



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.

"Let charity be the pupil of your eye." -- St. Claudine Thevenet

It can be hard to forgive those who seriously wrong us. And it can be even harder to forgive those who wrong the people we love. Claudine "Gladly" Thevenet was in her late teens when the French Revolution rocked her hometown of Lyon. Among those who were executed were two of her brothers. A few moments before they were killed, one of the brothers slipped her notes to give the family and whispered to her, "Forgive, Gladly, as we forgive." As life went on, Claudine cofounded a lay group to provide education and formation for young people; the group became the foundation for the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary. In 1836, the year before she died, she and the congregation's new chaplain struggled over approaches to spirituality, to the point that when he gave her last rites, he called her "an obstacle." Claudine's only response was: "How good the Good Lord is!"



May her example of forgiveness inspire us to do the same to those who wound or attempt to wound us.

Being Christ in Our Lives: Sister Chris Wiltrakis

Sister Christine Wiltrakis, a Missionary Servant of the Most Blessed Trinity (MSBT), had the privilege of journeying to Latvia soon after the Eastern European country's



liberation from Russia to share the Catholic faith with their teachers. She learned that it was primarily the "babushkas" or grandmothers who kept the faith alive underground during their care-giving of the children, while parents were in the fields and factories.

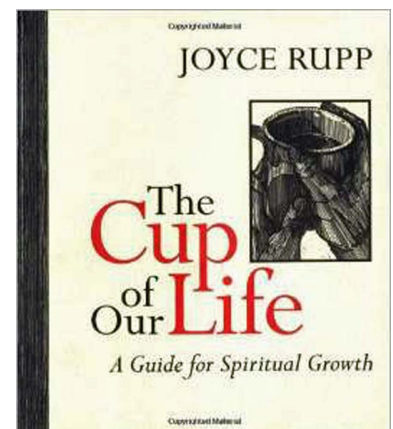
Sister Chris has spent most of her life in situations such as this in service to God's people as a woman religious. These days, you'll find her, her wonderful smile, and her gentle kindness at the [MSBT Blessed Shrine Retreat Center](#) in Fort Mitchell, Alabama. She and the other sisters offer Christlike warmth and hospitality to all visitors, which is a good reminder to me about what the Lord desires in the way we treat our neighbors.

Who reflects Christ to you?

On the Nightstand: Cup of Our Life--and an Invitation for You

Don't you love it when God keeps gently tapping at you to do something? That's the way I've been feeling about the writings of [Joyce Rupp](#), OSM. I've been reading her work in [Living Faith](#) for several years and enjoy her perspective very much. An author and speaker, she's a Servite sister and describes herself as a "spiritual midwife." But I've never read any of her books.

In the past six weeks or so, I've read two books that referred to Joyce's thoughts on prayer, and had her work recommended to me by two women I trust. So, message received, Lord! I've borrowed Joyce's *The Cup of Our Life: A Guide for Spiritual Growth* from my friend Mary Ann to have as my nightly reading in the coming weeks. It's made up of six weekly themes exploring the symbolism of cups,



ordinary and sacramental (and sometimes, both) in our lives.

Now, about the invitation: In the next few months, I'm going to be redoing my Web site to update and expand spiritual resources of interest to women. I'd like to share the resources my friends find helpful as well. I'd appreciate it if you would [share on my blog](#) your favorite spiritual book, magazine, or Web site along with a comment about why you use it. I'll use the information including your comment with your first name and the first initial of your last name when that part of the site is revamped. And, if you're among the first ten people to do this, you'll have your choice of a free signed copy of [Sisterhood of Saints: Daily Guidance and Inspiration](#) or my next book, *Blessed Are You: Inspiration from Our Sisters in Faith*, which will be published by Franciscan Media this fall. I'll contact you privately about which book you would prefer and where to send it.

Feel free to share this with your friends, and God bless!

Catch Me if You Can!

This month, I'm mainly catching my breath and doing some planning work for my part of marketing the next book as I prepare for Lent. On Ash Wednesday, February 18, I'll be attending Mass at [St. Vincent de Paul](#), a lovely little church near where I work that is known in part of the way it welcomes fans headed for Nationals Park. (Hard to believe Opening Day is only two months away!)

I'll be speaking about writing at the fabulous [Bay to Ocean Writers Conference](#) in Wye Mills, Maryland, February 28 but otherwise will be at home all month in Arlington, Virginia. I'm particularly excited about going with some friends to see the ["Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea"](#) exhibit at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in downtown Washington.

May God bless you exceedingly! Melanie

Copyright © 2015. All Rights Reserved.

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to melanie@melanierigney.com by melanie@melanierigney.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Melanie Rigney | 4201 Wilson Blvd. #110328 | Arlington | VA | 22203