

An Amelia Bedelia move, rats, a trip to the salad bar, and a few conference leftovers (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

Do you know [Amelia Bedelia](#)? My favorite thing about that book character is that she might botch everything she's been asked to do, but she makes a delicious dessert and all is forgotten and forgiven.

I ran out of ideas for dinner by the end of the week, so I cooked a little of everything that was left in the fridge. It didn't look like much of a spread on the table. But I had secretly slipped an [apple crisp](#) into the oven. So while everyone was eating an underwhelming dinner, the house started to smell all sweet and apple-y.

And once people have eaten apple crisp with a healthy serving of whipped cream, who can remember the tiny salad and the plate of noodles that has been reheated five times? No one, that's who.

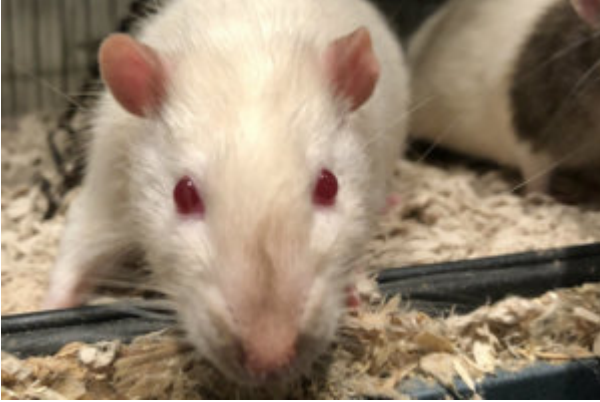
It's a really yummy recipe too. I didn't do orange peel, and just used orange juice out of the bottle. You might enjoy it, so [here's the recipe](#).

~2~

I have never paid attention to the scent when I'm buying dishwashing liquid. A few weeks ago, though, I bought blue dishwashing liquid, and the scent is rosemary. I

love rosemary in my olive oil dipping sauce and pasta and soups. But, as I've discovered, I do not love it in dishwashing liquid.

~3~



Last week when I visited my sister Maureen and her four children, I met my niece Eileen's current rats.

I never knew how fascinating or how cute rats could be until Eileen introduced me to rats. They are intelligent and active and fun to visit now and then if you are Eileen's aunt.

And they have the most wonderful names: Darcy, Bingley, Cassius, Brutus, and Dodger.

I have more fun with the kids than the rats, but spending time with the rats is also a highlight of any trip to their house.

~4~



The other day I took our boys to dinner, and our younger son asked if he could go to the salad bar. I was so pleased. His big brother takes a salad for lunch every day. What could go wrong?

I gave him the plate, and he went over and filled it with chocolate pudding, huge croutons, red onions, and bacon bits.

It was a dream come true—for all of us, of course.

~5~



A week ago I was scrambling to get veggies and fruit sliced for our [Beauty in Word and Art](#) conference, worrying about the fact that I hadn't written better intros for our speakers, and wondering what detail I might have overlooked.

As I drove to the conference, it was drizzling and gray. My co-planners and I had had all these images in our mind of a gorgeous day at the Shrine of St. Anthony, where

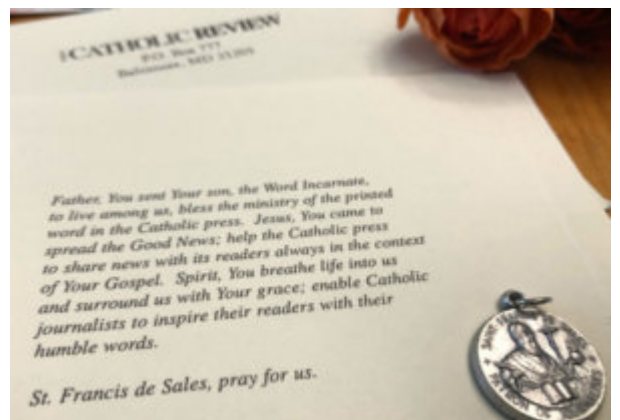
the ladies attending could wander around and explore the grounds in conversation or contemplation. Oh well, I thought. But as the conference got underway, the clouds started clearing. And eventually we found ourselves with a lovely fall day.

It has been such a joy to see other attendees' pictures from the day, and especially from the Shrine, and be grateful all over again for the gift of that day.

I still can't believe how beautifully everything came together—and how wonderful it has been to connect with so many other faith-filled women since the conference.

~6~

A few days before the conference, it occurred to me to reach out to my editors at *The Catholic Review* to see if they happened to have anything we could include in the swag bags for the conference attendees.



They quickly and kindly put together St. Francis de Sales medals on printed prayer cards. And no one—at least to me—complained that I could have thought to ask them for this way ahead of time.

I love working with journalists who can appreciate a good deadline.

~7~

It's not a great dessert, and it's far from a delicious apple crisp with whipped cream on it, but let's wind up these quick takes with a link to my latest column from *The*

Catholic Review, [Humility Cometh after a Fall](#).

Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, [This Ain't the Lyceum](#), and have a wonderful weekend!