St. Catherine of Siena: Vocation as Engaged Scholarship

Christina McDowell

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ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA:

VOCATION AS ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Christina L. McDowell

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ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA:
VOCATION AS ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

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ABSTRACT

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA:

VOCATION AS ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

By

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April 2012

Dissertation supervised by Ronald C. Arnett

The driving question of this project is: “How is St. Catherine of Siena an exemplar of engaged communication scholarship?” This project covers five essential facets of communicative inquiry into a deeper understanding of St. Catherine of Siena and her embodiment of engaged communication scholarship. The five areas trace her life from its historical context to its most personal revelations to her lived engagements with others. In the first chapter, the inquiry into St. Catherine of Siena begins with how she is understood by others for her knowledge and impact. Chapter Two assesses the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived. In Chapter Three, St. Catherine of Siena, both the person and her life, is explored focusing on her participation in society from her birth in 1347 to her death in 1380. Chapter Four examines St. Catherine of Siena’s work, The Dialogue, which contains four treatises including: (1) “A Treatise of Divine
Providence;” (2) “A Treatise of Discretion;” (3) “A Treatise of Prayer;” and (4) “A Treatise of Obedience.” Finally, Chapter Five takes an interpretive approach to understanding St. Catherine of Siena as an exemplar of vocation, revealing her as an engaged communication scholar. Together these chapters reveal St. Catherine of Siena as an engaged communication scholar whose spirit still has a place in this historical moment.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to St. Catherine of Siena, whose spirit continues to have a presence, regularly providing light in moments of darkness to the other.
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Chapter 1: Vocation as Engaged Communication Scholarship:

St. Catherine of Siena

Introduction

The driving question of this project is: “How is St. Catherine of Siena an exemplar of engaged communication scholarship?” The starting point for this inquiry must, of necessity, begin with the central emphasis of St. Catherine of Siena’s life. This is best stated as a living commitment to God revealed through love—a sacrament, a commitment to God, a true blessing, the enactment of “loving thy neighbor.” This love is elucidated through the many roles St. Catherine of Siena performed during her life. In the following pages, her many roles and devoted life will be examined for insight into living and acting in a way that embodies what is meant by the idea of “engaged communication scholarship.”

Each role that St. Catherine of Siena enacted reveals some aspect of her life as the embodiment of the “virtue of patience:” contemplative and reflective. She prayed unceasingly to God, using this divine communion as her starting point for teaching and engaging others. The Epistle of James brings the fullness of her character to life in the following passage: “but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James, 1:4). Love that is experienced in its fullest capacity is “perfect,” not having achieved a state of perfection but always living to become more like God. This passage captures what can be seen in the daily expressions of the love that St. Catherine of Siena expressed for the other. She knew that perfect love is “patient” (Corinthians 13:4) and lived with a commitment to walking this out in her communion with the divine and in her communicative engagement of the other. God’s law was
written upon her heart, revealed to others through the perfection of patience imparted to
her through His beloved Son, and established in love by the Holy Spirit.

This project covers five essential facets of communicative inquiry into a deeper
understanding of St. Catherine of Siena and her embodiment of engaged communication
scholarship. The five areas trace her life from its historical context to its most personal
revelations to her lived engagements with others. In each chapter more of St. Catherine of
Siena is revealed through her ideas and revelatory engagement with God. The conclusion
of this work invites the reader to consider her revelations as applicable in today’s
historical moment. The hope is to carry the light of her understanding into a world that
bears similar characteristics to her own. The following is a brief introduction into the
specifics of the direction of the project.

In the first chapter, the inquiry into St. Catherine of Siena begins with how she is
understood by others for her knowledge and impact. Specific emphasis is placed on her
contribution to a compelling understanding of vocation as a reality for all people,
bringing forth an engagement of existential relations that were before her and the
phenomenological impact of a life that is still remembered posthumously. This chapter
situates the work and provides a roadmap for engaging the remaining chapters. Chapter
Two assesses the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived. Specifically,
this chapter calls attention to the political, economic, and social forces that surrounded
Europe in the 14th century. In Chapter Three, St. Catherine of Siena, both the person and
her life, is explored focusing on her participation in society from her birth in 1347 to her
death in 1380. Chapter Four examines St. Catherine of Siena’s work, the Dialogue, which
contains four treatises including: (1) “A Treatise of Divine Providence;” (2) “A Treatise
of Discretion;” (3) “A Treatise of Prayer;” and (4) A “Treatise of Obedience.” From these
two treatises, clear insight in the form of what this author terms the “Four Ds” —
Direction, Discussion, Decision, Communicative Discipline — translates profound
revelation into practical application for those seeking a clearer understanding of vocation.
Finally, Chapter Five takes an interpretive approach to understanding St. Catherine of
Siena as an exemplar of vocation, revealing her as an engaged communication scholar.
Together these chapters reveal St. Catherine of Siena as an engaged communication
scholar whose spirit still has a place in this historical moment.

The Popular Conception of St. Catherine of Siena

This first section of this chapter is divided into three parts. The first part considers
St. Catherine of Siena as an embedded agent within a particular time and a particular
place. It asks the question: “Who is St. Catherine of Siena?” Central to this exploration is
an account of the communicative implications related to her experiences. From this
perspective, one can understand the background that facilitated her abiding devotion to
God and to the other. Immediately following is an examination into St. Catherine of
Siena’s life and experiences with regards to today. It is no question that she is revered in
Catholic scholarly and devotional circles. The additive consideration here is her
translatability into a popular context into the world in this historical moment. The final
part explores St. Catherine of Siena’s importance to the field of communication. This
exploration rests on the central presupposition of St. Catherine of Siena’s work and life:
that faith and divine grace lead to salvation and that neither come without burden and an
existential recognition of one’s responsibility to the other.
Who is St. Catherine of Siena? In 33 short years St. Catherine of Siena held many roles. Those roles included being a daughter to her parents and to God, a Sister to other religious people, a wife to her savior Jesus Christ—her Bridegroom, a mother in the form of a caretaker, a servant as an ambassadress, and many more that are known to particular others who were graced by her care and to the Lord, who saw all that she did when no one was looking. These roles provide a sense of the depth and complexity of her commitment to God and to others. Each one represents a different dimension of her engagement. They convey what people saw and continue to see in St. Catherine of Siena and subsequently identify an answer to the question: Who is St. Catherine of Siena?

In 1347, Catherine Benicasa was born to Giacomo and Lapa Benicasa, thus commencing her role as a daughter. Her father Giacomo was a dyer, a craftsman whose practice was composed of making and mixing dyes for linen and wool (Capua, 2003). This particular profession also served as a form of art during the time. Giacomo was a hard-working and honest man, deeply respected by others. He was also fearful of God, which explains his sincere dedication to his daughter when she made the decision to take to religious life. Giacomo’s wife, Lapa, was from Siena. While little is known about Lapa, many believe she was the daughter of a local poet (Capua, 2003). God blessed Giacomo and Lapa with 25 children, but only one is recorded in history: St. Catherine of Siena.

St. Catherine of Siena was Giacomo and Lapa’s 24th child. Her twin, Giovanna, was the 23rd. Recognizing that she would not be able to feed them both, Lapa had to choose which one of the twins would be given up to a nurse. She chose to attend to Catherine and give up Giovanna to a nurse. Shortly after their baptisms Giovanna, whose
name meant “of grace,” died. St. Catherine of Siena continued in Lapa’s care and was favored more than any of the other children. The favor on St. Catherine of Siena was realized outside of her home where she was inspiring to others and always in the right place to impact people’s lives. As a young child St. Catherine of Siena spoke with eloquence far beyond many adults. Her pleasing and charitable voice was known for bringing tranquility to all those who listened. Matthew 17:4 and her confessor point toward the sentiment expressed by many in her presence: “It is good for us to be here…” (Capua, 2003, p. 24). Others genuinely found peace in St. Catherine of Siena’s presence.

As St. Catherine of Siena matured, examples of her devotion toward God became more pronounced and public. Eventually, she realized her vocational call to enter the church. While her intentions became clear to her, they were not as clear to her parents, especially her mother. Since St. Catherine of Siena had reached the age at which many young women of her day were given in marriage, her mother and father, unaware that their daughter had already chosen her groom—God—began to consider her betrothal to a suitable husband. Her mother went to great lengths to prevent her daughter from entering a religious life. She made sure that St. Catherine of Siena’s appearance was always pristine and directed her persistent focus on “teaching [St. Catherine of Siena] how to behave…doing all she could to make her attractive so that if anyone should come along to ask her they should find her pretty” (Capua, 2003, p. 37). This attentiveness to her outward appearance was coupled with an effort to deprive St. Catherine of Siena of all good things. In the end, St. Catherine of Siena’s patience overwhelmed her mother’s efforts and she entered religious life, at that time becoming a Sister.
St. Catherine of Siena was the sister of 24 other children, but she more importantly was a Sister of faith. She was granted the habit and received into sisterhood by the *Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic*, known in Siena at the time as the *Mantellate’s*. The Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic were developed out of *The Brothers of the Militia of Jesus Christ* in the 13th century and eventually became known as the *The Brothers of Penance of St. Dominic*, commonly known as *Order of Preachers* or the *Preaching Friars*. The *Preaching Friars* was a Catholic religious order founded by St. Dominic in 1216 whose original members were only friars, but eventually would expand to include both Nuns and Sisters as well as lay people—secular individuals who participated in service activities within the Dominican Order. By the middle of the 14th century there were over 12,000 members preaching to all classes of Christian society. Taking the habit of St. Dominic Sisters of Penance was very unusual for a young woman at the time; however, the Sisters found St. Catherine of Siena’s devotion to God and the other to exceed her youth in God’s eyes. In becoming a Sister, St. Catherine of Siena also became a wife—to Christ.

Through her vows St. Catherine of Siena accepted Christ as her eternal husband. This act increased St. Catherine of Siena’s soul daily, making her desire to live her life in Christ’s footsteps to become more like God and obtain “perfect faith” (Capua, 2003, p. 99). St. Catherine of Siena continued to pray for this “perfect faith,” and her prayers were answered by God. God responded stating, “I will espouse you to me in faith” (Capua, 2003, p. 99). While fasting during Lent in her room, God spoke to St. Catherine of Siena:

Since for love of me you have forsaken vanities and despised the pleasures of the flesh and fastened all the delights of your heart on me, now, when the rest of the
household are feasting and enjoying themselves, I have determined to celebrate the wedding feast of your soul and to espouse you to me in faith as I promised.

(Capua, 2003, p. 99)

Appearing before St. Catherine of Siena was the Virgin Mother, St. John the Evangelist, the Apostle Paul, St. Dominic, the prophet David, and the Lord Jesus Christ (Capua, 2003). The event is depicted by her confessor as follows. Taking her hand, the Virgin Mother presented St. Catherine of Siena to her Son asking Him to marry her in faith. The Son of God held out a gold ring with four pearls representing the four types of purity that the Lord had bestowed in St. Catherine of Siena. A diamond was placed in the center as a representation of strongest rock. Christ placed the ring on St. Catherine of Siena’s hand stating: “There! I marry you to me in faith, to me, your Creator and Savior…Armed as you are with the strength of faith, you will overcome all your enemies and be happy” (Capua, 2003, p. 100). She wore this ring for the rest of her life—a ring that was only to be seen by her alone. It served as a visible sign to letting St. Catherine of Siena know God’s grace was eternally present in her life.

After entering into her “mystical marriage,” God revealed to St. Catherine of Siena her next responsibility. God invited St. Catherine of Siena to engage in public service and actions that would benefit the other. She graciously accepted. For St. Catherine of Siena this invitation was a burden, but she understood her responsibility. St. Catherine of Siena’s enlarged heart revealed how simple acts of kindness go far and beyond for the other.

Performing acts of humility and acts of charity—to the poor and the sick—St. Catherine of Siena began her role as a caretaker. Her caretaker role was twofold: (1)
“corporal works of charity,” and (2) “for the good of souls” (Capua, 2003, pp.116-117). Her confessor speaks of her acts of charity in this way: “The charity infused into the heart of this holy maiden was such that not only was she almost continuously aiding her neighbor by works of charity, but she also gave honor to the Highest by miraculous works of His Divinity” (Capua, 2003, p. 127). This role illustrated the divine gifts bestowed on St. Catherine of Siena by God, revealing her strong commitment to serve God by serving the other.

St. Catherine of Siena spent her entire life serving the other. This service to the other was especially exemplified in her role as an ambassadress. During the 14th century dark events arose throughout the world—events St. Catherine of Siena would take part in as an ambassadress. Two primary events that she would play a vital part include the rebellion of Florence against the Church and the Great Western Schism or Papacy Schism.

Fearing a strengthening papal power, the city of Florence rebelled against the church in 1375 (Capua, 2003). Florence at the time was a powerhouse and feared that its standing would be lost if the papacy gained power. Recognizing people were displeased with the French papal legates in Italy that Gregory XI appointed, Florence did everything to bring about a mutiny within the pontifical region (Capua, 2003). When extremely severe punishment, including excommunicating inhabitants, did not break the Florentines, Gregory XI sent St. Catherine of Siena to Florence with the hope of restoring peace. This proved to be unfruitful. Frustrated with the hostilities against the Pope, St. Catherine of Siena urged Gregory XI to re-establish the papacy in Rome. She succeeded in her efforts. In 1376, without the support of the French King and because of many
protests by Cardinals, Gregory XI left Avignon, returning to Rome. The return did not go as smoothly as Gregory XI expected, and despite all his efforts he would not see peace restored in the papacy before he died. St. Catherine of Siena remained in Florence until peace was restored within her Church and honor was given to God.

While peace was restored in Florence another storm was looming in the papacy—the Schism. In 1378 political debates about the true head of the papacy fueled the great Western Schism or Papacy Schism, bringing forty years of darkness to the Church—an event prophesized by St. Catherine of Siena years earlier (Capua, 2003). When Gregory XI died there were strong convictions by many Cardinals to elect a Roman as the next Pope. This would ensure the papacy would remain in Rome. When the final decision was made a Roman, Pope Urban VI, was elected Pope. Pope Urban VI, however, upheld a strictness that proved displeasing to the Cardinals who supported the papacy in Avignon. In efforts to return the papacy to Avignon those Cardinals abolished Pope Urban VI from the position, replacing him with Pope Clement VII from Geneva who led the papacy back to Avignon. With Pope Urban VI in Rome and Pope Clement VII in Avignon the Great Schism commenced.

In his efforts to restore the papacy’s presence in Rome, Pope Urban VI requested St. Catherine of Siena to return to Rome in November 1378 (Capua, 2003). She met with the Supreme Pontiff and Cardinals ensuring those present that “divine providence is always with us, above all when the Church has to suffer, and ended by telling them not to be afraid of the schism that had just begun and to do the things of God and to fear no one” (Capua, 2003, p. 305). St. Catherine of Siena understood God’s strength was
stronger than any other—person or event—and for the rest of her life worked to restore God’s honor in the Church.

St. Catherine of Siena performed many different roles throughout her life with the essential core of each role being her commitment to serve God and the other. She realized commitment in her life was enacted through public offerings and actions that engaged the other—people, places, and everything in between. In every encounter, she acted towards the other in love, careful to honor God and the other out of her divine calling. In her life, she knew the power of God’s love intimately, and it conquered all of her worldly cares and concerns, freeing her to live every day in selfless ways. St. Catherine of Siena’s realization of God’s love catalyzed her love for God. In receiving and giving, she was and is still remembered for living a life that overcame even the darkest of moments.

**Why is St. Catherine of Siena important today?** Over 200 biographies and 300 novels have been written on St. Catherine of Siena. The works cover everything from her extraordinary life to her religious orientation to her Christian doctrine. If documentation of a life were evidence enough of a person’s significance, she would qualify as significant. The works about her keep St. Catherine of Siena as an empowering presence in the world today. Her confessor called her a “rock,” so bound to God that not even the strongest persecution would break her away from His graces (Capua, 2003).

Her most notable presence today is evidenced by her declared titles. Independently of one another, each title reveals a facet of her character and devotion. Together, they illuminate the unannounced significance of St. Catherine of Siena, calling attention to what is not declared by title and leading people to read between the lines about a woman with stories and acts of goodness that only the Lord Himself knows. The
public titles include Saint, Doctor of the Church, and many Patronages—Patron Saint of Siena, Patron Saint of Italy, Patron Saint of Europe, and Patron Saint of Nurse. These titles open up the discussion for why St. Catherine of Siena is still important today.

In Paul’s letters to the Colossians he writes, “to the holy ones and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae: grace to you and peace from God our Father” (*New International Bible, Colossians* 1:2). The phrase “holy ones and faithful brothers” is the essential core of a Saint. In order for a person to be declared a Saint they must go through the processes of beatification and canonization. The beatification process begins after a person’s writings and teachings during life are investigated and nothing is found that is contrary to the Church’s teachings. Once the writings and teachings are approved by the Pope, a miracle during the person’s life must be confirmed. If a miracle is confirmed, then the person is declared Venerable—holding the title of “Blessed.” At this point the canonization process commences.

The canonization process begins with a question: What miracles did the person perform? The exception is a martyr—a person who died for the faith. In the case of the martyr, the Pope may waive the necessity of a miracle by way of *ad libitum*. If the person is not a martyr and the Pope has not waived the miracle, then two miracles are required, which include: (1) evidence of a miracle performed in life and (2) evidence of a miracle performed after death. Confirmation of both miracles permits the Church to bestow the title of Saint on the person as a way of announcing the person’s public devotion to God and the Church.

For clarification purposes the first Christians were primarily martyrs and were revered as Saints almost immediately after death. Not until around 1200 was it declared
by Pope Alexander III that only Popes could declare an individual a Saint; however, the
Church did not adopt the formal standards for Sainthood until the 17th century. Since St.
Catherine of Siena died in 1380 before the formal standards were put in place she did not
have to go through the beautification or canonization process. Without doubt, however,
she would have fulfilled the formal requirements and given the title of Saint.

After a person is declared a Saint they may be presented with other titles. One of
the most prestigious titles a person can be presented with is Doctor of the Church—a title
St. Catherine of Siena holds. The title of “Doctor of the Church” is bestowed on a person
whose writings and teachings have been proven significant in the development of the
Church as a whole. There are three vital conditions that the person must satisfy to be
granted this title: (1) *Eminens doctrina* (eminent learning); (2) *Insignis vita sanctiatas* (a
high degree of sanctity); and (3) *Ecclesiae declaration* (proclamation by the Church).

Today there are only 38 Saints that hold the “Doctor of the Church” title, including the
four original Doctors—St. Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St.
Jerome; all were scholastics in their historical moments. Within the 38 there are only
three women, including St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. Therese of
Lisieux.

Patron is another title held by a Saint. “A patron is one who has been assigned by
a blessed tradition, or chosen by election, as a special intercessor with God and the proper
advocate of a particular locality, and is honored by clergy and people with a special form
of religious observance” (Parkinson, 1911, para. 1). St. Catherine of Siena holds many
patronages, including four major patronages—Patron Saint of Siena, Patron Saint of Italy,
Patron Saint of Europe, and Patron Saint of Nurses. These four patronages are mentioned
because together they exemplify how St. Catherine of Siena’s importance reaches beyond the local level in Siena, to the regional level of Italy, a continental reach throughout Europe, and a global recognition with Nurses.

The titles presented to St. Catherine of Siena, including Saint, Doctor of the Church, and Patron, provide insight into her importance in the world today. The titles remind people of her commitment to God and the other. They begin to point people toward a greater understanding of her impact then and now. St. Catherine of Siena’s living memory proves that the actions of a person in life can be carried on in death. St. Catherine of Siena’s titles are an indication of this truth. Today the essence of St. Catherine of Siena’s spirit continues to have a presence, regularly engaging the other in everyday communicative experiences.

**How is St. Catherine of Siena relevant to the study of communication?**

St. Catherine of Siena actively engaged the other in all of her communicative experiences. This was not always easy. St. Catherine of Siena recognized that she was living in a time in which the historical moment was shrouded in political, economic, and social turmoil—a sign of the fallen world. In times of darkness, those with light to offer are called into action. St. Catherine of Siena was called into action. In our everyday communicative experiences people interact with the other in the hope of finding common ground. Communicative encounters announce a public offering and action to engage the other. Communication is at the heart of finding common ground. St. Catherine of Siena’s importance to the study of communication is exemplified through her communicative engagement with the other and this constant pursuit of common ground from which to reclaim a dark and fallen world.
St. Catherine of Siena’s primary connection to the study of communication is revealed through her public discourse with the other: dialogue. Dialogue is an essential part of human engagement and the philosophical dimensions of communicative life. This dual reality can be understood through Emmanuel Levinas’ dialogic standpoint. Levinas rejects engaging in “‘telling’; such an emphasis moves dialogue out of practical technique and into the pragmatic reality of meeting others” (Arnett, Grayson, & McDowell, 2009, p. 33). Levinas understood that dialogue prospers in difference. Engaging difference begins with answering an “ethical call,” an a priori ethical call of “I am my brother’s keeper.”

This pivotal lesson of being the keeper of my brother—the other—is seen in the Old Testament story of Cain and Abel:

Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out in the field.” When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” He answered, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” (New International Bible, Genesis 4:8-9).

This passage echoes Levinas’ dialogic standpoint in which a person enters a communicative encounter with a willingness and openness to engage the other. In such encounters there is always something outside of the self which cannot completely be explained or understood; however, the responsibility of a person is to always engage that other—people, places, ideas, events—making dialogue possible in every communicative experience. Like Levinas, St. Catherine of Siena embraced this responsibility, entering every communicative encounter ready to engage the other.
St. Catherine of Siena understood the importance of recognizing the other in her everyday communicative experiences. She respected and reflected on God’s call to “love thy neighbor as thyself.” Throughout her entire life, the neighbor—the other—was an ongoing presence. She relates the following in her *Dialogue* as a sign of this understanding: “Thou shouldest know that every virtue is obtained by means of thy neighbour…because you are obliged to love your neighbour as yourself…ever act of help that he performs should proceed from the charity which he has through love of Me…for, if he do not love Me, he cannot be in charity with his neighbour” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, pp. 39-40). This passage not only highlights the importance of loving your neighbor, but also explains how a person’s love for God is revealed by his/her charitable acts a person lives toward their neighbor. In every communicative encounter, there is an “other” and thus the possibility of charity. Acting in charity toward the other enacts what Levinas described as dialogic and what St. Catherine of Siena knew as the only way to live a life worthy of being called a child of God.

St. Catherine of Siena is an exemplar of what it means engage in genuine dialogue. As explained by Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson (1999), dialogue “cannot be demand,” rather for genuine dialogue to occur each participant *must* be willing to engage the other. St. Catherine of Siena was always willing to engage the other, working to guard a “common good” (Bellah et. al., 2007). She understood the public arena as a scared place for finding common ground—a place to protect (Arnett, Fritz, & Bell, 2009). She recognized the darkness that surrounded the lives of the other but never neglected her responsibility.
St. Catherine of Siena’s concern for the other frames communicative encounters within the spirit of what Immanuel Kant terms an “enlarged mentality” (1914). This state of reflection and engagement presupposes the importance of living with the other, seeking common ground even in the midst of great conflict. Seyla Benhabib (1992) develops the idea by saying, “the goal is of such conversation is not consensus or unanimity (Einstimmigkeit or Konsens) but the ‘anticipated communication with others’ with whom I know I must finally come to some agreement (Verständigung)” (p. 9). St. Catherine of Siena always focused on enlarging the place she was in, constantly finding balance between life’s excesses and deficiencies—walking the “narrow ridge” (Buber, 2001)—in order to bring people into places of light.

God invited St. Catherine of Siena to engage the other through many different communicative experiences. Communion with Him taught her genuine dialogue. She took what she learned and moved it outward into the community. She fulfilled her responsibility to God by enacting her role as a competent communicator with the other. Her life and her abiding presence after death reminds those who seek to know more about genuine communicative engagement of the intense devotion required. There is also much to be learned about the rewards of such devotion. In short, St. Catherine of Siena’s life and works create a communicative space for developing the life of the community through committed action with the other in all aspects of life.

**Intellectual Roadmap**

This second section provides a roadmap of ideas that situates the remaining chapters. These chapters cover particular aspects of St. Catherine of Siena’s life in a progression that prioritizes framing her as an engaged communicative scholar. The
remaining chapters unfold in four distinct explorations: (1) the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived; (2) St. Catherine of Siena’s life; (3) St. Catherine of Siena’s work: The Dialogue; and (4) St. Catherine of Siena: Vocation as Engaged Communication Scholarship. Central to each chapter is a concluding discussion connected to vocation as engaged communication scholarship, considering how the terms vocation and engaged scholarship are revealed in the inquiry. The following is a brief overview of each chapter.

The Historical Moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived. Chapter Two situates the historical moment of St. Catherine of Siena, rendering a framework for understanding the key questions that surrounded her in life and inspired her passion for serving God and the other. St. Catherine of Siena lived in the 14th century, commonly known as the Medieval historical moment. During this moment the common good of society was God or the Church. Those who lived in this time were guided by an overarching question: What am I (the individual) doing in my life to reach God? A person was to go above and beyond to do whatever they could to live a servile life for God, including bearing the pain and burden of the other. The presupposition was that God mattered and accepting the responsibility to serve the other announced a genuine commitment to Him and willingness to obey His Law. The pervasive sentiment was to love God and love your neighbor.

Central to this chapter is connecting this sentiment to the relationship between God and a life lived in community. Specific attention is given to the political, social, and economic forces that surrounded the Medieval historical moment while also framing St. Catherine of Siena’s response to the moment as it impacted her life. St. Catherine of
Siena recognized the darkness that had fallen over her world but never turned her back on God or the other, standing firm on her devotional ground. She met the historical moment with an open heart of faith and commitment to God, knowing His graces would relieve the Medieval society of darkness. St. Catherine of Siena knew her historical moment. She announced “the ground” on which she stood, always putting the needs of the other—of God and of people—above herself (Arnett & Arneson, 1999). She accepted the good, the bad, and everything in between in her historical moment—a moment of history that proved to be undisputedly catastrophic.

**St. Catherine of Siena and her life.** Chapter Three transitions from the historical moment to the life of St. Catherine of Siena, one of the 14th century’s most prominent societal figures. Her life began in 1347 in the Tuscan region of Siena where Lapa Benicasa gave birth to twins, her 23rd and 24th child, Catherine and Giovanna. From a very early age, Catherine demonstrated a profound commitment to serving God, bringing charity and grace to the other. Though not recognized as a Saint until 1461, 81 years after her death, she clearly bore the imprint of this title from a young age. At her canonization Pope Pius II remarked, “none ever approached her without going away better” (Capua, 2003, p.16). Her participation in society during her life was a genuine sign of her disciplined heart, and her devoted actions in life led her to remain the prominent figure she is in today’s global society. It is with respect for her place of honor in the Catholic tradition that Catherine is referred to as “St. Catherine of Siena” throughout this work.

The works of St. Catherine of Siena are considered classics in the Italian language and are written in the 14th century Tuscan vernacular (Garder, 1908, para. 1). Her writings are comprised of her primary work called Dialogue, 382 letters, and numerous
prayers. These works provide a glimpse of St. Catherine of Siena and her life. In particular, the *Dialogue* exemplifies the closeness she had with God. In 1970, Pope Paul VI declared St. Catherine of Siena for her doctrine a “Doctor of the Church.” She is only one of three women in history to be honored by the Catholic Church with the title Doctor, the other two being St. Teresa of Avila and St. Therese of Lisieux. As the Blessed Raymond of Capua, her confessor and biographer, so appropriately remarked of the life of St. Catherine of Siena: “in public for the honor of God and the salvation of souls, in all her actions there reigning the Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, world without end” (Capua, 2003, p. 101). She was committed to serving God and the other, making her life a statement of faith and action. St. Catherine of Siena lived as she believed, inviting others to do the same.

**Her work: The Dialogue.** In 1370, St. Catherine of Siena, while in spiritual ecstasy, dictated her *Dialogue* to her secretaries. The work itself contains four treatises that expand on the idea of vocation, providing divine insight into receiving, accepting, and living out one’s calling. The four treatises are: (1) “The Treatise of Divine Providence,” (2) “The Treatise of Discretion,” (3) “The Treatise of Prayer,” and (4) “The Treatise of Obedience.” In Chapter Four, each treatise is examined for its insight into the life and work of St. Catherine of Siena and for its revelation into her commitment to engaged communicative action in the world.

The first treatise, “The Treatise of Divine Providence,” offers insight into the idea of divine “Direction” and its practical application in the life a devout person. It also provides significant characteristics of Direction as it works in everyday life, irrespective of one’s spiritual orientation. The second treatise, “The Treatise of Discretion,” presents
the concept of “Decision” as an integral part of vocational pursuit. Direction is nothing without the Decision to move that way. The third treatise, “The Treatise of Prayer,” discusses the essential relationship for discovering one’s purpose in life: a relationship lived in constant discussion with God. “Discussion” is the living center of growing in wisdom and living out the call of God for one’s life. The final treatise, “The Treatise of Obedience,” reveals the strength of commitment needed to fulfill one’s vocation.

According to St. Catherine of Siena’s ecstatic experience, this could be interpreted for today as “Communicative Discipline”—choosing to listen, hear, and respond to both God and the other.

As a whole, the Dialogue is an extraordinary discussion of the entire spiritual life of a woman committed to serving God. The Dialogue is a written example of St. Catherine of Siena’s yearning to obtain a flawless faith in order to please God coupled with a graceful portrait of the practical elements of Christianity. She lived as she believed. This statement of faith was a testament to the devoted Christian of her day seeking light in a world of darkness. In this historical moment, the need to cultivate more defined “communit[ies] of memory” (Bellah, et. al., 2007, p. 237), make her equally relevant for devoted Christians. But, as this work hopes to demonstrate, her reach was and remains more expansive than the community of believers. Through St. Catherine of Siena’s work and life, people of all faith commitments are invited into the world, challenged to take the other seriously, and called to live a life of communicative action—a life of engaged communication scholarship that builds in people and places a spirit of light and hope.
Vocation as “engaged communication scholar.” In the final chapter, the work of George Cheney is used to uncover how, through St. Catherine of Siena’s life, an “engaged communication scholar” can be revealed through one’s vocation. Cheney’s work on “engaged scholarship” within organizational communication contexts begins the move in this chapter to connect three essential ideas—vocation, communicative action, and engaged scholarship. In an article titled, “10 Strategies for Engaged Scholarship,” Cheney, Wilhelmsson, and Zorn provide strategies for ideal engagement. These include: (1) engaging popular as well as academic concepts; (2) move out into the world; (3) consider multiple perspectives; (4) place the human, the moral, and even the spiritual alongside the technological, the financial, and the productive; (5) question our cherished concepts and practices; (6) choose problems and issues that matter; (7) reach audiences other than ourselves; (8) find or create models of socially responsible organizations and promote them; (9) embrace an action learning approach; and (10) seek out connections not only with the powerful but also with the disenfranchised. All of these strategies are expressed through practical engagement about how communication research and teaching are relevant to the world (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, and Zorn, 2002, p. 92).

The connections to engaged communication scholarship as made in this chapter bring St. Catherine of Siena into this historical moment. Using the “Four Ds” developed in Chapter Four, Cheney’s strategies are organized to reveal a deeper communicative impact in the life of engaged scholarship. This impact is grounded in St. Catherine of Siena’s love of God and the other, making a direct connection between love, action, and

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1 Communicative action embodies the theoretical and practical and it is applied here in the spirit of acts as it is understood in Calvin O. Schrag’s “Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity.”
engaged responsiveness. Thus, the conclusion of this project offers the combined wisdom of St. Catherine of Siena and communicative strategy of Cheney et al. in an effort to provide an applied understanding of how to pursue vocational direction and clarity in historical moments when the darkness provides an enveloping presence and growing space in which to fall from grace.

**Into the Marketplace**

Before moving into the extended development of this work, it is important to consider one more defining aspect: the marketplace imperative. In seeking to bridge vocation, communicative action, and engaged scholarship, there is a necessary application to consider—that of real ideas in the real world. St. Catherine of Siena lived this every day. Her communion with God led her to act in ways that embraced the other, irrespective of status, culture, or faith. Her work and life, like the work of an engaged scholar, must find its place in the particularities of people, places, and everything in between.

