

# Catherine

A Newsletter to Promote the Cause for Canonization  
of Servant of God Catherine de Hueck Doherty

Issue Number 9 — Summer 2005



## “We are Aiming at Sanctity”

■ From the Postulator’s Desk

Dear Friends of Catherine,

There are several themes of this newsletter: 1) that everyone is called to holiness; 2) that this is one of the deepest ways of understanding Christian relationships; and 3) that our times have been especially blessed with an abundance of saintly women.

Have we heard  
the call?

I think that many people have never heard the clear gospel message that everyone, including you, dear reader, is called to be a saint. When is the last time you heard a homily about this? Because the canonized saints lived such heroic lives, and are so exalted with feast days and statues in our churches, who of us would ever think of desiring such a status and recognition!

The point is, of course, that none of us are called to be St. Theresa of Avila, or St. Francis of Assisi. We can learn from the canonized saints, but it’s rather depressing to think that my sanctity requires some kind of imitation

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Catherine Doherty and Fr. Briere with Pope John Paul II, 1981

of the great saints. No wonder we have, for all practical purposes, a two-tier mental attitude: there are the Saints, with a capital S, and then there’s little me.

### Intimacy with God

Sometimes the words “holiness” and “sanctity” may sound too exalted, a goal only for certain chosen ones. Okay, then let’s think of it in this way: the good news is that each person is called to a very

great intimacy with God. Perhaps this is a better way of conceiving our call: a great intimacy with God.

It’s fairly common knowledge that Vatican II had a strong statement about the universal call to holiness: “Thus it is evident to everyone that all the faithful of Christ, of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity. By this holiness a more human way of life is promoted even in this earthly society.” (*Lumen Gentium*, V, 40)

And in many documents and statements after the Council, the Church keeps emphasizing this message. The most recent was at a Conference, Oct. 2, 2004, organized by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins, prefect of the Congregation for Saints, updated everyone with the statistic that 6,538 saints and blessed are officially recognized in the Church’s liturgical cal-

endar. The present Pope John Paul II has proclaimed 483 saints and 1,345 blesseds, the most of any pontificate.

To those who say there are too many saints being proclaimed, the Cardinal responds with the same

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words used by the Pope: “It is the Holy Spirit’s fault.” The Pope believes that holiness is a much more common phenomenon in the Church than we think, and not something rare. There are lots of holy people around! Therefore more recognitions are in order.

Another frequent criticism is that saints are being turned out like in an assembly line. The analogy limps terribly. It’s true, many more people are being canonized, but an assembly line turns out identical products. The saints portray an extraordinary uniqueness and variety.

Msgr. Piero Coda, a professor at the Lateran University, said: “As John Paul II has said, holiness is not the privilege of a few, but a necessity of all Christians. The saints are the fullness of humanity. They constitute the reserve of the intuitions that make attractive today the beauty of the gospel and its transforming force in society.”

### Catherine’s prophetic call

Long before Vatican Council II, Catherine was teaching strongly that everyone is called to be a saint. Catherine herself had an intense desire to become a saint, to be holy, to have a great intimacy with the Lord. She loved the say-

ing of Leon Bloy, “The only tragedy in the world is not to be a saint.” We believe she did achieve this, and by this cause we are trying to discover the Church’s discernment in this matter.

Our belief is that she not only

achieved it for herself but also left an astounding spiritual legacy about the journey she travelled. Often I am asked, “What do you think is Catherine’s main charism?” After many years of study and reflection, my own opinion is that, through her life and teaching, she has revealed a very profound and even detailed path of how to achieve intimacy with the Lord. Her teaching includes every aspect of life, as well as profound revelations about her own intimacy with Jesus. At the heart of her charism is the revelation of a deep and secure path to sanctity.

### At the Heart of the Priest’s Vocation

She understood that calling and leading people to holiness is also at the very heart of the priestly vocation. This is why last year, when I saw advertised an international priest’s conference in Malta on the theme, “The Priest, One Called to Form Saints for the New Millennium,” I was very strongly attracted to go. And I did go. I’d like to share with you some of the thoughts presented at this conference, because they echoed very much some of Catherine’s own reflections that I had heard from

her over the years.

