



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.

"Bring the Convent to Me"--Christine the Astonishing

I'll be honest. Christina the Astonishing is someone I've avoided because the stories about her are so, well, astonishing. She was born in Belgium in 1150 and when she was around twenty-one, very unusual things began to happen, according to a monk who lived in the following century and who wrote about numerous saints of the time. Those unusual things include levitating at what was supposed to be her funeral Mass; self-inflicted heat, water, and wheel torture; and a proclivity to spend time in the woods alone. Small wonder that those about her were concerned she was possessed by demons. Yet she was truly pained by the sins of those around her and prayed for the world's redemption.



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Christina shared her faith constantly, including a time when, emerging from a mystical encounter, she said, "Bring the convent to me, so that together we may

praise Jesus for his great goodness in his miracles." While Christina's charisms were different from those around her--and indeed, most of us today--I admire that she did not attempt to hide them to fit in. She was the woman the Lord desired her to be.

Being Christ in Our Lives: Meg Miller Rydzewski

Sometimes, the Lord nudges us way out of our comfort zone. That's what happened to Meg Miller Rydzewski. She spent time on Wall Street before becoming a mom to her two children, and, after staying at home for several years, was preparing to go back to work. But instead of going back to the world of investments, she heard the call to open a Catholic shop here in Arlington, Virginia. After praying and doing her homework, Meg pushed ahead with the help of family and friends.

[Joyful Spirit Gifts](#) has now been open for a year, and features a lovely assortment of everything from gifts for baptism, marriage, and other sacraments and religious holidays; clerical attire; and books.

I am inspired by Meg's "yes" to the Lord as He took her down a new path.

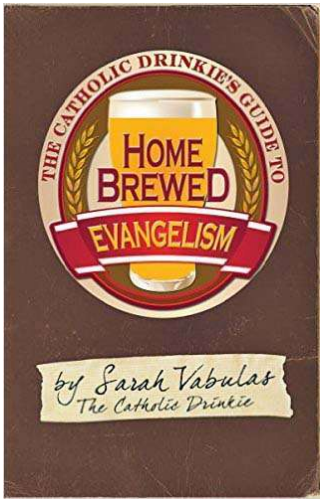


[Who reflects Christ to you?](#)

On the Nightstand: The Catholic Drinkie's Guide to Homebrewed Evangelism

A dear friend and I met when I was on a team for some sessions to help people discerning a return to Catholicism. Since that time, she's married in the Church, and she and her husband have a beautiful baby girl. She once told me that one of the key motivators for her return was when after the sessions, a bunch of us would go across the street from the parish for a beer or two at an Irish pub. She said it showed her Catholics could have fun.

That's a little background on why I think Sara Vabulas (aka [The Catholic Drinkie](#)) and her ministry are so important, and why I'm looking forward to reading [The Catholic Drinkie's Guide to Homebrewed Evangelization](#) this month. Yes, being a Christian often is extremely challenging. But some of our best evangelization opportunities



come in casual settings. I'm also looking forward to learning more about which monasteries make the best beer!

[What's on your nightstand?](#)

What's Going On

Thanks to the eight wonderful folks who hosted the *Blessed Are You* blog tour last month. You'll find links to their sites at my [Web site](#). I'm very humbled that on August 27, the book was Amazon's top-selling new Christian saints title.

I'll be speaking about the women saints the morning of September 26 at [Holy Comforter - St. Cyprian Catholic Church](#) in Washington, DC. I'm especially excited about this as the event organizer at the parish and I share a great love for [St. Josephine Bakhita](#). I'll be doing some additional speaking in the DC area and South Dakota in the next couple of months... and two Advent-related events at stores here in Arlington. More on that as it unfolds. I'm always happy to come share with your group, large or small, about the women saints and how they can inform our journeys. Details on my presentations are available [here](#).

And, I'll be doing an eight-book giveaway September 4-14 at [Goodreads](#). Check the Web site for more details on how to enter once the giveaway begins.

May God bless you exceedingly! Melanie

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