Engaged scholarship provides one way to express the marketplace relevance of St. Catherine of Siena’s life and work. Both were situated in the universal good of the Medieval era, a good defined by the relationship between the Church and the individual. In this relationship, St. Catherine came to value engagement with God and the other. The term “engaged scholarship” provides a parallel, albeit different, expression of this understanding. This idea emerges from within the conversation surrounding the “scholarship of engagement” first used by Ernest Boyer in 1995. He defines “scholarship of engagement” as “creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other” (Boyer, 1995, p.
The term calls for a more active perspective on social, civic, economic, and moral problems (Boyer, 1995). The term “engaged scholarship” takes this call to action and encourages people (academics in particular) to move into the marketplace to engage and learn from the other.

Although the term is a relatively new to the field of communication it is gaining popularity, specifically in the organization communication literature. Within the scholarly journals, a minimum of 15 scholarly articles (Ang, 2006; Barge, Jones, Kensler, Polok, Rianoshek, Simpson, & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Barge, Simpson, & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Barge, & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008; Barker, 2004; Cheney, 2008; Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002; Denson, Jayakumar, & Vogelgesang, 2010; Hunt, 2008; Hyland, Lambert-Pennington, & Norris-Tirrell, 2010; McKelvey, 2006; Reynolds, 2006; Sandmann, 2006; Seibold, & Simpson, 2008; Small, & Uttal, 2005) already exist. There is one primary textbook (Van de Ven, 2007) and two edited textbooks (Diener & Liese, 2009; Fry & Carragee, 2007) on engaged scholarship. In this project, Cheney, Wilhelmsson, and Zorn (2002) provide the necessary connection to the idea. This work takes the idea and builds direct, focused connections to the marketplace through the living experience of St. Catherine of Siena.

**Developing the Connections**

It is the perspective of this author that St. Catherine of Siena is more than a symbol of Christianity. She is also an exemplar of what it means to pursue a vocation. Even more, she is an exemplar of pursuing vocation as an engaged communication scholar. Through her commitment to God and to the other she illuminates what it means to reflect and act in ways that bring light into the midst of a dark world. Moreover, by the
grace of God she is as influential today as she was in the historical moment in which she lived. Her life can be explored for many noble reasons; here it is explored to learn more about living a life of vocational integrity. St. Catherine of Siena humbled herself under the hand of God, knowing that guidance from God comes to the heart through faith and patience. In the pages that follow, her life and works are examined to reveal how her faith and patience produced extraordinary accomplishments that remain worthy of study and creative application today.
Chapter 2: The Historical Moment in which St. Catherine of Siena Lived

Introduction

This chapter attends to the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived, rendering a framework for understanding the key questions that surrounded her life. The primary questions that guide this chapter include: (1) In what historical moment did St. Catherine of Siena live?; (2) What were the political, economic and social forces of the time? and; (3) How did St. Catherine of Siena meet her historical moment? Through an analysis of the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived, including the significant political, economic, and social forces, and how St. Catherine of Siena met the moment, this chapter attempts to reveal possible answers to these questions.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Three of these sections look more closely at each guiding question and one examines how historical moments shape a particular understanding of vocation and engaged scholarship. The first section provides an overview of the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived, drawing attention to the significant political, economic, and social forces that occurred. The second section develops an understanding of “the good” as a hermeneutic entrance into the historical moment, with particular emphasis on the good during the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived. In the third section, St. Catherine of Siena is examined for how she met the good of the historical moment in which she lived. Finally, the last section of this chapter discusses the importance of being attentive to the historical moment. The entirety of this conversation points toward how historical moments help to shape a particular vocation and engaged scholarship.
The purpose of this chapter is to provide a glimpse into the significant events that occurred during the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived and to consider more carefully her attentiveness to the world. Throughout this chapter, three significant ideas emerge to refine and focus the interpretation of her engaged life: (1) instability, (2) “the good,” and (3) vocation and engaged scholarship. Written into the pages that follow, these ideas encapsulate the hardships that emerged in St. Catherine of Siena’s historical moment, providing relevant insights into all of the political, economic, and social forces of the fourteenth century—a century filled with disaster and instability. St. Catherine of Siena’s virtuous actions offer signs of hope when a sense of community in society is lost, punctuating each of these ideas with light and promise. In what follows, she is presented as champion of the other.

A Moment of Instability: The Political, Social, and Economic Forces of the Medieval Society

Instability is unavoidable. In every historical moment, instability can be seen in greater or lesser degrees. What is important becomes how that instability is understood, for the nature of a given historical moment informs the actions a people and a place. Being attentive to the historical moment is a necessity in order to discern what is needed, appropriate, or required in a given moment; what is called for in one moment may not be required in another (Arnett & Arneson, 1999). This section attempts to articulate the importance of recognizing the historical moment by attending to the significant political, economic, and social forces that occurred in St. Catherine of Siena’s lifetime—a time marked by instability and darkness.
**Overview of the medieval historical moment.** Medieval Historian, Norman Cantor (1969) in *Medieval History* writes, “whether or not we are conscious of this fact, not only do we have a personal, individual memory, but also we participate in the collective memory of the vicissitudes which mankind has undergone in the past” (p. xx). Whether a person is aware of it or not, they are part of history. Behind the unexpected changes, especially in the fortunes of humankind, there are significant events, daily practices, ideas, and attitudes tied to a historical moment that determine the daily functions of a society. These coordinates provide glimpses of hope for a society, and at other times bestow fear; but like anything else, historical moments, good and bad, do not last forever. Historical moments will, however, always be remembered.

Medieval history is an extensive period that roughly begins in 300 and concludes by 1500 A.D., and as is with any historical period, it ends leaving behind many dominant institutions. These Medieval institutions include: the Christian church, representative government, capitalism, the university, and the most profound ideas, such as romanticism, rationalism, nationalism, and the scientific method (Cantor, 1969, p. xxii). These specific institutions and ideas forever changed the fortunes of humankind. Their effect was so great that “many aspects of twentieth-century civilization are the consequence of the medieval experience that to understand ‘how we got this way,’ we must know medieval history” (Cantor, 1969, p. xxii). Without doubt, the medieval period is a time will always be remembered, but for the period to be truly understood and its significance to be recognized one must take into account the occurrences that happened during the time.
The aim of this section is to reveal the medieval period in its genuine state by focusing on the political, social, and economic forces that shaped the moment. No doubt, the roots of the modern man lie in the medieval historical moment. It is a moment of rapid, sometimes even violent, constant change. The constant change occurring during the moment is the primary reason for its long duration and lack of unity—instability. Its long duration even caused historians to divide the moment into three parts, including: (1) the Early Middle Ages, (2) the High Middle Ages, and (3) the later Middle Ages.

For historians, the medieval historical moment begins in 300 A.D. with the decline of the Roman Empire and runs its course until the middle of the 11th century (Cooke & Kramer, 1981). In the early Middle Ages a distinctive Western civilization emerges when Christian, Graeco-Roman, and Germanic institutions and ideas collide (Cantor, 1969). This moment is typically marked by chaos and turmoil with the persecution of Christians beginning in 303 A.D. Along with these characteristics there was also disunity and invasion with the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. The primary force in the moment is the Church; however, at the time the Church was lacking strong ideals, leading to instability. Without these ideals the Early Middle Ages society struggles to develop institutions that would help facilitate everyday life. The moment lasts until the end of the 11th century when a transition occurs in society, moving the historical moment into the High Middle Ages.

By the end of the 11th century there is a culmination of ideas and a societal transition that leads to the High Middle Ages—a period from 1100-1400 A.D. The primary ideas in the High Middle Ages were connected to art, literature, religion, and philosophy. Some of the most significant figures and influential movements in the
humanities come out of this moment. Historians have generally agreed that the 12th and 13th centuries were the most stable moments of the Medieval world, but stability was short-lived. According to Cantor (1969), “by the second half of the thirteenth century the conflict between old ideals and new practices—which gives evidence of a disintegrating civilization—had made its appearance” (p. 11). The conflict between old ideas and new practices that Cantor speaks of involve one of the most significant and influential people in the history of the Catholic Church, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the separation of Church and State. This conflict also marks the transition from the High Middle Ages into the Later Middle Ages.

Historians call the 14th and 15th centuries the Later Middle Ages. This moment is classified as a period of history that is undisputedly catastrophic (Cooke & Kramer, 1981). During the moment growth and prosperity in Europe came to a standstill. As Cantor (1969) describes, society in the Later Middle Ages is “marked by war, pestilence, economic depression, bitter religious and intellectual controversies, and also by the foreshadowing of the modern world” (p. 12). It was a historical moment marked by instability within all realms of society, and it is not until the end of the 15th century that there is any kind of relief for the Medieval society. No doubt, the Later Middle Ages is the moment in which the majority of the political, social, and economic instability of the Medieval historical moment occurs. The following section will address the political, social, and economic forces of the Later Middle Ages, giving specific attention to the year 1347 through 1380—the moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived.

The political, social, and economic forces of the Later Middle Ages. The 14th century is a transitional moment from the High Middle Ages into the Later Middle Ages
and is a major turning point within the Medieval historical moment. At the time traditional societal institutions have declined, and “new” conditions were on the rise (Cantor, 1969). For historians, this century marks a period of history, including European history, which is undisputedly catastrophic. Growth and prosperity in Europe came to a standstill—the political and religious, economic and social forces forever changed European society.

The beginnings of the political forces that significantly change the Medieval historical moment commence with the start of Ottoman Empire at the turn of the century, the beginning of the Hundred Years’ war in 1337, wars between the Serbs and Ottoman Turks in 1389, and the Peasants’ Revolt in England in 1381. As a result of these events the political state of Medieval society reached its point of breaking with its constant instability.

These conflicts had a great impact on the political thought of the Medieval society. In periods prior, political thought was tied significantly to the Church and State as one; however, in the 1300s change happened, and political disputes triggered a movement of medieval authority from the Church to the states. To clarify, the term state in the fourteenth century was defined as “status” (Strayer, 1970, p. 23). Subsequently, in Western Europe, except for Italy, the nation state secured its own sovereignty (Strayer, 1970 p. 23). Once the nation state was free from the imperial power the next step was to free itself from the “plenitude poestatis” [plenitude of power] of the Pope, a power that allowed the Pope to intervene in the life of the states (Strayer, 1970 p. 23). If this want was fulfilled, then the states would be able to become city-states (Strayer, 1970, p. 24)—i.e., governed by its own institutions and government.
Common ground was lost in the 14th century—there was a shift in focus from doing what was best for the community to doing what was best for the self. People began to focus on obtaining power through exercising knowledge that would lead to wealth. Niccolò Machiavelli’s *Prince* echoes this understanding of the focus on statecraft by knowledge.

Machiavelli (1995) discusses how knowledge is useful in two ways. He states: first, one learns to know one’s country and can better perceive its defenses; moreover,

through knowledge and experience of those sites [one learns] to understand with ease any other site which might be necessary for him to think of at another time…from knowledge of one province one can easily come to the knowledge of the other (Machiavelli, 1995, p. 55).

In a practical sense, Machiavelli attempts to teach the individual about the “art of government” and claims that those ruling Italy have not learned how to organize the government. This can be seen in the 14th century. In the moment, kings became the representatives of the state, which ultimately led to the right to tax and the element of justice gradually became integrated in the stability of the states. The greedy actions taken by all of Europe’s rulers during the moment as well as the need for knowledge, power, and wealth, subsequently, were also the primary reasons for the spiritual decay that would take place.

Up to this time, Western Europe in the Medieval historical moment looked towards the Church guiding authority; however, the Church had also been infected with decay. It shifted its focus of attention from religious leadership to the covetous and
idolatrous act of gaining wealth and political power. The Church worshiped at the altar of
greed:

The power of the Pope was heavily based upon his personal ability and his
alliances with powerful secular rules. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the
growth of national states dwarfed the power of the papacy, and the popes often
became tools of royal policy instead of the reverse. The power of the papacy was
one of the first causalities of the growth of national monarchies and the
entrenchment of lay and secular interests that characterized the fourteenth and
fifteenth centuries. (Cantor, 1994, p. 488)

Unlike the centuries before, the Church failed to provide the guidance that the Medieval
historical moment needed, leading to lacking and unclear Christian ideals.

The weakness created an instability that could not be ignored; Medieval society
became a hypocrisy that negatively affected people’s behavior. Once the strength of the
Church started to decline stability became ruin. This transition is one of the first
examples of “the state” taking over faith as the “symbol of unity” (Strayer, 1970, p. 191).

With this, questions arise, including questions about God’s relation to the world, the
human soul, and the nature of redemption (Strayer, 1970, p. 61). Not until Europe
regained some stability in the 16th century did society start to move out of such
 disorderly conduct.

In the midst of all the political uprising there were also numerous economic and
social crises emerging. Famine and plague spread across Europe, including the Great
Famine from 1315 to 1317 that led to a population decrease in Western Europe of about
25 million people, thirty-four percent of the entire population (Cantor, 1994). In 1347 the
Black Death also took the lives of over a million people decreasing Europe’s population by one-third (Cantor, 1994). To give a more accurate description of the population decline after the Black Death, Roberts (2002) states:

from about the year 1000 another fundamental change was under way…growth then seems to have further accelerated to reach a peak of about seventy-three million around 1300, after which there is indisputable evidence of decline. The total population is said to have gone down to about fifty million by 1360 and only to have begun to rise in the fifteenth century. (p. 512)

The changes in demographic characteristics and decline in population drastically altered the social forces of medieval society. The dominant factor responsible for the economic and social turmoil that spread across Europe was the Black Death, or the bubonic plague, that had spread from China to European countries. Rural areas faced an indescribable demographic and economic event that prompted a sudden, radical change in population, leading to serious damage to the structures of Medieval society.

These economic and social changes from the Black Death and other plagues throughout Europe can be seen from the emerging agricultural depression, peasant revolts, and the decline of aristocracy, specifically in the crisis of the Church. Factors from the century prior also contributed to the instability, including disease, climate shifts, agricultural stagnation, and peasant discontent with landlord relationships (Cantor, 1994). Therefore, the Black Death was not the prime factor for the recent demise of Medieval society; it simply confirmed developments already present. For example, the Great Famine took place before the Black Death. The Famine affected almost all of Northern Europe; rainy summers and extra-cold winters gave way for failed harvests, warfare,
created financial difficulties, and epidemics and livestock diseases caused an agricultural downfall, especially in Flanders and the British Isles (Le Goff, 2000). These serious economic and social crises in the rural life of Europe spread to Medieval urban life as well.

In the 14th century major economic changes that dealt with trade were taking shape. Trade in the first half of the 14th century involved trading short distances, with the dominant trade being grain. The markets—predominantly customer-led economies—from the centuries prior continued and rural producers were still able to sell part of what they produced for an income that would cover their rent and taxes without difficulty (Le Goff, 2000). No doubt, in the beginning of the 14th century Medieval society was thriving, but this would not last. By the second half of the 14th century trade plummeted, war broke out throughout Europe, and the Church got caught in a power struggle, leading to the decline in Papal rule. The cost of war affected the international financial community; bankruptcies led to the collapse of the international courier services, and wages were bad for both employers and employees (Le Goff, 2000). The impact was so substantial that the “difficulties and progress were so finely balanced that contemporaries were uncertain of the direction history was taking” (Strayer, 1970, p. 123). The 14th century genuinely marked the major moment of instability within the Medieval historical moment, causing common ground to be lost that was purely driven by the lack of bearing any burden or responsibility for societal action.

It cannot be denied that during the 14th century the Medieval society went through a significant transformation and the traditional ways of life were no longer the preferred way to
live. Politically, topics were tied to war and religion; economically, the focus was on starvation and death, and socially virtues were no longer clearly defined. For those living during the 14th century the only horizon in sight was one of instability.

In order to understand how a sense of hope can be found in this moment of instability one can turn to St. Catherine of Siena and her virtuous engagement of the Medieval historical moment. But first it must be understood what it means to live a virtuous life. For this we can look towards St. Thomas Aquinas’ philosophical understanding of good. In the following section, a Thomistic understanding of the good is discussed, providing the necessary foundation for understanding how the good is the means to living a virtuous life.

**The good of the historical moment: Defined, understood, and recognized.** Throughout history, philosophers have been debating about what is termed the “highest good.” Some, for example Aristotle (2002), classify the highest good as *eudæmonia* identifying the “highest good” with happiness. Others, including Plato, classify the highest good as *deotologico* identifying the highest good with duty (Dinnenn, 1909). Additionally, Christian philosophers, such as Aquinas, believe the highest good is a blending of both *eudæmonia* (happiness) and *deotologico* (virtue) a classification known as “rational eudæmonism or tempered deontologism” (Dinnenn, 1909, para. 1).

According to Dinnenn, this blending of happiness and virtue for Christian philosophers invites a consideration for both a view of faith, as well as a rational component (Dinnen, 1909). For Christian philosophers:

The ultimate end of man is to be placed in perfect rational activity, in ultimate perfection, and in happiness, not as in three different things, but as in one and the
self-same, since the three conceptions are resolvable into one another, and each of them denotes a goal of human tendency, a limit beyond which no desire remains to be satisfied. (Dinnen, 1909, p. 3)

Christian philosophers believe a person’s actions announce a willingness or reluctance to live life in accordance to God’s will. For Christians, a “perfect rational activity” may be viewed as doing something that needs to be done with the full knowledge of why the action is taking place; an “ultimate perfection” may be understood as performing the activity to the best of one’s ability—happiness is simply doing the activity (Dinnen, 1909). In a practical sense, to know God is to know the reason for being (i.e. to have a purpose). If God is known, then satisfaction (happiness) is achieved because reason is found.

In the following sections the good is further defined from the Aristotelian and Thomistic standpoints in order to frame how St. Catherine of Siena lived out the good of her historical moment.

*Aristotle and “the good.”* Aristotle (1999) opens the *Nicomachean Ethics* with the line, “every art, and every science reduced to a teachable form, and in like manner every action and moral choice, aims, it is thought, at some good: for which reason a common and by no means a bad description of the highest good is, ‘that which all things aim at’” (p. 1). At the most fundamental level, skills, actions, and choices are done or made with the hope that something is approved or desired. The highest good, as Aristotle refers to it, explicates completion or end.

The highest good has a *telos* or end in and of itself and is the “highest of all goods” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 4). Aristotle suggests this highest good is *eudaimonia*, which
translates to happiness. Happiness represents an end in itself, because it is not a means towards another end. Aristotle concludes that happiness meets such a criteria, since “no one ever chooses happiness for [one’s] sake, or for the sake of anything else at all” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 8). Happiness is a final cause or purpose.

Happiness is the particular good that carries weight for determining the best way to live. It is connected to “living well and doing well” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 3). To live well and to do well is the means to reaching the highest good. Simple enough, right? Wrong. There is a dilemma pertaining to the conception of happiness. There are many things that are good for a person that are represented in different forms such as pleasure, wealth, courage, and health. The question for Aristotle becomes is: What good is the most desirable for a person?

Aristotle further explicates this question by clearly stating that happiness is not a form of “fortune” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 3). The assumption is that people do not have to have fortune to live well and do well. In fact, Aristotle suggests that happiness has nothing to do with fortune, especially in the form of pleasure. Rather, happiness is tied to human function, specifically virtuous actions. Aristotle (1999) stresses “happiness is a certain sort of activity of the soul in accord with complete virtue” (p. 16). Simply stated, happiness is an activity of human beings in union with goodness. Living well and doing well, then, require human beings to use reason to guide actions and choices. Aristotle is clear about the potential of the soul’s ability to reach its telos through virtuous actions and choices; however, whether or not happiness is actually achieved cannot be evaluated until the end of life.
People are rational beings, so reason is used throughout a person’s entire life. Subsequently, reason acknowledges responsibility for one’s actions, choices, and is manifested in virtue. With every action taken and choice made a consideration for the correct action or choice must be determined. Discerning the correct action or choice yields virtuous actions; subsequently, what is best for the soul. According to Aristotle, “human excellence is not that of man’s body, but that of his soul; for we call Happiness a working of the Soul” (Aristotle, 1999, p. 24). Thus, engaging in virtuous actions and making correct choices are what is best for people, and a means to reaching excellence. Happiness, then, resides in living a life full of virtuous actions and choices and is the highest good for which all humans strive.

Aquinas and “the good”. Aquinas helps further understand the good in Christian thinking. According to Aquinas, human beings’ telos or end is to reach the “highest good,” happiness, which is reached through union with God (Aquinas, 1981, I-II, Q.3, A8). Aquinas writes in Summa Theologica “final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence…perfection through union with God as with that object, in which alone man’s happiness consists” (Aquinas, 1981 I-II, Q.3, A.8). This position establishes a Christian understanding that the reason for being or human beings’ purpose is to know God, and to know God is to achieve the highest good.

Aquinas, working from an Aristotelian framework, further explicates this stance writing, “for the Philosopher says (Aquinas, 1981, p. 13) that ‘happiness is an operation according to perfect virtues’” (Aquinas, 1981, I-II Q.3, A 6). Aquinas is clear about the potential of the soul’s ability to reach the highest good through virtuous actions in life;
however, whether or not happiness is actually achieved cannot be evaluated until the end of life, because that is when human beings are united with God.

To reiterate, since human beings are rational, humans use reason throughout the entire life. During life, specifically for a Christian, actions help dictate whether a person experiences a union with God in death. With every action taken, consideration for the correct action must be determined. Discerning the correct action yields virtuous actions—what is best for the soul. A Christian cannot experience a union with God unless he/she lives a virtuous life; performing virtuous actions in the life is a necessity for a Christian because virtuous actions are directed toward God.

If happiness resides in living a life full of virtuous actions, then happiness is the highest good all humans hope to obtain. However, one cannot simply live an active life; one must live a contemplative life, which is “busied with one thing, i.e. the contemplation of truth” (Aquinas, 1981, I-II Q.3, A 2). For Christians to live a contemplative life is to live life-seeking knowledge of the truth and truth is God, which is seeking the “highest good”—happiness. Consequently, happiness can only be achieved through an intuitive knowledge of God (i.e., actual union with God).

According to Aquinas, happiness is only attainable in the next life because that is when a person meets God. Aquinas references the book of Jeremiah (9:24) stating, “It is written, ‘let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.’ Therefore man’s final glory or happiness consists only in the knowledge of God” (Aquinas, 1981, I-II Q.3, A7). While a person can be taught or conditioned to believe something (i.e., faith), which is a view C.S. Lewis offers in his book *Mere Christianity*, when he encourages a person to use their intellect to have knowledge of God. For
example, through teachings and faith a Christian can know the love of God, but not until he/she is in God’s presence does this truth come to fruition.

Dinneen (1909) summarizes Aquinas’ view that to know God is to know all there is to know because He is infinite truth, and therefore, infinite good. He further discusses, for Aquinas the ultimate end and the highest good coincides with the object of the highest acts of contemplation and love, which is God (Dinnen, 1909). Aquinas explains, “by God alone is man made happy, if we speak of perfect happiness” (Aquinas, 1981, I-II Q.5, A.6). God is not just blessing man He is the be all and end all, absolute truth and goodness and perfection. “Happy is he who has all he desires” (Aquinas, 1981, I-II Q.5, A.8). In other words, happy is he who has achieved the highest good—a union with God.

**Finding hope in moments of instability: How St. Catherine of Siena met the good of the historical moment.** In 1 Corinthians, St. Paul writes, “I planted, watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are equal, and shall receive his wages according to his labor. For we are fellow workers for God; you are God’s field, God’s building” (3: 6-10). God rewards each person according to the work they do in life. This begins with the act of diligently seeking Him (Hebrews 11:6). Prosperity and abundance is found by those who seek God and partner with Him according to His Word: “Great is the Lord, who delights in the welfare of his servant” (Psalms 35:27). God gives the power to gain wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). St. Catherine of Siena received her productivity and “wealth” by recognizing that she had a choice to serve God—to be for or against God—and to walk in the promises according to His word. In choosing to serve God, she accepted and understood the “why” for doing what she did during her life.
A “why” is the communicative action or attentiveness an individual gives to the questions of a particular historical moment. St. Catherine of Siena was in constant engagement with the “why” behind her communicative actions, never once neglecting the duties God set before her. She was always attentive to her commitment to serve God and the other. To God she confessed, “you are my Lord, and I am the least of your servants. May your will be done always, but remember me according to your great mercy, and do not forsake me” (Capua, 2003, p. 151). She recognized the historical moment and moved through it with a willingness to learn and grow from the good and bad choices of her life.

In uncovering the “habits of the heart” or truths of the historical moment, a person recognizes the historical moments in which they live through an ongoing commitment to meet what is before them (Bellah et al., 2007). When the traditional Medieval ways of life changed, the moment turned to an authority that had proved its stability in the past—the Church. As previously discussed, up until the 14th century the Church served as the authoritative power. In the 14th century the Church began to experience its own problems and its authority began to decline. While other structures in the past had stepped up and took on the authorial role in Europe this time no particular structure expressed such willingness (Fourace, 1997-2005). Having no authoritative structure to turn to, the Medieval society faced political, economic, and social uprising.

St. Catherine of Siena recognized that she was living in a time in which the historical moment was embodied ominously with disaster, but she knew God would not have this darkness linger. For the Medieval society and St. Catherine of Siena the uniting light was the Church: a community that filled voids and provided hope in the midst of the
intense suffering and disaster. The Church was the unifying structure that served as her guide throughout life.

St. Catherine of Siena recognized that historical moments discloses what we protect and promote in society, situating an idea in a particular context (Arnett, Fritz, and Bell, 2008, p. 4). As a result of the historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived, political chaos and harsh economic conditions debilitated the European society—a prime example of what happens when historical moments are not acknowledged. The Medieval society, therefore, lost its focus on what was propelling the period at the time—the Church. St. Catherine of Siena understood the significance of this matter, grasping meaning, and revealing a clear understanding of the “Truth” from God.

St. Catherine of Siena understood that she was obligated to spread the word of God. She used her voice to protect and promote the good of the Medieval historical moment—God or the Church. While darkness would continue to emerge causing much political, economical, and social turmoil throughout the world, the growing weakness in the Church made the situation worse. St. Catherine of Siena became an active participant, working to keep the values of Christianity from fading. Specifically, there are two primary events that St. Catherine of Siena would be directly associated with during her life that demonstrate her efforts, which include: the rebellion of Florence against the Church and the Great Schism. Considering St. Catherine of Siena’s role in these events helps establish how a sense of can be found in moments of instability.

The Church was in spiritual decay, concerned more with obtaining power then being a spiritual leader and guide to the Medieval society. For example, the first social revolts occur during the latter half of the fourteenth century (Cantor, 1969). In Florence a
rebellion against the Church emerged in which the Florentines feared that if the papal power were to strengthen Florence would lose its high-standings; consequently, Florence rebelled against the Church in 1375. Knowing there were many displeased with the French papal legates in Italy Florence did everything they could to bring upon a mutiny within the pontifical region (Capua, 2003). When extremely severe punishment did not break the Florentines, including excommunicating its inhabitants, Pope Gregory XI sent St. Catherine of Siena to Florence in an attempt to bring peace back. Her initial attempts to bring peace between Florence and Pope Gregory XI failed. Frustrated with the hostilities against the Pope, St. Catherine of Siena began to urge Pope Gregory XI to re-establish the Papal See in Rome. She succeeded in her efforts. Against the French King and many Cardinal protests Pope Gregory XI left Avignon in 1376 for Rome. This act would bring disunity to the Church for the next 40 years. The effort to restore peace would prove not to be as effortless and simple as bringing the Papacy back to Rome. However, despite all of Pope Gregory XI’s attempts he would not see peace restored before his death.

St. Catherine of Siena also remained in Florence until peace pacts were made public in July of 1378 by Urban VI. When Urban VI saw St. Catherine of Siena’s determination to not leave Florence until peace was restored within her Church and honor of God, he summoned her once more to return to Rome. While peace was restored with the Florentines another storm was looming in the Papacy: the Great Schism.

The Great Schism is the second major event in which St. Catherine of Siena had a pivotal role. The Great Schism commenced in 1378 and lasted for 40 years until 1418 when councils of Pisa and Constance were assembled and elected an undisputed pope.
(Cantor, 1969). At the center of the controversy was political authority and power. Within a year of returning the papacy to Rome, Pope Gregory XI died and a successor was to be chosen. Considering the recent action to bring the Papacy back to Rome the Cardinals knew that Pope Gregory XI successor would determine whether or not the Papacy would remain in Rome.

In April 1378, the concave chose Roman Archbishop of Bari, who took the name Urban VI. This election guaranteed that the papacy would remain in Rome. However, Pope Urban VI, while ideal in appearance, upheld strictness that proved displeasing to some of the Cardinals, leading them to claim the election of Urban VI invalid. Another Pope was elected, Pope Clement VII from Geneva, who would lead the papacy back to Avignon. With Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon the Great Schism commenced.

The means to retain faith were slim, and the Great Schism split Christendom. The conflict became so intense that each of the Popes declared that the other be excommunicated, and doubt of who the true Pope was continued to grow. In the years that followed the two groups of Cardinals—French and Roman—continued to elect rival Popes (Strayer, 1970, p. 208). Catholic doctrine also conveys that many people present during the times who would be presented with the title of Saint even were divided. St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine of Sweden, Bishop Peter of Aragon, Bishop Ursulina of Parma, Philippe d’Alencon, and Gerard de Groote were supporters of Urban. While St. Vincent Ferrer, Bishop Peter of Luxemburg, and St. Collette were supporters of Clement. The division did not stop with people. The European powers would also choose a side: most Italian and German states, England, and Flanders supported Urban in Rome while
France, Spain, and Scotland were in support of Clement in Avignon (Strayer, 1970). Without doubt, opposite poles were present in the Church because of the Great Schism. To retain one’s faith through all the physical and spiritual sufferings caused by war, plague, and schism was a challenge for Medieval society (Strayer, 1970, p. 210). With such turmoil rising, Urban VI would call upon St. Catherine of Siena as a servant to God to work towards restoring peace within the Papacy.

St. Catherine of Siena was summoned to return to Rome by Urban VI in November 1378 (Capua, 2003, p. 304). When arriving in Rome with her followers she met with the Supreme Pontiff and Cardinals, encouraging them to be strong, demonstrating “divine providence is always with us, above all when the Church has to suffer, and ended by telling them not to be afraid of the schism that had just begun and to do the things of God and to fear no one” (Capua, 2003, p. 305). St. Catherine of Siena understood God was stronger than any other, and He would not abandon His Church.

The Pope Urban VI initially was going to send St. Catherine of Siena to Sicily to try to regain the support of Joanna, Queen of the Kingdom of Sicily. At the time Italy was a group of small city-states, and Joanna had initially supported Urban VI as Supreme Pontiff. She soon rebelled against the Church after his Pontificate, and began to support the Great Schism. After consideration Pope Urban VI thought that the journey should not take place. Instead, Pope Urban VI would order Catherine’s confessor, Blessed Raymond of Capua, and his Friars to preach against the schismatics and serve as Papal Legate to the King of France. St. Catherine of Siena continued working in Rome, including writing many letters to the Cardinals to demonstrate her support for Pope Urban IV and to re-establish the honor of God until her death in 1380.
In one letter in particular, entitled *Letter to Three Cardinals*, St. Catherine of Siena openly uses her voice, pleading for the Holy See to be kept in Rome and her support for Urban IV. She (2003) writes:

Recognize your faults, that you may be humble, and know the infinite goodness of God, who has not commanded the earth to swallow you up, nor beasts to devour you; nay, but has given you time, that you may correct your soul. But if you shall not recognize this, what He has given you as a grace shall turn to your great judgment. But if you will return to the fold, and feed in truth at the breast of the Bride of Christ, you shall be received in mercy, by Christ in heaven and by Christ on earth, despite the iniquity you have wrought. I beg that you delay… (p. 425)

Seeing such evils in the Church through the Great Schism, and her beloved Pope ridiculed by such evils, St. Catherine of Siena engaged in constant prayer to God, asking Him to embody her with the knowledge on how to restore peace in the Church.

The historical moment in which St. Catherine of Siena lived was a time of extraordinary chaos; however, it is during these catastrophic events St. Catherine of Siena was able to find hope in the midst of instability. She understood her duty was to serve God and the other, meeting these terrible events with full force. In theory, the Medieval society had lost its way and failed to protect and promote the good of society, but St. Catherine of Siena’s heart proved that it only takes one person to begin to reconstruct what has fallen—she was that person (Capua, 2003, p. 301). St. Catherine of Siena believed “a thing is good if its ultimate purpose is good. God, again, tells us to judge a tree by its fruit. And the ultimate comes first, because the thing which is the last to appear
is the first in the intention of the Agent, being the purpose which moves the Agent himself to act” (Capua, 2003, p. 301). This was her divine purpose in life and was revealed to others through the actions she took during her life. She was committed to engaging her historical moment, announcing a genuine care toward God and the other.