It was said that not to desire holiness is a spiritual, even a *meta-physical contradiction*. Big words, perhaps. They simply mean that we were created for intimacy with God. Not to desire this is a contradiction right at the heart of our being. Catherine taught that we were all called to a passionate love for Jesus.

And a definition of holiness was given that has become very central for me. Holiness is *the desires Jesus has for me*. I like that. It emphasizes, first of all, that holiness is not an abstraction but a relationship with the Lord. Secondly, the “for me” highlights the fact that every Christian will receive “personalized inspirations” as to how he or she is to become intimate with Christ. I believe the goal of spiritual direction is to teach people how to discern his or her own unique path of holiness.

Catherine sometimes used the words “holiness” and “sanctity,” but most of the time she was talking about falling in love with Jesus, about intimacy with him. Holiness certainly was not an



Marthe Robin (1902–1981), Lay  
Foundress of *Foyer de Charité*, Mystic



Adrienne von Speyr  
Doctor, Wife and Mother, Mystic

"A saint will much more prefer not to be canonized; but out of love for the Church, which is based on love for the Lord, he will acquiesce in this ecclesiastical procedure and subordinate himself to its decision. His love for God does not thereby become standardized, it remains untouched by the canonization." — Adrienne von Speyr

abstraction to her. At the conference they spoke of holiness as an ontological reality. Again, a big word. It means we share in the very being of our Friend. We are no longer alone. Our solitude has ended. It is filled with God.

My own understanding of what holiness is has changed profoundly through my being drawn into Catherine's life. This brief quote from her will lead me into what I want to say. "You see, holiness does not ever take away one's weakness, or even one's sinfulness. To a certain degree holiness is not at that level of reality. Holiness is a gift of God. Holiness is the presence of God. We are like the fish swimming in the waters of God and letting his holiness enter us. Through all our gills we absorb the holiness of God."

Years ago my understanding of holiness was rather "Greek": per-

fect patience, perfect understanding, no emotional problems, and so on. Like a Greek statue. What Catherine is speaking about here, and what her life exemplifies, is that holiness is at a level deeper than these kinds of pseudo-perfections. We are all aware that we are not always able to control certain aspects of our lives. I believe Catherine took certain human imperfections to her grave. But there are deeper dimensions of holiness that are available to us in spite of our human weaknesses.

Through my more concentrated immersion in the lives of the saints over the past 15 years as a postulator, I have ear-marked several aspects of holiness in the lives of the saints that in some real way are essentially indicative of sanctity. And I've discovered that they existed in people who were not free of all human weaknesses. Here is my list, exemplified in Catherine's life and in the lives of all the saints: a passionate love for Jesus; a desire to make him known and loved; prayer; a selfless love of neighbor; a generous embracing of the cross. I'm sure you can think

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of others, but I find these always present in the saints.

Catherine said that "holiness is the presence of God." Too often we think of our holiness—intimacy, union with God—as something we are creating, building, constructing, piece by piece. It is deeper than that. At the heart of our personality, through Christ,

## The Little Mandate

*Catherine Doherty considered the words of "The Little Mandate" to be the very heart and essence of her vocation:*

Arise—go! Sell all you possess. Give it directly, personally to the poor. Take up My cross (their cross) and follow Me, going to the poor, being poor, being one with them, one with Me.

Little—be always little! Simple, poor, childlike.

Preach the Gospel with your life—without compromise! Listen to the Spirit. He will lead you.

Do little things exceedingly well for love of Me.

Love, love, love, never counting the cost.

Go into the marketplace and stay with Me. Pray, fast, pray always, fast.

Be hidden. Be a light to your neighbour's feet. Go without fear into the depth of men's hearts. I shall be with you.

