

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

Celebration! Finding Your Woman of Worth



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Hello friends! My big news this month is about my next book! It's tentatively titled *Finding Your Woman of Worth*. It uses Proverbs 31 to share stories that show the worth we all have in the Lord's eyes as well as reflections to help readers draw closer to Him. I'm excited to be working with my friends at [Twenty-Third Publications](#) again; Twenty-Third published a book I coauthored for parish leaders about programs for returning Catholics, and Twenty-Third is owned by the same company as [Living Faith](#), for which I'm humbled to be a regular contributor. The manuscript is due March 1, so please pray for continued inspiration!

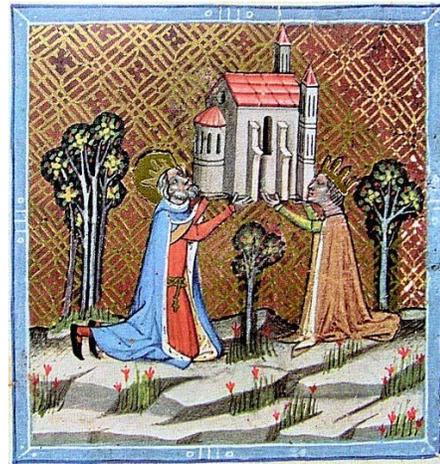
Blessed Gisela & St. Stephen: Christianity in Action

I've really enjoyed researching these female/male saint/blesseds relationships. (And no, I still haven't figured out how to write about Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross in fewer than 400 words!) I learned that Helena, who found the True Cross and other relics, may have had a role in the execution of her son Constantine's second wife. It's always instructive to spend time with Maria and Luigi Quattrocchi, the first married couple to be beatified together. And then there was the friendship of Paula and Jerome. So, I'll keep this series going for a while!

In September, among the folks I'll feature are Blessed Gisela and St. Stephen of Hungary. (In the spirit of full disclosure, I first encountered Stephen back in the 1990s when I was in Budapest before I'd returned to the Catholic Church. I saw his hand--that's right, the hand of a man who died in 1038--in the basilica that bears his name.) So far, I've learned that he and Gisela married young and spent quite a bit of time and money promoting Christianity and founding churches and monasteries. Sadly, when Stephen died, some pagan political rivals had Gisela imprisoned.

Eventually she was freed and became a Benedictine abbess.

To learn more about women saints and blessed, see the [Wednesday's Woman](#) entries in my blog.



Friends in Faith: Kathy Hofer



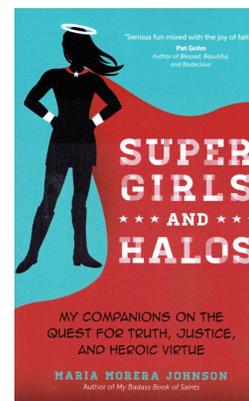
I remember the first time I saw Kathy Hofer. It was at our parish, and she was facilitating a Walking with Purpose women's Bible study small group that had ended up twice as big as expected. I could tell Kathy was nervous, but she plunged right in, confident in her soul (if not her head!) that God had put her in that place for a reason. I knew I wanted to get to know the woman who was so obedient. In the past two years, Kathy and I have become friends. I know she is never happier than when she is working behind the scenes for the Lord with her family, her students, her friends, and her community. But within that Martha soul, she also has the faith and wisdom to know when to put the busyness aside and

listen to Jesus. Several of my touchstone spiritual resources, I've found through Kathy.

Which of your friends inspires you?

On the Nightstand: *Super Girls and Halos*

Wonder Woman and Katharine Drexel, the do-gooder heiress turned tireless missionary? Katniss from *Hunger Games* and Mary MacKillop, who had more than one run-in with authority on her way to canonization? Yep, that's the way my friend Maria Morera Johnson sees it in her new book, *Super Girls and Halos*. I'm looking forward to discovering these commonalities and more! And, her subtitle--My Companions on the Quest for Truth, Justice, and Heroic Virtue--really speaks to me, because we can always use more friends on the journey, right?



In addition, Maria's going to have some fun with this book launch, which officially begins September 8. She's going to give away a plush Wonder Woman doll or cool t-shirt to someone posting a picture of herself (or himself, I'm sure that'd be fine too) with the book and the hashtag #SuperGirlsandHalos on social media. I can't wait to see the creative ideas people come up with to try to be the winner!

What's on your nightstand?



September, I'll Remember...

It'll be a month of meetings for the [Future with Hope](#) conference for Catholic women over 40 I'm helping to plan for October, and by God's grace, we're already nearly sold out. I'll also be taking a long weekend at that little slice of heaven I found in June, the Holy Cross Abbey retreat center about 70 miles west of here in the Shenandoah Valley. And, yes, while I'm there, I'll do some writing on that woman of worth book. I'll also be working on a reflection for [Women in the New Evangelization](#) (WINE) and helping a couple of editing clients. Through all the busyness, I'll be looking to remember to be present, confident these activities are placing me exactly where the Lord wants me. I'll be praying for the same for you.



May God bless you exceedingly! --Melanie

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