St. Catherine of Siena engaged the other, recognizing what Arnett and Arneson (1999) present as the minimal condition for dialogic civility: an attitude of respectfulness toward others. This attitude of otherness is both an antidote for and a preventative measure against cynicism. St. Catherine of Siena illuminates a realistic hope for her moment and for future moments—a hope that arises from awareness of and respect for multiple voices and the experiences that inform them (Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. 26). Her willingness to meet the demands of her historical moment and to respond to the burdens of Medieval society make her a standard bearer of divine responsibility as it is fulfilled through the engagement of the other.

**Being Attentive to the Historical Moment: Vocation and Engaged Scholarship**

Meeting the historical moment means more than just living in the moment. This is especially true when a person comes to see that their historical moment is almost as significant as the call on their life. The call and the moment are inextricably linked. For St. Catherine of Siena, vocation is a constructive posture in relation to God and to others. Gadamer (2006) call this posture a “biased” position. He observed that biased ground must be made public so that the questions driving a particular historical moment can be announced. His philosophical insights also emphasized the importance of making biases public because bias reveals what propels society during a particular time. When biased ground is articulated publicly, it is possible to gain an understanding and interpretation of
one’s own bias as well as the bias of another. Proclaiming biased ground is ethical engagement that allows for analysis, perception, synthesis, and difference to exist simultaneously. In biased reflection, there is a move from individual understanding to understanding established in relation to the other and ultimately to the community.

Though this chapter asked and answered several questions, there is one that brings it all together: “What am I doing during my life that will bring me closer to God and benefit society (the other)?” This is a question of vocational import that calls one to a life of action that moves what is learned into the community. Refusing this call is a type of injustice (Fritz, 2007). It denies bias and relegates the other to a subservient relationship.

Engaged scholarship demands justice and interpersonal exchange with the potential to impact more than just the self. Fritz’s work on interpersonal justice offers insight into the necessity of recognizing the other—seeing in the other a possibility of a worthwhile hope and future (2007). An engaged scholar lives with this understanding, and, in a sense, makes public the importance of acting in ways that enlarge the future by enlarging the other. Meeting the historical moment in engaged scholarship reinforces the act of reflection as the focus of the individual is on answering questions of the moment, and the question of their place in that moment.

Biased engagement—the act of living in a posture of engaged scholarship—connects a person to the moment and to their place in it. This is light. This is vocation at its most basic level. The light of one individual in a moment of darkness begins the dynamic process of vocational realization, leading a person into their place in the world. Light, for St. Catherine of Siena, is the by-product of being called by God in a given time and given place. The historical moment is almost as important as the call itself, for the
call is in response to the needs of the moment. Therefore, historical moments help to shape a particular understanding of vocation and the engaged scholarship of life. The next chapter takes a closer look at the life of St. Catherine of Siena and the characteristics of an individual who answers her vocational call and takes seriously and fulfills the responsibilities of an engaged scholar.
Chapter 3: St. Catherine of Siena and Her Life

Introduction

Every person has a life story. This chapter tells the life story of St. Catherine of Siena through the words of her confessor and friend the Blessed Raymond of Capua. This chapter is a truncated biography that offers perspective on the person and life of St. Catherine of Siena, addressing the question: Who is St. Catherine of Siena?

Three sections frame the abbreviated biographical inquiry in the pages that follow. The first section provides a brief informational overview of Blessed Raymond of Capua. Next is a chronological framing of St. Catherine of Siena’s life, including a snapshot of her family and birth, her youth, adulthood, death, and presence after death. Each of the sub-sections consider her story from both historical and spiritual standpoints. The final section continues the conversation about the relationship between vocation and engaged communication scholarship, providing insights on how a person contributes to a particular understanding of vocation and engage scholarship.

The purpose of this chapter is to bring to life the person of St. Catherine of Siena. In a moment of history when darkness enveloped the world, St. Catherine of Siena provided a guiding light to the other. She is a true example of Maya Angelou’s contemporary characterization of a “Phenomenal Woman,” from sun of her smile, to the grace of her style, and care that she gives to the other, which is one of the reasons St. Catherine of Siena’s spirit lives on today (Angelou, 1993). Her tenacity during her 33 living years was remarkable. The significance of her life can be explored many ways, but only one account embodies the complexity of her passionate life, which is why this chapter is strictly attentive to one biographical source. This source is The Life of St.
Catherine of Siena, by the Blessed Raymond of Capua. The source was chosen because the Blessed Raymond of Capua was St. Catherine of Siena’s personal, spiritual confessor. The following section will further explain why the Blessed Raymond of Capua is the ideal person to reference when discussing the life of St. Catherine of Siena. The chronological arrangement gives attention to each part of his biography. The section titles, however, are original to this work and were determined based on major transitions during St. Catherine of Siena’s life.

The Confessor: The Blessed Raymond of Capua

The Blessed Raymond of Capua was born Raymond delle Vigne in 1330 in Capua, Italy.

He attended the University of Bolonga earning a lectorate degree in Sacred Theology, and upon graduation at the age of 17, he entered the Dominican Order. He taught at the Dominican priory schools from 1358 to 1362, and then served as spiritual director to the nuns at the monastery of Montepulciano from 1363 to 1364. In 1367 he was elected prior of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, Italy. After a few years in Rome, in 1373, he was sent to Siena to take the role of Regent of Studies for the Dominican men in training. It was there in 1374 he met St. Catherine of Siena. (Connor, 1981)

Immediately after taking the Dominican order, St. Catherine of Siena prayed to God for a spiritual director. Raymond was blessed with this opportunity. According to Conner (1981), Raymond’s assignment served two purposes: to investigate her mystical experiences and to direct St. Catherine of Siena’s life. From the first time the two met they respected each other. Connor (1981) writes, “Raymond recognized in Catherine a woman of fine intellect, intense striving for sanctity, and tireless apostolate; Catherine in
Raymond, a man of intelligence, tact, breadth of understanding, and development of virtue” (p. 37). Both St. Catherine of Siena and the Blessed Raymond of Capua revealed their authentic, charitable character to one another, which would prove to be the bases for their growing friendship.

The authentic nature in which the two saw each other led to their strong friendship, a friendship that would last for the rest of their lives. Interpersonally, both The Blessed Raymond of Capua and St. Catherine of Siena sought mutual benefit for the self and other. As Connor (1981) states, “Catherine opened her whole soul to Raymond, who by his counsel and authority over her, helped her come to full self-knowledge” (p. 37). Raymond was the one human being during St. Catherine of Siena’s life that would truly come to know her at the most deepest and intimate level.

Unfortunately, in 1377, the Pope called the Blessed Raymond of Capua back to Rome to serve once again as the prior of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. St. Catherine of Siena was extremely saddened and the news caused her much pain. St. Catherine of Siena’s letters to him speaks of this sadness and pain:

…of her torment and the particularly hard and painful experience this first separation from her intimate friend occasioned. She asked God, who had imposed upon me royal and very poignant trial…to strengthen me in this privation which language is so incapable of expressing. (Connor, 1981, p. 37)

Her words illustrate how profound her relationship with her confessor had become—he was not only her spiritual director, but also a friend.

When friendship is spoken of many things come to mind, but one of the true tests of friendship is the foundation on which it is built. In other words, is it built out of
necessity or on the grounds of love for one another? Without doubt, the friendship
between the Blessed Raymond Capua and St. Catherine of Siena was out of love. C.S.
Lewis (1988) in his *The Four Loves* speaks of friendship stating, “friendship is not a
reward for our discrimination and good taste in finding one another out. It is the
instrument by which God reveals to each the beauties of all the others” (p. 89). Through
their actions, the Blessed Raymond Capua and St. Catherine of Siena provided both
spiritual and physical support for each other rendering a vision of such beauties that
Lewis speaks.

Their friendship was a vision of grace and exemplified how both worked towards
the same ends, and helped each other with a mutual exchange of ideas, energies, and
counsels (Connor, 1981, p. 38; Levasti, 1954, p. 140). Then, in 1378, Raymond was sent
to France by Urban VI to preach the crusades against those for the schism. Before
departing, St. Catherine of Siena requested to talk with the Blessed Raymond Capua,
which as prophesized by her would be the last time they would speak. At the end of the
conversation, Catherine said to Raymond “‘Go; and God be with you; for I don’t think
we shall ever again in this life have such a long conversation as we have had today’”
(Capua, 2003, p. 308). St. Catherine of Siena predicted that she would die before he
returned to Rome—she was correct.

In one of St. Catherine of Siena’s last writings to the Blessed Raymond of Capua
she wrote, “I beseech you to collect into your own hands any writings of mine which
you may find and the book (The Dialogue); do with all of them whatever you deem is
most for God’s honor and glory’” (Connor, 1981, p. 39; Cormier, 1906, p. 134). The
Blessed Raymond of Capua took this request seriously, and after 15 years of working
completed St. Catherine of Siena’s first biography titled *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena*.

What started out as an assignment to serve as spiritual director grew into a profound friendship. As confessor and friend, the Blessed Raymond Capua had personal insights into St. Catherine of Siena, making it appropriate to use his biography on her as the primary source of information for this chapter. In the biography Capua guides the reader through Catherine’s entire life—from birth to death—encapsulating who she was as a person and elucidating her spiritual, physical, and emotional devotion to God. His story elucidates St. Catherine of Siena, the person, and provides a glimpse into both her private and public life. Moreover, the story recounts the exploits and interior growth of what is going on with St. Catherine of Siena on the inside and the out, giving the reader an authentic perception of the person she was and her contributions to the faith.

**The Life and Death of St. Catherine of Siena**

This section outlines the life and death of St. Catherine of Siena. Central to this exploration is an understanding of both her private and public life. Each offer significant glimpses into why St. Catherine of Siena was remarkable during her life and remains so today. As the Blessed Raymond of Capua (2003) wrote, “anyone with any faith must conclude that her life was wholly miraculous” (p. 156). The following section begins telling the story of her miraculous life. It commences, as all life does, with the miracle of birth.

**The birth of Catherine Benincasa.** In the Tuscan region, in the city of Siena, a man by the name of Giacomo, a local dryer, married a local girl named Lapa. The two would become the parents of one of the most prominent figures of the 14th century, and in
Catholic theological history—St. Catherine of Siena. St. Catherine of Siena was born in 1347. She was Giacomo and Lapa’s 24th child. Her twin, Giovanna, was the 23rd. Recognizing that she would not be able to feed them both, Lapa had to choose which one of the twins would be given up to a nurse. She chose to attend to Catherine and give up Giovanna to a nurse. Shortly after their baptisms Giovanna, whose name meant “of grace,” died. St. Catherine of Siena continued in Lapa’s care and was favored more than any of the other children. As Catherine matured her spiritual devotion to God heightened and at a very young age she started demonstrating signs of her vocational calling.

**Growing in faith: The early years.** At the age of five St. Catherine of Siena learned the Hail Mary. She recited the prayer each time she went up and down stairs, taking the time to kneel on each step. At the age of six God blessed St. Catherine of Siena with a vision of His graces. As described by her confessor, she [Catherine] had to go with her brother Stefano to her sister’s house, and on their way back St. Catherine of Siena stopped in front of the church of the Friars Preachers and looked up towards the roof. When she looked up her confessor writes:

She saw a most beautiful bridal chamber decked out in regal splendor, in which, on an imperial throne, dressed in pontifical attire and with the tiara on His head, sat the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. With him were the Princes of the Apostle Peter and Paul and the hold Evangelist John…eyes upon her Lord and Saviour, who was revealing Himself to her in this way in order to captivate her love…He raised His right hand over her, made the sign of the cross of salvation like a priest, and graciously gave her His eternal benediction. (Capua, 2003, p. 25)
The grace of this gift from God to St. Catherine of Siena was so remarkably powerful that from that moment on the virtues that God had blessed her with would begin to be revealed to others. God’s love burned inside of her; it fueled the days until her death. This vision was only the first of the many signs to come. Those who knew St. Catherine of Siena saw firsthand how God blessed her with special graces—graces that would expound the virtues inside her soul toward the other.

This vision also led St. Catherine of Siena to begin living a life of solitude. Her first act of solidarity was making a vow of virginity; she took this vow at the age of seven.

She made the vow, stating to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

“O most blessed and holy Virgin, who were the first amongst all women to consecrate your Virginity forever to the Lord, who then graciously made you the Mother of His only Son, I pray to you that out of your ineffable goodness, ignoring my deserts and all my insufficiencies, you will deign to grant me this great grace—to give me as Husband Him who I desire with all the power of my soul, your most holy Son, our one Lord Jesus Christ; and I promise Him and you that I will never choose myself any other husband, and will always do all I can to keep my virginity unspotted.” (Capua, 2003, p. 31)

This vow of virginity announced she would not take a temporal husband, instead she would give herself up to God and her life would be lived serving Him.

While St. Catherine of Siena’s intentions became clear to her, as discussed in the first chapter they were not as clear to her parents, especially her mother. Since St. Catherine of Siena had reached the age at which many young women of her day were
given in marriage, her mother and father, unaware that their daughter had already chosen her groom—God—began to consider her betrothal to a suitable husband. Her mother especially went to great length to prevent St. Catherine of Siena from entering religious life. In the end, St. Catherine of Siena’s patience overwhelmed her mother’s efforts and she entered religious life.

St. Catherine of Siena wished to take the habit of the Order of the Preaching Friars. She prayed endlessly to God to grant her this wish, and God answered. In a dream, St. Catherine of Siena saw the vision of St. Dominic, in which he revealed to her that her wish would be granted. The next day she went to her parents, revealing this vision. This was also the moment in which her father began to embrace her decision to enter the religious life.

St. Catherine of Siena attempted to satisfy her hunger to become closer to God in many ways; however, some of the most pronounced ways were through daily penances. St. Catherine of Siena’s took part in a variety of different penances throughout her life. She abstained from food and drink. She only drank water, and gave up bread relying only on herbs for nutrition. St. Catherine of Siena’s also gave up any unnecessary material items. Instead of using a bed she nailed two boards together and used those boards as a bed, and wore only scratchy wool. Through her penance she revealed a level of perfection like none other, demonstrating her commitment to God and the other. To continue living her life serving God, St. Catherine of Siena pleaded with God to grant her worthy to take the Dominican habit that He had promised. She believed that her vow of virginity would be at risk until she was able to serve her Him by wearing a habit.
St. Catherine of Siena turned to the Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic, then known as the “Mantellate,” and begged them to bring her into sisterhood, granting her the habit. Because of her age, St. Catherine of Siena was initially rejected by the Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic. The habit was normally granted to widows that decided to invest the rest of their lives serving God. The Sisters believe there was a level of maturity, trust, and respect that developed over the years, in which widows had already proved their devotion to serving God.

This did not satisfy St. Catherine of Siena. At the time, she became ill, potentially because of this longing to belong, and told her mother that she would not be well again until her wish to belong to the habit was granted. Hearing this, her mother went to the Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic, appealing to them to let St. Catherine of Siena take the habit. The Sisters replied: “If your daughter is not too pretty or attractive,” they said, “we will accept her, out of consideration for her great enthusiasm, and yours: but, as we have already said, if she is very pretty we should be afraid of some scandal, people being what they are today, and in that case we cannot possibly give our consent.” (Capua, 2003, p. 63)

When the Sister’s visited St. Catherine of Siena they realized that while she was young in years she was committed to serving God and the other. After the visit the Sisters went to the Friars and requested that St. Catherine of Siena be granted the habit. God granted St. Catherine of Siena’s wish. St. Catherine of Siena was now entrusted to become an obedient servant of God and took her vow of obedience—a vow that she followed until her death.
Answering the call: A Sister of Penance of St. Dominic. St. Catherine of Siena took these blessings seriously, which is revealed in her commitment to serving God. Her relationship with Him was full of grace. The strength and purity of this relationship is revealed through her “Mystical Marriage” to God. As St. Catherine of Siena’s devotion deepened she prayed continually for her faith to be enlarged so that she may be closer to Him. God responded to these prayers saying, “I will espouse you to me in faith” (Capua, 2003, p. 99). Near Lent while St. Catherine of Siena sat in her room praying, God spoke to her, stating:

Since for love of me you have forsaken vanities and despised the pleasure of the flesh and fastened all the delights of your heart on me, now, when the rest of the household are feasting and enjoying themselves, I have determined to celebrate the wedding feast of your soul and to espouse you to me in faith as I promised.

(Capus, 2003, p. 99)

St. Catherine of Siena revealed to her confessor that the Virgin Mother, St. John the Evangelist, the Apostle Paul, St. Dominic, and the prophet David appeared. The Virgin Mother took St. Catherine of Siena by the hand and presented her to Christ asking Him to marry her in faith (Capua, 2003 p. 99). He agreed, holding out a gold ring with four pearls and a diamond in the center. He placed the ring on her finger. According to St. Catherine of Siena, God said to her:

There! I marry you to me in faith, to me, your Creator and Savior. Keep this faith unspotted until you come to me in heaven and celebrate the marriage that has no end. From this time forward, daughter, act firmly and decisively in everything that
in my Providence I shall ask you to do. Armed as you are with the strength of faith, you will overcome all your enemies and be happy. (Capua, 2003, p. 100)

While the vision disappeared, the gold ring stayed on St. Catherine of Siena’s finger for the remainder of her life—only to be seen by her. This marriage was a sign from God to St. Catherine of Siena that she would always be in His divine grace.

**Fulfilling God’s request: Living out a public life.** Soon after this event, God revealed to St. Catherine of Siena that she would no long live a life of solitude; instead she would go out into the world for Him. Hearing her responsibility to enter the public realm St. Catherine of Siena felt a burden come over her, but acknowledged the responsibility bestowed on her by God. In recognizing the responsibility Catherine accepted this burden. She began to act as God requested. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1995) describes this recognition of responsibility from God as guilt in his *Ethics*: “…from His selfless love, from His freedom from sin, Jesus enters into the guilt of men and takes this guilt upon Himself…Jesus took upon Himself the guilt of all men, and for that reason every man who acts responsibly becomes guilty” (p. 237). Bonhoeffer (1995) states that through Christ the responsible action that the man who is without sin loves selflessly and for that reason incurs guilt (p. 237). Catherine incurred such guilt. The Blessed Raymond of Capua explains St. Catherine of Siena went forth beginning to perform acts of humility and then acts of charity to fulfill her commitment to God and the other.

St. Catherine of Siena’s charitable actions were two-fold: (1) charity towards the poor, and (2) charity towards the infirm. She gave things away from her own household to those she knew were truly in need. On one occasion she came across a man that had given up all of his things for the love of God and was starving (Capua, 2003, p. 126).
When St. Catherine of Siena heard about this act of love done for God she took eggs to the man. Her charity towards the infirm was as significant as those acts towards the poor. St. Catherine of Siena had the ability to look deep within the souls of those who took ill. With a simple touch from her and prayer they were miraculously healed, even to those who had no faith or love for God. St. Catherine of Siena dedicated her entire life to serving the other—God and people.

St. Catherine of Siena lived a pious life. Her heart burned with a desire to serve God and the other. Bonhoeffer (1995) helps further clarify the incarnation of God in Christ; “all men are taken up, enclosed and borne within the body of Christ and that this is just what the congregation of the faithful are to make known to the world by their words and by their lives” (p. 203). He goes onto describe this as a “call” to men into the fellowship of this body of Christ (p. 203). Like Bonhoeffer, St. Catherine of Siena was committed in action to the virtues of a community. For both of them, God was the ultimate standard-bearer (Aristotle, 2002). Each came to know this fellowship through the bodily life that they live and their spirit, permitting faith to guide their actions towards the other.

St. Catherine of Siena spent her entire life serving God and the other. Many people would come to appreciate her in a variety of different ways. St. Catherine of Siena’s spiritual graces would impact the other in a most significant manner. The Blessed Raymond of Capua writes, “she was almost always in a state of contemplation, and her spirit was so absorbed in the Creator that she spent most of her time in a region beyond sense” (2003, p. 164). Her graces were so abundant that God revealed to St. Catherine of
Siena a sign that she would be given eternal life—the stigmata. St. Catherine of Siena revealed the following to the Blessed Raymond of Capua:

I kept on begging for eternal life for you and the others [speaking about her confessor] I was praying for and God was promising it to me, when, not through unbelief, but so that I could have definite proof of it, I said to Him, “What sign will you give me, Lord, that you will do what you say?”, and He said, “Put out your hand.” I stretched it out to Him, and He took out a nail, put the point of it in the middle of my palm and pressed my hand so hard against it that it felt as though it had gone right through, and I felt as much pain as though the nail had been struck by a hammer. And so, through the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, I now have the wound in my right hand, and though it is invisible to others I can feel it, and there is a continual pain from it. (Capua, 2003, p. 174)

The signs of stigmata were not the only signs revealed by God to St. Catherine of Siena.

In the course of her life St. Catherine of Siena experienced many ecstasies, especially when receiving Holy Communion. These ecstasies were observed by her confessor, other priests, and close friends. She also discussed revelations with her confessor, which God made known to her through visions and the other. In her biography, the Blessed Raymond of Capua discusses four particular revelations that he found in the written records from another one of St. Catherine of Siena’s confessors, Father Tommaso. These four revelations include God introducing St. Catherine of Siena’s soul into His own side revealing the Trinity to her and the Mother of God, filling St. Catherine of Siena with milk from her breast. In addition, Mary Magdalene had many conversations with St. Catherine of Siena; and other Saints, which include: The Apostle
Paul, John the Evangelist, St. Dominic, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Agnes (Capua, 2003, p. 179). When considering these four recorded revelations St. Catherine of Siena is revealed as a marvelous person that never neglected her vocational calling. What makes St. Catherine of Siena so marvelous was her ability to spread that wisdom into the minds of others, making her a “savior of souls” (Capua, 2003, p. 197).

St. Catherine of Siena is considered by Catholic Church as a “savior of souls,” because of the many souls that she “saved” during her life. These lives included praying for her father’s salvation when he took ill. St. Catherine of Siena did not want her father to be placed in Purgatory upon death so she prayed to God to let the suffering that would have been placed upon her father in Purgatory be placed on her so that justice would be served (Capua, 2003, p. 198). The Blessed Raymond of Capua describes how God conceded to St. Catherine of Siena and for the rest of her life how she bore the punishments that her father would have faced in Purgatory. As a savior of souls, St. Catherine of Siena did everything she could to protect those that surrounded her, even sinners.

In one instance, St. Catherine of Siena went to Andrea di Naddino, a rich man who did not fear God. When Naddino became ill and a local priest came to his bedside to absolve him of his sins, he laughed. When this news reached St. Catherine of Siena she prayed for his soul to be saved. God heard her plea and revealed Himself to Naddino asking him to confess his sins. Naddino answered this request calling for a priest so that he may confess his sins. This event is another demonstration of how strong of a commitment St. Catherine of Siena had toward God.
St. Catherine of Siena was a “doer of good,” performing miraculous acts for “the benefit of the body” (Capua, 2003, p. 219; Capua, 2003, p. 240). “The question of good always finds us already in a situation which can no longer be reversed: we are alive” (Bonhoeffer, 1995, p. 211). With these acts of good would also come adversaries to overcome, and St. Catherine of Siena’s greatest adversary was like no other—the Devil. The Blessed Raymond of Capua emphasizes that for a period of St. Catherine of Siena’s life the Devil attempted to lure her away from her commitment to serve God and the other.

Avoiding the Devil’s temptation. On several occasions the Devil attempted to get St. Catherine of Siena to stray from her commitment to God and the other. In one instance a young nun in Siena was “attacked and invaded by the Devil” (2003, p. 242). The Devil’s torture was so recurrent and sadistic that it scared the entire convent, leading to her removal. With the removal of their daughter from the convent the young girl’s parents sought out St. Catherine of Siena for help. The moment St. Catherine of Siena came in contact with the girl she knew she was possessed by the Devil. St. Catherine of Siena began to pray and stayed by the girl’s side through the entire night. By morning, the Devil was forced against his will out of the girl’s body. St. Catherine of Siena became known as the “Devil’s enemy” (Capua, 2003, p. 241). She continued to fight off the Devil throughout her entire life with the hope of saving the soul of the other.

A model for the other. St. Catherine of Siena was a model for the other in so many ways. St. Catherine of Siena’s virtues —her public, socially acceptable, idea of what was right and wrong – guided her life. As discussed by Alasdair MacIntyre (1996), virtue belongs “not to a man’s specific social function, but to his function as a man” (p.
35). MacIntyre’s work on ethics identifies the ethical implications that arise with the spread of Christianity. With the spread of Christianity, as MacIntyre observes, the function of a human being is tied to living out the virtues of Christianity. St. Catherine of Siena certainly lives out the virtues of Christianity, in accords with MacIntyre, and takes her actions further recognizing human choice within limits.

Montaigne describes human choice within limits in his *Essays* through his keen awareness of death and the limits of human capabilities and knowledge, as does St. Catherine of Siena. For Montaigne, true happiness and virtue is only achieved when we obtain “contempt for death” (1993, p. 174) instead of being afraid of it. Montaigne suggests we must embrace our limits and engage death (1993, p. 121). A person must engage life without worry of death; live for simple pleasures of the moment. It is within human capacity to choose how they will live their life in the midst of death. Throughout St. Catherine of Siena’s life she was never afraid of death; in fact, she prayed to God often to take her out of the temporal world and into eternity with Him. St. Catherine of Siena’s virtue and excellence emerges out of the actions she took during life, making her a model for the other.

**The obedient one.** St. Catherine of Siena was a “true daughter of obedience” (Capua, 2003, p. 304). No matter the person, if St. Catherine of Siena was called she was present, never putting up any resistance to even people who she disagreed. As previously discussed, she went to Florence on Pope Gregory XI orders and remained there until peace was reclaimed. Upon Pope Urban IV request she returned to Rome when the Great Schism broke out, fighting to bring honor back to God and the Church until her death in
During all this time, St. Catherine of Siena understood the darkness of the fallen world.

St. Catherine of Siena lived for only one person—God. The Blessed Raymond of Capua writes:

As the life of this holy virgin drew towards its end, the Lord gave many signs of the glory which, after all the fatigues and languors she had endured, He was shortly to grant her in heaven—a glory proportionate to the graces with which He had enriched her on earth. One of the signs by which the Lord revealed the perfection of her soul to those who wished to know it was this, that her desire to be freed from the bonds of the body and united with Christ increased daily, for only in her heavenly home could she come to a clear view of the Truth that on earth she could see only in a glass darkly. (2003, p. 320)

St. Catherine of Siena was committed in action to God and the other. In 1 Corinthians we see a similar understanding. It is written, “for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). As Ronald C. Arnett (2006) describes, “looking ‘through a glass, darkly’ is not a deliberate personal choice; more accurately, it is an ontological reality that accompanies attentiveness to the historical moment…‘through a glass, darkly’ engages darkness, shadows, the mud of everyday life as God’s earthy canvas upon which ‘holy sparks’ offer hope and direction in the art of life of living, the constant rediscovery of a faith” (p. 3). St. Catherine of Siena’s voice echoes in these words because it was never her personal decision to have to face reality through darkness, rather it was God’s
way of proving His existence and eloquence to others—through the neighbor. Through St. Catherine of Siena God revealed “hope and direction.”

Despite all the darkness that surrounded St. Catherine of Siena’s life she understood that the darkness would be made clear by God in her death. St. Catherine of Siena united with God—the Good—during her life (Capua, 2003, p. 328). In doing so she emitted an excellence and Truth that was embracing to all who came in contact with her (Capua, 2003, p. 328). The Blessed Raymond of Capua describes her many spiritual testaments but recognizes:

her first and fundamental principle was that people who wished to begin to serve God must rid their hearts of all that kind of love into which the senses enter…the heart, she said, cannot be entirely given to God unless it is delivered from all other affections and is simple and open and free from double-mindedness (2003, p. 330).

St. Catherine of Siena in her life revealed that only in giving the self to God does he/she truly see what the heart is worth and how God is the center of their life.

**Taking her place with God.** While in Rome fighting to regain the honor of God and the Church, St. Catherine of Siena told her confessor how God spoke to her letting her know that her wish to be with Him would soon be granted. The Blessed Raymond of Capua writes, “realizing that the moment of death was approaching she said, ‘Lord, I commend my spirit into her hands!’” (Capua, 2003, p. 336). With these words God took Catherine into heaven. The date was April 29, 1380.

Even in death, St. Catherine of Siena’s virtuousness was still present. Such excellence was illustrated through the miracles she carried out after her passing. To
demonstrate their excellence, examples from her biography are provided. These particular miracles are of astonishing prominence, because, according to a Catholics belief with regards to miracles, each one furthers the proof of the extraordinary power of St. Catherine of Siena’s soul.

St. Catherine of Siena died in Rome on April 29, 1380. Her body was placed in the church of the Friars Preachers, Santa Maria della Minerva in the Chapel of St. Dominic. In an attempt to avoid a large crowd arrangements were made to take St. Catherine of Siena’s body to the church the following morning after her death when the last rites would be performed. Although, no sooner was the body carried to the church did the word spread that St. Catherine of Siena had died. Crowds began to fill the church; everyone desired to touch the virgin’s corpse. Her body had to be moved behind “iron railings in St. Dominic’s chapel in the church” (Capua, 2003, p. 344). The Blessed Raymond of Capua discusses how many people “had such faith in Catherine’s merits that they began to bring the sick and infirm to her, begging the Lord to cure them through the virgin’s merits…they were not disappointed” (Capua, 2003, p. 346). There are a number of written records describing the “healings.”

These instances include a nun, Domenica, from the Dominican Order of St. Francis who had not been able to use one of her arms for six months. She went to see St. Catherine of Siena’s body, but could not get close enough to touch her body herself; however, she gave her veil to somebody else to touch the body. When the veil was returned to her she wrapped it around her arm and was immediately cured. She credited St. Catherine of Siena for her healing. This was the first instance, but surely not the last. The miracles continued to multiply. A man who was paralyzed in one leg touched St.
Catherine of Siena’s body and no sooner had he touched her, he was no longer in pain. A young girl was suffering from leprosy in her face and upon placing her face to St. Catherine of Siena’s she was cured. Another miracle involved the daughter of a Roman citizen who had developed a condition that caused progressive tissue loss in the body. When the parents heard about the other miracles they had their daughter touch the veil that had touched St. Catherine of Siena’s body; as soon as she touched it she was healed.

An additional miracle occurred to a man who had had trouble walking. The man made a commitment to St. Catherine of Siena and after making the commitment had no trouble walking. The Blessed Raymond of Capua accounts for all of these miracles and more in St. Catherine of Siena’s biography.

The miracles were of such abundance that St. Catherine of Siena’s body rested in the church for three days before it was taken to her tomb. Even then, though, the miracles did not stop. The Blessed Raymond of Capua states, about eight other miracles occurred after her body was put in her tomb. As St. Catherine of Siena was freed from her body, others were freed from the pains and sufferings that had infected their lives. As written about in Augustine’s *Confessions*, through Christ God’s words provide guidance to the temporal individual. God’s wisdom is eternal and as individuals we have the choice to follow God’s wisdom. St. Catherine of Siena followed God’s wisdom and rewarded those who followed such a way of life after her death. No doubt, during her 33 years in the world she brought a charity and grace to all those that surrounded and in death her phenomenological presence continued to enlighten those same people.

**St. Catherine of Siena’s spirit lives on.** After her passing, the Catholic Church recognized that St. Catherine of Siena had profound theological revelations and sought to
learn more about her encounters with God and the virtues of her life. As the Blessed Raymond of Capua appropriately inscribes, “all things considered, it can be said that the name of this Saint [St. Catherine of Siena], virgin and martyr should be recorded by the Church Militant in the catalogue of the Saints—and may this be granted to me and her other sons and daughters by the Eternal Goodness, who, one in three and three in one, lives and reigns, world without end. Amen” (Capua, 2003, p. 384). His prayer would be answered; St. Catherine of Siena’s virtuous acts would not go unnoticed, especially not by the Church.

In 1461, 81 years after her death, Pope Pius II canonized Catherine and she went on recorded as St. Catherine of Siena. For her doctrine, Pope Paul VI declared her a “Doctor of the Church” in 1970. With this title, St. Catherine of Siena ranked among those whose Christian Doctrine had proven to be that of excellence, including St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Furthermore, St. Catherine of Siena is one of only three women in history to be honored by the Catholic Church with the title Doctor. Her teachings during life were profound, and the insights gained from her writings still speak to many people, even today.

