



## On to October!

Last month, I confessed fall is my least favorite season, and asked you to explain why I should do more than endure it. And boy, did you! You'll see a sampling of comments on my [blog](#). Thanks to everyone who chimed in--it helped. I also realized when I was at the local farmers market last week that I love fall veggies, especially all the squash varieties. Yes, you can now get them year-round, but they never taste as good during the rest of the year, do they? Thanks again!

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## Friends in Faith: Nancy Ward



I've been following and interacting with [Nancy Ward](#), a sister in Christ and the Catholic Writers Guild, for several years now. A few years ago, Nancy released a terrific DVD aimed at showing people that Christianity isn't a spectator sport and that we're all called to evangelization. Soon she'll be releasing a book on the same topic, *Sharing Your Catholic Faith Story: Tools, Tips, and Testimonies*.

For me, Nancy is an example of obedience (who knew an introvert would have such a public ministry?) and of cheerful service coaching us to evangelize through our faith stories.

Who Inspires You?

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## Saint Aurea: About God and Second Chances

Between 850 and 859, forty-eight Christians in southern Spain were executed for their faith. The area had been under Muslim rule for about a hundred years; many Christians had fled or converted. Most of the martyrs were monks, and who among us doesn't have respect for a martyr? The one who speaks to me is

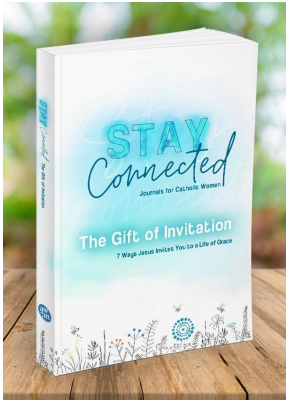
Aurea, is a widow in her 40s who had been living in a convent for some time. Initially, when her Muslim father's family reported Aurea, she renounced Christianity. Not long afterward, however, she regretted the decision. She bravely went to her death the second time the authorities came to investigate her.

Aurea's example reminds me that when we fail--and we all will--the Lord calls on us to pick ourselves up and, with His guidance, try again. I'll be writing a bit more about her later this month in my Wednesday's Woman feature (short profiles of beatified and canonized women).



### Wednesday's Women

## On the Nightstand: *The Gift of Invitation*



The tug at my friend [Allison Gingras'](#) heart to put together a series of guided journals for women began more than two years ago (and I have the emails to prove that!). It wasn't like Allison didn't already have plenty on her plate, with her family; her blog, [Reconciled to You](#), and podcast, [A Seeking Heart](#); and her work with [Women in the New Evangelization](#). But you may notice a commonality in Allison's ministries: she has a call to bring women closer to the Lord and to help them believe in His love. It's just so fun to hold in my hands the first fruits of that mission the Lord had placed on her heart.

*The Gift of Invitation: 7 Ways Jesus Invites You to a Life of Grace* has seven meaty chapters, each with prayers, reflections, Scripture for study, and what I think is going to be my favorite part, an invitation to share. The book is set up to be used as either an individual or group study. I'm going to be doing it on my own this month, two chapters a week. And, knowing Allison, I'm sure I'll be a different person in some way large or small, at the end of the study. I'm already smiling about the last line in her introduction: "May you flourish in the warmth of the Son."

If you're interested in getting a copy, you can find it on Amazon; or, go to [Gracewatch Media](#) and save 15 percent if you use the code GRACE15.

### What's on Your Nightstand?

## You Might Be Interested in:

- A project involving women saints that starts October 15. I'm teaming up with my friends at Franciscan Media (publisher of my two books on women saints) for two weeks of stories, reflections, and messages of faith from these extraordinary women. I hope you'll [sign up or visit the site](#) to learn more.
- The [Future with Hope Women's conference](#) at my parish here in Arlington, VA, Oct. 12-13. We still have some room; if you're not able to join us, like our [Facebook page](#) and you'll be able to watch the live streaming of the awesome speakers.



Blessings on your October! In Christ, Melanie

Other ways to keep the conversation going:

