

The Dialogue of Saint Catherine of Siena:

November pages 17-27, questions 1-6

December pages 27-37, questions 7-12

January pages 37-53, questions 13-17

February is our day of reflection

March pages 51-63, questions 18-23

April pages 63-73, questions 24-29

May pages 73-89, questions 30-36

Questions for treatise on Discretion

1. Affection/love for God relies on interplay between penance and virtue. How are they related? What role does discretion play?
2. Discuss the metaphor of how discretion is like a tree. Describe the difference between a discreet person and an indiscreet person with regard to the relationship to God and to their neighbor.
3. God describes another parable regarding a tree in the relationship between love, humility and discretion. Describe this in your own words and how a person conforms to this parable.
4. How does God explain the balance between corporal works and affection of the soul? God states the soul should love Him without measure but her neighbor "with measure, with a restricted love." How would you explain this concept, noting the role of discretion?
5. How is achieving virtue like conceiving a child?
6. St Catherine now responds, as this is a dialogue. What does she tell God that she has felt? What does she reflect back to Him that she has learned?
7. God the Father expresses grief over the church's defilement. Which sacrament does he initially discuss that is received unworthily? What are the root causes of this unworthy reception? How are ministers/priests implicated?
8. God the Father explains the plan of salvation through the incarnation and its necessity. Basically here he lays out the way of redemption from sin. How might you explain this to someone in your own words?
9. Why is sin more gravely punished after the passion of Christ?
10. Why is Christ a necessary bridge to God?
11. Saint Catherine asks God to explain to her those who go by the bridge of Christ and those who do not. God responds by telling her the three steps of this Bridge and how they correlate with states/powers of the soul. Explain this in your own words.

12. Further explain the metaphor of the bridge describing how Christ is manifest in its parts. Can you recall scriptures where Christ is described in these images?
13. Compare the journey of one who walks on the bridge of Christ versus one who chooses to go under the bridge.
14. What happened to the bridge when Christ ascended into heaven? What role does the Holy Spirit play with the bridge? Where does one find the bridge /the road of truth built on the bridge?
15. Saint Catherine praises God for his mercy "as one intoxicated ".After this God describes the soul that passes under the bridge. What metaphor does he use? What are the roots/4 vices of the tree of death?
16. What are the fruits of the death giving tree, and the evils that proceed from them?
17. False judgement proceeds through the fruits of death. How is false judgement exemplified in the treatment of Christ? What were the driving forces behind it? Do any scriptures come to mind during your reflection? How does this apply to our time?
18. God the Father proceeds to outline 3 reproofs of the Holy Spirit. What is a reproof? Why were men reproved? Discuss the first reproof of the three and how that applies to our day.
19. When and what is the second reproof?
20. God the Father describes 3 principle vices that lead to hell and 4 torments of the damned. What are they?
21. When and what is the final reproof? Why is it that the damned cannot desire any good? How is it that one Christ appears differently to those saved and those damned?
22. How do the blessed experience the glory of God?
23. Why does the General Judgement increase the pain of the damned?
24. Explain how even the devil serves God? What deception does the devil use to lure souls away from the Bridge of Christ?
25. God the Father again uses the figure of a tree, and at it's base is a thorn. This was evidently a vision He gave to St. Catherine. Explain it's symbolism and how different souls react to the thorn.
26. God speaks of the soul who desires/ seeks him experiencing the "earnest money of heaven " on earth. How does he explain this experience? How does he use the metaphor of an eye?
27. St Catherine now asks for a greater explanation of the 3 steps of the Bridge of Christ. What drives her question?
28. What 3 powers of the soul does God discuss? What role do the powers play as a soul ascends the bridge of Christ? What happens if the soul improperly uses its powers? What does it mean when Christ says "where there are two or three or more gathered together in my name there I am in the midst of them"?
29. Those who wish to rise out of the river and cross over the bridge of Christ must choose one of two goals. What are these goals? What do they require? What is required of the powers of the soul in order to persevere?
30. Summarize in your understanding God the Father's explanation of the loosely quoted John 7:37-38.
31. God expounds on yet another scripture (Mat 18:20) and shows how understanding of this Scripture relates to John 7:37-38. What is your understanding of His explanation " that two were not without three Nor three without two."?

32. Through the divine mirror St Catherine Catherine sees servile fear as a fearing of our own personal pain. Explain how servile fear isn't sufficient to give eternal life and how the law of fear and the law of love are united.
33. How does one move from imperfect servile fear to the second step of the bridge? What reveals the imperfection of those who love God for their own profit? Which apostle does God give as an example of this imperfect love?
34. How does God manifest himself to the soul who loves him?
35. Why did Christ say " I will manifest myself" not that he would manifest the Father?
36. God describes three states of relationship and their progression. What are those steps and what does God do to help us in those steps to a more perfect relationship? Explain how our neighbor plays a role in our relationship to God.