**A Person: Vocation and Engaged Scholarship**

How does an individual help shape a particular understanding of vocation and engaged communication scholarship? To answer this question it is important to remember the discussion at the end of Chapter Two, which focused on how historical moments help shape particular understandings of vocation and engaged scholarship through the questions they announce. Questions can be announced by the historical moment, or, as is presented in this chapter, by a person as they engage a given moment.
Through questions, people personify actions and experiences of a historical moment. Charles Taylor (1989) calls this a form of “moral topography” (p. 111). Moral topography is a reflection of a moral narrative. Just like mountains on a map are important to revealing a terrain, individuals help shape the ethical features of their life and the ethical terrain of their historical moment. In effect, there is a symbiotic relationship at work.

Answering the question of an individual in or to a historical moment offers a direct sign of their ongoing participation and commitment in society. It could be said that as questions are answered, signposts are established, marking the places of a person’s story—those that are physical as well as philosophical and moral. Parker Palmer (2000) in his book *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* is mindful of the importance of marking the signposts of a life. He advocates the value of listening closely for a vocational calling. He believes that all individuals are blessed with things they are good at doing. Parker advises, “let your life speak…before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent” (p. 3). To listen is to see what is being spoken by God, our surroundings, other people, and the possibility that has yet to be realized.

Vocations are marked by call and response—a value-oriented way of being in the world. Like engaged scholarship, it is important for individuals to live purposefully, owning bias and value so that others have the opportunity to see light in a dark world. Through value-laden discourse, vocation and engaged scholarship find common ground. The purpose of an engaged scholar is embodied in a person’s willingness to embrace the
value of an enlarged mentality and move beyond their frame of reference into the marketplace. The purpose of a vocationally directed life is to be enlarged so that others might be given an alternative ground on which to stand. Both enlarge spaces and people. Both offer embodiment as an alternative to self-oriented living. Both bring light to a dark world.
Chapter 4: The “Dialogue” of St. Catherine of Siena

Introduction

St. Catherine of Siena’s *Dialogue* is first and foremost a significant contribution to Christianity, specifically to Catholicism. The work itself is a “dialogue” between God and St. Catherine of Siena. It is this work, along with her surviving letters and prayers that contributed to the Catholic Church naming her a Doctor of the Church. The *Dialogue* itself brings to life the true meaning of “taking up your cross” (*New International Bible*, Mark 8). Within the traditional Catholic practices, taking up one’s cross is the equivalent of publicly announcing your bias. For a Catholic, this bias is grounded in a commitment to God and the Church. Herewith, the *Dialogue* is a spiritual testament of St. Catherine of Siena’s commitment to God and the Church.

The chapter explores the *Dialogue* in depth through three sections. The first provides a global overview and explanation of the entire work. The second section treats each of the four treatise’s individually, providing a summary of each treatise. The final section illustrates how each treatise can be communicatively engaged. It suggests four ways of connecting St. Catherine of Siena’s ideas to vocation as engaged scholarship.

The purpose of focusing on the *Dialogue* is to better understand the implications of St. Catherine of Siena’s life in “action-oriented” terms. The goal is to situate her reflections beyond the boundaries of a Christian life. She lived outside the confines of a walled sanctuary; so, too, do her ideas. It is justifiable to say that after 500 years her ideas in the *Dialogue* continue to inform and engage people today.

Overview and Explanation: The *Dialogue*
The *Dialogue* of St. Catherine of Siena is comprised of four works including, “Treatise of Divine Providence,” “Treatise of Discretion,” “Treatise of Prayer,” and “Treatise of Obedience,” and divided into 93 sections. The sections within each work are arranged in a linear progression; that is, they are to be read as subsequent steps in a discussions and related reflections. Taken as a whole, the *Dialogue* is a reinforcement of the Church’s teachings and is important because it emphasizes these teachings at a time when St. Catherine of Siena points out there is fear for the Church and its people. With this, the *Dialogue* reminds the Church’s people of their responsibilities as Christians through reemphasizing Jesus’ teachings of loving God and loving thy neighbor.

Each section begins with a statement from God to the soul through the experience had by St. Catherine of Siena with her Creator. These statements explain the soul passing through life in order to reach God, the starting point being the desire to honor God. Moreover, in each work St. Catherine of Siena serves is a conduit through which God speaks to her in order that she may speak and do for others. What God shares with her is the progression of the soul’s journey as a person builds a relationship with Him. Each work describes the growth and decline of the soul’s relationship with God, and the different pitfalls that the soul goes through along the way in order for the soul to be in perfect union with God.

The conversation with God and the soul unfolds in the following way. The first work of the book examines divine providence and is devoted to understanding how God provides direction for human beings. In the second work, discretion is explored by way of free will and focuses on the soul’s power or right to decide to follow in Christ’s footsteps. The third work contemplates prayer, and considers prayer in both the spoken and
unspoken form of communication with God. The fourth part of the work discusses obedience and establishes the importance of obeying God. As a whole, God converses with the soul describing the actions to be taken in order to fulfill a soul’s desire to reach God.

The experience threaded throughout the entire work is how the soul can reach a perfect union with God. According to St. Catherine of Siena’s experience, God wants the soul to understand all that it can know through communion with Him and actions taken in life. If the soul is responsive, it is an act of faith—an act represented by the opening of one’s heart to another. Additionally, the work addresses logical lessons, such as growth in wisdom. Specifically, she discusses the importance of seeking wisdom beyond the self, gaining wisdom from others, and understanding that true wisdom begins and ends with God. Together, the conversations between God and the soul are extremely complex, theologically dense, and incredibly intricate and demanding for the reader.

In the following sections, the Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena is reviewed in a truncated format. An extensive outline of the text is provided as an appendix, which is a section by section description of all the conversations in the text (see Appendix). The narrative that follows is meant to elaborate upon the major ideas in each treatise; it is not intended to reiterate the details of specific sections. St. Catherine of Siena spoke in a fashion that was incredibly tempestuous. Therefore, the first task of this chapter is to establish a phenomenological response to the discussion that takes place between God and St. Catherine of Siena.

The “Treatise of Divine Providence

According to Walker:
Providence in general is a function of the virtue of prudence, and may be defined as the practical reason, adapting means to an end. As applied to God, Providence is God Himself…God preserves the universe in being; He acts in and with every creature in each and all its activities…All of these operations on God’s part, with the exception of creation, are attributed in Catholic theology to Divine Providence. (1911, para. 3)

For Catholics, this means that everything happens through God’s direction. The call and response context means that a devout Catholic accepts direction from God, and, at the same time, recognizes that they are not necessarily going to be told every detail of the “call.” It is the duty of a Catholic to give their self wholly to God, in spite of any perceived ambiguity. To give yourself to God, heeding the call and direction, is to fulfill your duty as a Catholic.

The “Treatise of Divine Providence” is the first of the four works in the Dialogue and is devoted to understanding how God provides direction for human beings. To obey, one must know direction and how to hear from God. This Treatise is composed of eight sections. Following the order of these sections it is clear that from the first to the last section of the “Treatise of Divine Providence” the metaphor of direction is made clear beginning with the soul’s initial desire to honor God.

**Summary of “Treatise of Divine Providence.”** In the “Treatise of Divine Providence” the soul, St. Catherine of Siena, makes four petitions of God. These petitions are made in order to increase God’s love in the soul because the soul has the desire to honor God, and the salvation of souls practices ordinary virtues and remains in the realm of self-knowledge in order to understand better the goodness God has towards them (St.
Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 26). It is confirmed that the soul does this because knowledge must come before love, then with knowledge one can have love, and with love one can gain truth (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 26). In other words, knowledge of the self and God gives rise to love, which grounds truth. The soul then asks God how this happens.

God replies that the best way to gain this truth is through “humble and continuous prayer,” discovered through knowledge of the self and of God, because this type of prayer unites with God, the soul that “follows the footsteps of Christ crucified” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 26). In this case, with desire, affection, and union of love God manifests Himself with the soul and the soul becomes one with God. The soul must understand God. To understand God is to love God. Then, by loving God you can obtain Truth because God is Truth.

God demonstrates His love very clearly to the soul who honors God. The self is then “clothed in God’s will” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 27). This soul is united with God by love, but must also have “virtues in herself” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 27). According to God, the soul is of no use in such things as prayer or to their neighbor unless the soul has virtue in the self. With the desire to have virtues in herself four petitions are made to God, including: for herself, for the reformation of the Holy Church, a general prayer for the whole world, and the Divine Providence to provide for things in general (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, 28). For herself, so that she can follow in Christ’s footsteps. For the reformation of the Holy Church in order to keep the Church unified. A general prayer for the whole world, so people do not stray from God. The petition for the Divine Providence to provide for things is a prayer for God—the Truth—to provide.
The conversation then turns to the idea of “First Truth” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 28) in which it is revealed to the soul the neediness of the world. God explains the neediness of the world through punishment and the sorrow caused against God, the loss of souls, and the persecution of the Holy Church (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 28). With this God encourages the soul to pray for those who cause sufferings against Him and not to punish them, but, instead to punish her for the sufferings stating “punish them in my prison” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 29). God shows the soul the wrongful acts of others, so this soul prays more in order for others to be reformed—like praying for peace—and begins a discussion of not sufficient and sufficient punishments.

The conversation of not sufficient and sufficient punishments illustrate how pain is not given to men as punishment, but rather pain is a form of correction (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 30). Furthermore, guilt and penalty can be amended by the “desire of the soul” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 30). In other words, by true remorse and an infinite desire to amend; infinite because God is in the finite, God desires infinite love, and God desires infinite grief (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 30). Moreover, infinite grief wishes for both the sorrow for one’s sins committed against God and for the sins committed against God by the neighbor (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 30). These actions echo the first two commandments: honor God and honor thy neighbor and grounds this as a virtue because finite works are not valid without the addition of “the affection of love” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 31). The soul cannot just do “works,” but the soul has to love God too because without love one cannot know the truth; the truth being God.
How guilt is not punished just through pain, instead how pain is felt because of desire, love, and contrition of the heart is also discussed in this Treatise. The key is that true remorse must be present. Being remorseful is primary because in the soul there is a separation of the self from Christ. This is the only way virtues are of value, because the virtues are drawn from the love for Christ, and that love follows Christ’s “Footprints” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 31). It is then, with remorse of the heart, love, true patience, and true humility the soul endures the “patient humility” of such desire (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 32). Here, in self-knowledge the soul is humbled seeing that they do not exist, for being, the soul learns, is obtained from God (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 32). The Treatise makes clear how God loves this soul, but this soul is not the first soul loved by God.

God states through Catherine, “through the ineffable love which I had for you, wishing to recreate you in Grace, I have washed you, and re-created you in the Blood of My only-begotten Son, split with so great a fire of love” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 33). It is here that the soul also learns that the truth comes to the soul who seeks self-knowledge and rids self-love. With this the soul can receive the “fruit of life” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 34); the fruit God destines for the soul—the “Eternal Life” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 35). When a soul truly recognizes their sins they receive the “gift of grace” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 36). Therefore, satisfaction is gained through the desire of the soul to be united with God.

Being united with God is tied to love and divine charity, which are discussed as joined in the soul with “perfect patience” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 39). Joined so tightly together that neither “can leave the soul without the other” (St. Catherine of Siena,
This discussion revolves around the understanding that to love God is a choice and that choice involves enduring pains for God. With this, patience cannot be proved in any other way than by suffering for God, because patience is united with love, and God is Love.

Love is tied primary to love for God and love for thy neighbor, especially when it comes to how every defect of the soul is obtained. The defects of the soul are obtained through the neighbor; however, every virtue is also obtained through the neighbor. God clarifies how every defect is obtained through the neighbor by discussing how injury is brought to Him in general and in particular with hatred. In general because “you are to love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18), and while the particular way hatred causes injury is not discussed it can be argued that to love God is to love thy neighbor; so if hatred is taken against the neighbor, then hatred is taken in particular to God. Furthermore, if hatred is present, then the soul does no good. If good is not present, then the soul is deprived of love and evil is present.

It is explained that the soul does evil to the self, then his neighbor; however, not against God because no evil can touch Him except to count for the evil done to the self (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 40). In short, evil being done to the self can be connected to despair. Despair is the sin of believing you are not able to be saved, so you cut yourself off from grace when you do not have the power to do such a thing. Only God can cut you off from grace and He would never do such a thing. Here the soul is not only hurting his neighbor, but himself too. This is a violation of the Golden Rule and a glimpse of how every virtue and every defect is obtained by means of the neighbor.
On the other hand, virtues are also obtained through the neighbor. While the root of all evil is self-love because it destroys charity and affection, the root of all good is charity because it is the “pure love” of God. When God’s goodness is recognized the soul loves and conceives hatred for sin and love of virtue. Moreover, the love of God and love of thy neighbor are “one and the same” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 45). With this, all the virtues are bound together in the “affection of love” with one particular virtue serving as the “principal object” of its virtues (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, pp. 45-46). God is indifferent when it comes to invest us with virtue. Aquinas (1981), in the Summa Theologia, discusses how “principal objects” define an object of a virtue, essentially what the virtue deals with, because virtues are bound in the case of both God and the neighbor by love.

The “Treatise of Divine Providence” ends with a conversation of how human beings may serve their neighbor and by doing so make visible their love of God. Here, attention is given to how a human being proves love for God when wronged by their neighbor:

Man proves patience on his neighbor when he receives injuries from him; he proves his humility on a proud man, his faith on an infidel, his true hope on one who despairs; his justice on the unjust; his kindness on the cruel; his gentleness and benignity on the irascible. Good men produce and prove all their virtues on their neighbor, just as perverse men all their vices. (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 48)
Therefore, a good man is a virtuous man that demonstrates a determination to uphold love for thy neighbor and love for God. Moreover, this man has made the choice to serve God.

**The “Treatise of Discretion”**

Human beings’ actions and thoughts are a choice. Discretion to choose is the willful right to act and think according to one’s own judgments. The additive component in religious discretion is God; specifically, having the right to act and think according to one’s own judgments according to the will of God. As stated in the *Treatise of Discretion*, “the root of discretion is a real knowledge of self and of My goodness, by which the soul immediately, and discreetly, renders to each one his due” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 52). The soul has not only self-knowledge, but knowledge of God, as well as the right to make decisions. For all human beings, there is a primary decision that must be made: to follow or not to follow in Christ’s footsteps.

The “Treatise of Discretion” is the second of the four works in the *Dialogue* and is devoted to acknowledging that human beings have the power to decide to follow or not to follow God. This Treatise is composed of forty-two sections. Following the order of the sections as they are presented in the Treatise, it is clear that within the “Treatise of Discretion” is threaded the metaphor of decision. From divine providence and direction to the importance of discretion and decision-making, St. Catherine of Siena reveals keys to living a purposeful life devoted to fulfilling one’s vocation.

**Summary of “Treatise of Discretion.”** The importance of virtue and the function of specific virtues are discussed, specifically attention is given to relying on virtue, discussion of specific virtues, and arriving at virtue. The reliance of virtue begins with a
discussion of penance. If penance is given without discretion, then it pleases God little and the soul’s perfection will be delayed because this action would be self-focused (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 50). Penance then needs to be given with discretion.

Moreover, penance is a form of reconciliation. Through reconciliation the soul reflects on how it has strayed from God (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 51). Here, the focus of attention is on what the soul did and not to do again in the future. Giving penance then is a way of repairing the relationship with God.

Therefore, giving penance with discretion has a level of reflection, both a doing and saying component. For example, when a Catholic gives penance they say the “Act of Contrition” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 51). If the Act of Contrition is said while reflecting on the act taken that strayed the individual from God, then it is said with discretion because the individual recognizes that they have offended God. On the other hand, if the Act of Contrition is said without discretion, then remorse is not present and the Act of Contrition is said, perhaps only out of fear from going to Hell.

The point being, sins need to be confessed and shortcomings acknowledged, which is a sign of virtue. “Whatever rank a man be in, whether that of a noble, a prelate, or a servant, if he have this virtue (virtue of discretion), everything that he does to his neighbor is done discreetly and lovingly, because these virtues are bound and mingled together, and both planted in the ground of humility which proceeds from self-knowledge” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 53). With this, God makes it clear to the soul that indiscretion is found in pride, and discretion found in humility.

This sets up the discussion of specific virtues through a parable, which include love, humility and discretion. The parable is of the soul as a tree of life. The parable is
The soul is a tree, which exists by love and is rooted in affection for God (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 52). This tree of love feeds on humility and from this there is the off-shoot of true discretion proving that God is in the soul and the soul is in God (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 53). Together, the tree “produces blossoms of virtue…the soul renders fruit of glory and of utility to her neighbor…and renders glory and praise to My Name…and reaches the term of her being, that is Myself, her God, who am Eternal Life” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 54). Consequently, the soul arrives at virtue.

God desires few words and many actions; however, acts are to be taken with discretion. With this, the “light of discretion” proceeds from love and gives a “restricted” love to the neighbor (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 56). Love to the neighbor is to be restricted because God does not want one to act for the other if it means that person will commit a sin. Holy discretion is “a prudence which cannot be cheated, a fortitude which cannot be beaten, a perseverance from end to end…stretches from knowledge of Me to knowledge of self, and from love of Me to love of others” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 59-60). This statement confirms the purpose of discretion is to love God infinitely and love thy neighbor restrictedly. At this juncture, the “Treatise of Discretion” moves to discuss the neighbor or people in general, Christian people, and God’s servants. Moreover, the act of praying for the Church and its people, praying for Christian people, and praying for the world by way of God’s servants are considered.

With this, the soul grows by means of the divine response through self-reflection because reflecting on the self the soul can see their deficiencies—the metaphor of a mirror is used in this description. It is stated, “because in knowledge which the soul
obtains of herself, she knows more of God, and knowing the goodness of God, and
knowing the goodness of God in herself, the sweet mirror of God, she knows her own
dignity and indignity” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 61). By self-reflection and
knowing of her dignity and indignity her sorrow grew less, but grew more because she
could see how others were straying from God. So, the “soul prays that God may show to
the Church and other people what He had shown her, His ineffable love…great goodness
and breadth of charity” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 65). This is the prayer for the
Church and its people.

The prayer for Christian people focuses on the fact that through Baptism God has
abolished original sin and the only thing that remains after Baptism is the inclination to
sin. Through the sacrifice of Christ, man is able to be saved again and the mark of
original sin is wiped away, and the Blood of Christ can either give life or give death. For
this reason, “guilt is more gravely punished” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 72) because
Christ’s sacrifice is representative of ridding original sin. The Blood “gives life and
adorns the soul with every grace, in proportion to the disposition and affection of him
who receives it” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 66). With this, the Christian person who
has reflected on the self has accepted Christ and confesses one’s sins asks to grow closer
to God.

God created humans, but humans sinned; thus, obtaining the stain in which they
could not be freed by their own power. Yet, God loves humans, so He sent down Christ
who becomes man and is also divine. With this duality Christ was able to sacrifice
Himself for human sin, thus giving humans the ability to reach Eternal Life. However,
humans still have the inclination to sin, but through reflection humans chose to increase
their relationship with God. The foundation of this choice is free will, because free will allows humans to choose to turn away from God as well (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997)—the prayer for the whole world by means of the prayers of God’s servants.

Given that humans have received redemption through the sacrifice of Christ, humans should be under obligation to not act against God. God speaks through Catherine, stating “Man has become God and God has become man” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 70). This is a union of the Divine with the human and puts in place humans’ obligation to act in a virtuous way to pay this debt back to God. However, as discussed above, humans are inclined to sin, but through God’s servants, those who dedicate themselves to God such as St. Catherine of Siena, and their prayers God will show mercy (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 71). Mercy as it is here suggested is “a virtue influencing one’s will to have compassion for, and if possible, to alleviate another’s misfortune” (Delaney, 1911, para. 1). Humans must actively seek to grow in Christ in order to be saved by God. As describe by God through Catherine this is done so by way of a “Bridge.”

The “Bridge” as discussed in the Treatise symbolizes the road to heaven and exemplifies a rebuilding of the union between God and man. In Genesis, on the sixth day, “God created man in His image” (1:27) and in doing so a Bridge that stretched from Heaven to earth was established. However, as the Biblical story of Adam and Eve describes, man disobeys God by eating the forbidden fruit; thus, original sin comes into existence. But, because God loves man He freed us from sin through the sacrifice of Christ. As described by God through Catherine, “wishing to remedy your (man’s) great evils, I have given you the Bridge of My Son” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 74). Therefore, the Bridge—the union between God and man—was able to be repaired
The Bridge as a representation of the union between God and man further demonstrates that God did His part, and now it is up to man to do one’s part. Man’s part is choosing to walk over the Bridge, therefore, observing “that it is not enough, in order that you should have life, that My Son should have made you this Bridge, unless you walk thereon” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 76). Walking the Bridge is of one’s discretion. Hearing this, the soul prays that God show her those who cross the Bridge, and those who do not. Then St. Catherine of Siena states:

I am the thief and thou hast been punished for me. For I see Thy Word, Thy Son, fastened and nailed to the Cross, of which Thou hast mad [made] me a Bridge, as Thou hast shown me, Thy miserable servant, for which reason, my heart is bursting, and yet cannot burst, through the hunger and the desire which it has conceived towards Thee. I remember, my Lord, that Thou wast willing to show me who are those who go by the Bridge and those who do not. (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 76-77)

This demonstrates how pleasing it is to this soul to further understand God’s goodness.

Additionally, in this Treatise the reader is constantly reminded that the Bridge reaches from Heaven to earth and is a union between God and man. It is also discussed that the Bridge has three steps, “of which two were made with the wood of the most Holy Cross, and the third still retains the great bitterness He tasted, when He was given gall and vinegar to drink” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 77). Moreover, in these three steps is found the three states of the soul as explained in the following passage:

The feet of the soul, signifying her affection, are the first step, for the feet carry the body as the affection carries the soul. Wherefore these pierced Feet are steps
by which thou canst arrive at His Side, Which manifests to thee the secret of the Heart, gazing into the open Heart of My Son, with the eye of the intellect, and finds It consumed with ineffable love…He being one and the same thing with Me…having passed through the second step, the soul reaches the third—that is—to the Mouth, where she finds peace from the terrible war she has been waging with her sin. (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p.78)

Here the climbing of the three steps represents the soul’s route, by way of the three states of the soul, from transgression to peace.

The stones of which the Bridge is built signify “true and sincere virtues” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 80). They symbolize excellence because Christians cannot have a life of grace without following God’s doctrine—an excellence of which the Bridge is built—the Truth. Christ is the Bridge to God and God is the Truth, so Christ is Truth because He follows Truth, which is God. Those who choose not to follow God’s doctrine go beneath the Bridge. The water under the Bridge represents falsehood and eternal damnation (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 80). Consequently, the soul is once again forced to make a choice—to travel the Bridge or travel the River.

Both the Bridge and River are hard to travel. The Bridge is ultimately easier because the soul accepted God, but hard along the way because the soul is always tempted to stray from God. On the other hand, the River is hard because the soul is constantly burdened by sin. In spite of the differences, however, the common ground between the two roads is revealed as divine humanness.

This is a divine humanness unearthed by the Bridge reaching Heaven on the day of Ascension. God is man in the form of Christ (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 85).
Christ practiced God’s doctrine through His actions—showing by example, not by words. Subsequently, His doctrine is found in “the mystical body of the human condition” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 87). His doctrine then is truly “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 88) and together there is the Bridge. Arguably, this is what is meant with “the only way to the Father, is through me” (John 14: 6). If the soul is going to reach Heaven, then the soul must practice His doctrine, which the soul who follows the Bridge does. It is at this point that the discussion of the Bridge is complete and discussion shifts to the soul, called by God the tree of death, who passes underneath the Bridge (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 92). The souls who drown, however, are “dead of grace” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 93). This soul has no feeling, no love, and no will, so grace is dead (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 93). The tree of death is used to illustrate the soul who drowns, in comparison to the tree of life as discussed earlier.

The tree of death and its fruits are connected to the soul who chooses to stray from God. Whereas, the tree of life has four principle virtues, the tree of death has four principle vices. The four vices include pride, nourishment by self-love, branches of impatience, and off-shoots of indiscretion in which evil and death proceed (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 93). This soul is the tree of death because it has “not drawn life from grace” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 93), everything that comes from it is evil. For example, its fruit is “as diverse as are the sins” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 95). The notion of diversity signifies that there is not only one way for the soul to sin, but many ways. There are many examples of sins mentioned, which include things like sensuality,
money and power. Although, the point is that a sin is a sin, and through sin evils proceed and the soul falls from grace. The result is one falls into false judgments.

Falling into false judgment is making the wrong decision by self-love instead of love for the other. Moreover, through sin the souls that face this state fool themselves into believing that good is bad and that bad is good. In order to caution the souls of the repercussions of false judgments God states “I will send the Holy Spirit who will reprove the world of injustice and of false judgments” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 100). Then, three reproofs are discussed.

The first reproof is continuous and is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reproof is continuous because it is ever present, specifically through Holy Scripture and God’s servants. God states to the soul, “this is that continuous reproof that I make to the world by means of the Holy Scriptures, and My servants, putting the Holy Spirit on their tongues to announce My truth…” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 100). The second reproof is a condemnation or a conviction, both in general and particular. The general reproof is that the soul’s beliefs are better than God’s. On the same lines, the particular reproof is falling into false judgment that the soul’s misery is greater than God’s mercy. The particular reproof is worse than the general reproof in that “this is that sin which is neither pardoned here nor there, because the soul would not be pardoned, depreciation My mercy” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 104). With the second reproof comes out a discussion of the four principle torments of the damned.

These torments include: 1.) “deprived of the vision of Me,” 2.) “worm of Conscience,” 3.) “vision of the Devil,” and 4.) “the fire” (p. 105). In sum, the damned are tormented through deprivation of seeing God, knowing that they will not see God,
understanding that because of their sins they are worthy of seeing the Devil, and are burned by the fire without being consumed, because the soul is not a physical thing so it cannot be consumed. Moreover, all other torments stem from these four principle torments (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 106). It is also noted that in reproof one and two the soul has the ability to “amend themselves” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 107), but if the soul chose not to they are subjected to eternal punishment.

After discussing the four principle torments conversation returns to discussing the reproofs. The third and final reproof is “made on the Day of Judgment” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 107)—the second coming. This reproof describes how people will act when Christ returns and “He will reprove the world with Divine Power” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 107). He will come down divine and powerful, and those who are just will rejoice and glorify Him and the damned will be “scared and confounded by God being there. Through their own defect the “damned cannot desire any good” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 108); again, because of false judgment they view being good as bad and bad as good.

Judgment cannot be made until the soul has lived out their life on earth; however, upon death the soul’s life can be judged. When “the life of man ended, free-will is bound” (p. 108). As discussed early in the chapter, during life the soul has the free will to make good decisions; however, in death, free-will is no more. The book gives the example of Lazarus and his brothers. Ultimately, the soul during their life must choose, by their own free-will, to follow the “Way of Lie” or the “Way of Truth” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 118), thus deciding who is their Father—Satan or God and how the choice is made through the act of temptation.
Temptations blur the soul’s ability to see right from wrong or good from evil, and one of the most displeasing things to God is committing a sin, disobeying God’s law, by way of temptation. Upon death, before departing from the body God gives the soul a taste of what is to come, revealing to the damned hatred and despair, the perfect ones love and the light of faith of the Blood, and the imperfect ones a taste of mercy and same faith as perfect ones because the imperfect soul has tried and have faith that they will get to Heaven (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 118-121). These three states of the soul—damned, perfect, and imperfect—are determined by acts of good and evil taken during the soul’s life: how and when the soul let temptation get the upper hand by way of the Devil.

The Devil catches the individual by playing on their self-love and enticing them with pleasures, according to their weaknesses. This is the case, because it is easier to make a choice based on personal preference. In return, the soul deceives itself and neglects to follow the “Way of Truth.” Here, a “thorn” is used to describe this act. Upon death, the soul begins the journey to their final resting place. Along the way, the soul faces many tribulations in which free-will once again plays a significant part. The thorn represents one of these tribulations.

When faced with the thorn of self-love the soul sees a vision of the pain of Christ. If the soul chooses to follow Christ, which is “the deliberation of the will,” then the thorn breaks and the soul is free to follow Truth (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 122). Without doubt, every individual goes through life with some pain, but if the individual makes a deliberate choice to follow God the pain will be tolerable and eventually suppressed. This soul (Catherine) is saddened by those who turn away from God, thus asks for clarification.
of the three steps of the Bridge and three powers of the soul in order for souls to better understand how to follow Truth.

Again, the Bridge is brought back into the conversation; specifically, in ascending the three steps of the Bridge the soul finds that the three powers of the soul have come together by reason in God’s name. Again, God reminds the soul that “every evil is found in self-love” (p. 129). From this, He discusses why and how the soul is created in God’s image and given memory, intellect and will in order to ascend the three steps of the Bridge. God speaks to the soul stating:

The soul I created in My image and similitude, giving her memory, intellect, and will. The intellect is the most noble part of the soul, and is moved [will] by the affection, and nourishes it, and the hand of love—that is, the affection—fills the memory with the remembrance of Me and of the benefits received, which it does with care and gratitude, and so one power spurs on another, and the soul is nourished in the life of grace. (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 130)

Moreover, the soul created out of love by love cannot have one of these powers without the other because memory, intellect and will are united through the love. For it is said, “When there are two or three or more gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 133). Ultimately, these powers are united because God is love and rests in the midst of them. So, if the powers are not united, then there cannot be perseverance on the part of the soul.

To come out of the River the soul has two goals and for each goal perseverance is needed. The two goals include virtue and vice. Those who persevere in virtue arrive at life (God who is Life), while those who persevere in vice arrive at eternal death (The
Devil who is Death): hence, the meaning behind “whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 134). As a result, the soul who follows Christ will be nourished by the “fountain of living water of grace,” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 135) and will be permitted to cross the Bridge.

The general means to ascending the Bridge, then, is following God’s Law—love God and love thy neighbor. The two are described in the text as the two virtues. At the same time, to ascend is not only to love God and love thy neighbor in the name of God. The three powers of the soul—memory, intellect, will—must also be united in which God is in the midst of them by grace. With this, the soul begins to see what God is talking about in respect to people following the Bridge, and fear alone will not help the ascent.

Two types of fear are discussed and included: 1.) servile fear and 2.) fear tied to love. Servile fear is based on dreading the pain that would follow after wrongful actions are taken. This type of fear is not motivated by love of God, and, therefore is not sufficient to reach eternal life. Therefore, beginning the climb in such imperfect will prevents the soul from arriving at the second step—the Heart—because the soul ascends by way of fear and not in love (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 139). Beginning the climb by way of an imperfect love for God also has consequences. Those who love God for their “own profit, delight, and consolation” are also restricted from reaching the second step because they have only loved God when they needed Him; as is the case with their neighbor (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 145). The “two bodies, one soul” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 146) analogy is given to help exemplify. There is one soul through affection, which is, consequently, love.
God manifests Himself to the soul who loves Him by way of three manifestations (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 146). This is God’s love and charity in the soul. The three manifestations include the word and blood of His Son to those who live the “ordinary grace of God” and known through the “sentiment of the soul” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 147). The second manifestation is “in men themselves” in which God manifests through the affection and their love (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 147). God then forms in the mind the presence of the Truth, which is the third manifestation. He does so through the power of prayer, the wisdom of the Son and clemency of the Holy Spirit (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 148). All of which give the soul a taste of God’s divine charity.

A taste of God’s divine charity is the foundation for understanding “why Christ did not say ‘I will manifest My Father,’ but ‘I will manifest Myself’” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 148). The Treatise states that He did not for three reasons: first, He wanted to show that He and God are not separate from one another; second, to not present anything to the soul that He had not received from God; and, third, because God is invisible and cannot be seen until the soul is separated from the body (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 149): “He is one thing with Me.” Through this Christ demonstrates how God manifests Myself, Me and Him. At the center of this discussion is love.

The secret is love, and not just any love but “filial love” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 150) and tied to how man becomes a friend of God and from a friend grows into a son. Filial love is perfect. Moreover, if man has filial love, then he receives his “inheritance” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 151)—his peace. To arrive at filial love man must persevere and have self-will, recognizing the guilt of mortal sin. In doing so,
the soul recognizes sin for what it is and is fearful of penalty, but, at the same time, realizes that God is merciful. With this, the soul chooses to follow God, but in order for the soul to develop perfection God will withdraw Himself from time to time so that the soul desires Him more—this is a continual process. Then, through perseverance and continual self-knowledge, prayer and living a penitentiary life, the soul arrives at perfection, or true love.

