

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. When she was only 20 she had a deep mystical experience of being united to Christ in marriage. She knew God was asking her to leave her contemplative life of the past three years and go out among his poor and needy but she was fearful of losing her intimate relationship with Him. In prayer she heard God speak 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. It is the justice of these two commandments that I want you now to fulfill. On two feet you must walk my way.

From that time forward, Catherine walked firmly on two feet—love of God and love of neighbor. Her journey included nursing the sick, caring for the poor and peacemaking between feuding families and warring Italian states. Catherine spent the last year and a half of her life trying to restore unity to the Church, pleading with God and all who would listen to bring unity to the Church. 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



Join us for a powerful encounter with our Risen Lord and Savior as experienced through the heart and mind of Catherine of Siena. Down through the ages Catherine has inspired a new way for women to live—freedom to travel, freedom to learn, freedom to try new things. For men, she has inspired freedom to

hear the Gospel interpreted from a feminine perspective and freedom to have a woman as a trusted friend. Yet of all the gifts Catherine's life presented, the one that compels our attention the most today is her role as a woman in the Church. What kind of woman was she? Come and find out! When you encounter Christ Jesus through the mind and heart of Catherine of Siena, you will know why she is called Saint, Mystic, and Doctor of the Church and your soul will never be the

A Parish Mission

Catherine of Siena is a saint for our time. She is one who set her eyes on Christ, and with humility, obedience, and perseverance she nurtured others to do the same. Catherine is as relevant today as she was in the 14th century. Whether man or woman, when we enter into Catherine's dialogue with the Father, we are certain their conversations are meant for us and are about us, in our own day and time. A modern-day saint for the difficult times in which we live, Catherine points the way to holiness and healing for families, the Church, and the world.

Please review this “Catherine of Siena Mission” brochure and pray about whether or not your parish community is called to be renewed through the dialogue, wisdom, and insight of this great saint.



Parish Renewal
Retreat & Mission Series

Catherine of Siena

*The Climb
The Conversion
The Surrender
The Kiss*



*Saint, Mystic,
Doctor of the Church*

Parish Outreach Ministries

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Catherine's Dialogue

St Catherine dictated *The Dialogue* (1377-1378) to her secretaries while she was in a state of ecstasy. *The Dialogue* is Catherine's primary work. It is called *The Dialogue* because in it Catherine poses questions to God the Father and the Father responds to her questions. The responses are so vivid, real, and revealing of the Truth, that one is overwhelmed with a sense of God's presence in every response. *The Dialogue* simply and powerfully retells the stories of God's imploding love at the time of creation, of our fall, our struggle to conquer sin, His Word made Flesh, the Cross—The Bridge, the Advocate, and the Church. *The Dialogue* describes Catherine's four petitions to God and God's response to her, detailing the three powers, states, and stages of



the soul; the clemency of the Holy Spirit; Eucharist; the three reproofs; the four contrary winds of life; how to move from imperfect love and prayer to perfect love and prayer; o b e d i e n c e ; humility; tears; and the joy of heaven.

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.

Catherine's Letters



In addition to her place of honor as Saint, Mystic, and doctor of the Church, Catherine is considered one of the great Italian letter writers of the fourteenth century. Nearly 400 letters have been handed down. Her letters depict her deep awareness of each person's unique circumstances in life. Through them, she offered her friends, family, followers, and clergy (priests, bishops, and popes), spiritual counsel, temporal counsel, and guidance. Her counsel and guidance were characterized by sensitivity and common sense. St. Catherine chose her words carefully, giving just the right encouragement and instruction when and as needed. Letter writing was in fact, the primary means through which Catherine evangelized others, introducing them to God's love and mercy and telling them of God's one commandment that we live life in perfect love of God and neighbor.

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 Climb

The climb out of the river of death requires us to use our memory to remember God's goodness to us, in all of His creation and in all of our lives. It requires us to use our *intellect* to understand Jesus—our Bridge to the Father, and it requires us to use our *free will* to choose actions and words that keep us out of the river of death and closer to the Cross of salvation where we can once again begin our climb, our journey to the One who loves us passionately and unconditionally.

The Conversion

Coming out of the river of death and to the foot of the Cross, we climb the first stair—onto the feet of Christ, the symbol of His love for us. Once on his feet, we receive the grace to confess and profess, to turn away from our love of the world to love for God, continually stripping ourselves of sin and turning our back on the world.

The Surrender

Moving to the second stair—having stripped ourselves naked and completely surrendering to Jesus, we open ourselves to receive the love and mercy of God flowing from the Sacred Heart of His Son. There, at Christ's side, is revealed His inmost heart. There, we fall deeper in love with God and learn to love what is good and true of virtue.

The Kiss of Peace

When we have climbed on Jesus—the feet of God's love, and entered into Love—His Sacred Heart, we experience God's Love poured into our own heart. Seeing how tremendously we are loved, we are filled with overflowing love and this love lifts us to the face of Christ on the Cross where we feel His Breath of Peace and receive Peace from the terrible war we had waged because of our sins. Now Christ's Kiss of Peace brings us into complete surrender to the Father, as we say, "Into Your Hands I commend my spirit".