Pray always. *I will be your rest.*

our union with God is already a reality. We not only don't realize it, but because of our sins and failings it is not effectively penetrating all areas of our lives. You might say

it is actually present but not effectively present—not fully influencing our whole lives. The Christian life is the process of removing the obstacles to allow the very holiness of God that is within us to shine forth. "Letting his holiness enter us," as Catherine said.

Continued on page 6...

# Testimonies and Favours Received

I think Catherine's life merits the opening of a cause. Because her life and her foundations, her spirituality, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are very important in the Church. Her life and all her actions are like those of a prophetess. She brings for the needs of today the prayer (*Poustinia*) and action for the poor in many countries. Her spirituality in the ordinary life is very important for people of today and she has done a lot to unite East and West.

— *Most Rev. Guy Gaucher,  
Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux,  
France (an expert in the life and  
teaching of St. Therese of Lisieux)*

Without qualification I would recommend Catherine's cause to be opened. She captured with such grace and love the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While she was Russian by

birth, she very much belongs to all of us in North America. I believe if she were canonized, the dedication of her life would be extremely important for the Church today because, first of all she was a woman. Secondly, she was a lay woman. Thirdly, she was truly saintly. As a strong, dynamic woman she would provide a marvellous example of holiness at a time that the question of women's role in the church is questioned. Catherine would personally object to this adjective, but I found her to be a most "priestly" woman.

— *Fr. Ed Hayes  
(author of a number of books  
on prayer and spirituality)*

In many ways, the opportunities offered by life in the church open doors to many forms of leadership on the part of women, and they continue to be great spiritual guides, prophets and examples for those of us who try to live an authentic spiritual life: Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Dorothy Day (foundress of the Catholic Worker Movement), Catherine de Hueck Doherty (founder of the worldwide Madonna House community), Adrienne von Speyr (a noted intellectual and mystic), St. Edith Stein (a distinguished philosopher who converted from Judaism to Catholicism, became a Catholic nun and was killed by Nazis in a concentration camp because of her

*"Catherine's spirituality, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are very important in the Church. Her life and all her actions are like those of a prophetess... Her spirituality in the ordinary life is very important for people of today and she has done a lot to unite East and West."*



Mother Teresa of Calcutta  
1910–1997

I said three Masses for her soul, but all the time I was tempted to pray *to* her instead of *for* her. Actually that is what I am doing from now on. Isn't it just great to know that someone who loves us so dearly is with Jesus and Mary! I am sure that Madonna House will have a saint canonized by the church within a few years. Not that that matters very much! The important thing is that she is a saint, our saint.

— *Fr. Heber Salvador De Lima,  
S.J. Brazil (who wrote one of the  
early books on Catherine)*

religious background). Even today, there are thousands of women, lay and religious around the world, who continue the tradition of these great leaders from our Catholic heritage. Perhaps the Church will never officially recognize them as saints, but God is certainly aware of their efforts, and their contributions do not go unnoticed.

— *Fr. Murray Watson,  
London, Ontario*

I've admired Catherine and her down-home, solid Slavic spirituality. Because of her love for priests, sinners and victims of injustice, I

believe that she would be a powerful patron for those priests who have committed crimes of sexual abuse, as well as their victims. To that end, you may use, amending in any way, the following prayer. I only ask that you do not associate my name with it.

*“Without qualification I would recommend Catherine’s cause to be opened. She captured with such grace and love the Gospel of Jesus Christ... As a strong, dynamic woman she would provide a marvelous example of holiness at a time that the question of women’s role in the church is questioned.”*

“O Christ our High Priest, through the prayers of your Servant Catherine Doherty, kindly come to the spiritual and temporal assistance of all fallen priests, and those who they have harmed. In suffering as a result of their own sins, may these, your fallen priests, make reparation for the severe spiritual injuries they have inflicted on others, and for the scandal they have caused. Because you are the Conqueror, not only of sin, but its effects, please hear the prayers of your servant Catherine, and countless others for the healing of all wounded priests, the victims of their sins, and of your Mystical Body, the Church. By the power of your Holy spirit, and through the intercession of your Glorious and Blessed Mother, may your church, her priests, and all her members be filled anew with the zeal they need to accomplish your will, the salvation of souls. Amen.”

