

September 15

Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510) witness

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Catherine, a witness of God's love, died in 1510 in Genoa, Italy after many years of illness and suffering. Born in 1447 into Genoa's distinguished Fieschi family, Catherine showed a strong inclination to solitude and prayer in her childhood, but was given to a violent man from a Ghibelline family in a marriage of pure convenience.

After years of growing unhappiness in which her faith was nearly stifled, Catherine suddenly experienced grace and consolation from God, and discovered her calling to live for the sole reason of responding to the boundless love and tenderness she had received in her heart. She spent the rest of her life serving the poorest of Genoa's ill, and caring in particular for victims of leprosy and the plague, which had returned to ravage the city.

Elected director of Pammatone hospital after having assisted patients there for years, Catherine was joined by her husband, who had also been touched by the grace of conversion. She attracted a small group of disciples, whose one intention was to respond to God's love by serving their neighbors.

Catherine died consumed by the love whose servant she had become, but exhausted as well by severe physical and mental illness, which had struck with little warning and had made the last nine years of her life an unending agony. She is the patron saint of the city of Genoa.

BIBLICAL READINGS

Jer 20:7-9; Lk 6:27-38

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Cyprian (d. 258), bishop of Cathage, martyr

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Blessed virgin Mary, our lady of sorrows (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (5 tut/maskaram):

Sophia of Low Egypt (?), martyr (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:

Jan van Woerden (d. 1525), witness to the point of bloodshed in Netherlands

MARONITES:

Nicetas the Goth (d. 370), martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Nicetas the Goth, megalomartyr

Simeon of Thessaloniki (d. 1429), bishop (Greek Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:

John Chrysostom (d. 407), bishop and doctor of the church