The “Treatise of Discretion” ends with a conversation of the difference between true love and imperfect love. Specifically, the conversation considers how loving God imperfectly yields loving thy neighbor imperfectly. This is the case, because the soul ought to love God but reveals their love for God by loving their neighbors. In other words, if the soul has an imperfect love of God, then the soul loves their neighbor imperfectly as well. God speaks to the soul, stating:

All of the love which you have for Me you owe me to Me, but because you ought to do so. While I love you of grace, and not because I owe you My love. Therefore to Me, in person, you cannot repay the love which I require of you, and I have placed you in the midst of your fellows, that you may do to them that which you cannot do to Me, that is to say, that you may love your neighbor of free grace, without expecting any return from him, and what you do to him, I count as done to me... (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 155-156)

It is shown here that the soul owes one’s love to God, but that God does not owe His love to the soul. In loving our neighbors then the person does not only follow God’s law but also better understands how God loves us. Perfect love then rests within the response and an ongoing commitment to God and the neighbor.
The “Treatise of Prayer”

According to Wynne, prayer is “an act of the virtue of religion which consists of asking proper gifts or graces from God. In a more general sense it is the application of the mind to Divine things, not merely to acquire a knowledge of them but to make use of such knowledge as a means of union with God” (1911, para. 1). Prayer is a form of spoken and unspoken communication with God established in action. Additionally, Pope John Paul II (1994) said eloquently:

What is prayer? In conversation there are always an ‘I’ and a ‘thou’ or ‘you.’ In this case the ‘Thou’ is with a capital T. If at first the ‘I’ seems to be the most important element in prayer, prayer teaches that the situation is actually different. The ‘Thou’ is more important, because our prayer begins with God (p. 16).

In prayer, then, God must be primary.

The “Treatise of Prayer” is the third of the four works in the Dialogue and is devoted to exploring prayer as the spoken and unspoken form of communication with God. This Treatise is composed of thirty-two sections. Following the order of the sections of the Treatise in the Dialogue, each section is summarized. From the first to the last section of the “Treatise of Prayer,” the reader is engaged by St. Catherine of Siena’s experience of prayer done without interruption—in silence.

Summary of “Treatise of Prayer.” The “Treatise of Prayer” begins by asking the question: what is prayer? The answer is that prayer demonstrates lively faith, which is recognized through perseverance in virtue and not stopping during times of holy prayer, thus avoiding interruptions. Holy prayer should only be stopped for obedience or charity’s sake (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 158). However, the Devil wants the soul
to be interrupted during times of prayer because he wants the soul to disregard the exercise of prayer, because prayer is a “weapon that the soul can use to against every adversary” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 159). Here, the task is to avoid temptation to let the mind go astray during prayer.

God speaks to the soul, stating “‘Know, dearest daughter, how, by humble, continual, and faithful prayer, the soul acquires, with time and perseverance, every virtue’” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 159). Authentic prayer then is to be continual. It is also important that prayer be done out of excellence; however, as God recognizes that the soul is imperfect in the beginning, He also knows that prayer falls into imperfection when it is commenced. The meaning behind this viewpoint comes from an understanding that the soul does not become nourished through only vocal prayer.

The tendency for the soul is to say vocal prayer without joining to mental prayer as well. To be pleasing to God the soul must “enlarge your hearts and affections in My boundless mercy, with true humility” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 162). Moreover, the soul “should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of My goodness” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 164). In doing so prayer moves from vocal imperfect prayer to perfect mental prayer. It is stated “thus she will exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for, even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 166). With this, if the soul stays in a state of vocal prayer alone, the soul will always be imperfect and only love God and their neighbor when they find pleasure in doing so. These are the souls spoken of earlier who turn to God only in time of need.
Here, God reminds the soul of the evil tied to self-love, and the importance of separating the soul from imperfect love through perseverance. By means of perseverance and an understanding that knowledge of the self is seasoned with the knowledge of God’s goodness, the soul can rise above this imperfect love and arrive at perfect love. Moreover, the soul knows it has arrived at perfect love because the soul has love for the neighbor and love for God. This signifies a perfect union with God because those who are perfect follow God and the Son. While those who are imperfect follow only the Father and are still in a state of servile fear only calling on God when needing comfort.

Realizing “the only way to the Father is through the Son” (John 14:6), the perfect soul follows God and the Son. The significance of following God and the Son is exemplified in a discussion surrounding Holy Baptism and in reference to the first and second steps of the previous discussed Bridge. As stated, “first climbing to the Feet, with the feet of the soul’s affection, from thence arriving at the side, where she found the secret of the Heart and knew the baptism of water, which has virtue through the Blood” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 171). This is referring to the moment during the crucifixion of Christ when His side was pierced and blood instead of water flowed. Moreover, the soul is reminded by God the sacrifice Christ made for the salvation of human beings. It is written, “in My Divine Justice: ‘Thou didst remember Me in the time of thy life, when thou couldst, now will I not remember thee in death’” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 173). The point being the soul should render God’s glory at all times and not just in times of need.

God speaks through Catherine, emphasizing why a Christian is to praise His name and love Him above everything. The confronted issue is while people praise His name
and love God they do not love Him above everything. In life God gives more to sinners and less to the righteous man who renders and praises God more so than others because they are able to do without. These souls are able to do without because they have the virtues of patience and charity and know at Judgment Day they will be rewarded. So, through actions, “whether they will or no, worldly people render to My Name praise and glory even when they intend to do Me infamy and wrong” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 176). Even the devils render glory and praise to God (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 176). The Devil rebelled against God because he thought he was equal to God, but God casting the Devil and other fallen angels to Hell illustrates God’s power and glory and the justice that was served to them. The sinners, by not obeying God, will not go to heaven and receive the glory of God, but they still act as an instrument to others because they test “patience, fortitude and perseverance” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 176). With this, even the sinner renders glory to God, but the righteous soul continues to desire in death.

While the pain of the righteous ceases upon death, this souls desire to give glory to God continues. It is stated, “pain in her is ended, but not love, as the tortured desire, which My Word, the Son had borne from the beginning when I sent Him into the world, terminated on the Cross in His painful death, but His love—no” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 178). Here the body is gone, which is the “vessel that caused her pain,” but the desire to give glory to God is actually realized. The person has fulfilled the reason they were created and that is to love God, but still has the desire to love God in death because it is only death from the body and not from the God. The example is given of St. Paul in which he “tasted and knew God’s Truth” and because of this he desired to be with God.
Thus, the desire to be with God after the soul has felt the union with God is even greater.

This desire is a unitive state in which the souls desire to be with God after the soul has felt the union with God. Once the soul actually realizes the glory of God it wishes to leave the earth and be united with God; however, though the soul desires to be with God, the soul shall remain in the earthly state if God desires the soul to remain, with their pain, for the greater praise and glory of God (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 180). Further, the soul who arrives at this unitive state understands the Truth. Specifically, this Truth is realized through the word of God, or Holy scripture. Here it is discussed how God enlightens people, but not all. For example, some scientists will never know what is going on because they will never be enlightened by God. To obtain the intellectual light of God then is to understand, in a different sense, not just literal or scientific, and knowing the truth. The discussion of the unitive state ends with the discussion of the intellectual light of God, and the conversation turns to the subject of tears.

The inquiry into the different kinds of tears begins with the soul passing through each stage of the soul with tears because the soul wished to “learn from the Truth concerning different kinds of tears, and how they came to be, and whence they proceeded, and the fruit that resulted from weeping” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 186). Here, the examination of the subject of tears begins with the souls request to know about the tears. Soon it is disclosed that there are five kinds of tears, which include: (1) tears of the wicked men of the world, which are “tears of damnation;” (2) imperfect tears caused by fear, in which the souls “weep for fear;” (3) tears of those who abandoned sin and are beginning to serve and taste God and the souls “weep for very sweetness,”
however, because their love is imperfect so are their tears; (4) tears of those who have
perfect love for the neighbor who “love Me (God) without any regard whatsoever for
themselves” and their “weeping is perfect;” and (5) the “tears of fire” of the souls who
wish to weep but cannot. Once describing the different kinds of tears the soul is told how
these tears are connected, as previously discussed, to each stage of the soul.

The connection begins with an understanding that there are tears for fear, tears
from the heart, tears with love for God and the neighbor, tears of the blessed and
sorrowful, and tears through self-knowledge that are gained in love of the neighbor (St.
Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 189). Along with the four stages of the soul these tears are
of infinite value because tears come from the heart, so there is a desire from the soul that
produces these tears. Moreover, the desire is never-ending, so it cannot be fulfilled in this
life. God states through Catherine, “thus is holy desire, which is founded in love,
exercised, and with this desire the eye weeps” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 197).
Therefore, in death the soul reaches God, so the desire is fulfilled. But, God continues
“when the soul is separated from the body and has reached Me, her End, she does not on
the account abandon desire, so as to no longer yearn for Me or love her neighbor, for love
has entered into her like a woman bearing the fruits of all other virtues” (p. 197). With
this, God wishes to be served by infinite service and this infinite service is fulfilled by the
souls desire to be united to God through the tears. This is why there are different kinds of
tears connected to different stages of the soul. There is also the case of the tears of the
worldly men.

To begin, the worldly men’s tears are tears from first class men that make a “god”
out of materials things and damage their souls by placing self-love above love for God.
Again, God reminds the soul that everything that grows from the tree of self-love is corrupt. Consequently, this man lives in misery. As stated by God through Catherine, “the soul who lives virtuously, places the root of her tree in the valley of true humility; but those who live thus miserably are planted on the mountain of pride…” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 200). Because self-love is principally in the worldly man’s life, his tears come from the pain he is feeling because God places “man above all creatures, and not beneath them, and he cannot be satisfied or content except in something greater than himself” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 203). This thing greater than himself is God.

**The “Treatise of Obedience”**

Vermeersch (1911) states that obedience “is the complying with a command or precept. It is here regarded not as a transitory and isolated act but rather as a virtue or principle of righteous conduct. It is then said to be the moral habit by which one carries out the order of his superior with the precise intent of fulfilling the injunction” (para. 1). Moreover, in religious obedience a person allows themselves to be governed by God or by another for the sake of fulfilling a vocational call. The obedient person demonstrates this in their response to authority and by conducting themselves in an appropriate manner, even when no one is watching. Furthermore, the obedient Catholic allows themselves to be governed by the Church or religious authority for the sake of God. In choosing to walk in Christ’s footsteps, a devout Catholic is obedient throughout life, so in death a perfect union with God is experienced.

The “Treatise of Obedience” is the fourth and final work in the *Dialogue* and is dedicated to a conversation regarding religious authority. This Treatise is composed of eleven sections. Each section is summarized in the order that it appears in St. Catherine
of Siena’s *Dialogue*. From the first to the last section of the “Treatise of Obedience” the metaphor of obedience is developed according to how it is found, destroyed, signified, and nourished.

**Summary of “Treatise of Obedience.”** The “Treatise of Obedience” begins with discussions of where obedience may be found, what destroys obedience, what are the signs of possessing obedience, and what accompanies and nourishes obedience (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, pp. 281-285). Where is obedience found? God speaks through Catherine stating “find it in its completeness in the sweet and amorous Word, My only-begotten Son” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 281). Therefore, in Jesus obedience is found. What destroys obedience? Obedience was destroyed first by the “first man” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 281), or Adam. Pride is also a coordinate that destroys obedience because pride is produced by self-love and the need to please his [Adam] companion [Eve] (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 281). What are the signs of a soul possessing obedience? Patience. A soul cannot be obedient without being patient because patience and obedience are united. Thus, impatience is a sign that the soul does not have the virtue of obedience. What accompanies and nourishes obedience? No one can reach eternal life that is not obedient (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 282). When Jesus died He left the “key of obedience” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 283). This goes back to the fact that the only way to God is through the Son. Moreover, true humility feeds obedience, because humility is tied to charity, love. Jesus accompanies humility and patience, which leads to obedience. While, it is the case that self-love accompanies pride and no humility, which leads to disobedience. Once these questions are addressed there is
an extensive conversation of how obedience is the key with which Heaven is opened. This discussion goes as follows.

Obedience is the key with which Heaven is opened, and the excellence of obedience rests within the soul (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, pp. 285-290). God speaks through Catherine stating “the whole of your faith is founded upon obedience, for by it you prove your fidelity” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 285). In general, proving one’s fidelity is to obey the Law—the First and Second Commandments—God’s Law to love God above anything else and to love your neighbor above yourself. Following this “principal commandment” is being obedient. With this act, the excellence of obedience emerges through “self-contempt” because the soul does not despise man, but rather praises man. On obedience, it is stated “she (obedience) is conceived and born of charity on her founded the rock of the holy faith” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 288).

Obedience is excellent because obedience contains all of the other virtues. The discussion of obedience then moves on to discussing the excellence of the obedient, as well as the misery of the disobedient.

Again, a reminder is given that “by My (God’s) providence the Word repaired the key of obedience” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 290). It is the disobedient that neglect to accept this fact. Specifically, the disobedient are blinded by self-love and pride, which prevents obedience. On the other hand, the obedient are in a “blessed state” because “they acknowledge this fact and observe the Law—Love God above all things, and love thy neighbor as yourself” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 291). The conversation then moves along to the souls “who have such love for obedience that they do not remain content with the general obedience of precepts, but takes on themselves a particular
obedience‖ (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 293). Those who take on a particular obedience become “observers of the counsels both in deed and in thought” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 293). This section sets the stage for a discussion of particular obedience.

In general, obedience and particular obedience are not divided; however, particular obedience is simply more perfect then general obedience. The soul then advances from general to particular obedience by the same “light” as reaching general obedience (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 294). Specifically, advancing through perseverance and learning God’s truth, and continuing to look for ways to pay her/his debt to God: a debt created by Christ’s crucifixion. Here, the excellence of the religious orders is also illustrated through discussion of specific figures, including Francis, Dominic, Aquinas, Peter, and Paul. These figures are exemplars of excellence in religious orders. At this point, the conversation goes back to the excellence of the obedient and the misery of the disobedient but is tied directly to members of the religious orders. The following discussion is on the enemies of obedience.

To begin, a soul’s spouse is obedience, its mother charity, and sister patience. Moreover, self-hatred is placed as a “servant in his soul” to get rid of the enemy, which is self-love (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 302). The primary enemy of obedience is self-love, which produces pride (i.e., the enemy of humility and charity). Other enemies of the soul include impatience, disobedience, infidelity of faith, self-confidence, injustice, and intemperance. God states through Catherine “these are a man’s enemies, causing him to leave the good customs and traditions of his order” (p. 306). He then goes onto describe other “cruel enemies” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 306). It is also noted, that each of
these enemies have a good counterpart. For example, the good counterpart of disobedience is obedience. In sum, the obedient soul, including members of religious orders, are obedient for God; not the self.

The next exchange treats the idea of receiving a “hundredfold for one” when obedient in life (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 312). In life, the soul leaves behind everything for God’s love and in doing so the soul receives a hundred as much God. God explains that a hundred is a perfect number and cannot be added to except by beginning at one again. With this, in death the soul receives eternal life. At the same time, the disobedient feels pain and everything is contrary to what it is for the obedient man. Moreover, the disobedient man disobeys the three vows of obedience, voluntary poverty and continence (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 319). In doing so, he produces fruit of death on a tree of self-love, making all affections in the soul corrupt (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 320). Thus, the key of obedience that would have once opened the door to heaven now opens the key of disobedience and opens the door of hell (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 320). Here the obedient soul is blessed and the disobedient soul is damned. It is noted, however, that the obedient soul is not rewarded according to merit; rather the soul is rewarded according to the love the soul has for God—“the measure of your love” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 321). The point is to think about when God became a daily presence in your life.

At this juncture, there is a review of the entire book. In sum, the dialogue between God and Catherine begins when the soul made four petitions of God including: (1.) for self, (2.) for God to give mercy to the world, (3.) for God to protect the Holy Church, and (4.) for a particular individual. The conversation then moved to illustrate how God is
merciful; specifically, because He sent His only Begotten Son to rid original sin. Here, the reader is introduced to the Bridge metaphor, which is a representation of our salvation. The Bridge itself is built on three steps or the three powers of the soul: (1) the feet, (2) the side, and (3) the mouth. These steps also represent the three states of the soul: (1) the imperfect state, (2) the perfect state, and (3) the most perfect state—union with God. Finally, these states connect to the three judgments that take place: (1) in life, (2) at death, and (3) the last judgment. In the Dialogue there are also conversations regarding the excellence of ministers, excellence of the sacraments, states of tears, God’s providence in general and particular, and perfection of the obedient and imperfection of the disobedient. The discussion ends by reinforcing the teaching that the task of a soul is to follow in Christ’s footsteps.

The dialogue between God and Catherine on obedience, as well as the entire work, comes to an end with the soul thanking and praising God and making a prayer for the whole world and Holy Church. In the end, the “light of faith,” the soul, has acquired wisdom “in the wisdom of the Word—Thy only begotten Son” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 333). Catherine states, “grant that my memory may be capable of retaining Thy benefits” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 332). This she requests so everything that has been made known to her be manifested in her memory and that she continue to live a “mortal course with true obedience and light of only faith” (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 334). Then, she thanks and praises God for enlightening her through showing the soul the true ways to reach eternal life (e.g., reflecting on the self). With this, the soul is “clothed” in the Eternal Truth (St. Catherine of Siena, 1997, p. 330). This Treatise and
work ends with St. Catherine of Siena praying for everyone and for the sake of the Church.

**Communicative Engagement Toward Vocation**

St. Catherine of Siena’s *Dialogue* brings forth a particular understanding of communicative engagement towards vocation. The following sections attend to the communicative engagement toward vocation as seen in each treatise. Each section focuses one by one on the four treatises, emphasizing what God—through St. Catherine of Siena—offers to our understanding of vocation. Key to this exploration is the translation of those ideas into practical communicative engagement and the necessary actions taken in order to reach a vocational end. In the spirit of St. Catherine of Siena each treatise is conversed; however, the order of discussion has been altered to establish the relevance of this work for someone seeking to answer their vocational call today.

The discussion of each treatise will follow in this order: the “Treatise of Prayer,” the “Treatise of Divine Providence,” the “Treatise of Discretion,” and finally the “Treatise of Obedience.” The practical communicative engagement connected to each (in the order being discussed) is framed by what this author calls the “Four Ds of Vocational Engagement”: Discussion, Direction, Decision, and Discipline. The Four Ds reveal the communicative engagement that happens and the committed action needed when pursuing a vocation. St. Catherine of Siena had many obstacles to overcome before she reached her vocational calling, one she believed as to be with the Lord. This section attempts to discern the practical communicative implications gained from her journey toward this end in order to illuminate helpful coordinates in the pursuit of vocational purpose for any who answer the call.
Communicative engagement toward vocation: Discussion. As stated above, the “Treatise of Prayer” is devoted to spoken and unspoken communication with God. The significance of this treatise for the current project is found in the communicative insight that prayer cannot simply be spoken or unspoken words toward God; prayer must come from the heart. The heart represents a level of active engagement and concern for what is being requested through prayer. It represents ownership and faith, not just unreflective chatter. Prayer is an inner reflection that allows a person to engage God about matters of life and in so doing it allows a person to engage others. St. Catherine of Siena’s understanding of prayer is distinctly Christian, though engagement of this kind is not limited to those of the Christian faith (Barron, 2011). At its most basic level, prayer represents communion, conversation, even discussion.

The spirit of what St. Catherine of Siena realized as the essential core of prayer is not only part of communing with the Divine but also a part of the very nature of human communication. Discussion forms the heart of engaged, faith between people—faith in the promise and hope of connection and relation with others. Discussion is also a matter of the heart—sometimes reflective, sometimes unreflective. From a dialogic standpoint, it depends on how significant the communicative encounter is to each person involved. Like prayer, for reflection to emerge in a discussion the actions taken must come from the heart.

“Discussion” provides a contemporary way of interpreting and understanding the “Treatise of Prayer.” In a practical way, it offers access to a deep spiritual revelation for people of all faith traditions. Discussion is a necessity of life because it encapsulates the communicative pursuit of something with someone. It takes many different forms,
including verbal and nonverbal engagement. For example, discussion for the artist may be in the form of painting. For the musician, it may be music from the instrument or the interpretation of a given piece. For the scholar, discussion may be as an interlocutor with a given text or group of people. Whatever the case, discussion can be viewed as a form of communicative engagement and in turn a practical way of understanding in everyday life the engagement that happens in prayer.

Within the “Treatise of Prayer,” God, through St. Catherine of Siena, illustrates why saying prayer but not truly believing in the heart that He is going to act on prayer or point one in the right direction is a false sign of faith. In the time of St. Catherine of Siena, society was in disarray and people were losing faith that God would provide. They were talking about their problems to one another, looking for political, social, and economic answers, but not seeking answers from God. St. Catherine of Siena interpreted the signs of her time to be the shadow of dark times falling on a fallen world (Arendt, 2001). Her response was to seek God.

Today, one could argue that the same challenges exist, only globally. The shadows that fell during St. Catherine of Siena’s world are falling once again. The angst that never found resolution in her personal life now pervades a global society. What can be done? If “The Treatise of Prayer” teaches us anything, it is to have hope and faith in the possibility of communion with God and with one another. In discussion, the spirit of prayer—true and real engagement of the other—finds a place in the between of human engagement. Discussion, if viewed through the lens of St. Catherine of Siena’s treatise, affords humanity the hope of a good life reclaimed through the connectedness of our communicative lives.
Connectedness, however, is contingent upon knowing one’s place in community. Given the particular emphasis of this work, discussion can be understood in relation to a person’s pursuit of their place in community— their vocation. Irrespective of how far along they are in this pursuit, discussion plays an active role in the movement that a vocation-driven life requires. Questions posed to God, colleagues, friends, and family are just the beginning of this process. It is the intimate reflections between God and a person, and between a person and their inner self that bring St. Catherine of Siena’s idea of prayer into full relief. Discussion in action leads a person to a clearer understanding of their vocation.

In actionable terms, discussion occurs when seeking to know one’s vocation. People seek out others to discuss thoughts about the vocation being considered. Discussions provide a clearer understanding of this consideration. Discussion is communicating with the other, a praxis approach to reflective thinking. Reflection is the crux of discussion. It may be internalized or experienced in communion with God or others. Discussions for the sake of “discussing” do not qualify as reflective moments. While it is important to partake in discussions, they are meaningless unless reflective thinking and action occurs. Reflective thinking and action is a “surge of the heart” (Barron, 2011), illustrating the desire to answer a vocational call. Discussion formed in the crucible of reflective thinking is the foundation of pursuing and attaining vocational clarity. Discussion opens relations and creates a space for listening to occur. As such, discussion is the essential starting point from which the next step might be taken: seeking direction toward a given vocation.
Communicative engagement toward vocation: Direction. The “Treatise of Divine Providence” is about direction, specifically why and how everything is clarified through being attentive to direction from God. The significance of this treatise for the current project is found in the communicative insight that giving something “up to God” is an act of faith and hope in Divine Providence—His direction. Faith and hope represent a level of active engagement and concern for the guidance that is being requested. The two together create an essential understanding of what it means to seek direction. Seeking Divine Providence allows a person to engage God about specific personal choices and through those choices engage others.

St. Catherine of Siena’s understanding of direction was based on her belief in the Truth. God is Truth. As people have faith and hope in God, He will provide what He wills. Direction is the result of knowing and seeking to know the Truth. From this position, divine providence is an expected outcome. Direction can be anticipated. For St. Catherine of Siena, revelatory knowledge of God’s direction may come through divine advisement, guidance, or prophetic instructions from God Himself.

The essence of divine providence for St. Catherine of Siena was realized as she sought, through prayer, direction from God. Her engagement in this search makes it clear that in seeking such direction we can continue to texture the development of prayer as a communicative practice that takes place in many ways in the everyday lives of people. On the one hand, direction forms the heart of engaged guidance as it emerges between speakers—guidance that leads to advice and trust in the other. Seeking direction in this manner is an act of reflective, dialogic communicative engagement. The result is a deep and purposeful encounter with the other—God or man—that generates direction.
Direction may also be a matter of personal exploration. This encounter is inwardly reflective, bringing the self into alignment with a cause more significant than mere personal gain. Though the self is emphasized in this engaged action, it is not without a sense of broader communicative reach. According to St. Catherine of Siena, both realities point toward existence in the shared space of divine providence. Here one must be attentive and respond appropriately in a given situation, thus always situating the self in context.

“Direction” is a contemporary way of interpreting and understanding the “Treatise of Divine Providence.” In a practical way, it helps people to reach some end, hopefully an end with vocational intent. Seeking direction is an ongoing process, especially because the pursuit of vocation or any other worthwhile good is a life-long calling. The act of receiving direction can be recognized in many different ways, both personal and professional. People can be directed on where to go—a specific edict that brings together place and purpose. Direction can also be experienced as a word that guides or tells a person what to do in a given moment. Regardless of the situation, the practical enactment of divine providence in the experience of “direction” from God or others can be viewed as a form of communicative engagement.

The “Treatise of Divine Providence” brings forth a charitable approach that consists of doing good for and with others for mutual benefit (Lewis, 2001). It is an orientation of the heart that focuses on the other. From a Christian standpoint, taking a charitable approach comes in the form of love—love for the neighbor. During St. Catherine of Siena’s life, society drifted from giving glory God and love to the neighbor to a world of seclusion and communal darkness. People’s focus of attention shifted from
other-oriented to self-oriented. St. Catherine of Siena recognized that religion was not the antidote, as religion itself was vexed with self-orientation. Religion needs divine direction (Merton, 1998), so St. Catherine of Siena responded to the call and followed in Christ’s footsteps—the leading of Divine Providence—toward a vocation that reached people with the power of a real and present God.

The same trials and tribulations that St. Catherine of Siena faced can still be seen in this historical moment. Divine Direction was lacking then and this deficiency in seeking guidance continues to exist and even deepen in today’s global society. The sorrow felt by St. Catherine of Siena is shared from generation to generation in the sorrow of others who recognize the same darkness encroaching on their world. Should we be concerned? If anything is to be taken from “The Treatise of Divine Providence,” it is that no matter what the cultural, social, economic, or religious perspective, people must love their neighbor. Within the spirit of Divine Providence direction is found. The possibility of Direction is present in every communicative engagement with the other. As expressed by St. Catherine of Siena’s treatise, direction provides a way of understanding the depth and breadth of human thought and action in our everyday communicative lives.

Seeking direction and then following through on what is offered reflects the spiritual core of St. Catherine of Siena’s position on Divine Providence. It is also very practical. In practical terms, it can be suggested from the insights in St. Catherine of Siena’s treatise that human thought and action direct our communicative engagement that we have with others. From this standpoint, direction can be seen as a part of a person’s vocational pursuit. For example, consider the exchange that takes place when one seeks the counsel of another. Direction sought out in this way parallels what is experienced
when a person seeks guidance and affirmation from God. Trusting enough to ask and being willing to listen for the response is an example of reflection and guided action. When a person receives an answer from God, they receive His love. The world is not self-sufficient and needs God’s love. People’s needs go far beyond their temporal horizon. True, God loves people unconditionally, but action in temporal existence is not enough to pay back this love. It is unmatched. The opportunity is to pay it forward.

Seeking good counsel from another, and then listening and responding is a way in which direction, divine or otherwise, is communicatively engaged in our everyday lives. This is how we pay it forward. In actionable terms, we seek direction about our vocation through the communicative engagements that we have with others. In each of our encounters in which we seek direction from another or Divine Providence, paths are presented that we may or may not choose to take. As the poet Robert Frost aptly stated, “Two paths converge in the road…and I could not take them both” (Frost, 1993). When answering a vocational call discussion occurs, direction is considered, and then a choice is to be made. We pay it forward by receiving and acting on guidance and paying it forward when called to do so.

**Communicative engagement toward vocation: Decision.** Keeping forward movement in the process of seeking one’s vocation takes discussion in order to receive direction. When understood for its full reflective potential, a person engaging in this process is equipped to take the next step and decide what path to take. In the “Treatise of Discretion,” God through St. Catherine of Siena explains why the decisions a person makes during life will impact them in death. The significance of this treatise for the current project is found in the communicative insight that people must use discretion
when making a choice regarding the appropriate action in a given moment. The action represents a level of participatory engagement and concern for making the “correct” choice. Discretion is the ability to first choose to actively engage God in all matters of life, and, through subsequent choices, engage others. St. Catherine of Siena’s understanding of discretion is overwhelmingly tied to her actions life in order to reach God in death. This action had a profound impact on her way of actually living—an impact that enables us to see the power of “choice” and discernment in everyday decisions.

The act of using discretion when communicating with others brings the spirit of St. Catherine of Siena’s realization about the power of free will and the human capacity to choose alive. Discretion, as described in her treatise, reveals an essential part of human communication: decision-making and its influence on the person making the choice as well as others. Making a decision forms the heart of communicative engagement between people. Decisions that are not passed with careful consideration for the outcomes lead to and perpetuate troubling situations. For St. Catherine of Siena, discretion and decision-making are inextricably linked. Decision is a matter of the heart—sometimes selfish, sometimes unselfish—and the heart is where discretion resides. The heart is also the location from which genuine acknowledgement and connection with the other begins. When made from the heart, decisions enable dialogic communicative engagement. They open a space for genuine concern between self and other. As St. Catherine of Siena experience in her own life, decisions that move beyond concern for the self must come from the heart.
Though not an explicitly practical treatise, the “Treatise of Discretion” offers a key to pursuing vocational clarity that is fundamentally practical. St. Catherine of Siena’s development of discretion provides a way of understanding the powerful role of decision-making that is ever-present in human communicative engagement. Discretion is thus a necessary part of pursuing one’s true vocation.

The necessity of discretion informs all aspects of life. For example, decisions by a doctor emerge through discretion about prescribing certain prescriptions for a patient. A jury’s decision requires discretion as their choice has the power to change the direction of a life indefinitely. Decisions also determine how a couple talks about their relationship. Depending on the degree of communicative engagement involved in each of these examples, discretion can be more or less involved in the process. No matter what the degree of involvement, however, St. Catherine of Siena’s experiences remain true: choice matters. Discretion influences decision-making. Both are essential to genuine human engagement. Vocation can only be realized when genuine communicative engagement meets discretion in decision-making contexts.

Within the “Treatise of Discretion” God reveals, through St. Catherine of Siena, the necessity of using discretion in decision-making and why not using discretion jeopardizes the relationship between God and the self. During the time of St. Catherine of Siena, people’s relationship with God was jeopardized by a lack of “moral life that makes decision possible” (Taylor, 1989, 89). Gaining authoritative power was the impetus in decision-making. People neglected their role as a servant of God—neglected their moral obligation. Realizing this relational distance between God and man, St. Catherine of Siena was determined to do her part to repair it by revealing God’s love to her neighbor.
St. Catherine of Siena constantly reminded people of the importance of building a relationship with God—a present struggle for Christians today. In a world characterized by unreflective chatter, her understanding of discretion foregrounds the importance of thinking and doing. Not only are these essential for repairing the relationship between God and man, they are also essential to forming one’s relationship with the other. Human will is the freedom to decide and act. The key question is: What action should we take? “The Treatise of Discretion” provides clarification on this action. It is an action toward the other—to be attentive and reflective in our decisions because decisions affect our relationships. In spirit of discretion—genuine consideration and engagement of God and/or the other—decisions reveal the foolishness or wisdom in the choices we make.

Finding a vocation demands attentiveness and contemplative engagement toward what is being pursued. Vocation necessitates reflective decision-making. It is St. Catherine of Siena’s moral consideration of the self for God that enables us to gain a practical sense of her understanding of discretion. In the context of this work, discretion reveals to us that people turn to the other for guidance about vocational decisions. Decision offers the possibility of confirmation. It is about considering the thoughts of the self along with those of others, and making a reflective choice. If careful consideration is not taken when making a decision, it lacks discretion. Careful consideration is putting the discussions had, direction taken, and thoughts of the self and the other into action. Discretion helps confirm a person’s decision about their vocation and gives them the opening to live a disciplined life in pursuit of that call.

**Communicative engagement toward vocation: Communicative discipline.**

The “Treatise of Obedience” clarifies what it means to be a devout servant of God. The
significance of this treatise for the current project is found in the communicative insight that obedience requires a disciplined heart. The disciplined heart represents communicative engagement evidenced in the act of submitting to God. Submission is placing complete trust in Christ as the path to salvation. Obedience is found in both the inward and outward conduct of a person, allowing for coherent and consistent engagement with God and others. This can be about matters of life and death, or about the everyday events of life.

St. Catherine of Siena’s level of obedience was evident through her resilient spiritual conviction. She opened her disciplined heart and mind to receive all that God would provide. Simply stated, St. Catherine of Siena’s obedience demonstrates how this disciplined life guards the heart and conduct of a person.