— A priest friend of  
Madonna House

Whatever else one may say about Catherine, it is clear, very, very clear, that she was wholly in love with God. In her God’s love was able to do mighty things. Perhaps

the chief fruit of her work as I have experienced it is Madonna House itself. Madonna House is a beacon of hope in the wastelands of contemporary North America, and it is that, because it is built on the “Yes” Catherine said to God.

My one and only encounter

with Catherine left me disappointed. But the fruit of her life and faith, her splendid and inspiring teachings, her writings, and the writings of the community has flowed from her charisma at work in her in a way that can be called saintly. I think that the difficulty of her personality is part and parcel of her way to holiness. I am sure that she suffered very much for her love. I think that she shows us that saints are sinners who are madly in love with God.

To sum up, I see in Catherine a powerful mission that God had formed and given and to which she said “yes.” That she was at times a not very pleasant person, and yes, that she remained a sinner only makes her richer, I think. What matters is the tremendous love affair with God that happened there. Not buildings or writing but a passionate love in the heart. And that is what the Church is starving for today.

— Fr. Ray Gawronski, S.J.  
(who did a Master’s thesis on  
Catherine’s spirituality)

I had never met Catherine but did receive a short letter from her in response to a question I sent her...

her short letter was one of the highlights of my spiritual life.

Though there was nothing particularly profound in what she wrote, it was as though she was standing directly in front of me, talking. Through her talking the Holy Spirit spoke to me in such a way that I felt that I was in his very presence, and that he was answering my question — without words — as only he can do through one’s contemplation.

Needless to say this was a profound event in my contemplative life and one that I still vividly remember and will forever remember.

— GW, Altoona, Florida

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If you believe you have received favours through Catherine’s intercession, we would be pleased to hear from you. Please write to the Postulator at the address found on the last page. ■

### *Prayer Asking for Favours Through the Intercession of Servant of God Catherine Doherty*

All loving Father, through your beloved Son, Jesus, we have been taught to ask for what we need. And through his spouse, our Mother the Church, we have been instructed to pray for one another, and to ask the intercession of your servants, who have fallen asleep in Christ. Therefore, through the intercession of your servant, Catherine Doherty, we ask (*here mention your petition.*)

We ask this for your honour and glory, and in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son Our Lord. Amen.

*Imprimatur:* † J. R. Windle, Bishop of Pembroke,  
May 1, 1993. For private use.

## Not Only Priests

The excerpt from Catherine's writings I've chosen for this newsletter is a powerful cry to priests to call us to holiness. The words she uses are "Give us God." This is one of her ways of saying, "Call us to sanctity, to union with God. Feed our hunger for holiness."

I'd like to emphasize that, as Christians, this is what we're all called to do for one another. The deepest call of husbands and wives, parents, members of communities, parishioners, friends, is to help one another become saints. So when you read Catherine's excerpt, apply it to yourself. We are all called to *give God to one another*, to constantly point one another to the goal of human existence—sanctity. To aim one another at sanctity.

Father Robert Wild,  
Postulator for the Cause ■

*Is loving an emotion? Is love a state? Or is it a Person? It is the person of the Carpenter who spent thirty years in a village of no account. Teach us how to love a Person, because love is a Person.*

### ■ A Word from Catherine

#### GIVE US GOD!

*This is one of Catherine's ways of saying, 'Lead us to holiness, inspire us to become saints.' Although addressed to priests—see Dear Father, Chapter 2—this is the deepest call of Christians to one another: to give each other God. Catherine writes:*

The hunger of men for God is rising like a tide that nothing can stem; the answers must be forthcoming. Either we answer or someone else will. People seek God everywhere. The hippies used to travel across the continents and to India to find him, although now the hippies have disappeared. But the hunger of men has not. Youth still travels across continents to find God.

