

Catherine of Cortona

Catherine of Cortona belonged to a noble family. Since childhood she distinguished herself for her piety and her love of God. At the age of eight years, she became an orphan after her father's death. One day he appeared to her completely surrounded by the flames of Purgatory and said: "My daughter, I will be in this fire for as long as you won't have done penance for me." From that day and notwithstanding her young age, Catherine devoted herself to harsh penances to free her parent from the torments. The Lord welcomed the efforts and good intentions of the little girl and one day her father appeared anew, this time however shining in glory and he said to her: "God has accepted your acts of love, and your prayers, my daughter; I will rejoice in glory. Continue all your life to sacrifice yourself as a victim for the salvation of the suffering souls, it is the divine will." Catherine remained faithful to her mission for her whole life and devoted herself with enthusiasm to offer supplications for the souls of Purgatory. Some of her companions tried to dissuade her from practicing too many penances, but she answered: "When one has seen, like me, what Purgatory and Hell are, one will never do enough to rescue the souls from one place and preserve them from the other one. Therefore, I must not be spared, because I offered myself in sacrifice for them."

