mama Rose married, and she and her husband went on to have nine more children. Other children in need found a home with Mama Rosa and husband Carlo from time to time. But her charism didn't stop there. She was a shrewd financial planner, managing to care for her own family and help those in need as well. This

woman also had quite the prayer life, eventually becoming a lay Franciscan.

And so, Mama Rosa reminds me that there's plenty of time for everything God has on His to-do list for me... if I listen.

## ***Being Christ in Our Lives: Vicki Thorn***

And speaking of busy mothers, I'd like to introduce you to one of my newer friends, Vicki Thorn, a wife, mother of six, and grandmother to six more. When I moved to Milwaukee in 1984, I was busy adapting to my newlywed life in a new city with a new job that paid a lot less than promised due to my employer's financial troubles. It all seemed very important.

I didn't know it then, but just a couple miles away, Vicki was starting up something that truly IS important: Project Rachel, a Catholic ministry that seeks to provide healing to people in the aftermath of abortion. Since that time, Project Rachel has helped thousands of people around the world, and Vicki's traveled to 24 countries to receive all sorts of awards and honors, though you wouldn't know that from talking with her.

While it wasn't in God's plan for Vicki and me to meet back in 1984, He chose through a most delightful coincidence to bring us together virtually last fall. We met in person in Milwaukee in March. It was a privilege to spend several hours with Vicki. Her strong faith in the Lord and in Catholicism's teaching radiate in her smile, her tone in conversation, and the way she listens. I learn from her. Vicki's planning a pilgrimage to Rome next year to see the sites of the women saints, and I'm eagerly awaiting more details (and hope to see some of you there as well). [Who reflects Christ to you?](#)

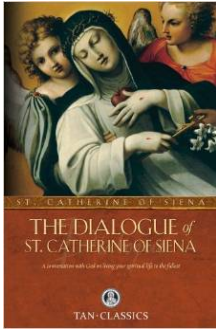


## ***On the Nightstand: Back to the Saints!***

I'm humbled to share I'm working with [Franciscan Media](#) on the follow-up to [Sisterhood of Saints: Daily Guidance and Inspiration](#). The tentative title is *Rejoice and Be Glad: Living the Beatitudes with the Women Saints*. Each chapter will include a brief discussion of a Beatitude and how it challenges us today, then share how four female saints lived that challenge. For example, the chapter on meekness features

the stories of Therese of Lisieux, Bernadette Soubirous, Gianna Beretta Molla, and Paulina of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus. The book will likely be available sometime in 2015.

To prepare myself for the writing beginning this month, I'll be reading [The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena](#). I know her basic story--14th century mystic and adviser to the pope and others--but I need to spend more time with her to learn where she belongs in this new book. After all, how can you not love the woman who wrote: "Start being brave about everything, driving out darkness and spreading light as well"? [What's on your nightstand?](#)



## **[Where to Find Me](#)**

At my desk, that's where you'll find me! In addition to working on the Beatitudes book, I have some assignments from *Living Faith* as well as some research for an exciting new feature on the Web site. More about that when it's ready.

The plane reservations are made for the Pilgrim Center of Hope [Catholic Women's Conference](#) in San Antonio, Texas, September 19-20, and I'm so excited about speaking there about the women saints... and about meeting a lot of new friends. In October, I'll be back at [St. Peter's in the Loop](#) in Chicago, and most likely some other parishes in the area. Let me know if your women's group in the Chicagoland area would like me to come for an afternoon or evening. in October.

And, January 9-11, I'll be presenting at the [Blessed Trinity Shrine Retreat](#) in Fort Mitchell, Alabama. It's a beautiful place inside and out... check it out if you're in the Atlanta; Columbus, Georgia; or Montgomery area.

May God bless you exceedingly!  
Melanie

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