

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

In Praise of Fall's Bounty



I'll be honest. I find autumn the most challenging of the four seasons. The days get shorter. The weather gets colder. Nature prepares to hibernate. But I love fall vegetables. I've yet to encounter a type of squash from this time of year that I don't like. Kale seems better for some reason around now, and then there are Jerusalem artichokes, also known as sunchokes, and their unique, nutty flavor. I've been sauteing them for thirty-five years now, and never tire of them. Here's hoping you find a joy spot in the season as well!

Saints Rose of Lima and Martin de Porres: Sacred Support

I'm going to be wrapping up soon my Wednesday blog entries of saintly women and men who were related or worked together. But I'd be remiss to end the series without the story of Sts. Rose of Lima and Martin de Porres.

Rose can be difficult for us to appreciate, which is sad when you consider she was the first person in the Western Hemisphere to be formally canonized. She inflicted all sorts of self-injury whenever someone told her that she had a beautiful face or hair or lovely hands, for example. Her reasoning was that she wanted no distractions, including that of pridefulness, to separate her from the Lord. When she died at forty-one, she had spent most of her life in solitude.

But Rose was not friendless. Brother Martin de Porres, seven years older, was a man of action. While like Rose he had a strong streak of mysticism, he also worked as a Dominican, ministering to the poor and the sick. When Rose, a lay Dominican, was troubled by visions and spiritual dryness, she went to her friend Martin, who comforted her and assured her she was loved by God.



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



Friends in Faith: Karen Audant



In the ten years I've known Karen Audant, she's been through her share of challenges. But it's always evident that Karen's confidence in the Lord even in the most difficult situations runs deep. She often looks to nature and physical activity to reconnect with God. Karen is a big fan of Wayne Muller's *Sabbath* book and, like Muller, believes some time in nature is essential and a nourishing Sabbath practice.

Her form of spiritual replenishment—including an upcoming camping and hiking trip with her husband to Patagonia—reminds me to take time to revel in the Lord's ways beyond the sanctuary and adoration chapel.

Karen helps open my eyes to just how big God is.

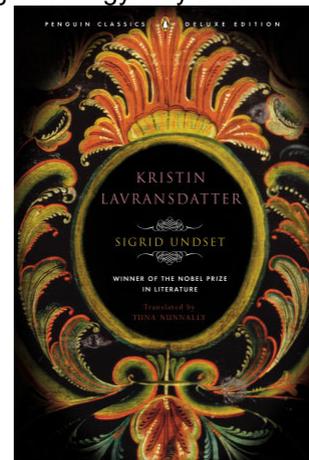
Which of your friends inspires you?

On the Nightstand: *Kristin Lavransdatter*

A couple of years ago, several of my friends were talking about this great trilogy they'd read when they were younger, *Kristin Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Undset. The novels are about Kristin's spiritual and physical journey from childhood to death, set in 14th century Norway and published in the 1920s.

I have to confess I yawned a bit at the discussion. When I think of the 14th century, I think of Catherine of Siena and Italy. When I think of writers of the 1920s, I think of Hemingway and Fitzgerald. But I finally decided to give the trilogy a try, and I'm so glad I did. The characters are compelling, the plot still relevant today. It came as no surprise to me that Undset in 1928 became only the third woman ever to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

I'm about halfway through the second book, and will be sorry to say goodbye to Kristin and her family later this month. Give her a try!



What's on your nightstand?

October Forecast: Blurred and Busy

Jam. Packed. That's how I'll describe this one but then, what month isn't busy for any of us?

- On **October 13**, I'll be joining the three speakers for the [Future with Hope](#) conference for Catholic women over 40 for an hour special on [WMET-AM 1160](#), Catholic radio in the DC area. This station is on the move, and we're going to have some fun together.

- The **conference** itself is **October 20-21** in nearby Falls Church, VA. We've recently done some reconfiguration, and have room for a few more registrants. Check it out!
- On **October 29**, I'll be providing a few opening remarks for my parish's annual **All Saints' Day Parade**. I can't wait to see which saints the children choose to honor!



I'm also starting a new position at the Day Job; doing some writing for *Living Faith*; keeping up with my Bible study group; and working on the proposal to submit with my novel manuscript, currently with the most eagle-eyed proofreader I know, **Linda M. Au**. And, if I'm very lucky, at some point before Halloween, I'll see the top of my desk again. #agirlcandream

May God bless you exceedingly! --Melanie

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