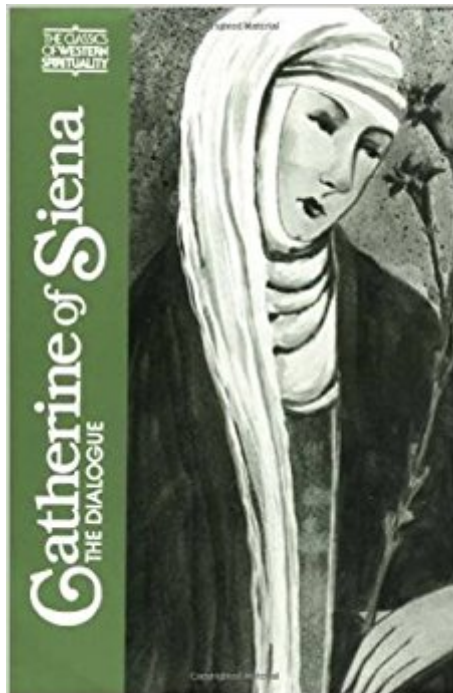




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Catherine Of Siena : The Dialogue (Classics Of Western Spirituality)



Synopsis

Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), mystic and doctor of the church, wrote *The Dialogue*, her crowning spiritual work, for "the instruction and encouragement of all those whose spiritual welfare was her concern."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Italian (translation)

Noffke has been researching, translating, and interpreting the works of Catherine of Siena since 1976. Giuliana Cavallini, O.P., was the Director of the Centro Nazionale di Studi Cateriniani in Rome, as well as an editor of St. Catherine of Siena's dialogue and author of additional works on the saint. She purposefully wrote her biography of "St. Martin de Porres" as a story neither chronological nor critical. Rather, she gathered various episodes taken from the testimony given during the process of his beatification, from people who had known Martin in his lifetime. The completed work received the Imprimatur from Cletus F. O'Donnell, and was originally published in 1963. Giuliana Cavallini is also the author of "Things Visible and Invisible: Images in the Spirituality of St. Catherine of Siena".

Saint Catherine of Siena was a third order Dominican in fourteenth-century Tuscany. As a young adult, she devoted herself to prayer, fasting, and mortifications. After this period of solitude, with its

accompanying ecstatic visions, she went out into the world to care for the sick and the poor. Catherine also worked to bring peace and unity in the Church and among Christians. She was canonized by Pope Pius II and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI. St. Catherine gives us one of the great literary treasures of the Church, called *The Dialogue*. It was for this work and her letters, Saint Catherine was named Doctor. Saint Catherine's insights are pertinent to today's Church, especially in the Spiritual Life. For instance, she instructs us on:

- specific stages in the Spiritual Life.
- the notion of "mystical marriage" and what it means.
- how our journey in the Spiritual Life reflects Jesus on the Cross.
- how to overcome "selfish sensuality" by hatred of sin and growth in virtue.
- that trials, temptations, and sufferings can be transformed into positive things.
- how "filial love" and love of God eventually leads to "spousal love."
- and, much more, even the four distinct punishments experienced by those in Hell!

These are all found in *The Dialogue*, which takes the form of actual conversations between God and Saint Catherine, and comes to us in four separate exchanges. Briefly, there is a "Treatise on Divine Providence" in which is explained the connection between love and suffering, emphasizing that God wants only our love and the service we give to our neighbors. The "Treatise on Discretion" introduces the metaphor of "The Bridge" between our fallen world and heaven, which is Jesus—similar to seeing Jesus as "The Way!" The "Treatise on Prayer" gives instructions for the progress from vocal to mental prayer, and describes the higher degrees of prayer. The "Treatise on Obedience" covers the necessity and rewards of obedience. As with the writing of other Doctors and spiritual writers in this series, this is a message that comprises: taking our own steps towards spiritual perfection, whereby God wants to bring us to sanctity and salvation. This is a message completely true to Sacred Scripture. This profound teaching is a gift to guide the reader to apply these extraordinary ideas and teachings to his or her own life that they might arrive at the same benefit and spiritual growth envisioned by the Saint. Highly recommended!

This is a very thoughtful and careful translation of the primary teaching of one of the world's greatest mystic saints. It purports to be a dialogue with God the Father, obtained by the mystic ecstasy of St.

Catherine, although probably not in the sort of very short and very dramatic fashion that a movie maker might cast it. These insights did come to her through her inner life. The wordings she received were important to her, and at the key sections, she herself felt that the wording could not be changed without doing irreparable and unnecessary harm. Still, she herself spent a lot of time editing these for clarity, in passages that were available to her to edit. Of course, we have the writings of many great mystic saints, and none of them should be neglected. St. Theresa of Avila wrote voluminously. St. John of the Cross wrote extensively. St. Theresa of Lisieux deserves top mention. None of these is somehow less or worthless. Still, it is entirely necessary to be in a right frame of mind to ascertain what the great athletic saints like Theresa of Avila or John of the Cross are really saying. They wrote from a frame of mind that is hard for ordinary people to match. Theresa of Lisieux is more accessible much of the time, and she cannot be neglected. Still, the Dialogues of St. Catherine are wonderful because they are more accessible to ordinary people. They don't have the repulsive saccharin veneer (which turns out to be necessary and endearing when properly assimilated) of Theresa of Lisieux. They don't have the athletic difficulty of Theresa of Avila or John of the Cross. They are accessible. We can read them. We can see what they mean. We can, in fact, move our lives in practical ways toward the direction and state of mind that St. Catherine indicates. It is a very comforting book in that way. In the end, what do we want? What does everybody want? We all want to make our lives into something that matters, and not just have our lives amount to nothing at the end. Most of us have few strategies to make their own lives the beautiful work of art it can be. We have so many people who say that this or that is "larger than life." Such people are foolish. They make their lives too small. St. Catherine offers a wonderful doorway. We can all walk through and make our lives much better, much richer, much more pleasing---not just to God---more pleasing to ourselves, too. Is there someone in the world who doesn't want his/her life to be wholesomely beautiful, to be an experience of growth and freedom---to be liberating? Is there, anywhere in the world, a person who would not like his/her life to touch the celestial realm---to realize the image of God in which we are created? I think there is not one person.

This book.....is beyond words. Absolutely inspiring to say the least! This book is perfect for anyone searching to deepen their faith. I absolutely love, love this book. There are no words to express what these writings have done for me.

Reads like a text book, but full of great explanations and interpretations of the immense love of this

beautiful Catherine.

I have wanted this book for a long time because St. Catherine is my patron saint. This book has far exceeded my expectations. Thanks!

She's a wonderful role model. Read her book and you will be inspired to save your soul.

I love this book, Excellent service, thanks

Again, he loved it.

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