

St. Catherine of Siena teaches us to listen, act and trust in God

HAVE YOU EVER WOKEN FROM A DREAM AND SPENT THE WHOLE DAY WONDERING WHAT IT MEANT — WAS IT A WARNING, A FANTASY OR JUST YOUR BRAIN ON OVERDRIVE? ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA COULD RELATE TO A SIMILAR WONDER.

She spent her life discerning God's voice in visions and interior conversations with Christ, showing us how to listen carefully when God tries to get our attention.

Born in 1347 during the Black Death pandemic, Catherine felt God calling her to an intimate relationship with Him from a very young age. By the age of 7, she had privately vowed herself to Christ. As a teenager, she boldly resisted her family's attempts to marry her off — even cutting her hair and fasting — to remain faithful to her calling.

At 18, she joined the Dominican Third Order as a laywoman and quickly became known for her courage and holiness. Catherine dictated letters to popes, cardinals and political leaders, urging reform and unity — not with threats, but with prayer-filled persuasion.

Catherine lived during the Great Schism in the Church. The papacy had been in Avignon, France, for nearly 70 years, and the Church was so divided that at one point three different men claimed to be the true pope.

Through prayer and mystical experiences, or visions from God, she came to believe God was calling Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome. She personally met with him and wrote letters urging him to be brave and obedient to God. In 1377, her courage paid off — the pope returned to Rome and Catherine's influence was widely recognized.

Artists later symbolized her role by showing her holding or steadying a ship — the Barque of Peter, which represents the Catholic Church — reminding us that her faith and obedience helped guide the Church through stormy times.

Catherine did not rely on ordinary dreams — but her example can teach us how to discern when God might be speaking through ours. She shows us three key lessons: bring everything to prayer, seek the peace that comes from God and submit discernment to the Church.

St. Catherine of Siena teaches us to listen, act and trust God with bold courage. She reminds us that God speaks to attentive hearts, whether through Scripture, the Church or even the quiet stirrings of the soul. As we celebrate her feast day on April 29, I invite you to ask for St. Catherine's intercession to be more attentive to the whispers in your heart from God.

And that's a saint you need to know! ■



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A SAINT YOU NEED TO KNOW! VIDEO SERIES

Looking for more on the saints? Check out our YouTube channel, [youtube.com/catholicnh](https://www.youtube.com/catholicnh), which features the *A Saint You Need to Know!* video series.

Here's a list of videos to check out for March and April:

- St. Patrick
- St. Joseph
- St. Simon of Cyrene
- St. Anselm of Canterbury
- St. Catherine of Siena