Obedience is first and foremost an act of servitude toward God. In a secondary way, obedience demonstrates the very nature of conviction in human communicative life. Conviction in human communication is a barometer of the health of the “conventional relationship with God” (Barron, 2011). This relationship impacts everything about a person’s life. At the root of conviction is discipline, or committed action toward one’s self and toward others. Discipline is nourished with the hope, not the guarantee, of attaining a particular end through committed action. If a person’s disciplined heart is attentive to the good, action will yield healthy results, even if mistakes are made along the way. An undisciplined heart, however, yields careless reactions (Simon, 1997). Such reactions, if unreflectively engaged, lead to foolish destruction. If knowingly engaged, they lead to evil. The obedience practiced by St. Catherine of Siena, confirms that committed actions towards the self and other must come from a disciplined heart.
“Discipline” provides a contemporary way of interpreting and understanding the “Treatise of Obedience.” Life cannot be lived without some level of discipline or it becomes anarchy against the self. Regardless of what is being pursued, discipline is most readily observed in a person’s conduct as it is repeatedly conformed to particular action(s). For the student, discipline is staying in to study when s/he would rather go out with friends. For the person on a diet, discipline is refraining from eating certain foods. Communicative discipline is also acting in the interest of others before the interest of the self. This means that thinking and acting move toward the other, even in situations where self-interest is a significant factor. The challenge is to recognize the harmony between both the self and the other and knowing when to act in a given direction. This may require knowing that something is right to do and not wanting to do it, but putting aside self-interest and taking committed action anyway.

For St. Catherine of Siena, knowing and doing the right thing was characteristic of her obedience towards God. She was disciplined, standing by His declaration that the person who neglects to know and do the right thing is not an obedient servant. She knew that discipline unlocks the door of obedience. No person can unlock the door to eternal life if they are not disciplined. In the same way, communicative discipline is vital to unlocking the door to genuine human engagement. This genuine human communicative engagement is met through discipline that leads to a life of obedience. In the committed act of being disciplined, vocation can be fulfilled.

Obedience was a concern for people living in St. Catherine of Siena’s historical moment; however, the act of being obedient was not tied to servitude toward God. It was tied to the imperative of submitting to authoritative power. Her society abandoned the
very heart of revealed truth, choosing instead to life in bad faith (Sartre, 1953), lying to
themselves about their position within the ranks of the enemy. St. Catherine of Siena saw
this reality. She understood the malaise of the people as a sign of contention between
those who sided with God and those who placed their confidence in false authority. The
former live by a heart of discipline. The latter, by an undisciplined heart. St. Catherine of
Siena’s response was to remind all people that God rewards according to the expression
of love and consistency of the truly obedient person.

In a time of careless action, St. Catherine of Siena acted with resolve,
demonstrating disciplinary action engaged through self-restraint. Self-restraint is crucial
for walking in Christ’s footsteps. It is also crucial for building and maintaining one’s
committed relationship with Him. For St. Catherine of Siena, the resolute action of a self-
restrained person builds a strong relationship, and with proper commitment to the right
relationships, a person will never deviate from them. What does this tell us about
discipline in everyday life? The “Treatise of Obedience” puts into perspective the
importance of obedience in our everyday communicative encounters. Through disciplined
action the truly obedient are rewarded. In communicative discipline, the spirit of
obedience—acting with true and engaged self-restraint—is revealed in the “I” that
submits to the “Thou” (Buber, 1948). Discipline, brought forth by St. Catherine of Siena,
marks the submission of a person who is committed to the healthy engagement of the
other in all communicative life.

When discipline meets the pursuit of vocation, it becomes the cornerstone of
every action. It announces the human will and a commitment and tenacity to accomplish
what is being pursued. Standing firm about the decision to answer a vocational call is
only the beginning of discipline. God’s Word through Christ says it best, “if you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). Some things must be realized beyond the saying; it must be realized in the doing. Discipline is the doing of and toward vocation. St. Catherine of Siena kept God’s commandments so that in death she would receive the reward of her “doing” and enter into eternal life. Her actions exemplified the ways of an obedient servant, always doing what God willed her to do. St. Catherine of Siena’s disciplined living can be known in the pursuit of vocational fulfillment in the disciplined act of self-restraint and openness to the other. Always outward, always disciplined, discipline is the doing that makes a vocational call a reality.

**Vocation as Engaged Scholarship: The “Dialogue”**

At its core, the four treatises in *The Dialogue* as covered in the sections above reflect the authentic relationship that St. Catherine of Siena had with God and her ongoing commitment to guiding the other in knowing this same relationship in their everyday life. The significance of the entire work is seen in the central commitment of St. Catherine of Siena to the noble struggle that people go through when answering their vocational call. The work is unified by an invitation to place all bets on God and trust that He will provide what He wills at the right time. While all trust is on Him, we must daily choose to “pick up our cross” and pursue what is before us. This act announces our teachable spirit and willingness to count the cost and follow in Christ’s footsteps. In this way, the *Dialogue* helps shape a particular understanding of vocation as engaged communicative scholarship—the willful, disciplined act of moving divine or theoretical understanding into everyday experiences.
The “Four Ds of Vocational Engagement”—Discussion, Direction, Decision, and Communicative Discipline—frame a deeper understanding of engaged communicative scholarship that is both divine (theoretical) and lived (practical). From her genuine dialogic encounter with God, St. Catherine of Siena realizes the Divine’s influence on the heart. The disciplined heart is one that communes with God and accepts His direction. Deciding to act on this direction is a choice of the will. St. Catherine of Siena wrestled with this as a spiritual choice as well as a practical one. She made the decision to take up her cross “inside” before walking this into the real life of her historical moment. This disciplined authenticity drives the communicative practices of a person seeking to fulfill their vocational call. At the heart of The Dialogue is a deep philosophical inquiry into God’s eternal benediction for our lives. St. Catherine of Siena invites us to ask ourselves “What will our benediction be?”

The grace of this divine gift in the form of inquiry and communion with God is evident through St. Catherine of Siena’s communicative engagement and the necessary actions she took in order to reach her vocational end. Out of respect for the deep revelations of her journey and inquiry into divine vocation, this work transformed her insights into practical communicative engagement for someone seeking to answer their vocational call today.

Some acts of humanity cannot be defined by human kind, so people are left with the challenge to walk a “narrow ridge” (Buber, 1948). They are challenged to walk between extreme positions of right and wrong. The question of a life in pursuit of something more becomes: How do I live fully in communicative engagement? The Dialogue invites the reader to follow or not to follow in Christ’s footsteps. Even if the
reader rejects the invitation to follow, St. Catherine of Siena leaves them with philosophical reflections on a life lived to the fullest. Everyone should have the opportunity to seek and live this kind of life. People with a limited understanding of the world are subject to limited engagements and outcomes. The choice to live an engaged, disciplined life must come from the heart. This can be chosen by all willing to enter into a pursuit of something more.

In the Dialogue, God, through St. Catherine of Siena, reveals how a person can fruitfully live in Christ, or as a fully engaged, disciplined and directed human being. From a Christian perspective, the work outlines the steps a person should take in life in order to reach a perfect union with God upon death. In her own life, St. Catherine of Siena chose to be a participant and walk in Christ’s footsteps. For this reason, she is a “standard-bearer” for all Christians who choose to walk the same path (Aristotle, 2002). She found hope where there seemed absolutely none at all, encouraging others to think about the challenges they faced, and meet those challenges: an encouragement that she still affords in spirit to Christian’s today.

For Christians and non-Christians alike, the writings of St. Catherine of Siena present an unannounced phenomenological understanding of engaged communicative scholarship whereby all who partake find themselves in more significant relationships with the other and with the world itself. Her spirit is present in an “enlarged communicative mentality” made visible in the writings of her service toward God and the other (Arnett, Grayson, & McDowell, 2008). Thus, The Dialogue offers insight into all levels of communicative engagement for every pursuit connected to our lived experience. Together, the divine and philosophical revelations of her work and the pragmatic
implementation of these into her life provide a timeless document that invites, even calls us to communicative engagement toward vocation. St. Catherine of Siena lived and died as she wrote. All who read and take her work to heart will find their lives in a position to be transformed, even conformed into an engaged communicative life. St. Catherine of Siena participated in one of the earliest versions of engaged scholarship, understanding that the engagement of the other is larger, more important than the self alone.
Chapter 5: St. Catherine of Siena: An Exemplar of Vocation as Engaged Communication Scholarship

Introduction

St. Catherine of Siena was a remarkable woman with an enormous heart who spent her entire life serving God through the other. No one can reasonably doubt her sanctity. Her Confessor describes her religiousness and divine mission by quoting Canticles: “‘Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is full of dew, and my locks of the drops of the night.’ And she replies, ‘I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them’” (Capua, 2003, p.105). After being clothed in God’s glory, St. Catherine of Siena’s divine mission was clear. She was to dress the other. In all her communicative experiences, she attended to the other with a willingness and hope of fulfilling her own vocational call.

The familiar saying “we are called to do small things with great love” is a message that held a constant presence in the life of St. Catherine of Siena. In a practical sense, doing small things with great love is a call for the self to engage the other. Embracing Ernest Boyer’s (1995) call for a person “to become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems,” this chapter seeks an understanding of how a person genuinely engages the other (p. 1). His call for “scholarship of engagement” provides insight into such an inquiry. “Scholarship of engagement” consists of “reaching, teaching, integration and application types of scholarship that incorporate reciprocal practices of civic engagement into the production of knowledge” (Sandmann, 2006, p. 80). Scholarship of engagement is an appeal to the self to engage the other in their everyday communicative experiences.
Engagement is the primary coordinate that connects scholarship of engagement to all people. Every person has a choice to enter communicative encounters with openness to other—to be an engaged scholar.

An engaged scholar is committed to engaging the other in all their communicative experiences. In the following discussion the committed actions of an engaged scholar are practically exemplified through the life of St. Catherine of Siena. Drawing from the work of George Cheney, Morgan Wilhelmsson, and Theodore E. Zorn Jr., this chapter puts into practice what the author’s identify as the “Ten Strategies for Engaged Scholarship.” The ten strategies for engaged scholarship serve as an interpretive entrance into understanding how St. Catherine of Siena and her commitment to the other is an exemplar of vocation as engaged scholarship.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a reflective communicative hermeneutic for understanding engaged scholarship within vocation. At the heart of vocation is answering a call. It is announcing a commitment and dedication to fulfilling a pursuit. St. Catherine of Siena knew God had a plan for her to prosper and not be caused harm along the way, a plan that would grant her hope and a future with Him (Jeremiah 29:11). She gave herself fully to this plan increasing her attentiveness to His presence through the engagement of the other.

Vocation as Engaged Communicative Scholarship: The “10 Strategies for Engaged Scholarship” in Action

Unlike the preceding chapters, this chapter takes a phenomenological and applied approach to St. Catherine of Siena’s work through the idea of engaged communicative scholarship. The point is to demonstrate how St. Catherine of Siena lived out engaged
scholarship in her pursuit of vocational end. Phenomenologically speaking, her everyday communicative actions as engaged scholarship are made visible by looking at her insights through the ten strategies for engaged scholarship. These strategies by Cheney, Wilhelmsson, and Zorn (2002) contemporize her work and bring a renewed vigor to the study of St. Catherine of Siena for today. With a starting point in academia, the strategies all share the common commitment of engaging the other. This baseline commitment is the foundation for engaged scholarship and the phenomenological connections that follow.

**Strategy 1: “Engaged popular as well as academic concepts.”** “Engaging popular as well as academic concepts” is the first strategy for engaged scholarship. This calls a person to move beyond the “prepackaged” ideas of the world, helping to “foster a lifetime of reflection” in every communicative engagement (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 93). This sounds difficult. In actuality, the authors are not asking for a lifetime in a minute; they are asking people to step back, think, and then respond. In this reflective action, the past meets the present for constructive decision-making in the midst of lived experiences. The future is also “present” as the unspoken other—a person, idea, event, or commitment that calls one to act in a particular direction.

Life cannot be lived without facing and engaging lived experiences. Without engagement, life becomes meaningless. St. Catherine of Siena saw trouble in her world but knew that human beings could never live a problem-free life. Undeserved and impossible in a fallen world, the idea of a problem-free life and the resolution of all difficulties nurture a false hope. In the midst of adverse circumstances she persevered and found hope in God’s promise of a problem-free eternal life. Rather than wish for what
could never be, she lived passionately toward her eternal destiny. St. Catherine of Siena lived with reflective clarity. Every moment was a reflective one. Her communion with God opened her life to the discipline, discernment and devotion that perpetuates constructive decision-making in everyday situations. We can see in her resolution to live with eternity in mind the essential value of acknowledging God and His promises in everyday communicative engagement.

Regardless of her difficulties, engagement of the other was effortlessly met in all of St. Catherine of Siena’s lived experiences. She understood the darkness that came over the fallen world to be a sign of fallen reality. She also saw this as a sign of God’s interest in the development of a person to the point where they consistently make the correct decisions and are communicating the correct responses. There are numerous examples throughout her life of this active engagement of lived experiences, but the most obvious are recorded in her communicative encounters with others. The strongest example can be found in her engagement with God. St. Catherine of Siena’s journey began when she discovered Christ as the human embodiment of God. This led to a realization: choosing to follow Christ affirms one’s place within the body—the call of all Christians. St. Catherine of Siena realized this as the foundation and structural support for answering the vocational call to walk in Christ’s footsteps. Just like leaving behind pre-packaged ideas about life, walking with Christ marked the beginning of the real work of engaged living.

Engaged lived experiences become reflective when we think about the popular and academic concepts in our life. In practical terms, we think about why and how things are done. This mode of reflection is the crucible in which decisions are made. The test of this engaged reality—what could be called engaged scholarship of living—is whether or
not action impacts a person’s entire life. St. Catherine of Siena’s divine and philosophical interactions with God and others demonstrate how this works and provides insight for vocational pursuit today. The work in reflection that causes action. For St. Catherine of Siena, this was the knowledge that faith without works is dead.

**Strategy 2: “Move out into the world.”** “Move out into the world” is the second strategy for engaged scholarship. This encourages a person to take an active role in society and work toward making a positive difference in the lives of others (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 94). In many ways, this should be common knowledge and common practice. The authors, however, recognize that sometimes the most common matters get overlooked. Therefore, they are making an explicit invitation for people to become active participants in their community. In this active engagement, there is consideration for the self and his/her community through an authentic public offering or action that benefits someone or group other than the self. The action taken is for the good of the “group” and represents an engagement of the other clearly announced by communicative action.

Communicative engagement is the space where people bond together and create community. In community a person’s identity is shaped through his/her participation. St. Catherine of Siena recognized the importance of accepting God’s invitation to take an active role in her community. She put forth an authentic public offering through the encouraging actions and guidance she provided to all who crossed her path. Her consideration for the other and for the community clearly demonstrates her acquired *phronesis*—practical wisdom—gained through her communion with God and communicative engagement of others (Aristotle, 2002). She answered God’s call to be
her brother’s keeper (*New International Bible, Genesis 4:9*). St. Catherine of Siena never neglected the face of the other, always walking in committed in action that reflected the virtues of her life.

If St. Catherine of Siena knew the adage “we plan and God laughs,” she would have agreed. Her plan was to live a contemplative life in silence and seclusion. God, however, had another plan. Shortly after taking the habit of St. Dominic, a vision of God appeared to St. Catherine of Siena revealing that she was to become active participant in her community for the honor of Him and the good of souls (Capua, 2003, p. 101). In that moment her life of solitude came to an end and she began to embark on a new journey. This journey moved her out into the world, revealing her commitment to the engagement of the other in all communicative life.

God invited St. Catherine of Siena to engage in public offerings and actions that would benefit the other. She graciously accepted. To use her own words, “to the true servant of God…every place is the right place, and every time is the right time.” She knew each day was an auspicious time to pray to God and willingly carried out whatever deed He sent her way. Her most profound charitable acts can be seen towards the poor and the infirm. The first beatitude written in the Gospel of Matthew is brought into this life by St. Catherine of Siena’s charitable works toward the poor. It reads, “Blessed are the poor and spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (*New International Bible, Matthew 5:3*). Through the grace of God and charity in her heart, St. Catherine of Siena came to a place of an inner peace that she invited others to know. She gave alms to the poor and she prayed for every soul in need. She also took seriously the task to “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely
give” (Matthew 10:8). Embracing God’s grace, she understood that there is no disease that He does not have the power to cure. Her charitable acts toward the poor and the infirm were marvelous acts that exemplify what it means to humble oneself to the glory of God for the salvation of souls. Her life was genuine public commitment toward the other, lived everyday as a “moving out” toward the face and life of people in need.

Public commitment toward the other becomes significant in everyday ways when we think about moving out into the world for the good of family, friends, or colleagues. In practical terms, we enact this when we think about how we can help a given group. Though not of the divine, it can be argued that when a person moves out into the world by considering the group over themselves that they are working in the spirit of St. Catherine of Siena. In small or large acts of “moving out” the problems of others are met and addressed, not overlooked or ignored. The darkness of the world encounters the essence of St. Catherine of Siena’s desire to do good toward the other. In this engagement, the divine meets the temporal in the living memory of St. Catherine of Siena and her willingness to accept the call and move out.

**Strategy 3: “Consider multiple perspectives.”** “Consider multiple perspectives” is the third strategy for engaged scholarship. This strategy urges a person to listen to others and not just those working from the same perspective (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 95). Such a strategy is not always easy, but it is always possible. The authors are not suggesting that a person place their focus of attention only on the values of the other; they are challenging people to listen “alongside” the other. In listening alongside, a person is attentive to the other but does not hang on every word. They keep their perspective while remaining open toward the other. In doing so, differences between
the self and other become a space for listening, engaging, and learning. Considering multiple perspectives brings a person “alongside” another, making dialogue possible in every communicative engagement.

Today there is a lot of attention given to difference and tolerance. So much so that it seems like discourse is stifled, and without discourse the good life cannot be pursued. While people have varying understandings of given situations, understanding is brought to a different level when the conversation requires people to communicate and listen to one another. The key idea is moving beyond communication to discourse that involves listening.

By considering the work of St. Catherine of Siena we are equipped to increase our capacity for engaged discourse that involves listening. Through dialogue, St. Catherine of Siena was able to announce the ground on which she stood and remain open to the other’s position (Arnett and Arneson, 1999, p. 145). Considering multiple perspectives places dialogue at the heart of communicative engagement with the other. In considering multiple perspectives a person is invited to recognize and engage differences between the self and other. The vantage points offered by different perspectives allow for genuine dialogue to occur, even when the individuals involved in the discourse disagree.

It is common knowledge that the wise person listens “for” and not “to.” St. Catherine of Siena was a wise person. She listened for that something—a concern, idea, thought, value—in her interactions with the other that would allow her to give an authentic response in every communicative encounter. She listened closely and then responded, taking into consideration the perspective of the other as well as the self. It was this willingness to be open to the other that afforded her the ability to engage multiple
perspectives, even if she did not agree. St. Catherine of Siena listened “alongside.” She recognized the importance of mutual respect in every engagement. In this case, mutual respect could be characterized as acknowledgement of the common root between the self and other—that all human beings are created in the image of God. St. Catherine of Siena started from this perspective, working from an enlarged understanding that her dialogic actions were toward the other, a distinct part of God’s creation and, therefore, her “brother.” Again, she was reminded of the importance of being her brother’s keeper.

In addition to the divine import of listening “alongside,” the art of engaged scholarship resembles the vitality found in coming alongside—in listening carefully to the other. In contemporary discourse, listening “alongside” is a way to value the importance of multiple perspectives. When we listen “at” someone we miss things—hearing only what we want to hear. If, however, we listen “alongside” someone we openly permit the position of the other to have life and engaged presence with the self. When listening “alongside,” the voice of the other is ever present. The engaged perspective that comes from listening “alongside” encourages people to listen for, hear, and acknowledge positions of difference and agreement. This brings vitality to banal articulations of tolerance and difference, energizing the promise of genuine communicative engagement in everyday life.

**Strategy 4: “Place the human, the moral, and even the spiritual alongside the technological, the financial, and the productive.”** The challenge to “place the human, the moral, and even the spiritual alongside the technological, the financial, and the productive” is the fourth strategy for engaged scholarship. The emphasis is on “looking both within and without for better” with particular emphasis on the importance of moral
action in everyday communicative encounters (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 95). In this historical moment, the idea of integrating these expectations into everyday life is, to some degree, part of our vernacular, but not without extreme tension and the unique cultural boundaries that exist in a shrinking, global world. The challenge is real. The authors understand the reality of what they are asking people to do. They are asking people to act in an ethical way. Ethical engagement makes caring for the other possible in both good and bad times. Care in ethical engagement opens up the opportunity for genuine concern for the other in a given moment. It is a concern and challenge to comprehend the way things are, the way things have been, and the direction things are going in order to take ethical action.

People have free will to act in an ethical manner and demonstrate genuine care for the other. St. Catherine of Siena understood that when life ends, free will is bound (2007, p. 109). During life a person has the free will to make “good” decisions and through reflective decision-making increase their relationship with God or the other. People also have the choice to turn away. Either way, free will is bound to care: care for the other. Without care free will cannot exist. Care is a “human answer to the call of the other, a willingness to meet and attend to someone other than oneself” (Arnett, Fritz, & Bell, 2008, p. 192). People develop an ethical orientation of caring through the communicative engagements that calls a person to be attentive to the needs of the other.

Care is ever present in our lives. It has the potential to open up a person’s eyes to the goodness in others and limit judgment. St. Catherine of Siena knew the opportunities as well as the risks that accompany caring. Caring was a way for her to be in relation with the other (Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. 243). She held a genuine concern for the needs of
the other, announcing her commitment to upholding an “ethic of care” (Noddings, 1984, p. 79). She approached every communicative encounter in her life with care, knowing that for better or worse caring is central to the ethical response. Care binds the self to the other. It calls attention to a person’s willingness to meet every situation with an open heart toward the other.

There is an underlying message tied to this: we have the right to act. The right to act announces entitlement, privilege, even permission; however, it also presupposes action is moral and taken with care. Engaging the human, the moral, and even the spiritual alongside the technological, the financial, and the productive announces moral action taken with care. In our everyday communicative engagements we are often faced with multi-dimensional situations. Unreflective responses happen all the time and they happen when we move hastily. The engaged world is a world that depends on pacing ourselves—taking the time to think twice and respond once. If we are slower to respond we are potentially a little more careful.

**Strategy 5: “Question our cherished concepts and practices.”** To “question our cherished concepts and practices” is the fifth strategy for engaged scholarship. This posits that a person should “question the ideas and theories that have come to stand as universals” across space and time (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 96). It is an idea that is not new or very complex. History and culture have a lot to teach us (2002, p. 96), much of which we have yet to discover. In the words of Yoda, we have “much to learn.” In order for learning to occur, a person must embrace a “critical consciousness” (Freire, 1996). This consciousness calls into question the very concepts and practices of an individual, even of a global society. When a person questions concepts and practices
that have been engrained in their life, society, and culture, they begin a process of “owning” ideas that keep the past alive, releasing ideas that inappropriately burden a life, and opening their future to ideas that will impact their life and the lives of future generations.

A person’s values are shaped by the voice of the other. Throughout life the other suggests, directs and often tells a person what he/she should and should not do until a person reaches a point in which they come to “own” their own ideas. Owning suggests contemplative engagement of surroundings—people, places, and situations. From this reflective stance, owning is coming to an understanding of the things in life that are negotiable and not negotiable.

St. Catherine of Siena owned her ideas and was clear to all that God was not up for negotiation. In heart and mind she stood firmly behind her values and belief to trust, confide in, and be open to God and His plan. This was not always easy. There were many situations in which her commitment to God was tested by the other. In the Gospel of John, it is written “when he [the Devil] lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (8:44). Overcoming challenging circumstances is part of life. St. Catherine of Siena understood that the Enemy presents a person with problems and adverse situations to see if he/she questions God’s goodness. She was no exception. St. Catherine of Siena would often find herself in battle with the Enemy—fighting her own battles as well as battling for the other. Through all circumstances, however, she owned her ideas and continuously dismissed the inappropriate burdens of her life.

Youth affords a person the pursuit of knowledge from the other. Then they grow up and learn to be cautious; to approach every experience with a critical consciousness.
Finally, in the midst of reflective critical thinking a person comes to know themselves. It is a process in which they play the hand that they have been dealt, and accessorize life with what they have. After all, things do change, including people and places, and everything in between. To question our cherished concepts is to meet every communicative engagement thoughtfully and critically with an open mind that the other might just have it wrong and to identify what is genuinely meaningful to us.

**Strategy 6: “Choose problems and issues that matter.”** “Choose problems and issues that matter” is the sixth strategy for engaged scholarship. This encourages a person to “lookout for interesting special topics” that “suggest engagement” (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 96). This sounds simple enough, but in a world wrought with the trivialization of significant ideas, “issues that matter” are contested ground. The authors are pointing to the importance of spending time and energy on things that matter. What matters is classified as a person or a cause that holds significant meaning in one’s life. Again, it seems like people should not have to be told to do this. But, too often people place significant value and meaning on things that do not matter. In moments of great distress, true joy and quiet reflection, people know what matters. In the midst of busyness, however, trivial things are easily mistaken as meaningful. Choosing to focus on problems and issues that matter makes it possible to discern what someone or something means to us and to make life decisions accordingly.

What matters to a person is determined by the significance someone or something holds in their life. To determine significance, meaning *must* be discovered. Meaning is emergent, gained through “what we give,” “what we take,” and “the stand we take” in life (Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. 221; Frankl, 1967, p. 15). No doubt, a person gives, takes
and stands for someone or something in different moments of their life. However, to
discover meaning in life demands reflective engagement in all of these elements though
our everyday communicative encounters. To give, take and stand for someone or
something is a genuine “means” to finding a meaningful “end.” Through communicative
encounters meaning is discovered. Choosing problems and issues that matter facilitates
finding meaning in our communicative engagement with the other.

What mattered to St. Catherine of Siena was driven by her relationship with God. She chose to give, take and stand for Him—the person or cause that held significant
meaning in her life. God called out to her many times to give, to take or stand for the
other during life. Each time she responded to what was before her, discovering meaning
through the communicative engagement. She understood meaning is always present,
though it may not always be visible (Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. 213). As a result, she
was able to discern what someone or something meant to her and to make life decisions
accordingly. For St. Catherine of Siena, choosing problems and issues that mattered was
a direct result of her commitment to serve God and the other. She realized meaning in life
is found in the midst of all circumstances—good and bad—and there is a reason for
everything, even when it cannot be seen.

Choosing what matters should depend on how meaningful someone or something
is in a given moment. However, what is meaningful to a person is often put aside, even
lost in the busyness and the demand to stay ahead in today’s global society. This is
problematic. When we are not attentive to the important things—people, places, and
everything in between—meaning cannot be discovered. Moments of quiet reflection are
necessary to determine the problems and issues that matter in life. In reflection we take
the time to prioritize—to place priority on someone or something. The issue with meaning is not always a matter of what you attend to but also the priorities of life. It is important to carefully think through not only what is important but also the order of importance because everything cannot be first. Meaningfulness is directly connected to a person’s ability to put proper priorities in place. When we do not put the proper priorities in place we end up dividing our attention, which is going to lead to missing what is meaningful. In reflective engagement we choose the problems and issues that matter and are working in the spirit of St. Catherine of Siena. Without reflection we are not able to meaningfully engage anything let alone what is most important.

Strategy 7: “Reach audiences other than ourselves.” “Reaching audiences other than ourselves” is the seventh strategy for engaged scholarship. This calls attention to the importance of reaching audiences through multiple channels (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 97). This is a very tactical approach. Indeed, the authors are describing how to “do” engage scholarship. One thing is especially clear. Engaged scholarship cannot be done in one context; it has to stretch across multiple contexts. This is extremely important when considering how a person is getting his/her message out and whether or not the message is being heard. The task is to find common ground, revealing the message as “engaging and useful” to multiple realities (2002, p. 97). When common ground is not established it becomes harder to reach audiences other than those who are working from the same standpoint. To reach multiple audiences is to generate awareness in all we say, do, and think in our communicative lives.

Reaching audiences other than ourselves situates the self in a constructive hermeneutic, encouraging the self to attend to the other within a “unity of contraries”
(Buber, 1966, p. 110). This act announces the “crossing of contrasting ideas” in which understanding emerges through opposites (Arnett, 1986, p. 65). It is finding common ground between multiple realities, realizing that each idea has something to offer to the other. Common ground presents an opportunity for multiple contexts to come together in every communicative engagement. Common ground does not come about through sameness; rather, it comes about through respect for our differences. To reach audiences other than ourselves is to find common ground between the self and other, respecting difference.

St. Catherine of Siena realized all a person can be in life is who they are, and everyone is not going to have the same ideas, be on the same page, or even work from the same perspective. Yet for her, there is a common ground that can be established between the self and the other. This common ground is God. Regardless of people’s differences and similarities she believed God to be the center of life. St. Catherine of Siena understood God as the unity of all contraries. Her communicative encounters, however, were not always with those who had a similar stance. Regardless, she was committed in action to teaching the Truth to the other. She was an ambassador of God (Capua, 2003, p. 301). Always without force, she found a way to reach audiences other than herself. She engaged in “dialogic civility,” embracing the other and the multiple contexts the situation brought forth without losing herself—“keeping the conversation going” (Arnett & Arneson, 1999, p. xii). She respected difference. In reaching audiences other than ourselves the essence of St. Catherine of Siena is present through the engagement of multiple contexts within our everyday communicative experiences.
One of the first things we learn is how to communicate. Though, the older we get the harder it is to speak the words we really want to say, especially if we do not agree with another. Sometimes we keep quiet because we are afraid to disagree, sometimes we think it is just not worth it, and sometimes we think the other will not understand. The challenge in communicative encounters is not to refrain from talking when difference is present; instead, to convey information ambiguously enough for a person to relate it to their lives. The engaged person understands the most important information does not come from one person or the other but emerges between the two participants. When difference is respected the self reaches out to the other, making it possible to understand what each person does, says, and thinks in their communicative life.

**Strategy 8: “Find or create models of socially responsible organizations and promote them.”** To “find or create models of socially responsible organizations and promote them” is the eighth strategy for engaged scholarship. This strategy calls a person to “promote alternative” viewpoints that are both “feasible and inspiring” on a corporate level (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, p. 97). This may seem like a daunting task, but it is vital to individual as well as communal existence. The task is to take what is already in place and make it better. It is the task of moving an envisioned ideal into a relevant reality. The authors are not asking a person to reinvent the wheel; they are, however, seeking people who will accept the challenge of improving the original design. In this reflective and even contemplative action, a person becomes a participant in a “community of memory” (Bellah et. al, 1985, p. 152). They work on an idea that improves a corporate entity and thus impacts the lives of people, the ideas of a generation, and/or the landscape of a place. In promoting social responsibility, what is
relevant becomes real, and the workmanship of a business becomes vital to its people and to its surroundings.

Connecting to being socially minded and connecting to people and places is very much embodied in Robert Bellah’s understanding of a “community of memory.” A community of memory helps establish real connections between the self and other in communicative encounters. A community of memory holds in place guideposts for engaging the self and the other. Being socially minded is about being more than pandering to the self-interests of any one group of people. It is more than a utilitarian appeal. The authors are talking about working in restraints to enhance people and enhance community. A community of memory expects attention to the past, the present and the future. It is the knowing engagement of past, present and future that keeps a social conscience thinking forward and back about the self and/or other.

The practical living of this in St. Catherine of Siena is three: she brings the Church’s history in daily practices, keeps herself in the present through the workings of the Church, and living in the day-to-day lives of others she establishes a way to reach future generations. St. Catherine of Siena was attentive to the past, the present and the future in her commitment to God and the other. She embraced a “community of memory,” recognizing a person finds their identity in the ongoing story of a community. She did not leave the past behind and walk away; instead, she focused on the things—people, placing and everything in between—of the past connected to her in the present and would connect to others in the future. St. Catherine of Siena understood God wants a person to do their share to promote the socially responsible other—including the other that may have already been or is yet to be in existence.
In practical terms this strategy is about the attentiveness required in a given moment to maintain what is good from generation to generation. While social mindedness is going to change as the global foot of the world changes there are ideas, perspectives and information that need to remain present from generation to generation. This is what St. Catherine of Siena learned in church and is clearly livable in everyday life. Whether people believe St. Catherine of Siena did or did not have an imprint, it is clear we must hold onto what is good and pass it on from generation to generation. This could be very simple from making known the importance of preserving water, saying “thank you,” to developing a local community.

