



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.

"Whatever troubles may be before you, accept them cheerfully, remembering whom you are trying to follow." --St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop

Obedience is something I struggle with, and I've been told by many of you that I'm not the only one. So, this month, I'm contemplating St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop, whose feast day is August 8 and who is Australia's first saint. In 1869 when she was

still in her twenties, Mary became the first sister and mother superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, a teaching congregation. Within just a few years, amid some controversy, a special commission called for the congregation to be supervised by local priests. When Mary challenged the recommendation, she was excommunicated for five months. A few years later, other issues resulted in Mary's removal as the community's leader. In 2009, 100 years after her death, an Australian archbishop apologized to the sisters for Mary's excommunication.



Through all the upheaval, however, Mary remained obedient to higher authorities within the Church and ultimately to the Lord. Her example shows me that obedience doesn't preclude respectful disagreement with our brothers and sisters. It does require us to gracefully submit when the time comes, regardless of what we perceive as the personal cost. You'll find more about her in my new book, [*Blessed Are You: Finding Inspiration from Our Sisters in Faith*](#), in the chapter about persecution.

Being Christ in Our Lives: Jenna Guizar

I've been following Jenna Guizar, founder of [Blessed Is She](#), on social media for some time, and it was a gift to meet her in person at the [Edel Gathering](#) in Charleston last month. Blessed Is She is a marvelous ministry for Catholic women of all ages, featuring daily devotions, regional communities, a book club, and cool things to buy.

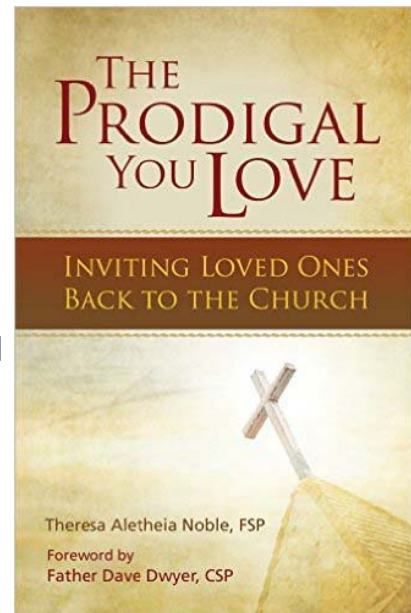


Besides this ministry, Jenna is a wife and mom of three daughters. It makes me tired just thinking about how much is on her plate! She inspires me in the way she was present to every person who came to her table at Edel, with a big smile on her face and an engaged style of listening. You feel special around Jenna, and that is a true charisma.

[*Who reflects Christ to you?*](#)

On the Nightstand: The Prodigal You Love

As someone who didn't have a faith life for decades (and coauthor of a book for parish leaders on setting up programs to help "away" Catholics), I'm always interested in hearing or reading about others who left the Church, why they came back, and what the Lord has set them on fire to do. That's how I came to "know" on social media Sister Theresa Aletheia Noble, who was raised as a Catholic, became an atheist and well, obviously, has found her way back. Her ["Pursued by Truth"](#) blog on Patheos is on my daily must-read list for her beautiful, sensitive writing, and I'm looking forward to more of the same this month in her book [The Prodigal You Love](#). The book's concept--how mothers, fathers, siblings, friends, and coworkers can minister to those who have left the Church--is something that should resonate with everyone.



What's on your nightstand?

It's Showtime, Folks!

Angela of Foligno



"Human perfection consists in knowing the greatness of God and our own nothingness."

Birth date: 1248

Birth place: Italy

Death date: January 4, 1309

Death place: Italy

Feast day: January 4

Canonized Date: October 9, 2013

Canonized By: Pope Francis

Date in Sisterhood of Saints: March 16

Links of Interest:

[Oasis of St. Francis Church, with shrine to Angela of Foligno](#)

The Sisterhood of Saints Database is here! I'm really excited about this new free offering on my [Web site](#). I'll be adding women on a regular basis, so stop by often to see who's new; browse the entire list; or search by name, date, or any number of other fields. The really neat part is that for each woman listed, you'll find links to more information about her (for example,

shrines or other historical sites, or congregation sites for women religious). Some testers already have come up with great ideas (such as patronages and ascribed miracles) to add to the listings, and I hope you'll [let me know](#) what else you'd like to see. A big thank you to Eric Jon Job at [Highlands Media](#), who did the heavy lifting with database development; Whitney Hopley, who handled most of the data entry; and [David Cortner](#), who has made my sites run smoothly and look inviting for several years now.

And speaking of showtime... I'm humbled by the early response to [*Blessed Are You: Finding Inspiration from Our Sisters in Faith*](#). Thank you so much. Below are the places this month that I'll be sharing about the women saints; just let me know if you'd like me to come [speak to a group in your area](#).

- **August 5:** [Joyful Spirit Gifts](#), 3315 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA, 6 p.m.
- **August 9:** [One More Page Books](#), 2200 N. Westmoreland St., #101, Arlington, VA, 3 p.m.

Don't live in the DC area? No worries! I'll be doing a blog tour later this month. Details to come on my Web site, but I can tell you the tour includes a couple of my very favorite Catholic writers, [Pat Gohn](#) (who wrote the foreword to *Blessed Are You*) and [Pam Spano](#) as well as several other very wonderful women! And... my books will be among the products featured in the "underground market" at [Saintnook Bazaar](#) August 9-15.

May God bless you exceedingly! Melanie

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