

Catherine 's Life

At the age of seven, Catherine was given a vision of Christ over the church of San Domenico. This vision affected her greatly, compelling her to make a vow of virginity and influencing the rest of her life. At 20 she had a deep mystical experience of being united to Christ in marriage and after spending three years in contemplative prayer, she heard God tell her to leave her prayer cell. She argued with Him and He responded to her saying,



I have no intention whatever of parting you from myself, but rather of making sure to bind you to me all the closer by the bond of your love for your neighbor. Remember that I have laid down two commandments of love: love of me and love of your neighbor....On two feet you must walk my way.

From that time forward, Catherine's journey included nursing the sick, caring for the poor and peacemaking between feuding families and warring Italian states. She offered her life for the Church saying, "O eternal God, receive the offering of my life in this mystic body of holy Church. I have nothing to give except what you have given me, so take my heart and squeeze it out over the face of the bride"

Catherine of Siena



Have you ever wanted to eaves drop on a conversation that was all about you?

St. Catherine of Siena spent five days, from October 9-13, 1378, in an intimate conversation with God the Father, who revealed to her, His

Divine Mercy, unconditional love, the things of heaven and hell, sin and repentance, life and death, the Power of the Cross, and so many other critical aspects of our journey to heaven.

**Who would not want to get in on this conversation!
Well now you can!**



Parish Renewal Series

Catherine of Siena Saint, Mystic, Doctor of the Church



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Catherine's Dialogue

St. Catherine is noted for writing a great spiritual masterpiece, *The Dialogue*, which she dictated to three secretaries, over a period of five days, while she was in a state of mystical ecstasy.

The Dialogue is distinctive in two ways.



First, it is a dialogue mostly between her soul and God the Father (rather than with Christ, who is the usual "dialogue" partner for Christian mystics), and second, the

whole work is centered on the theme of Divine Mercy "The Spirituality of St. Catherine of Siena" (Stackpole, STD, 2005). We will experience here Dialogue together during this retreat!

Catherine's Prayers

Catherine's prayers were transcribed by one or more of her followers who were present as she prayed aloud. Her prayers reflect her passionate and intense love for God and they express her continual astonishment over the depth of God's great mercy and love for herself and for all of humanity. We will encounter some of her powerful prayers during this retreat

Catherine's Letters



In addition to her place of honor as Saint, Mystic, and doctor of the Church, Catherine is considered a great Italian letter writer of the fourteenth century. Nearly 400 of her letters have been handed down. They depict her deep awareness of each person's unique circumstances in life, characterized by sensitivity and common sense. Through them, she offered spiritual and temporal counsel and guidance to her friends, family, followers, and clergy relevant to her time and relevant to us still today. St. Catherine chose her words carefully, giving just the right encouragement and instruction when and as needed.

Resources

Catherine of Siena: Passion for the Truth, Compassion for Humanity.
Mary O'Driscoll OP.
New City Press: NY: 2002.

Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue.
Translated by Suzanne Noffke, OP.
Paulist Press. NY. 1980.

The Conversion

From out of the river of death, the Father calls us to use our *memory* to remember His goodness. He calls us to engage our *intellect* to come to know and understand His Son, our *Bridge* to Our Father. He calls us to exercise our free will to choose loving actions and words that keep us out of the river of death and keep us united with Christ, on His Cross of Salvation, where we encounter His unconditional and passionate love.

The Climb

Once out of the river of death, the Father calls us to the foot of the cross and onto the feet of Jesus on the Cross where we find encounter His Grace to turn away from our love of the world, confess our sins, profess our love, turn our hearts and minds towards Him and surrender our lives to Him.

The Surrender

Having stripped ourselves of sin and having surrendered our lives to Jesus, we open ourselves to receive God's love and mercy flowing from the Sacred Heart of His Son. There, at Christ's side, is revealed His inmost heart where we are invited to fall deeply in love with God and learn to love what is good and true of virtue.

The Kiss of Peace

Once lifted up from the feet of Jesus and having encountered such immense love flowing from His Sacred Heart, we find ourselves at the face of Jesus, there to receive His Kiss of Peace, a kiss that brings us consolation in our war waged against our sin and evil in the world.