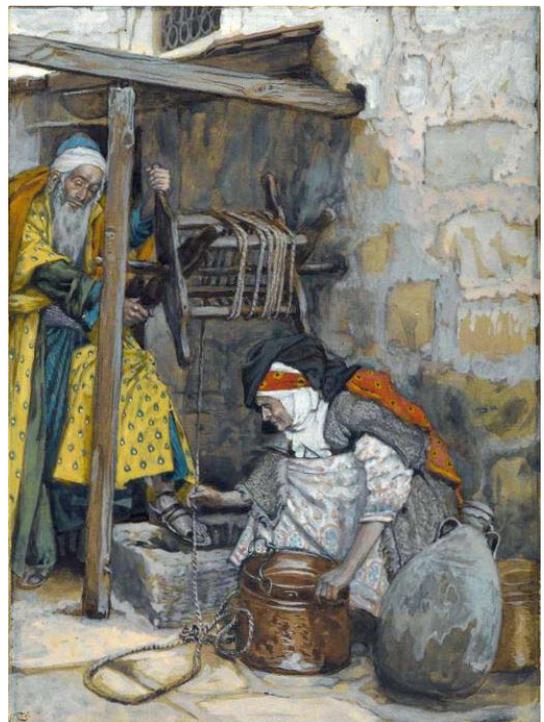




Welcome to *Sisters and Friends: Refresh Your Soul with Melanie Rigney*. Each month, I'll share something about a woman living today and a Catholic saint who will inspire you, spiritual resources, and a brief note of where I'll be in the coming month. In between newsletters, I hope you'll check out my [Web site](#) for my blog and other updates.

"... the Sound of Your Greeting..." --Saint Elizabeth

She was old, well past the usual age of childbearing. But Elizabeth was pregnant. And when her young relative Mary arrived at her home and called out, Elizabeth wasn't preoccupied with the unusualness of her own state. No, instead, we learn in Luke 1:44, Elizabeth offered Mary a blessing and said, "For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy." I like this about Elizabeth, her openness to the Lord in whatever way He presented Himself, rather than focusing on herself. We're headed into the busiest time of the year, so this month I will be contemplating Elizabeth's openness and joy... and attempt to emulate it.



Being Christ in Our Lives: Dorothy Smith



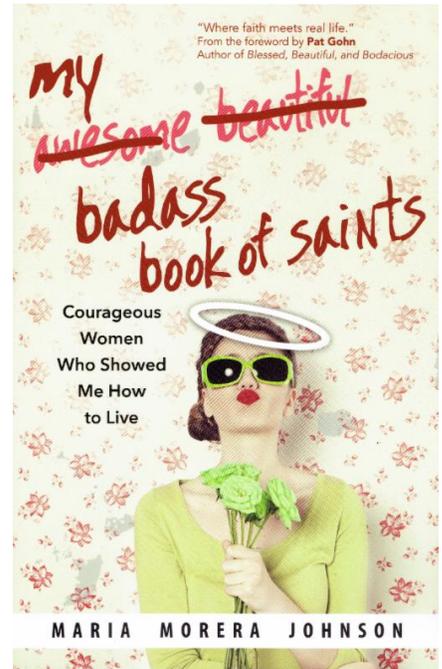
Last month I had the joy of spending time with one of my very favorite relatives, my aunt Dorothy Smith. Her wedding to my beloved uncle when I was five was one of the highlights of my childhood: Dorothy was just so beautiful that day, she looked like a princess! As you can see in this photo, she is if anything more beautiful today. In the intervening years, Dorothy has had significant accomplishments-serving in a high-ranking staff position with the South Dakota Supreme Court-and some big challenges-successfully battling breast cancer. But if you talk with her, you'll find she'd much rather talk about the four wonderful children she and my uncle raised-and their twelve grandchildren. Dorothy's strong Catholic faith has sustained her since childhood. She lives it every day in the way she laughs and the way she loves.

Who reflects Christ to you?

On the Nightstand: My Badass Book of Saints: Courageous Women Who Showed Me How to Live

OK, seriously, how do you *not* pick up a book with this title? I preordered mine back in July when I met author [Maria Morera Johnson](#) and we had an immediate mind meld about the way we both love the saints. This book is part memoir, part a sharing of how women, canonized or otherwise, influence Maria's life. I've read as far as the introduction so far, and was struck by this: "*Everybody* has a story. Some are broken by it and don't know how to write new and better chapters. Others celebrate it." That resonates with me as someone who at various points of life wasn't sure how to write those next chapters... and who has learned to let God take control of the keyboard. I'm looking forward into delving into this one and learning more about some women I love, and meeting some new friends.

What's on your nightstand?



What's Going On

I'm humbled that my friends at [Landings International](#), the Paulist ministry to those considering a return to Catholicism, have invited me to share their table November 14 at the [Arlington diocesan catechetical conference](#) in Reston, Virginia. Please stop by if you're attending.

And, my publisher, Franciscan Media, and I have developed a [free study guide](#) for *Blessed Are You: Finding Inspiration from Our Sisters in Faith*. I hope you'll consider downloading it for your parish book club or for your own use.

May God bless you exceedingly! Melanie

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