Strategy 9: “Embrace an action learning approach.” “Embracing an action learning approach” is the ninth strategy for engaged scholarship. An action learning approach places people together in order for them to study and improve on their actions and experiences (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, p. 98). This is praxis-oriented learning, with praxis realized in the between of person-to-person relations. The authors believe that a person’s actions can teach them a lot about themselves but that they need to see these actions through the other. This learning happens in discrete encounters and experiences where a person and/or the other is prepared to engage, take note, and respond. In this learning encounter, a person not only reflects on action taken, but also receives feedback from a source external to the self. In this form of engagement there is a genuine opportunity to provide ideas and insights that guide future actions. An action learning approach makes known what works well and the changes that need to occur. It is an essential strategy for communicative engagement that results in shared experience, not just information dissemination.
It has already been established in previous strategies that all communicative encounters call for enactment and reflection by the self as the self engages the other. The self is thus shaped from interrelation with the other (Mead, 1962). It would be safe to say that a person learns about their identity through the interactions they have with the other—with people, places and situations. For example, our active learning experiences can make known what is meaningful and significant, help identify actions that are inappropriate or even wrong, and reinforce what is good and what works well.

Communicative encounters that meet the expectation of an action learning approach are exemplified by a person who pays attention. A person must be attentive in experiences in order to engage action learning in their everyday communicative life. Based on her documented actions and personal reflections, it is fair to say St. Catherine of Siena attempted to be attentive in all of her communicative experiences with the other. She was prepared to engage, take note, and respond to every encounter with the other in a reflective and contemplative manner. She understood that God was teaching her a difficult yet valuable lesson, learned only through discrete encounters with the other. He taught St. Catherine of Siena about her identity and the relationship between that identity and the world in which she lived. Her identity was shaped through every communicative encounter and secured through her commitment to serving God and the other. In everyday life, St. Catherine of Siena embraced her lived experiences, inviting a twofold learning encounter to emerge: (1) learning by the other as she followed in Christ’s footsteps, and (2) learning from the other who provided ideas and insights that guided St. Catherine of Siena’s future actions.
The learning-action ratio in St. Catherine of Siena’s life was a one-to-one correlation. It was high commitment on both sides; learning was lived and spoken. In her life, taking the time to reflect on what we can learn from another was crucial to everyday experience and engagement. For St. Catherine of Siena, the key was to begin and end every communicative encounter with engagement. A person enters a conversation and *must* walk away from the communicative encounter with engagement at the center of things. The goal is to ask “What can/did I learn?” throughout. In asking this question, one can read in St. Catherine of Siena’s life a constant appreciation for the other in her communicative living. As a person lives this constancy out, engagement becomes a pattern of asking and receiving. It is a space that allows one to listen to the soul of the other while simultaneously learning and improving the self. Active learning is the outcome of this engagement. It is at the core of St. Catherine of Siena’s life and at the core of an action learning approach.

**Strategy 10: “Seek out connections not only with the powerful but also with the disenfranchised.”** To “seek out connections not only with the powerful but also with the disenfranchised” is the tenth strategy for engaged scholarship. This strategy is focused on inspiring a person to “consider traditional concepts from the standpoints of marginalized or invisible groups” and to become open to those groups and their ideas (Cheney, Whilhemsson, & Zorn, 2002, p. 98). The authors are overtly calling attention to the importance of listening to the voice of the other by noting the extremes of two social groups that rarely meet in reflective communicative engagement—the powerful and the disenfranchised. Often engaged with suspicion and from a distance, both groups typically live with a thin understanding of the other. Using the tenth strategy for engaged
scholarship, a voice-centered approach is affirmed as a means of purposefully demonstrating concern for the other. A focus on intentional action is applied as a way of creating space for openness and commitment. Here, the unheard and misunderstood other are brought into communicative engagement—a space where enlightenment, reflective learning, and change are possible.

The extremes of the powerful and disenfranchised make explicit how voice becomes the embodied engagement of both the mind and body. Voice is the direct connection between how a person lives and how they think about their situation. On the one hand, it represents limitations—perspectival and circumstantial. On the other hand, it represents the possibility of seeing the other, learning from their position, and engaging them in terms that elevate the discourse and hopefully the person. In the best of all worlds, a person’s voice cannot be silenced (Freire, 1996). Voice announces the ground on which a person stands and their relation to the other (Arnett & Arneson, 1998).

St. Catherine of Siena heard and hearkened to the voice of the other. She dedicated her life to God whose ongoing presence encouraged and inspired her to preserve His voice by listening to and engaging the voices of others. Through her lived and spoken voice she did this every day. Her commitment to the other ranged from a commitment to the powerful to a commitment to all those who were unheard, unloved, unrecognized—to those who were disenfranchised. Using her voice, she showed the other the grace of God at work in her life and invited them in to a conversation—a discourse—that could change their lives like hers had been changed. Her voice strengthened and inspired the other, never silencing even those with whom she disagreed. Her trials on this front were severe, yet St. Catherine of Siena encouraged other in the midst of her trouble.
She told them not to lose heart but to trust God (New International Bible, 2 Corinthians 4:16)—to listen to His voice. By living God’s voice though her daily interactions, St. Catherine of Siena emotionally and spiritually connected to the other, demonstrating concern and commitment toward the unheard and misunderstood that ensured their voices would be heard.

Being open to the voice of the other is crucial in today’s global society. In a world driven by competition and success, oppression is ever-present. The darkness falling on this world in this historical moment reminds us to consider the attitude of St. Catherine of Siena as she challenged the darkness with the light of her word and engagement of a “world come of age” (Bonhoeffer, 1997, p. 342). In the spirit of St. Catherine of Siena, it is every generation’s task to address the extremes of the powerful and the disenfranchised, not with critique but with a constructive voice. In every historical moment, people are to recognize the necessity of hearing the other’s voice. If they do not, decay is sure to follow. When a person’s voice is not heard genuine communicative engagement is not possible. Recognizing and attending to the voice of the other opens up the possibility for genuine communicative engagement. In practical terms, we need to listen and respect the other in all our communicative interactions.

**Conclusion: Vocation as Engaged Communication Scholarship**

God called St. Catherine of Siena to surrender her heart and to walk along His path, and out of her love for Him she did. She made the most of life and by doing the things she did St. Catherine of Siena was an inspiration to others. She played a decisive role in shaping a constructive approach to her historical moment which is evident through her communicative engagement and the necessary actions she took in order to reach her
vocational end—to be with God. She repeatedly stressed God’s invitation to “pick up our cross” and pursue what is before us, ensuring that this practice would keep one in peace. In short, she lived as she believed, making it possible for future generations to learn from the constancy of her experiences.

With love in her heart, St. Catherine of Siena lived as a steward life of active reflections. In everything, she envisioned what could be while attending to what was before her. St. Catherine of Siena recognized that a life of purpose is not a life of unfettered choice. It must be a dialogue with the divine and an engagement with the other. When the other comes into our lives, she saw the opportunity to walk out God-ordained truths that enlarge the person and the moment. St. Catherine of Siena believed that we do have the choice to simply embrace or discard the other—be it God, a person, an experience, or even a moment in time. Her heart was tender toward a living expression of faith.

St. Catherine of Siena attempted to engage the other everyday of her life. Through the ten strategies for engaged scholarship, engagement of the other is revealed as the essential component to be an engaged scholar. While each of the strategies for engaged scholarship has its own distinctive definition and underlying core idea of engagement, these strategies are not communally exclusive. The strategies are discrete links that when put together reveal the ongoing practices of an engaged scholar. Within each strategy there are common threads—key connections—to the others. The strategies call for reflective action that is demonstrated through a person’s commitment toward the other in a given moment. There is a genuine effort to find common ground between the self and the other and a willingness to be open to new possibilities. The engaged scholar focuses
on the things—people, places, and everything in between—of the past connected to them in the present and will connect to others in the future. Above all, these strategies reflect the authentic relationship that the engaged scholar must have with the other and their ongoing commitment to working “alongside” the other through everyday communicative experiences. Through her everyday interactions with the other, St. Catherine of Siena fulfills the call of the engaged scholar.

Engaged scholarship is a way to understand a person’s relevance to the world (Cheney, Wilhelmsson, & Zorn, 2002). To be an engaged scholar a person must move out into the world and seek active engagement with others. St. Catherine of Siena is an exemplar of the engaged scholar. She moved out into the world, reaching all types of audiences with a spiritual voice that people should listen to in order to build a relationship with the other—God or a person. Regardless of her religious nature she was a voice of discernment for the other. A testament to what happens when a person holds the willingness to engage the other with a committed heart. St. Catherine of Siena answered God’s call to move out into the world and fulfill His call—to love Him and love her neighbor. Through her communicative engagements with the other she announced this commitment and in doing so fulfills the call.

As a person develops an understanding of the meaning of engagement they begin to develop a rationale that drives and guides their communicative actions. Cheney, Wilhelmsson, and Zorn (2002) “10 Strategies for Engaged Scholarship” reinforce “what the ideal of engagement is” (p. 93). The presumptive bias of this work identified the ideal of engagement as answering one’s vocational call. Vocation as engaged communication scholarship presupposes that there is genuine commitment between the self and other:
something St. Catherine of Siena lived by. Understanding, “where there is humility, there
is wisdom,” she learned by experience and lived by example extending God’s grace to
the other. St. Catherine of Siena’s entire life was spent serving the other in hopes of
fulfilling her vocational call—to be with God—a call that she undoubtedly answered,
constantly pursued, and was confirmed upon her passing.

In “Hallowed Ground,” the poet Thomas Campbell fittingly said “to live in hearts
we leave behind is not to die” (Hazel & Allen, 1936). St. Catherine of Siena enacted this
by being a carrier of meaningful connection with God in each of her lived experiences.
Though people are, at times, passerbys in life, there are those special few whose imprint
is recognized beyond their sphere of influence and lived presence on earth. St. Catherine
of Siena lived to imprint others. Her life certainly impacted a given time and place. Her
story, however, continues to impact lives today. St. Catherine of Siena’s life is one of
engaged commitments—of scholarship that lives in action and in others. She is one of the
few who touched countless lives in more ways than can be adequately documented. St.
Catherine of Siena crossed the paths of people and left a lasting imprint. This work is a
testament to the residual goodness of her life and her story. In this moment, she can be
revisited as a bearer of communicative light helping through her life as one of engaged
scholarship to shape the story of those seeking purpose in the midst of a changing and
often dark world.
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Appendix: Outline of The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena.


**Thesis:** A dialogue between Saint Catherine of Siena and God.

1. **Treatise of Divine Providence**
   a. **How a soul, elevated by desire of the honor of God, and of the salvation of her neighbors, exercising herself in humble prayer, after she had seen the union of the soul, through love, with God, asked God four requests.** (pp. 26-28)

   i. The soul who has the desire to honor God, and the salvation of souls practices “ordinary virtues,” and remains in a realm of “self-knowledge” in order to understand better the “goodness” God has towards him.

   1. Knowledge must come before love.
   2. With knowledge one can have love.
   3. With love one can gain truth.

   a. Knowledge yields love, which yields truth
   b. The “best” way to gain this truth is through “humble and continuous prayer,” discovered through knowledge of the self and of God.
   c. This type of prayer unites with God, the soul that “follows the footprints of Christ crucified.”
ii. With desire, affection, and union of love the soul makes himself another Himself!

1. John 14:21—“To him who will love Me and will observe My commandment, will I manifest Myself; and he shall be one thing with Me and I with him” (p. 27).
   a. Through love the soul becomes another Himself.
   b. God manifests his love.
   c. The self is “clothed in God’s will” (p. 27).
      i. The soul is united with God by love.
      ii. The soul must have “virtues in herself” (p. 27).

2. The four (4) requests to “the Supreme and Eternal Father.”
   i. For herself.
   ii. For the reformation of the Holy Church.
   iii. A general prayer for the whole world;
       particularly, for the peace of Christians, with much lewdness and persecution, against the Holy Church.
   iv. The Divine Providence to provide for things in general; particularly, for a certain case with which she was concerned.

b. How the desire of this soul grew when God showed her the neediness of the world. (pp. 28-29)
i. The “First Truth” shows this soul the neediness of the world.
   1. The penalties and intolerable sorrow caused against God.
   2. The loss of souls.
   3. The persecution of the Holy Church.

ii. The soul prays for those who cause these sufferings.
   1. Prayer not for them to be punished, but for their punishments to be placed on her (this soul). It is stated: “punish them in my prison” (p. 29).

   c. How finite works are not sufficient for punishment or recompense without the perpetual affection of love. (pp. 29-31)
      i. All pain given to men are “not punishments, but corrections” (p. 30).
      ii. Guilt and penalty can be amended by the “desire of the soul” (p. 30).
         1. This is by true remorse.
            a. God is infinite.
            b. God desires infinite love.
            c. God desires infinite grief.
               i. Infinite grief wish in two (2) ways:
                  1. Sorrow for self’s sins committed against God.
                  2. Sorrow for the sins the souls neighbor commits against God.
2. Desire is a virtue
   
a. Paul—1Cor. 13:1—“If I had the tongues of angels, and if I knew the things of the future and gave my body to be burned, and have not love, it would be worth nothing to me” (p. 31).

b. Finite works not valid (as punishment or reward) without the addition of “the affection of love” (p. 31).

d. How desire and contrition (remorse) of heart satisfies, both for the guilt and the penalty in oneself and in others; and how sometimes it satisfies for the guilt only, and not the penalty. (pp. 31-38)
   
i. Guilt is not punished by pain which is just pain.

ii. Guilt is punished by pain felt because of desire, love, and contrition of the heart. This is a desire of the soul.

   1. Only way virtues are of value is if the virtues are drawn from the love for Christ, and that love follows Christ’s virtues. “His footprints” (p. 31).

   2. With true remorse of the heart, love, true patience, and true humility—worthy of pain and not of reward—the soul endures the “patient humility” (p. 32) of such desire.

   3. In self-knowledge one humbles her/himself seeing that the self does not exist. For being the soul learns is obtained from God.
iii. God loves you (the soul), but also others before you were in
existence.

1. Through the love God has for you (this soul) God has
washed you and “re-created” you (the soul) in the blood of
His only-begotten Son (p. 32).

2. The Blood teaches.
   a. The Blood teaches that the truth comes to the soul
   by self-knowledge without self-love, and the soul
   can learn the truth no other way.
   b. The soul receives the “fruit of life” (p. 34).
   c. The fruit of life is the fruit God destines for the
      individual soul (p. 34).
   d. To turn to seek “native country,” which is the
      “eternal life” (p. 35).

3. When the soul truly recognizes sins the soul receives the
   “gift of grace” (p. 36).

4. Satisfaction is gained through the desire of the soul united
to God.

 e. **How very pleasing to God is the willing desire to suffer for Him.** (pp. 38-39)
    i. Love and divine charity are joined in the soul with “perfect
       patience” (p. 38).
1. Joined so much so that neither love nor divine charity “can leave the soul without the other” (p. 39).
   a. To love God is to choose to endure sufferings for God.
   b. Patience cannot be proved in another other way than by suffering.
   c. Patience is united with Love.

f. How every virtue and every defect is obtained by means of our neighbor. (pp. 39-43).
   i. Every virtue is obtained through the neighbor.
      1. To be in charity is to love God.
      2. To love God is to love the neighbor.
   ii. Every defect is obtained by way of thy neighbor.
      1. To hate God is to hate thy neighbor.
         a. Injury is brought with hatred in general and particular.
         b. General and particular: Must love your neighbor as you love yourself.
      2. Evil comes from the soul who has deficient love for God and the neighbor.
         a. If man does no good, then he must do evil.
            i. Evil to the self, first.
            ii. Evil to the neighbor, second.
b. No evil against God because no evil can touch God, except to count for the evil done to the self.

i. Connected to despair.

1. Despair is a sin.

2. A sin tied to believing the self is unsavable.

   a. The individual is cut off from grace when the self does not have the power to do such a thing.

   b. Only God can cut the soul off from grace and God would never do such a thing.

   c. This is the reason behind why the individual not only is hurting the neighbor, but itself.


3. The man who does not love is cruel.

   a. Pride brings forth evils.

   b. Evil towards the neighbor “through love of one’s own reputation” (p. 4?).
c. “In all places and in all kinds of people, sin is always produced against the neighbo[u]r, and through his medium” (p. 43).

g. How virtues are accomplished by means of our neighbo[u]r, and how it is that virtues differ to such an extent in creatures. (pp. 43-47).

i. All sins accomplished by means of the neighbor.

ii. Self-love destroys charity and affection because self-love is the principle foundation of all evil.

iii. Charity is the “pure love” of God (p.44).

1. When God’s goodness is recognized the soul loves without any “medium,” the medium of the self and with the medium of virtue, virtue is conceived through love of God.

2. Must conceive two (2) things:

   a. Hatred for sin.

   b. Love of virtue.

iv. Love of God and love for the neighbor are “one and the same” (p. 45).

1. All “the” virtues are bound together in the “affection of love” (p. 45).

2. One particular virtue serves as the “principal object” (p. 45) of its virtues.

   a. God is indifferent when it comes to investing human beings with virtue.
b. The “principal objects” can be tied to Thomas Aquinas.

i. Aquinas defines object of a virtue, or what the virtue deals with.

ii. For example, justice deals with right.

3. Bound in the case of both spiritual and temporal things.

4. Spiritual and temporal things are the things necessary for the physical love of man.

h. How virtues are proved and fortified by their contraries. (pp. 48-49)

i. Virtues are proved and fortified by their contraries in seven (7) ways (p.48).

1. “Men proves patience on his neighbor when he receives injuries from him.

2. “Man proves his humility on a round man.”

3. “Man proves his faith on an infidel.”

4. “Man proves his true hope on one who despairs.”

5. “Man proves his justice on the unjust.”

6. “Man proves his kindness on the cruel.”

7. “Man proves his gentleness and benignity on the irascible.”

ii. Fortitude is a serious virtue founded on Truth.

1. Based on determination.

2. Determination by the soul to follow in “Christ’s footsteps.”

II. Treatise of Discretion

169
a. **How the affection should not place reliance chiefly on penance, but**
   **rather on virtues; and how discretion receives life from humility, and renders to each man his due.** (pp. 50-53)
   
   i. If penance is given without discretion, then it pleases God little.
   
   ii. Penance without discretion leads to perfection in the soul to be delayed because this action would be self-focused.
   
   iii. Penance needs to be given with discretion.
   
   1. If the soul sins, then penance needs to be given.
   
      a. Penance is a form of reconciliation.
   
      b. A form of reconciliation because penance is the way to reflect on how the soul has strayed from God.
         
         i. Focus of attention is on what the individual did or did not do, and what to or not to do in the future.
         
         ii. Penance is about repairing the soul’s relationship with God. In committing a sin the individual offends God.
   
      c. When giving penance the “Act of Contrition” is said
         
         i. Giving penance with discretion is saying the “Act of Contrition” while reflecting on what was done to offend God.
         
         ii. The “Act of Contrition” is said because the soul is sorry that offense was taken against
God, and not because the soul is afraid to go to hell.

iii. The importance behind giving penance with discretion. When penance is given without discretion, the words of “Act of Contrition,” but without true remorse and reflection.

2. Penance is given to receive good graces from God, but to also mend the tarnished relationship with God.

3. Important to confess sins, and acknowledge shortcomings.
   a. Indiscretion is tied to pride.
   b. Discretion is tied to humility.
   c. “Whatever rank a man be in, whether that of a noble, a prelate, or a servant, it he have this virtue (virtue of discretion), everything that he does to his neighbor is done discreetly and lovingly, because these virtues are bound and mingled together, and both planted in the ground of humility which proceeds from self-knowledge” (p. 53).

b. A parable showing how love, humility, and discretion are united; and how the soul should conform herself to this parable. (pp. 53-55).
   i. Parable of the tree.
      1. “The soul is a tree existing by love, and that it can live by nothing else than love” (p. 53).
2. “The root of this tree that is the affection of the soul” (p. 53) should grow from having self-knowledge, which is contained in God.

3. “This knowledge of thyself and of Me is found in the earth of true humility” (p.54)

4. “The tree of love feeds on humility, bringing forth from its from its side the off-shoot of true discretion” (p. 54).

5. “Proves that I am in the soul and the soul in Me” (p.54).

6. “The tree produces blossoms of virtue…the soul renders fruit of glory and of utility to her neighbor…and renders glory and praise to My Name” (p.54).

ii. All the fruits are “flavored with discretion” (p. 55).

C. **How penance and other corporal exercises are to be taken as instruments for arriving at virtue, and not as the principal affection of the soul; and of the light of discretion in various other modes and operations.** (pp. 55-61).

   i. Penance and other corporal exercises are to be “adopted as a means, and not as an end” (p. 56).

   ii. God desires “few words, and many actions” (p. 57).

   iii. “Light of discretion” (p. 58) proceeds from love and gives a “restricted” love to the neighbor.

   1. It is a restricted because God does not want the soul to act for the other if it means that the soul will commit a sin.
2. This is the purpose of discretion.
   a. Love God infinitely.
   b. Love thy neighbor restrictedly.

3. Holy discretion is “a prudence which cannot be cheated, a fortitude which cannot be beaten, a perseverance from end to end…stretches from knowledge of Me to knowledge of self, and from love of Me to love of others” (pp. 59-60).

   d. **How this soul grew by means of the divine response, and how her sorrows grew less, and how she prayed to God for the Holy Church, and for her own people.** (p.61-65)

      i. The soul grows by means of the divine response.
      
      ii. Through reflection (the metaphor of a mirror is used to describe reflection).

         1. The need to reflect to see one’s deficiencies.

            a. In knowing yourself and being honest with deficiencies are made known.

            b. Through God and knowing God the soul is able to know more of itself.

         2. Sorrow grows less because God comforts the soul.

         3. This is by way of self-reflection and knowing of one’s dignity and indignity.

         4. The soul also grows more because the soul begins to see how others are straying from God.
5. The soul then prays so that God may show to the Church and other people what He had shown to this soul (i.e. Catherine). “His ineffable love …great goodness, and breadth of charity” (p.64).

e. How God grieves over the Christian people, and particularly over His ministers; and touches on the subject of the Sacrament of Christ’s Body, and the benefit of the Incarnation. (pp. 65-70)

   i. Through Baptism God has abolished original sin, and the only thing that remains after Baptism is the inclination to sin.

      1. Through the sacrifice of Jesus people are able to be saved again and wipe away the mark of original sin.

      2. Through the Blood of Christ, Baptism can either give life or give death

         a. Gives life: “Therefore guilt is more gravely punished…” (p. 72).

             i. The person who has reflected on self and accepted Jesus and confesses their sins.

             ii. The same person asks to grow closer to God by receiving communion—communion “gives life” (p. 66).

         b. Gives death: “Him who receives unworn…but to himself he does…” (p. 66).

             i. Living a falsehood.
ii. Taking communion un-repaired.

c. Connection to the incarnation—bread and wine turning into the body and blood of Christ.

3. God created man, but man sinned and obtained the stain.

   a. Man could never do anything to free himself from this sin.

   b. God loves man and sent down Jesus Christ to be man and divine.

   c. With this duality Jesus was able to sacrifice himself for our sins.

   d. In doing so Christ gave man the ability to reach Eternal Life; however, there is human inclination to go back and sin. So, through reflection man one’s relationship with God can be increased, but there is free will and one can (by free will) turn away from God.

f. How sin is more gravely punished after the Passion of Christ than before; and how God promises to do mercy to the world, and to the Holy Church, by means of the prayers and sufferings of His servants.

   (pp.70-73)

   i. Because human beings have received redemption they should be under obligation to act.
1. Man has become God and God has become man (i.e. Christ).

2. This is the union of divine with the human.

3. Human beings are obliged to act in virtuous ways to pay this debt back to God.

4. After the Passion of Christ sin is more gravely punished then before because before… “a false Christian is punished more than a pagan…” (p. 72).
   a. Example of how false Christian’s are punished more than a pagan can be seen in Dante’s *Inferno*.
   b. The level of Limbo represents the level for those who died before the Passion of Christ.

ii. “Therefore I give my servants hunger and desire for My hono[u]r, and the salvation of souls, so that, constrained by their tears, I may mitigate the fury of My divine justice” (p. 72).
   a. Through His servants (those who dedicate themselves to God, such as Catherine), specifically through their prayers He will show mercy.
   b. This is not to say He is going to let everyone ‘off the hook.’
   c. To be given mercy does not mean the human being will not be punished for wrongdoings.
g. How the road to Heaven being broken through the disobedience of
Adam, God made His Son a Bridge by which man could pass. (pp. 73-74)

   i. “Bridge of My Word…Only Begotten Son” (p. 73).

1. God is a Bridge.
2. The sea is sin.
   a. In the book of Genesis, God on the sixth day made man—Adam, then Eve to please Adam.
   b. God made Adam and Eve in His own image.
   c. They had free realm over the Garden of Eden except for fruit tree.
   d. Man had free will to disobey God and Adam and Eve did by eating the forbidden fruit.
      i. When man disobeyed God man was kicked out of the Garden of Eden.
      ii. Since God had humility He freed man of the devil, but immediately after innocence was lost and all created things rebelled against man.
      iii. Adam and Eve sinned and immediately knew they sinned; therefore, were tormented by this sin—“as soon as he sinned a flood arose…” (p. 74).
3. God sent down Christ to free man from sin.

4. Because Christ was both man and good He was able to repair the Bridge that had been broken.

h. **How God induces the soul to look at the greatness of this Bridge, inasmuch as it reaches from earth to heaven.** (pp. 74-76)

i. The Bridge is a union between God and man.

1. God did His part by making the Bridge.

2. Man now has to do his part.

   a. “And observe, that it is not enough, in order that you should have life, that My Son should have made you this Bridge, unless you walk thereon” (p. 76).

   b. God made the Bridge, but man has to choose to walk on it.

i. **How this soul prays God to show her those who cross by the aforesaid Bridge, and those who do not.** (pp. 76-77)

   i. The soul understands: “I am the thief and thou hast been punished for me. For I see Thy Word, Thy Son, fastened and nailed to the Cross, of which Thou hast mad me a Bridge, as Thou hast shown me, Thy miserable servant, for which reason, my heart is bursting, and yet cannot burst, through the hunger and the desire which it has conceived towards Thee” (pp. 76-77).
ii. God begins to explain the nature of the Bridge.

j. How this Bridge has three steps, which signify the three states of the soul; and how, being lifted on high, yet it is not separated from the earth; and how these words are to be understood: “If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things unto Me.” (pp. 77-80)

i. The feet of the soul, signifying her affection, are the first step.

1. The feet carry the body as the affection carries the soul.

2. The feet are steps by which thou canst arrive at His Side.

ii. The side of the soul is the second step.

1. The side holds the secret of the Heart.

2. “Gazing into the open Heart of My Son, with the eye of the intellect, and finds It consumed with ineffable love…He being one and the same thing with Me…” (p. 78).

iii. The mouth is the third step.

1. At the mouth the soul “finds peace from the terrible war she has been waging with her sin” (p.78).

2. The soul finds peace when reaching the third step.

iv. Climbing the three steps represents the soul’s route, by way of the three states of the soul, from transgression to peace.

k. How this Bridge is built of stones which signify virtues; and how on the Bridge is a hostelry where food is given to the travelers; and how he who goes over the Bridge goes to life, while he who goes under It goes to perdition and death. (pp. 80-83)
i. “Stones of true and sincere virtue” (p. 80).

1. Cannot have a life of grace without following God’s doctrine.

2. In the form of hostelry.
   a. God is hostelry in the Garden of the Holy Church.
   b. The Truth.

3. God’s Truth.
   a. Christ is the Road to God.
   b. God is the Truth, so Jesus is truth.
   c. Jesus is truth because He follows Truth (i.e. God).

4. Those not on the Road goes under the Bridge.
   a. No one can pass under the Bridge.
   b. Water under Bridge is falsehood—The Devil leads to eternal damnation.

1. How traveling on both of these roads, that is the Bridge and the River, is fatiguing; and of the delight which the soul feels in traveling by the Bridge. (pp. 84-85)

   i. The two (2) roads are hard to travel—the Bridge and River.

   1. The Bridge is hard to travel:
      a. The Bridge is hard to travel, but is ultimately easier because by traveling the Bridge the person has accepted God.
b. The Bridge is difficult because human beings are always tempted.

2. The River is hard to travel:
   a. The River is hard to travel because it signifies burden done by sin.
   b. Sin can be reconciled in the River.

3. Both the Bridge and the River are connected to Divine Humanness.

m. How this Bridge, having reached to Heaven on the day of the Ascension, did not for that reason leave the earth. (pp. 85-90)
   i. God is man in form of Jesus.
   ii. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence today.
      1. Jesus practiced God’s doctrine through His actions (showing by example not by words).
      2. His doctrine fund in “the mystical body of the human condition” (p. 87).
      3. What He meant when He said: “I came from the Father, and I return to the Father, and shall return to you” (p. 88).

n. How this soul wondering at the mercy of God, relates many gifts and graces given to the human race. (pp. 90-91)
   i. The mercy of God.
   ii. God wants the soul to pray for those who committed sin against Him, so that He may give them mercy.
o. Of the baseness of those who pass by the river under the Bridge; and how the soul, that passes underneath, is called by God the tree of death, whose roots are held in four vices. (pp. 92-94)

i. Those who drown are “dead of grace” (p. 93).

ii. Three (3) powers.

1. Feeling.

2. Love.

3. Will.

   a. All three (3) powers are dead for the one who drowns.

   b. Since all three (3) powers are dead, then grace is dead.

iii. Tree of death.

1. Roots (in comparison to the “tree of life” as discussed earlier).

2. Four (4) principle vices.

   a. Pride.

   b. Nourished by self-love.

   c. Branch own impatience.

   d. The offshoots of the tree of death’s roots are indiscretion—evil and death proceed.

p. How the fruits of this tree are as diverse as are the sins; and first, of the sin of sensuality. (pp. 94-95)
i. Many ways that a sin is committed.

ii. But, a sin is a sin.

1. Sin of sensuality—"filthy action" (p. 95).

2. "Neither does any sin, abominable as it may be, take away the light of the intellect from man, so much as does this one. This the philosophers knew, not be the light of grace, because they had it not, but because nature gave them the light to know that this sin obscured the intellect, and for that reason they preserved themselves in continence the better to study. Thus also they flung away their riches in order that the thought of them should not occupy their heart. Not so does the ignorant and false Christian, who has lost grace by sin" (p. 95).

q. **How the fruit of others is avarice (desire to keep money); and of the evils that proceed from it.** (pp. 95-97)

i. Avarice is being a "slave of riches," a "miser" who carries thought of own reputation.

ii. Avarice produces envy—tongue (words) does not match the heart.

iii. The avarice preforms acts based on their own profit.

r. **How some others hold positions of authority, and bring forth fruits of injustice.** (pp. 97-98)

i. Some "hold their heads high by their positions" (p. 98).

ii. Direct connection to power.
s. **How through these and through other defects, one falls into false judgments; and of the indignity to which one comes.** (pp. 99-100)
   
i. False judgment is making the wrong decision by such things as self-love, pride, and avarice.

   ii. Through sins the soul fools itself into believing that good is bad and that bad is good (ex. a good man makes a good man better, and a bad man makes a bad man worse).

t. **Of the words that Christ said: “I will send the Holy Spirit, who will reprove the world of injustice and of false judgments;” and how one of these reproofs is continuous.** (pp. 100-102)
   
i. The first reproof is the Holy Spirit
      
      1. This reproof is continuous because it is ever present.
         a. “This is that continuous reproof that I make to the world by means of the Holy Scriptures, and My servants, putting the Holy Spirit on their tongues to announce My truth…” (p. 101).
         b. Ever present through Holy Scripture and God’s servants.

      2. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence today.

u. **Of the second reproof of injustice, and of the false judgment, in general and in particular.** (pp. 103-104)
   
i. The second reproof is a condemnation.

   ii. It is a conviction.
1. A conviction in general.
   a. The soul’s beliefs are better than God’s
   b. “Generally in all her (the souls) beliefs” (p. 103).

