



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.

## ***Happy Fifth Centenary, St. Teresa of Avila!***

This month is an especially big deal in the world of the women saints! We mark the fifth centenary of St. Teresa of Avila, who was born in 1515. Her feast day is October 15. A number of observances and events are planned here in the [United States](#) in the coming year, so you can be a part of the activities even if you can't get to Spain.

Who was Teresa of Avila? Where to begin? She was a Carmelite nun who reformed her order to get back to the basics. Her writings on prayer, including *The Interior Castle*, are so valued that she was named one of the first women Doctors of the Catholic Church. She successfully fought charges against her during the Spanish Inquisition. In her youth, she was said to be young and flirtatious. She had a relationship with God that was so comfortable she once wisecracked to Him that the way He treated His



friends, it was no wonder He had so few of them. But she always, always loved the Lord.

Teresa wrote and said a good many things. In my wallet, I carry a card with this beautiful prayer. If you don't already know it, you may find it helpful:

*Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, all things are passing away: God never changes.*

## ***Being Christ in Our Lives: Emily Stimpson***

[Emily Stimpson](#) is one of those gifted people who can put her strong theological knowledge into words we can all understand. Her passion for sharing the Catholic Church's message on valuing the feminine genius had the house rocking recently during the [Catholic Women's Conference](#) in San Antonio.

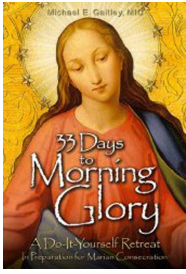
You might know of Emily for her books such as *The Catholic Girl's Survival Guide for the Single Years* or *These Beautiful Bones: An Everyday Theology of the Body*, or perhaps for the newly published *The American Catholic Almanac*, which she coauthored. When I think of her, I think of not only her knowledge, but also her intrinsic kindness and gentleness, and her transparency in sharing some of her own struggles with waiting for God's plan for her to unfold.



[Who reflects Christ to you?](#) Be one of the first three to comment at my Web site, and receive a \$10 Amazon gift card.

## ***On the Nightstand: 33 Days to Morning Glory***

Recently, a priest suggested I pray with the Blessed Virgin Mary to help better hear God's desires for me on a couple of decision points. He noted, more elegantly than this, that Mary pondered many things in her heart... listened to the Lord... and went about her life instead of being paralyzed with indecision. A new friend in San Antonio, Rose Marie, and I were sharing stories while I was there for the Catholic



women's conference, and Rose Marie was kind enough to give me a copy of this book, described as "A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for Marian Consecration." It will be at the top of my stack this month. [What's on your nightstand?](#)

## *Where to Find Me*

Thanks for the prayers for my sister's and my move into our new condo! The place is looking more and more like home every day.

I met so many wonderful sisters in Christ last month in Atlanta and San Antonio, and look forward to meeting even more and talking about the women saints this month here in northern Virginia and in the Chicagoland area. On October 8, I'll be at [Church of the Nativity](#) in Burke, then on October 16 it's on to [St. Lawrence the Martyr](#) in Alexandria. On October 28, I'll be speaking at [St. Anne's Catholic Church](#) in Barrington, Ill., in the northwest suburbs. The next evening, I'll be in the far western suburbs not far from where I lived for several years, visiting [Our Lady of Mercy](#) in Aurora. On October 30 at [St. Peter's in the Loop](#) in downtown Chicago, I'll be talking about the four female Doctors of the Church (including Teresa of Avila!) and what they can teach us about prayer.

What's ahead? We're still working out the details, but sometime in November I'll be talking about the women saints at St. Francis of Assisi in Lenoir, N.C. (and also meeting in person for the first time my wonderful Web guru, [David Cortner](#), and his wife). I'm looking at a trip to Decatur, Ill., and possibly Springfield and St. Louis, for March; if your women's group or parish would be interested in having me visit, please let me know!

May God bless you exceedingly!  
Melanie

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