

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

October's Bright Blue Weather



Sergey Peterman

The amount of poetry my parents knew by heart was mind boggling. This time of year always makes me think of my mother's rich alto voice and the final stanza of Helen Hunt Jackson's classic:

*O suns and skies and flowers of June,
Count all your boasts together,
Love loveth best of all the year
October's bright blue weather.*

May your month be filled with bright blue weather and love.

"I have found my heaven on earth..." --Elizabeth of the Trinity

"... since heaven is God, and God is in my soul." I love this peaceful quote from Elizabeth, a French nun who died in 1906 and who will be canonized on October 16. There are many things about Elizabeth that resonate with me... her big feet. Her height. The strong-willed, tempestuous nature that she struggled to control. I am also moved and inspired by her devotion to contemplative prayer and her writings. Her life was changed when as a young person, she read an early version of Therese of Lisieux's *Story of a Soul*. It convinced Elizabeth that, like Therese, she was called to be a Carmelite. She entered the order in 1901 and died of Addison's disease when she was just twenty-six.

I'll be blogging about Elizabeth a bit later this month. To learn more about other women saints and blessed, [see the Wednesday's Woman entries in my blog.](#)



Friends in Faith: Paula Hummel

Paula Hummel and I grew up less than a hundred miles apart in the Upper Midwest. (Me about a decade before her, but does that really matter? Not to me!) We have some other similarities in our backgrounds, but it's the way Paula lives her faith today that inspires me. She's a devoted wife and mother. In her part-time job at Catholic Charities, she works to get donations for [St. Margaret of Cortona Family Transitional Housing](#), which helps homeless families get back to independence after emergency shelters.



Paula and I are among the organizers for this month's Future with Hope Catholic Women's Conference, and I have gained a great appreciation for her unflappability in situations that seem like crises to me. Paula reminds me to trust in the Lord and not myself when things don't go as I anticipate.

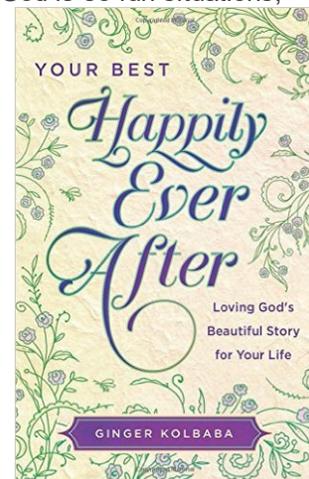
Which of your friends inspires you?

On the Nightstand: *Your Best Happily Ever After*

I recently reconnected with [Ginger Kolbaba](#), an editor and writer I knew and respected a great deal when our paths crossed about fifteen years ago. In one of those God-is-so-fun situations, Ginger edited my dear friend [Letitia Suk's](#) new book about do-it-yourself women's retreats. Well, one thing led to another and Ginger is now critiquing a Christian novel I finished about four years ago and put in a drawer after an agent and a publisher turned it down. (Obviously, I did not follow my own advice about writers and persistence. But I had a few other things going on.)

In the course of all this, I learned about Ginger's book *Your Best Happily Ever After: Loving God's Beautiful Story for Your Life*. It's at the top of my reading list this month. While I'm pretty much grateful for the narrative the Lord is writing for me, there are a few things about it I struggle to love and so I'm looking forward to Ginger's wisdom. (Note: I am not expecting this will make Ginger any less honest in her critique of my novel. Like God, she just doesn't work that way!)

What's on your nightstand?



What's Going On?

Well, here we are, three weeks from the [Future with Hope Women's Conference](#) for Catholic women forty and over, set for October 21-22 in Fairfax, VA. Paula Hummel, Colleen Duffy Kiko, Monica McBrady and I have been overwhelmed by the support we've received from our sponsors and friends. If you're in the area, there's still time to register for this not-for-profit gathering. The conference and getting settled after my sister's and my move, thanks much for all your prayers, are taking up most of my time this month.



I'm also excited to be back in the Walking with Purpose weekly women's Bible study at my parish. Our text this time is called *Keeping in Balance: Creating Order Within*, and that's something with which I really need help!

May God bless you exceedingly! --Melanie

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