



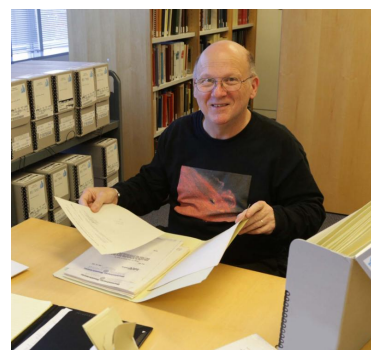
Recharging

Hi everyone! When I was walking to morning prayer one day at [Holy Cross Abbey](#), I was treated to this image. Every few feet, the cat would mew loudly. The monk would turn around and look at her. The cat would sit and look at him. Then the monk would start walking again. Repeat, repeat, repeat. I suspect the two of them do this every morning. That's part of the beauty of monastic life, I think. Routine can free us to live in the moment, experiencing the small joys and gifts right in front of us.

Do know that all of you who requested prayers were remembered intentionally throughout my time at the abbey retreat center. Other than ten minutes at the beginning of each day, I was unplugged, spending my time praying, reading, and resting. I hope you have the opportunity to do the same, even for an afternoon or an hour, in July.

Friends in Faith: David Cortner

To me, [David Cortner](#) is a wizard. As my webmaster, he comes up with great graphics (my very favorite is the [Advent calendar](#) he designed a few years back). No matter how half-baked my ideas are, he figures out a way to make them work. (I can't wait to see what he does with a few of my retreat doodles that hopefully will turn into a refreshed website next spring.)

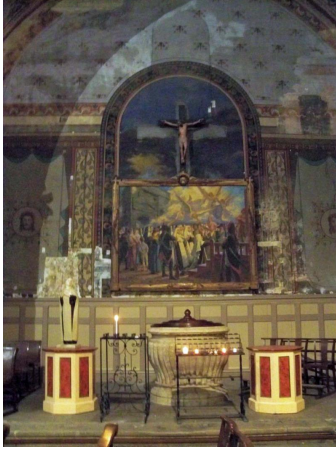


As my friend, I learn from his gentleness, patience, and enthusiasm. David is a wonderful husband to Amy, a photographer/astronomer, and the dogged pursuer of the facts in the life story of a man history has forgotten (but shouldn't have). David reminds me that there's joy and delight to be found in every star we see, in the skies or in our homes, and that's why he's the first male I've featured in this little newsletter.

Who Inspires You?

"Do your job, sir! I have an appointment to dine with angels tonight!"

This in-your-face quote comes from Sacramentine Sister Marie Cluse, imprisoned along with more than two other



women religious in Orange, France's prison in 1794. What makes it so in your face is that Marie said it to a guard who had offered to help her escape if she would marry him. Instead, she and thirty-one other women religious would be guillotined between July 9 and 26.

It had to be disruptive, so many women from four different congregations, ranging in age from twenty-three to seventy-five, brought together because they refused to take an oath they believed was counter to their faith. And yet, they quickly organized themselves into a new community, providing comfort even as they were taken out to face execution.

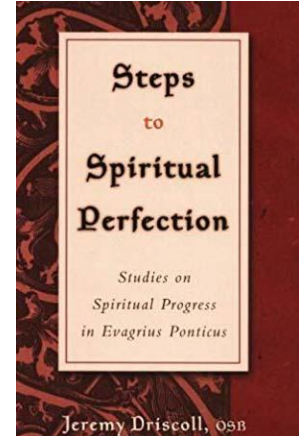
I'll be blogging a bit more about the Martyrs of Orange later this month in my Wednesday's Woman feature (short profiles of beatified and canonized women).

Wednesday's Women

On the Nightstand: *Steps to Spiritual Perfection*

I ask Monk A if he's ever heard of Evagrius, whose writings I keep seeing referenced in stuff I'm reading. Eagerly, he says yes and that Evagrius (he pronounces it ee-VAY-gree-us, which makes a lot more sense than my attempt), a fourth-century Desert Father, is featured in a chapter of a book he's reading on mysticism. He recommends a book by Driscoll that he thinks is on a table in the monastery gift shop.

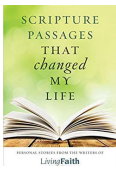
The next day, I go to the gift shop. I look on the table; no luck. I ask Monk B, working the gift shop register, about the book. He checks the computer; Driscoll's not in the database. I wander around some more. I end up back at the table and pick up another book... only to see this one next to it! I take it to the register along with other goodies. Monk B is delighted! He checks the database; the book still isn't there. He smiles and shakes his head. "That's the thing about Evagrius," he says. "He's profound, but he makes you work for it."



And work for it this month I will as I learn about what Evagrius has to say about spiritual apathy, the Holy Trinity, and more.

What's on Your Nightstand?

Giveaway Winners!



Congratulations to Kathy Davis of Iowa and Amber Hensley/Stewart of Kentucky! They are the winners of signed copies of *Scripture Passages that Changed My Life*, a collection of essays from *Living Faith* contributors, including me.

Blessings on your month! --Melanie

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Other ways to keep the conversation going:

