

St. Catherine of Genoa

About 1447 in Genoa, Italy; died September 15, 1510, in Genoa, Italy

Feast Day: September 15

Prayer: Lord, I trust in you—first, last, and always.

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—the oracle of the Lord—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope. (Jeremiah 29:11, NAB)



Action: Just for today, resolve not to mourn what was or what could have been, or what may be in the future. Pray with Catherine for the wisdom to embrace the present.

About St. Catherine: Catherine didn't know what to do about that husband of hers. She and Giuliano Adorno had married when she was sixteen, possibly to end a dispute between the two families of the noble class. Giuliano's behavior was not what Christians would regard as noble: he gambled and spent money wildly, ultimately going bankrupt. He had at least one child with another woman. Catherine's reaction to all this? It's said she spent about five years in virtual silence, attempting to be submissive. She spent the next five years checking out more worldly options. Finally, she prayed to become bedridden, since nothing else had seemed to work. She was bitter. Life seemed to have passed her by, and she was only twenty-six.

Then, one day when she was at confession, Catherine had a mystical experience that made her path clear: Rather than complaining about Giuliano and feeling sorry for herself, the Lord desired that she help others. She began assisting lepers and others considered undesirable. Giuliano eventually had a conversion of his own, and joined her in her hospital ministry. They even lived for a time in a hospital, with Catherine serving as the manager and treasurer. This saint also is known for her insights on purgatory as a place of interior cleansing to bring us closer to God rather than as a place of punishment.

Catherine's story reminds us that the Lord *does* have a plan for us amid family discord, even if it is not readily apparent. Rather than lament that our relationships are not as perfect or loving as we'd like them to be, may we have the faith to look to the Lord for purification and guidance to a place of joy and love. — *Melanie Rigney*