

Of saints, friends, books, and what's going on in my crazy life.



Hello, Summertime!

OK, so it doesn't officially start until June 20, but I'm always ready for summer, perhaps because my birthday, June 21, often is the first day of the season. The photo above is of a park across the street from my day job. At lunchtime, I like to sit and watch the children run through the spouts as their parents or babysitters take great joy in their delight. Perhaps the Lord takes something like that delight when our thoughts, words and actions please him. Thanks for June's joys, God!

Women Saints of the Americas: Mary Elisabeth Hesselblad

On June 5, Mary Elisabeth Hesselblad (1870-1957) becomes the newest Catholic woman saint. Her story has a special place in my heart; she worked to improve understanding and relations not only among Christians but also with non-Christians.



Raised in Sweden in the Lutheran faith and one of thirteen children, Elisabeth arrived in the United States shortly after her eighteenth birthday and went to nursing school. She converted to Catholicism at thirty-two after a vigorous study of Church doctrine. Elisabeth found her vocation as a sister with the Order of the Most Holy Savior of St. Bridget, one of her medieval countrywomen. In her efforts to bring new life to the community, she emphasized the need for ecumenism while never wavering in her faith. I like this quote from her: "The Lord has called us from different nations, but we must be united with one heart and one soul." I'll be writing a bit more about her later this month at my blog.

[See the Wednesday's Woman entries in my blog.](#)

Friends in Faith

You often hear the phrase, "September 11 changed everything." I wasn't in DC or New York that day, but it changed a lot for me.

I was on a business trip in the Los Angeles area with Tammy Workman, who sold advertising for the magazine where I was the editor. We'd always been friendly, but not really close; she lived in Alabama, I in Ohio. Then, as we were getting ready in our shared hotel room early that morning, we watched on TV as the towers crumbled. Tammy began quietly praying.

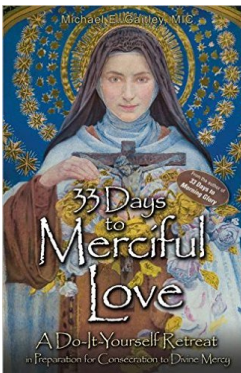
In the next five days, we drove more than 700 miles--to San Diego; Campbell, CA; and finally to the Bay area. I was decades away from having had a faith life, but Tammy's confidence in God amid the tragedy helped spark something in me that I didn't know was still there.

Later, we both ended up in the DC area, and enjoyed the occasional lunch or dinner, always with deep, faith-based discussion. She's moved back home to Alabama, and I miss her. But I'm glad she knows that something as seemingly simple as her praying during our five-day odyssey began to change my life. Tammy shows me that living our faith actively even with people who may not seem to understand it is so pleasing to the Father--and may help others in ways that take time to bear fruit.



Which of your friends inspires you?

On the Nightstand



This month, I'm going to be reading this book by Father Michael Gaitley, who will be familiar to many Catholics. I'm excited about this book because it's based on the "Little Way" spirituality of St. Therese of Lisieux, a philosophy and way of living that appeals to (and challenges!) me more the older I get. Similarly, the message of divine mercy--that the Lord loves each and every one of us, no matter how dark we believe ourselves to be, and desires us to draw closer to him--also resonates with me.

What's on your nightstand?

What's Going On?

I'm sticking close to home for the next couple of months, but that doesn't mean I won't be busy. But then, you all know how that goes, right?

First, I am delighted to say three friends and I have gained approval to move forward with a conference for Catholic women ages forty and over. We hope to help women grow closer to God and to each other at this stage of our lives. The conference will be October 21-22, 2016, at the Fairfax, VA, Hyatt Regency. We anticipate registration will begin in the next few weeks. More on this in July, including our lineup of terrific speakers, opportunities for sharing, and some fun activities. If you'd like more information before then or would like to help us in this not-for-profit effort, please [email me](#).

Second, it's been a gift working with Women in the New Evangelization to prepare for the June 18 launch of the WINE summer book club reading of *Blessed Are You*. I hope you'll consider participating, virtually or with women in your neighborhood. Find out more [here](#).

Finally, I've had some requests about buying the prayer cards I give out at speaking engagements as well as the notecards I use for thank-you notes. So, I've added a bit of a [gift shop](#) to my site. I hope to one day sell printed copies of the [ebook of saints quotes](#) you can download free after subscribing to this newsletter. If there's anything else that would interest you, [just let me know](#).



May God bless you exceedingly! --Melanie

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