

Reflection Thursday Easter week 4 St Catherine of Sienna 2021

St Catherine of Siena (1347 - 1380) was born in Siena and, seeking perfection, entered the 3rd Order of the Dominicans in her teens. In 1370 she was commanded by a vision to leave her secluded life and enter public life. She wrote letters to many major public figures and had a long correspondence with Pope Gregory XI, urging him to reform the clergy and the administration of the Papal States. She burned with the love of God and her neighbour. As an ambassador, she brought peace and harmony between cities. She fought hard to defend the liberty and rights of the Popes and did much for the renewal of religious life. She also dictated books full of sound doctrine and spiritual inspiration. She died on 29th April 1380. In 1970 Pope Paul VI declared her a Doctor of the Church.

Down through history, notable women have stood up and help manoeuvre the Church back onto the right path and reform the errors of its ways. We owe them much more than we realise.

In his letter, John echoes what we heard yesterday, that Jesus is the light – our light. It was the light of Jesus that motivated and inspired Catherine and those she influenced. The peace and reforms she brought about happened because the light within her was recognised as the light of Christ. A light powerful enough to forgive past errors and open up new ways for the future...

The yoke is often seen as a sign of oppression, domination, and enslavement. Jesus does not want this. His yoke will help us learn from him just as Catherine did. Accepting Jesus' yoke changes a person's perspective. One no longer wanders about aimlessly alone, without purpose, devoid of direction, disordered, or lacking accomplishment. Quite the opposite. Jesus' yoke gives purpose and direction and helps prepare the ground to receive the seed – the good news. It gives a deep sense of purpose. It is fulfilling. It gives life meaning by showing that life matters and by leading one's soul to rest as Jesus promised.

Today, let Catherine show you the way!

- *A man walks into a bar with a newt on his shoulder. "What do you call him?" asks the bartender. "I call him Tiny, because he's my newt!"*
- *Two elderly people had been friends since their 30s. Now in their 80s, they still met twice a week to play cards. One day they were playing gin rummy and one said, "You know, we've been friends for many years so, please don't get mad, but for the life of me, I can't remember your name. Please tell me what it is." The other friend glared back hard and continued to glare and stare for at least three minutes. Finally, looking up, said, "How soon do you need to know?"*