SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

FEAST DAY 29TH APRIL

Saint Catherine was born on the 25th March 1347 in Siena in Italy. She was the youngest of a very large family, she had a twin sister who died in infancy and twenty-two other brothers and sisters.

At the age of six she had a vision in Church in which Jesus appeared to her surrounded by the apostles, Peter, Paul and John and blessed her. She felt that Jesus wanted her to give her whole life to him.

Catherine's parents wanted her to marry so she had her hair cut off and became a Sister instead, joined the Sisters of the Third Order of St Dominic. She took care of the poor and the sick, nursing people no-one else wanted to care for and spent a lot of time in prayer.

Catherine made a special visit to Pope Gregory XI and told him that God wanted him to live in Rome not France. The Pope listened to her because she was very wise and did go back to Rome.

She established a monastery for women in 1377 outside of Siena. She is credited with composing over 400 letters even though she learnt to read and write as an adult. These works are so influential that St Catherine would later be declared a Doctor of the Church.

Catherine became very sick because of all her fasting and died in 1380 aged thirty-three. Her last words were ‘Father into Your hands I commend my soul and my spirit. She was declared a doctor of the church in 1970 and a patron saint of Europe in 1999.

Saint Catherine, pray for us.

