

“In *Menopause Moments*, Melanie Rigney truthfully captures the many sides of menopause—the funny, poignant, and even sweaty moments we women experience as we endure the unique trials of this season of life. Her distinctive voice gives these moments a prayerful touch. I found myself laughing and blushing as so many of her reflections hit home. Hysterically funny and undoubtedly real.”

MARY LENABURG, author of the award-winning *Be Brave in the Scared*

“Melanie Rigney explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges of menopause with compassion, encouraging women not to view them as setbacks. This journal is packed with gentle, practical tips for embracing and contemplating God’s plan in this season of life.”

BARB SZYSZKIEWICZ, editor at *CatholicMom.com*

“God loves women in every season of life, but there’s an intensity to menopause that ought to give us spiritual pause. And that’s exactly what Melanie Rigney recommends. In *Menopause Moments*, she offers readers frequent breaks for prayer and reflection to counterbalance the physical and emotional moments of this ever-changing phase of life.”

PAT GOHN, editor of *Living Faith: Daily Catholic Devotions*

“*Menopause Moments* is a sweet reprieve, like a Dove chocolate at the end of a grueling day. Any woman of any age, before, during, or long after menopause, will reap the rewards of this helpful handbook of life survival skills.”

PATRICIA LORENZ, *Daily Guideposts* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul* contributor and author of 14 books

“Written with the wit and wisdom that could only come from the heart of a mature woman steeped in God’s love and word, this journal at times made me laugh out loud and weep, sometimes both at the same time. *Menopause Moments* serves as a lovely reminder that while the world tries to tell women of a certain age and stage in life they have no worth anymore, God shows us otherwise.”

LAURA K. ROLAND, *speaker/blogger; co-founder, Encounter Grace*

“Melanie Rigney has given us a gift. She addresses our awkward concerns and provides reflections and prayers to help us find consolation as well as opportunities for holiness in our suffering. This honest and sometimes poignant book is a great companion in midlife.”

MARIA M. JOHNSON, *author of My Badass Book of Saints: Courageous Women Who Showed Me How to Live*

“Melanie Rigney’s *Menopause Moments* invites us to a guided action and reflection toward joy and meaning in the midst of ongoing life changes. It gives us a chance to pause and accept where we are but also to reach for a new insight and understanding of ourselves. These reflections offer an opportunity to embrace and celebrate change.”

CHRISTINA PUCHALSKI, MD, OCDS, FACP, FAAHPM, *Professor of Medicine and Health Science; Executive Director, The George Washington University’s Institute for Spirituality and Health (GWish)*

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Light Sleep, Dark Nights

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

MATTHEW 11:28



You toss. You turn. When you do fall asleep, the slightest noise brings you back to wide-eyed wakefulness. You go to bed tired, and you wake up tired. There are so many things to try—hormone replacement therapy, melatonin, white noise, exercise, boring memory challenges (remember every teacher you ever had, starting with kindergarten)—but some nights, not one of them works. And you know what sleepless nights can lead to: cranky, restless days.

There’s no one, surefire way to overcome disrupted sleep. Thankfully, there is one surefire way to keep it from turning you into a total grouch. Instead of fretting, offer up your sleeplessness. Get out of bed and sit in a comfy chair with your Bible or other spiritual reading for a half hour. Pray the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, or have a spontaneous conversation with God. Your body may still be tired, but your spirit will be refreshed. As Jesus told us with so much love, “Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

ACTION

Consider keeping a journal this week of what you eat and do before bed, your bedtime, and how you sleep to see if there are some patterns. Does it help when you incorporate prayer into your bedtime preparations?

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Dear Saint Joseph, God entrusted to you the protection of Mary and Jesus. So that I may sleep and be prepared to do the Almighty's work tomorrow, I entrust to you this worry of mine:

Friends, New and Old

*Do not abandon old friends,
for new ones cannot equal them.
A new friend is like new wine;
when it has aged, you can drink it with pleasure.*

SIRACH 9:10



You've had your "posse" for years. Maybe it's the moms with whom you share school or after-school event carpooling, or maybe it's the other women on your street with whom you've organized years of block parties and progressive dinners. Or maybe it's the friends you've made at work or through professional organizations. They haven't changed, but you feel stale. You wonder if it's time to shake up your friendships a little—then feel guilty and ungrateful for thinking about it.

As your life changes, so do your friendships. You're not betraying anyone if you choose to spend less time with a particular circle of friends to broaden things out through a new prayer group, or perhaps a support group for an ache in your life. You can tend both old and new friendships, knowing, as Ben Sira wrote, a new friendship when aged with time is something "you can drink...with pleasure."