How does a man, a person, give God to another? Well, what do we hunger for? We hunger to be taught, to be led, to be healed by the Word of God, by love. Teach us how to love. Teach us true knowledge. Teach us how to pray. Teach us not only *about* God but also how to know *God himself*. Help us to know *him*. God reveals himself to those who love him with an open heart, who listen to his words which now come to us like a whisper of a spring breeze.

We speak much of community these days. You are a member of the people of God. You are in a community. The community loves you and expects from you not eloquence but words that come from your heart because you have listened to *his* heart.

Give us God because you have met him in prayer and in the study of the Word of God. Teach us how to know God because you know him. Teach us how to pray because *you* are men of prayer.

Teach us how to love, and here we come to the sixty-four thousand dollar question: Is loving an emotion? Is love a state? Or is it a Person? It is the person of the Carpenter who spent thirty years in a village of no account. Teach us how to love a Person, because *love is a Person*.

Talk to us about our hunger and your hunger, and tell us that he who speaks through you can



Catherine receiving Communion

heal us and assuage this hunger. Stand still before God so that you can speak to us. Open your heart to him and you will be preachers that children will follow on the street. Give us God and we will go into the ghettos. We shall clean them. We shall love. We shall work. We shall pray, because you have given us the knowledge of how to do it. Yes, you have shown us because you have seen and felt and touched who you are and who He is. Because of that we will have touched and known and fallen in love with him who is love. You will send us forth like a thousand sparks of fire of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you.

We are living in the resurrected Christ, not in the dead One. Christ is in our midst now and forever. Give us that light! Give us that joy!

There is a song of silence that man hears coming from the heart of other men. It is all so simple, so simple, to fall in love with God, to be one with this great Community of the Most Holy Trinity. Stand still before him so that you can speak to men, since God has spoken to you. Then we shall renew together the face of the earth, because love is the only thing that can do it in this time of hate, strife and misery. Love speaks all languages.

Teach us to understand. Teach us how to pray. Teach us how to love. You will know, because you love, you pray, because you are one with him. Speak to us in any way you wish, because he will be speaking in you. Remember: let him.

## OF NOTE: Vatican may stop requiring miracles for saint-making

Pope John Paul II reported to be considering a proposal to stop requiring miracles as proof of sainthood. The claim comes from a highly credible source, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone of Genoa, who, until two years ago, was secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, from where the proposal originated.

Cardinal Bertone told the Genoa newspaper *Il Secolo XIX* there is a growing feeling that the key requirement for sainthood is a life of “heroic virtue” and that miracles are “anachronistic.” He does not mean, of course, that miracles no longer happen. The Congregation of the Saints continues to approve many miracles for those on the path to holiness. What I think he meant is that the step by step requirement for miracles may be too rigid and out of date.

At present, the three steps leading to sainthood are 1) determination that the candidate has lived a life of heroic virtue and is therefore venerable; followed by 2) beatification and 3) canonization. Those who do not qualify for beatification through martyrdom must be shown to have performed a miracle. This may have occurred any time after the person’s death. Another miracle is required of all candidates after they have been declared blessed in order to qualify for consideration for sainthood.

Removing the miracle requirement could open the door to sainthood for candidates whose cause

is stalled because, perhaps, they lack the kind of charisma that attracts prayer. Blessed (and now St.) Claude de Columbiere, the spiritual director of St. Margaret Mary, was in the “blessed doldrums” for several centuries because of the lack of a final miracle. A modern example is Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–1890) who is still at the venerable stage. Is not this the most important?

An official of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints refused to discuss the issue, but indicated that doing away with the miracle requirement would be little short of revolutionary. Asked how long miracles have been required for sainthood, he replied: “Always.”

