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CATHERINE was the youngest of a very large family. In 1353, at the age of six she had a vision in St. Dominic's church in which our Lord appeared to her and blessed her.

She felt that our Lord wanted her to do some special work, so she prepared for it by penance and fervent prayer.

Her parents wanted her to marry, but she put on the robes of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Dominic and devoted herself to the care of the poor. She had many temptations, but overcame them through constant prayer. Her sound advice and wisdom were sought by civil leaders, and even by the Pope.

The Popes had been living in France instead of in Rome for many years because of the unsettled times. Catherine made a special visit to Pope Gregory XI and said, "Holy Father, God wants the head of His Church to live in Rome. I pray that you will go there as soon as possible." And once again Rome became the home of the Popes.

Catherine's last days were full of suffering, which she offered up for all Christians. Our Lord granted her a vision showing the beauty of a soul in the state of grace. She died at the age of thirty-three.

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

April 29

O God, You caused St. Catherine to shine with Divine love in the contemplation of the Lord's Passion and in the service of Your Church. By her help, grant that Your people, associated in the mystery of Christ, may ever exult in the revelation of His glory.

Patron of Nurses



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SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

October 4

*O God, You enabled
St. Francis to imitate
Christ by his poverty
and humility. Walking
in St. Francis' footsteps,
may we follow Your
Son and be bound to
You by a joyful love.*

Patron of Catholic Action



As a young man Francis liked to have a good time. His father was rich. But once, when he was sick, Francis heard our Lord calling him to leave the world and follow Him. Francis began to visit the hospitals and to serve the sick. He used to say, "When one serves the poor, he serves Christ Himself."

Francis put on the clothes of a poor shepherd and began to preach to the people about peace with God, peace with one's neighbor, and peace with one's self. He looked on all people and things as his brothers and sisters because they were all created by the same God.

Francis took twelve young men to Rome with him, and the Pope gave him permission to start a new religious order, the Franciscans. He also helped St. Clare to start the order known as the Poor Clares.

Francis had a vision in which he saw Jesus hanging on the Cross. The marks of the five wounds of Jesus were left in his hands, his side, and his feet, which remained with him all his life.

When Francis became very ill, he prayed, "O Lord, I thank You for the pains which I suffer." He died October 4, 1226.