ACTION

How can you, as the saying goes, make new friends but keep the old? Which friendships do you find to be a drag on your joy? Are there women at your parish, in your neighborhood, or at work you'd like to get to know better?

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Why do I keep investing time and effort in a friendship where there is no reciprocation?

Sweats and Flashes

*Does not the dew give relief from the scorching heat?
So a word is better than a gift.*

SIRACH 18:16



You probably remember your first hot flash or night sweat. Maybe it shocked you, the way it came on suddenly and ended just as suddenly. A study from WebMD and HealthyWomen found that that was the first sign of menopause for more than 60 percent of women. Knowing you have a lot of company probably doesn't help much, though. At night, you kick the covers on and off, disturbing your husband if you're married. During the day, you're always the one at home or in the office who wants to turn up the air conditioning—for a few minutes, anyway, until this episode passes.

Feeling like you're inside a furnace isn't pleasant. Sometimes, deep breathing helps. You might find it helpful as you breathe out to give thanks for the unique blessings you have received as a woman—and those to come in the future. Truly, gratitude is a form of the dew that Ben Sira had in mind that gives “relief from the scorching heat.”

ACTION

Talk with friends about the blessings of being a woman—of giving birth, of raising a family, of nurturing a marriage or business, of caregiving. Men are capable of doing much of this, but women have a particular gift for mothering of all sorts. What are you doing or what will you do to share this genius with the next generation?

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Three things that make me happy I'm a woman are:

Shifts of Time

*Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.*

PSALM 16:9



You unpack that linen dress you love to wear in the summer—except now, it looks stretched across your hips. You order a new pair of pants in the same size and style you’ve worn for years—except now, your butt looks huge and you have trouble buttoning or zipping them. The scale confirms you haven’t gained weight. Call it gravity; call it the shifts of time. Some of those pounds have headed south, right where you don’t need them.

Looking at your body can be downright uncomfortable, regardless of how much you exercise or how careful you are about what you eat. While giving up and binging on a box of cookies or a bag of chips isn’t healthy, God finds beauty in your appearance even if you go up a size or two. As the psalmist wrote, when the Lord is before us, “my body also rests secure.”

ACTION

It just might be time to switch up your workout routine, possibly including more activities to keep your bones strong. Talk with your doctor or a trainer about whether a change would be good for your body and spirit. When the exercise of either gets to be too rote, it's easy to get bored and out of shape.

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

I'll take a 10-minute walk today on a different route than I usually do, and be present to God's wonders by watching for:

Counting the Hairs

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

MATTHEW 10:29–31



Your hair was your “crowning” glory. Sometimes, you even complained about how much time it took to dry and style it. But now, you notice a lot more in your brush or comb than ever before. You’ve checked with a physician, and there’s nothing wrong with you beyond getting older—and, possibly, female-pattern hair loss. But it’s not like your dad’s, your brother’s, or your husband’s. Your hair is thinning out all over the crown of your head.

You have options; there are topical solutions that purport to thicken up your hair, and there’s always the try-a-new-style-to-hide-it approach. While you may feel less physically attractive these days, and perhaps a little embarrassed about finding yourself so concerned about this, take comfort in God’s love, for as Jesus said, “even the hairs of your head are all counted.”

ACTION

Look at a photo from a good hair day. Maybe it was your high school or college graduation, or your wedding day. Your hair may have looked great, but you've undoubtedly grown in wisdom since that time. Write a letter to that "before" you to share what you wish you'd known then that gives you comfort now.

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

*Today, I'll reflect on an experience where I couldn't see
God at first, but that turned out to be a blessing.*

Reading Minds

*Jesus stood still and called them, saying,
“What do you want me to do for you?” They said
to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.”*

MATTHEW 20:32–33



You rejoin your family after prayer group. The dinner dishes are still on the kitchen counter. Your husband’s watching football or baseball. The kids are on their phones. Or, everyone’s supposed to take turns cleaning out the refrigerator at work, but you always end up doing it. Can’t anyone see that you need a break from being the Responsible One, just for one day?

You might think it’s obvious, but your family and coworkers don’t. It could be they think you actually enjoy doing particular tasks. Or, could it be that you’re so exacting in the way you want things done that others have given up on pleasing you? They might not ask you Jesus’ question—“What do you want me to do for you?”—but things may improve if you ask for help. You may find out that a clean work refrigerator doesn’t matter to anyone else, but a smile and “good morning” do.

ACTION

None of us can read minds. How can you ask people for the help and support you need from them—or ask them what they want from you?

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

*Jesus, help me to be a servant in your image today.
Open my eyes to what someone I find difficult to love
in the moment needs from me.*
