

St Catherine of Siena

Feast Day: April 29th/30th: By Kathryn

What is the name of your saint that you've chosen?

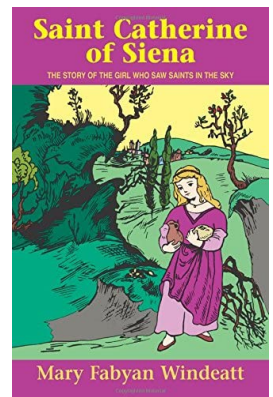
The saint I've chosen is St Catherine of Siena. Her original name was Caterina Benincasa.

Why did you choose this saint to be your Confirmation saint?

What did they do?

What qualities did they have - what was good about them?

I didn't really choose my saint, it's one of my Baptism names. When I had my First Reconciliation I was given a book of her life from my grandparents. I have learned more about her life since then. Catherine is the patroness of Italy and a co-patroness of the Dominican Order, along with Mary Magdalene.



She was a Third Dominican Nun, which is a nun who made promises to live poorly, never to marry, to be obedient to their bishop. She would stay at home instead of going to live at the convent with the other nuns but she could still wear the black and white nun clothing at home. She lived in a small room, away from her family, but in her childhood home, where she prayed, fasted and wrote her stories about Christ.

St Catherine of Siena is the patron saint of Italy and Europe, along with Fire Prevention, nurses, bodily ills, illness, sickness, miscarriages and people ridiculed for their piety. Catherine was one of the four female saints who are named a Doctor of the Church. She was an activist, mystic and author. She had a great influence on Italian literature and the Catholic church.



What did you find inspiring about their life and faith journey?

How were they a witness to Jesus?

How did they pray?

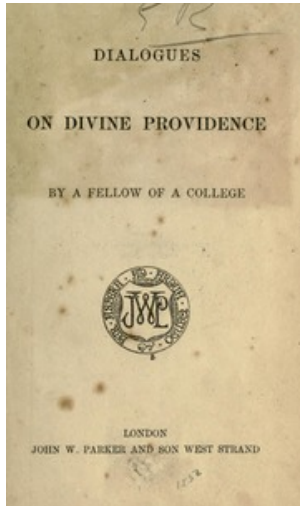
Catherine was born on the 25th of March, 1347 in Siena, Italy. She died at the age of 33, (like Jesus) on April 29th, 1380, in Rome, Italy, exhausted by her fasting. She was canonised as a saint in 1461. In 1970, she was declared a doctor of the church and became the Patron Saint of Europe in 1999. She was the youngest of 25 children. She cut her hair so she wouldn't be attractive and wouldn't have to marry. When she was young she wanted to love God as a martyr, but God told her to go home to her family.



I found her inspiring because, from the age of six, Catherine began having visions of Jesus, the saints (such as St Francis of Assisi, The Apostles - Peter, Paul, John) in the sky. She was a passionate author. St Catherine wrote many Dialogues and over four hundred letters.

The first vision she saw was above the church in Siena. She had many of these visions throughout her short life.

She lived in a small room in her childhood home. In this room she prayed, fasted and wrote her books of Christ. An example of her writing is the Dialogue and over four hundred of her letters.



She only left her room for a small meal, to see the sick and those in prison, or to go to mass. Her major book was The Dialogue of Divine Providence, which probably begun in October 1377, it was a dialogue of a soul who “rises up” to God and God himself. She visited people who were sick in hospitals and people who were in prison, those who were criminals and innocent alike. She had become close with someone and tried to make his judge change his mind, when he died, she was right by his side. She was an activist and she convinced Pope Gregory XI to move from France to Rome, Italy. Catherine also tried to make peace with the Muslims since there were two popes at the time.

After her father died, she convinced her mother to become a nun, after her mother died, Catherine prayed to give her mother another chance of life. When her mother rose from the dead her mother (in her 80s at the time) became

a Dominican Nun with Catherine and helped her daughter with her campaign. She was a witness to Jesus because she had many visions. In one of her visions, she had a mystic marriage to Christ. In her last vision, near her death, Catherine saw Christ suffering on the crucifix and she got nails in her hands, a condition called stigmata, which is where she has mystic nails in her hands, and a crown of thorns on her head like Christ.



Catherine took many trips to see popes, bishops and Christians. Although she didn't go to school, fellow Dominican Nuns taught her to read and write, but she was also taught to read and write after a vision of Christ, she began to understand words and could write.

She mostly wrote about stories of Christ, what she had learned from him and her understanding of God. As a Dominican Nun, Catherine prayed almost all the time. She taught us to pray with love and serve.



Catherine's symbols are the Dominican Tertiaries' habit, a book, a crucifix, a cupid, a heart, crown of thorns, stigmata, a ring, doves, roses, miniature churches and the lily flower.