Who knows, this requirement may be dropped by the time Catherine — as we hope — is declared Venerable! — Fr. Bob

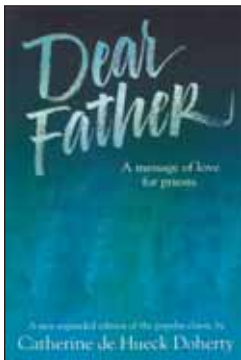


St. Gianna Molla, a wife, mother and doctor, who sacrificed her life for her unborn child rather than have an abortion

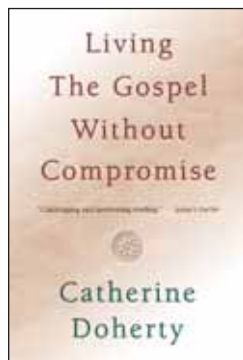
**“Real zeal is standing still  
and letting God be a bonfire in you.”**

■ Catherine in print and media

Catherine Doherty's life was the subject of many books, and she herself was a prolific speaker and writer with dozens of published works. We hope to introduce you to some of these popular and important works, considered by many to be modern spiritual classics.



138 pages  
\$12.95 U.S.  
\$16.25 Canadian



160 pages  
\$12.95 U.S.  
\$16.25 Canadian

### Dear Father

#### *A Message of Love for Priests*

by Catherine Doherty

“Wonderful news that the expanded edition of Catherine's *Dear Father* is ready for publication. Catherine practiced what she preached: she exercised her priesthood to the full, and she extended her love for Christ the Priest to all priests, especially those in need. Her words, written early in her path to sainthood, take on ever deeper meaning. May they bring solace to many more.” — Msgr. Bernard Prince, Secretary General, *Pontificum Opus A Propagatione Fidei*

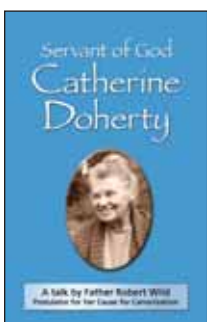
“I encourage everyone to read her book, especially priests.” — Fr. Stephen J. Rossetti, Ph.D., D.Min., President, *St. Luke Institute*

### Living the Gospel Without Compromise

by Catherine Doherty

In this hard-hitting book, Catherine Doherty brings unique wisdom and clarity to the dilemmas and anxieties of the modern world. She turns the insecurity and fear of the world on its head, showing you how cultivating “holy insecurity” could be your most reliable path to genuine peace. She writes movingly about numerous matters that today's secular society ridicules and caricatures: sacrifice, renewal, community, stewardship, and more. She explains how you can learn to overcome your fear and live with danger, all with joyful (but never naïve or unrealistic) faith and hope in Christ.

These and other titles by Catherine Doherty can be ordered directly from Madonna House Publications by calling toll free: 1-888-703-7110, or on the Internet at: [www.madonnahouse.org/publications](http://www.madonnahouse.org/publications)



### *A talk by the Postulator on VHS video*

A VHS videocassette of Father Robert Wild presenting information about canonization and Catherine's cause is available.

*Suggested donation: \$25.*

To order, write to: Vice Postulator, Madonna House  
2888 Dafoe Rd, Combermere ON K0J 1L0

More information about Catherine Doherty and the progress of her Cause—as well as printable copies of this and previous newsletters—can be found on the Internet at:

[www.catherinedoherty.org](http://www.catherinedoherty.org)

### How to Contact Us

If you believe you have received favours through Catherine's intercession, we would be pleased to hear from you. We are also in need of financial donations to help cover the expenses of her Cause. If you would like to contact us, please write to us at:

Postulator for the Cause  
Madonna House Apostolate  
2888 Dafoe Rd  
Combermere ON K0J 1L0  
Canada

Fax: (613) 756-3832

E-mail: [cause@catherinedoherty.org](mailto:cause@catherinedoherty.org)

If you didn't receive this newsletter in your mail, but you would like to, please write to us with your address. There is no charge, but donations are accepted and appreciated.

- Yes, I would like to receive future newsletters about Catherine's cause. (Please send in  English or  French)
- Please send me cards of Catherine's official intercessory prayer. Quantity: \_\_\_ English \_\_\_ French \_\_\_ Spanish
- Please also send me a catalogue of Catherine's published books and talks.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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