2. A conviction is particular.
   a. Injustice and false judgment that the soul’s misery
      is greater than God’s mercy.
   b. “This is that sin which is neither pardoned here nor
      there, because the soul would not be pardoned,
      depreciating My mercy” (p. 104).

v. Of the four principal torments of the damned, from which follow all
   the others; and particularly of the foulness of the Devil. (pp. 105-107)
   i. The first principal torment.
      1. “Deprived of the vision of Me” (p. 105).
      2. Deprived because of own choice.
   ii. The second principal torment.
      1. “Worm of Conscience”
      2. Knowing that one will not see God and “conversation of
         the angels” (p. 105).
   iii. The third principal torment.
      2. By own sins one is worthy of seeing the Devil.
   iv. The fourth principal torment.
2. The fire burns without consuming, because the soul is not a physical thing so it cannot be consumed.

v. All other torments stem from the 4 principal torments.

vi. In reproof one and two souls have the ability to “amend themselves,” and if not amended the soul faces “Eternal Punishment” (p. 107).

w. Of the third reproof which is made on the Day of Judgment. (pp. 107-108)

i. The third reproof is made on the Day of Judgment—the second coming.

1. Describes how people will act when Christ comes down and how human beings will come down.

2. Christ will come down divine (and powerfully) those who are just will rejoice and glorify God, but the damned will be in confusion (scared and confounded by God being here).

   i. “To the miserable ones who are damned, His aspect will cause such torment and terror that the tongue cannot describe it” (p. 108).

   ii. “To the just it will cause the fear of reverence with great joy” (p. 108).

x. How the damned cannot desire any good. (pp. 108-109)

i. When “the life of man ended, free-will is bound” (p. 109).
1. During life the soul has the free will to make “good” decision.

2. In death free-will is no more.

3. The damned blaspheme God during life, so the damned cannot desire any good.
   a. Example given of Lazarus and his brothers.
   b. Actions in life have consequences in death.

y. Of the glory of the Blessed. (pp. 110-114)
   i. The blessed are those who died with love and affection for God.
   ii. Jesus appears to the “saved with love and mercy” (p. 114).

z. How, after the General Judgment, the pain of the damned will increase. (pp. 115-118)
   i. The damned are reminded of all the cruelty they did towards their neighbor in order to better the self.
   ii. The damned place self-love before love for thy neighbor.
   iii. With this, their pain increases because they are reminded of cruel actions in life.
   iv. The damned choose to follow the “Way of Lie” instead of the “Way of Truth” (118).

aa. Of the use of temptations, and how every soul in her extremity sees her final place either of pain or of glory, before she is separated from the body. (pp. 118-121)
i. Before departing from the body God gives the soul a taste of what is to come.
   1. For the damned, hatred and despair.
   2. For the perfect ones, love, the light of faith and hope of the Blood.
   3. The imperfect ones arrive at Purgatory and are given a taste of mercy and same faith as perfect ones, because the soul has tried and has faith that they will get to Heaven.

bb. How the Devil gets hold of souls, under pretence of some good: and, how those are deceived who keep by the river, and not by the aforesaid Bridge, for, wishing to fly pains, they fall into them; and of the vision of a tree, that this soul once had. (pp. 121-124)

   i. The Devil catches the individual by playing on their self-love and enticing them with pleasures. This is done according to weaknesses.

   ii. The soul deceives itself because it is a lot of work to follow the “Way of Christ”

   iii. This soul turns away because it does not know the Truth (Christ).

   iv. Once the soul sees the pain of Christ the soul says it is going to follow Christ crucified.

   v. Then the “thorn” that prevent this soul from walking on the Bridge no longer exists.
1. “Recognizing the deceits of the world, returned to the Tree and passed the thorn, which is the deliberation of the will. Which deliberation, before it is made, is a thorn which appears to man to stand in the way of following the Truth” (p. 123).

2. Demonstrates how God is “not an Acceptor of persons but of holy desire” (p. 124). A desire to follow the Truth.

c. **How, the world having germinated thorns, who those are whom they do not harm; although no one passes this life without pains.** (pp. 124-128)
   i. Everyone goes through life with some pain, but if you follow God the pain will be tolerable.
   ii. The thorns that stand before the soul and the Bridge represent pain.

d. **How this soul was in great bitterness, on account of the blindness of those who are drowned below in the river.** (pp. 128-129)
   i. The soul is saddened by those who turn away from God.
   ii. God shows the soul those who choose to “self-love and disordinate affection” (p. 129) and arrive at eternal damnation.

e. **How the three steps figured in the Bridge, that is, in the Son of GOD, signify three powers of the soul.** (pp.129-133)
   i. God reminds the soul that “every evil is found in self-love” (p. 130).
   ii. The soul is created in God’s image.
iii. Learn the three powers of the Bridge

1. Memory: “the hand of love fills the memory with remembrance of me [God] and the benefits received” (p. 130).

2. Intellect: “the most noble part of the soul, and is moved by affection...nourishes it” (p. 130).

3. Will—“free will” bound to affection. Cannot have free will without affection.

iv. God rests in the midst of the three (3) powers—“When there are two or three or more gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (p. 133).

ff. How if the three aforesaid powers are not united, there cannot be perseverance, without which no man arrives at his end. (pp. 133-134)

i. In order to come out of the river there are two goals that the soul must reach, and for each goal perseverance is needed.

1. The two goals:
   a. Virtue
   b. Vice

2. Perseverance is needed.
   a. Those who persevere in virtue arrive at life (God who is life).
   b. Those who persevere in vice arrive at eternal death (the Devil).
gg. An exposition on Christ’s words: “Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink.” (pp. 134-135)
   i. In following Christ the soul will be nourished.
   ii. The “Fountain of Living Water of Grace” is crossing the Bridge (p. 135).

hh. The general method by which every rational creature can come out of the sea of the world, and go by the aforesaid holy Bridge. (pp. 135-139)
   i. Can go by the holy Bridge by following the Law.
      1. To love God.
      2. To love thy neighbor.
         a. These two virtues cannot come together in the name of the Lord without the three powers of the soul—memory, intellect, will.
         b. With two virtues and three powers of the soul together God is in the midst of them by grace.
         c. Climbing the three steps the soul finds that the three powers have come together by reason in the Lord’s name (p. 138).
   ii. God accompanies the soul who follows the Law.

ii. How this devoted soul looking in the Divine mirror saw the creatures going in diverse ways. (p. 139)
   i. The soul begins to see what God is talking about in respect to people following the Bridge.
ii. Reaffirms that the state of perfection cannot be obtained through fear tied to the self.

jj. **How servile fear is not sufficient, without the love of virtue, to give eternal life; and how the law of fear and that of love are united.** (pp. 139-141)

i. Servile fear is based on dreading the pain that would follow after wrongful actions are taken.

ii. Servile fear is not motivated by love of God.

iii. The soul must fear and love God.

kk. **How by exercising oneself in servile fear, which is the state of imperfection, by which is meant the first step of the Holy Bridge, one arrives at the second step, which is the state of perfection.** (pp. 141-142)

i. Beginning the climb in imperfection [servile fear] will prevent the soul from arriving at the second step—Jesus’ Heart.

ii. Here, the soul climbs in fear and not love.

ll. **Of the imperfection of those who love GOD for their own profit, delight, and consolation.** (pp. 142-146)

i. The souls who love God for their own profit, delight, and comfort are imperfect because they only love God when they need Him—as with their neighbor.

ii. Friend analogy given.
1. Friends do not have any secrets—two bodies, one soul (p. 146).

2. One soul through affection (love).

**mm. Of the way in which GOD manifests Himself to the soul who loves Him.** (p. 146-148)

i. The soul makes three (3) manifestations, which demonstrates God’s love and charity in the soul.

1. Word and Blood of His Son

   a. In two(2) ways:

      i. To ordinary people—those who live in the “ordinary grace of God” (p. 147).

      ii. Known through “sentiment of the soul” (p. 147).

2. In men themselves. Manifesting through the affection and their love for God (p. 147).

3. God forms in the mind the presence of Truth (p. 147).

ii. This is done through three (3) things:

   1. Prayer—God’s Power.

   2. Wisdom of My Son—Intellect.


**nn. Why Christ did not say “I will manifest My Father,” but “I will manifest Myself.”** (pp. 148-150)

i. Did not say this for three reasons.
1. Christ wanted to show that He and God are not separate from one another.

2. To not present anything to the soul that He had not received from God—manifests Myself, Me and Him.

3. Because God is invisible and cannot be seen until the soul is separated from the body.

ii. God manifested Himself in Christ. “He is one thing with Me” (p. 150).

oo. How the soul, after having mounted the first step of the Bridge, should proceed to mount the second. (pp. 150-154)

i. Secret of the Heart is step two of the Bridge.

1. Discussion of how man becomes a friend and from friend grows into a son.

2. Through “filial love.”

   a. “Filial love” is perfect love (p. 151).

      i. Because man has filial love he receives his “inheritance” (p. 151).

      ii. Inheritance is peace.

   b. To arrive at filial love man must also persevere and have self-will.

   c. Recognizing guilt of mortal sin and recognizing sin for what it is (going to hell) the soul is fearful of
penalty, but realizes that God is merciful and the soul chooses (by way of self will) follow God.

d. In order for the soul to develop perfection God will withdraw Himself from time to time so that the soul desires Him more (a continual process).

e. Through perseverance and continual self-knowledge, prayer and living a penitentiary life the soul arrives at perfection.

ii. In arriving at perfection the soul arrives at true love.

**pp. How an imperfect lover of GOD loves his neighbour also imperfectly, and of the signs of this imperfect love.** (pp. 155-157)

i. By loving our neighbor we love God.

ii. Human beings owe love to God because He sacrificed His only begotten Son for the salvation of human beings.

iii. Every perfection and imperfection is then acquired from God, but manifested through the neighbor.

1. “So the love of the neighbor[r], whether spiritual or temporal, should be drunk in Me, without any self-regarding considerations. I require that you should love Me with the same love with which I love you. This indeed you cannot do, because I loved you without being loved” (p. 155).

2. God does not owe His love to us.
iv. By loving our neighbor we can better understand how God loves us.

1. This love must, however, be a sincere love of the neighbor because it is the same love given towards God.

2. If the love is not sincere, then the love for God is still imperfect, which means there is still a level of self-love present.

III. Treatise of Prayer

a. Of the means which the soul takes to arrive at pure and generous love; and here begins the Treatise of Prayer. (pp. 158-159)

i. Through lively faith the soul arrives at pure and generous love.

1. Living faith recognized through perseverance in virtue and not stopping during times of holy prayer (avoiding interruptions).

2. Holy prayer should ONLY be stopped for obedience or charity’s sake.

ii. The Devil wants the soul to be interrupted during times of prayer. He wants the soul to disregard the exercise of prayer, because prayer is a “weapon that the soul can use to against every adversary” (p. 159).

b. Here, touching something concerning the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, the complete doctrine is given; and how the soul proceeds
from vocal to mental prayer, and a vision is related which this devout soul once received. (pp. 159-167)

i. “‘Know, dearest daughter, how, by humble, continual, and faithful prayer, the soul acquires, with time and perseverance, every virtue’” (p. 159).

1. The soul does not become nourished through only vocal prayer.
   a. Should not abandon vocal prayer, but just as the soul is imperfect then perfect; prayer is imperfect then perfect.
   b. Should not say vocal prayer without joining to mental prayer (i.e. words and heart/love of God).

2. To be pleasing to God the soul must “enlarge your hearts and affections in My boundless mercy, with true humility” (p. 162).

3. The soul “should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of My goodness” (p. 164).
   a. In doing so moves from vocal imperfect prayer to perfect mental prayer.
   b. “Thus she will exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for, even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they” (p. 166).
   c. Vocal prayer and mental prayer are one.
4. If the soul stays in a state of vocal prayer alone, the soul will always be imperfect and only love God and the neighbor when the soul finds pleasure in doing so (i.e. the soul who turns to God only in time of need).

c. **Of the method by which the soul separates herself from imperfect love, and attains to perfect love, friendly and filial.** (pp. 167-168)

   i. By means of perseverance, “barring herself into the House of Knowledge” (p. 167).

   ii. Knowledge of the self is seasons with the knowledge of God’s goodness.

   iii. “The soul who wishes to rise above imperfection should await My Providence in the House of Self-Knowledge, with the light of faith…” (p. 168).

d. **Of the signs by which the soul knows she has arrived at perfect love.**

   (p. 169-170)

   i. The soul arrived at perfect love because the soul has love for the neighbor and love for God.

      1. The third state is love for neighbor

      2. The fourth state is love for God—perfect union with God

   ii. The third and fourth states are not separable because there cannot be love of God without love of the neighbor (and, there cannot be love of the neighbor without love of God).
e. How they who are imperfect desire to follow the Father alone, but they who are perfect desire to follow the Son. And of a vision, which this holy soul had, concerning diverse baptisms, and of many other beautiful and useful things. (pp. 170-174)

i. Those who are perfect follow the doctrine of Christ—the rule, way, and doctrine of their life.

ii. Those who are imperfect follow only the Father—these souls still have fear and only go to God for comfort.

1. ‘Can only get to the Father through the Son.’

2. Baptism of water united in Blood. Connection to the soldiers piercing Jesus’ side in the bible. In the gospel of John it is written: “one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bring a sudden flow of blood and water.” (19:34).

3. On baptisms.

   a. Those who are able should be baptized “with contrition of the heart, confessing” (p. 173).

   b. Those who are not able to confess but have “contrition of the heart” (p. 173) have a sufficient standing for baptism if there is the desire present to be able to confess.
c. Those who are able to confess and do not “will be deprived of the fruit of Blood” (p. 173)—Jesus’ salvation—this soul will be condemned.

d. Those who are able to confess and put it off until their last moment will not be remembered. “In My Divine Justice: ‘Thou didst remember Me in the time of thy life, when thou couldst, now will I not remember thee in death” (p. 173).

f. **How worldly people render glory and praise to GOD, whether they will or no.** (p. 175-176)

   i. Praise His name and love God, but do not love Him above everything.

   ii. In life God gives more to sinners and less to the righteous man that renders praise God more so than others because these souls are able to do without. These souls have the virtues of patience and charity and will be rewarded.

g. **How even the devils render glory and praise to GOD.** (pp. 175-176)

   i. The devil rebelled against God because he thought he was equal to God.

   ii. God cast Lucifer and the fallen angels to Hell. This act demonstrates God’s power, glory, and the justice that was served to them.
1. “So thou seest that My Truth is fulfilled in them, that is, that they render Me glory, not as citizens of life eternal, of which they are deprived by their sins, but My justiciars, manifesting upon the damned, and upon those in Purgatory” (p. 177).

2. Sinners by not obeying God and being sinners will not go to heaven and receive the glory of God. However, these sinners still act as an instrument to others because they test “patience, fortitude and perseverance” (p. 176).

h. How the soul, after she has passed through this life, uses fully the praise and glory of My Name in everything, and, though, in her the pain of desire is ended, the desire is not. (pp. 177-178)

i. “Pain in her is ended, but not love, as the tortured desire, which My Word, the Son had borne from the beginning when I sent Him into the world, terminated on the Cross in His painful death, but His love—no” (p. 178).

1. The body is gone, which is the “vessel that caused her [the soul] pain” (p. 178).

2. The desire is actually realized…the soul fulfilled the reason they were created and that is to love God.

   a. Still have the desire to love God in death.

   b. In death it is only death from the body, not the soul.
i. **How after Saint Paul was drawn to the glory of the blessed, he desired to be loosened from the body, as they do, who have reached the aforesaid third and forth states.** *(pp. 179-180)*

   i. Speaks about Saint Paul.

   ii. Paul “tasted and knew God’s Truth” and because of this he desired to be with God *(p. 179).*

j. **How the soul who finds herself in the unitive state desires infinitely to leave the barren earthly state and unite herself with GOD.** *(pp. 180-181)*

   i. The desire to be with God after the soul has felt the union with God.

   ii. “Though they desire to come and be with Me, they are contented to remain if I desire them to remain, with their pain, for the greater praise and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls” *(p. 180).*

   iii. God decides when the soul will come and be with Him.

k. **How they, who are arrived at the aforesaid unitive state, have the eye of their intellect illuminated by supernatural light infused by grace.**

   **And how it is better to go for counsel for the salvation of the soul, to a humble and holy conscience than to a proud lettered man.** *(p. 182-186)*

   i. My Truth (Jesus is the Truth because He is the Word of God).

   ii. The Truth is also the Holy Scripture

   iii. Discusses God illuminating the mind in order.

   1. God enlightening people.
2. Discusses how some scientists will never know what is going on because they will never be enlightened by God—place science over faith.

3. Intellectual light of God is to understand in a different sense—not just literal or scientific—knowing the truth.

i. How this devout soul seeks knowledge from God concerning the state and fruit of tears. (pp. 186-187)

   i. The soul passes through each state with tears.

      1. “The soul passes through these states with tears, she wished to learn from the Truth concerning the different kinds of tears, and how they came to be, and whence they proceeded, and the fruit that resulted from weeping” (p. 186).

   2. The soul requesting to know about the tears.

   ii. In no other way can a soul learn about the state and fruit of tears then by the desire to learn the Truth.

m. How there are five kinds of tears. (pp. 187-188)

   i. The five kinds of tears represent the souls passing through different states.

      1. Tears of the wicked men of the world—“tears of damnation” (p. 188).

      2. Imperfect tears caused by fear—abandon sin because of fear—“weep for fear” (p. 188).
3. Tears of those who abandoned sin—beginning to serve and taste Go—“weep for very sweetness,” however, because their love is imperfect so are their tears (p. 188).

4. Tears of those who have perfect love for the neighbor—“loving Me (God) without any regard whatsoever for themselves”—“weeping is perfect” (p. 188).

5. The fifth and fourth tears or joined. These are “tears of sweetness” that “fall with great peace” (p. 188).

ii. There are also “tears of fire”—those who wish to weep but cannot.

“And I wish thee to know that all these various graces may exist in one soul, who, rising from fear and imperfect love, reaches perfect love in the unitive state” (p. 188).

iii. All of the states of tears can be seen in one soul—the move from imperfect to perfect love for God.

n. Of the difference of these tears, arising from the explanation of the aforesaid state of the soul. (pp. 189-196)

i. The tears are connected to each stage of the soul—the journey from imperfection to perfection.

1. Tears for fear of penalty.

2. Tears from the heart.

3. Tears with love for God and the neighbor.

4. Tears of the blessed and sorrowful.
5. Tears through self-knowledge (gained in love of the neighbor).

ii. Serve God through the neighbor.

1. Cannot return love to God because He has loved you without being loved Himself. Cannot repay Him, but can repay “His rational creature” (p. 194).
   a. In doing so fulfill God’s law—the first two commandments: Love God and Love thy Neighbor as yourselves.
   b. Nourish the soul in life, because you cannot the highest perfection of love in this life.

2. This perfection is a union with God.
   a. Perfection is not known until death because the soul cannot “attain to a higher perfection of love” in life (p. 196).

o. How the four stages of the soul, to which belong the five aforesaid states of tears, produce tears of infinite value; and how God wishes to be served as the Infinite, and not as anything finite. (pp. 197-199)
   i. The value of tears can be infinite.
      1. Tears come from the heart, which signifies that there is a desire from the soul.
         a. Desire is never-ending, so it is not fulfilled in this life.
b. “Thus is holy desire, which is founded in love, exercised, and with this desire the eye weeps” (p. 197).

c. In death the soul reaches God, so the desire is fulfilled.

i. “But when the soul is separated from the body and has reached Me, her End, she does not on the account abandon desire, so as to no longer yearn for Me or love her neighbor, for love has entered into her like a woman bearing the fruits of all other virtues” (p. 197).

ii. In death the soul reaches the Supreme Good-happiness.

2. God wishes to be served by infinite service.

a. “The only infinite thing you possess is the affection and desire of your souls” (p. 198).

b. This infinite desire is united in the tears.

c. “No tongue can tell what different sorrows may cause them” (p. 199).

p. Of the fruit of the worldly men’s tears. (pp. 199-203)

i. Tears of the first class of men.

1. First class men make a god out of material things.
a. Damaging to the soul.

b. Place self-love above love of God.
   
   i. Everything that grows from the tree of self-love is corrupt
   
   ii. This man lives in misery
   
   iii. “The soul who lives virtuously, places the root of her tree in the valley of true humility; but those who live thus miserably are planted on the mountain of pride…” (p. 200).

1. Because self-love is principle in this man’s life, his tears come from the pain he is feeling.

2. “Man is placed above all creatures, and not beneath them, and he cannot be satisfied or content except in something greater than himself. Greater than himself there is nothing but Myself, the Eternal God. Therefore I alone can satisfy him, and, because he is deprived of this satisfaction by his guilt, he remains in the continual torment and pain.
Weeping follows pain, and when he begins to weep the wind strikes the tree of self-love, which he has made the principle of all beings”’ (p. 203).

q. **How this devout soul, thanking God for His explanation of the above-mentioned states of tears, makes three petitions.** (pp. 204-206)

i. The soul asks God to explain three (3) points—“stumbling blocks” for the soul (p. 204).

1. “Come to Thee truly in the light, and not flee far in darkness away from thy doctrine” (p. 204).

   a. “When a person desirous of serving thee, comes to me, or to some other servant of Thine to ask for counsel, how should I teach him?” (p. 204).

      i. God’s reply above: ‘I am He who takes delight in few words and many deeds.’

      ii. Satisfy God by taking action.

   b. “Explain further the sign which Thou didst say the soul received on being visited by Thee—the sign which revealed Thy Presence” (p. 205).

2. The soul makes these petitions because they are seen as “stumbling blocks” for the soul.

r. **How the light of reason is necessary to every soul that wishes to serve God in truth; and first of the light of reason in general.** (pp. 206-210)
i. “The light of reason in general”

1. Three lights issue from God (The True Light):
   a. General light in those who live in “ordinary charity”
   b. The other two lights are in those who have abandoned the world and seek perfection.

2. The point: “Without the light, no one can walk in the truth” (p. 207).
   a. God is the light, so no one can walk in the truth without God.
      i. Within the “general light” there are two lights.
      ii. Need two lights to walk in truth that come from The Light (God) (God adds a third, which is not discussed in this section).
         1. The light of reason:
            a. Allows souls to know the nature of things in the world.
            b. Allows souls to see how fragile they are and the instability of the world.
            c. Light of faith (received through Baptism).
2. All people must possess this light, because without it the soul would be in damnation.

b. The light of holy faith is part of the intellect. It is “the pupil of the eye,” which allows the soul to see good and evil, to distinguish between virtue and vice (p. 209).

s. Of those who have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their own will; and of the second light, more perfect than the former general one. (pp. 210-212)

i. Once obtaining the “general light” the soul should continue to desire to growth, either in the “general light” (i.e. by the lights of reason and faith) or strive for the “perfect light.”

ii. Reaching the perfect light leaves imperfect completely behind and the soul becomes perfect.

iii. There are two kinds of perfection in the perfect light:

1. With the first kind of perfection the soul has placed their desire in the destruction of their own will. This soul acts “with true knowledge of themselves and of Me, with great humility, and wholly conformed to the judgment of My Will, and not that of the will of man” (p. 211).

2. With the second kind of perfection the soul is “truly humble and not presumptuous” that God gives everything
through love, and “with love and reverence” she receives everything from God. This is what the second state “does” (p. 211).

t. Of the third and most perfect state, and of reason, and of the works done by the soul who has arrived at this light. And of a beautiful vision which this devout soul once received, in which the method of arriving at perfect purity is fully treated, and the means to avoid judging out neighbour is spoken of. (pp. 213-221)

i. Those in the third state are perfect in every way.

1. This is the united state

2. Reference, again, to the only way to the Father is through the Son

   a. “Rise up then, promptly, and follow Him, for no one can reach me, the Father, if not be Him (Jesus);

      He is the Way and the Door by which you must enter into Me, the Sea Pacific” (p. 215).

   b. Love for God is pure without motives or interested tied to the love. Perfect Light

   c. There are two things necessary to arrive at the union.

      i. The soul unites to God without “medium” – Participates in God’s Purity.
ii. The soul does not judge the will of man even if they can see “mortal sin.”

ii. In order to reach purity the soul must beg of God three (3) things:

1. That the soul be united to God by affection and love—To love God and know what He has given the soul.

2. With the “eye of the intellect” see the affection of God’s love—To know that the souls (they) are loved by God.

3. “In the will of others to discern My will only” (p. 220). Not to discern peoples will as good or evil, but to know that others are present to let you know God in one way or another. The will of others and part of Gods will.

u. In what way they, who stand in the above-mentioned third most perfect light, receive the earnest of eternal life in this life. (pp. 221-222)

i. This soul has a sense of perfection, but will not have The perfection until they arrive at God.

ii. Another reminder that happiness is not attained until death.

v. How this soul, rendering thanks to God, humiliates herself; then she prays for the whole world and particularly for the mystical body of the holy Church, and for her spiritual children, and for the two fathers of her soul; and, after these things, she asks to hear something about the defects of the ministers of the holy Church. (pp. 223-226)
i. The soul humiliates herself through the recognition that she is imperfect and that God has shown her Perfection.

ii. Prays for the whole world, particularly the Church, so that His ministers and other souls may recognize this Perfection.

w. **How God renders this soul attentive to prayer, replying to one of the above-mentioned petitions.** (pp. 226-227)

   i. God satisfies the soul’s petition for the Whole World, and particularly the mystical body of the holy Church.

      1. The soul has learned God’s Truth.

      2. States that the soul should: “Apply thyself attentively to pray for all rational creatures, for the mystical body of the holy Church, and for those friends whom I have given thee, whom thou lovest with particular love, and be careful not to be negligent in giving them the benefit of thy prayers, and the example of thy life, and the teaching of thy words, reproving vice and encouraging virtue according to thy power” (pp. 226-227).

   ii. The soul will receive what the soul is fit to receive according to God; not the self.

x. **Of the dignity of the priests; and of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ; and of worthy and unw worldly communicants.** (pp. 227-234)

   i. God replies to the soul’s petition for the ministers of the holy Church
ii. The priest is a minister of the holy Church.

1. Administers of the Sun (i.e. God, and The Body and Blood of Christ).
   a. The metaphor of the Sun is used because just like the natural sun light and heat cannot be separated. With this Sun God and Jesus cannot be separated—a perfect union in both cases.
   b. Priests receive this grace so that they distribute it to others.

2. The Sun is received in the Sacrament.
   a. Gestalt example: “The whole of God and the whole of man cannot be separated under the white mantle of the host; for even if the host should be divided into a million particles (if it were possible) in each particle should I be present, whole God and whole Man” (p. 230).
   b. Cannot just receive the Sacrament (it alone is without light—uses the candle metaphor); you must receive it with Love—goes back to God created man out of love. Through Baptism the soul is able to receive this love.

3. The unworthy soul.
a. The soul who take the Sacrament without true contrition or confession.

b. This soul feels nothing when taking the Sacrament.

y. How the bodily sentiments are all deceived in the aforesaid Sacrament, but not those of the soul, therefore it is, with the latter, that one must see, taste, and touch It; and of a beautiful vision this soul has upon this subject. (pp. 234-238)

i. Bodily sentiments are deceived—The soul must see, taste and touch.

1. “‘How is this Sacrament to be truly tasted, seen and touched?’” (p. 235).

2. “‘With what eye is It to be seen?’” (p. 235).
   a. With the eye of the intellect.
   b. The eye is the “principal means of vision” (237)

3. “‘How dost thou touch It?’” (237)
   a. With the hand of love.
   b. “The soul touches Me with the hand of love, as if to certify to herself that which she has seen and known through faith” (p. 237).

4. “‘How dost thou taste It?’” (p. 237).
   a. Holy desire.
b. “The corporal palate tastes only the savour of the bread; but the palate of the soul, which is holy desire, tastes God and Man” (p. 237).

z. **Of the excellent state of the soul who receives the sacrament in grace.**

   (pp. 238-239)

   i. Grace remains in the soul after receiving the Sacrament.

   ii. Specifically, grace remains in God’s charity, the mercy of the Holy Spirit, and the wisdom of Jesus Christ (p. 238).

aa. **How the things which have been said about the excellence of this Sacrament, have been said that we might know better the dignity of priest; and how God demands in them greater purity than in other creatures.** (pp. 239-241)

   i. The priests are installed by God to administer the Body and Blood of Christ; therefore, God demands purity in them.

   ii. If the priests are “cruel” to themselves, then they are being “cruel” to others (p. 241).

bb. **Of the excellence, virtues, and holy works of virtuous and holy ministers; and how such are like the sun.** (pp. 241-254)

   i. Speaks of the holy life of some of His ministers.

   ii. Those “who are like the sun” (p. 241).

      1. Each minister is placed in different ranks.

      2. Each minister is to administer the “the grace of the Holy Spirit” (p. 242).
a. Ministers cannot administer with “the light of grace” (p. 242) alone.

b. To receive the light of grace the minister must receive the “warmth and color of grace” (p. 242), and the three parts of the soul [as discussed above] must be united.

c. Once receiving the light ministers administers in two ways:
   
i. Actually through the Sacrament.

   ii. Spiritually through Love.

   1. Receiving light and administering both actually and spiritually the minister fulfills their position.
      
a. God provides examples, including Augustine and Aquinas living their life in light demonstrating “true and perfect humility” (p. 244).

   b. God also discusses the “prelates,” which include all high ranking members of the clergy—priest, bishops, cardinals, etc.
i. The prelates are important in this section because they are placed in this position by God “placed in the prelacy of Christ on earth, offered Me the sacrifice of justice with holy and upright lives” (p. 245).

ii. “The pearl of justice” is shown in them— the “light of discretion” (p. 245).

3. At the same time, God recognizes that there is a “lack of the light of justice” in the Church.

i. If the minister is not correct, then the minister cannot correct others.

ii. This is the case if the minister is still rooted in self-love. It is out of servile fear the minister does not that by “holy justice they
would be able to maintain it (correction)” (p. 247).

1. “In such as these are fulfilled the words spoken by My Truth, saying: ‘These are blind and leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch’” (p. 248).

2. Goes back to God creating man without being loved, but that we have the free-will to act.

3. “It is true that I desire you to use your being, and exercise the grace which I have bestowed upon you, with the light of reason, because thou I created you without your help I will not save you without it” (p. 251).

iii. Ministers must answer God’s call (their vocation) and “exercise it with care and profound humility with true and real virtues” (p. 253).

c. A brief repletion of the preceding chapter; and of the reverence which should be paid to priests, whether they are good or bad. (pp. 255-258)
i. Reverence should be given to priest whether they are good or bad, because they have been anointed by God and administers to others the sun—the Sacrament.

ii. Man should be displeased by their sins and hate them, but also continue to love and pray for them to be “re-clothed” (p. 257).

iii. God will give them mercy if they will receive the prayers and correct their ways.

iv. God will be the ultimate decider; however, if the priest chooses not to correct their ways, then at last judgment God will condemn them to damnation.

dd. Of the difference between the death of a just man and that of a sinner, and first of the death of the just man. (pp. 258-264)

i. Struggles are different of the soul of a just man and a sinner.

ii. The deaths of a just man and a sinner are different.
   1. A just mans death is more or less peaceful according to the perfection of their soul.
   2. The just man dies peacefully because they got rid of their enemies during their life.
   3. The just man receives grace.

iii. “Each one is measured of the affection of love according as he has measured to me” (p. 264).

ee. Of the death of sinners, and of their pains in the hour of death. (pp. 264-273)
i. The death of a sinner is “terrible and dark” (p. 264).

1. During a sinners life they are “unfaithful” to God and place self-love above loving God, and loving their neighbor.

2. If a man during his life does not repent his sins or grieve for his offences against God, then he is sentenced to eternal damnation.
   a. God’s mercy is greater than all sins; therefore, it is displeasing to God that man would consider his sins greater than His mercy.
   b. “Despair is that sin which is pardoned neither here nor hereafter, and it is because despair displeases Me so much that I wish them to hope in My mercy at the point death, even if their life have been disordered and wicked” (p. 268).
   c. “So that the one, that is to say, the just man, who has lived in ardent charity, exults in joy, while the wicked man is darkened and confounded in sorrow” (p. 271).

ii. Man is blinded.

1. Particularly the ministers.
   a. “Their is the fate of the false Christian, who is placed in Hell in greater torment than a pagan,
because he had the light of faith and renounced it, while the pagan never had it” (p. 272).

b. For the same sins as Christians theirs are punished more severely, because ministers are chosen by God to administer the Sacrament—the holy sun.

ff. **How this devout soul, praising and thanking GOD, made a prayer for the Holy Church.** (pp. 274-280)

   i. The soul seeing everything in the world, again, prays for the world and the holy Church.

   ii. The soul does this because she recognizes what a “wretched and sorrowful soul” (p. 278) she has.

      1. A reiteration of God’s creation of man.

      2. “Re-create them to Grace in Thy mercy and the Blood of Thy Son sweet Christ Jesus” (p. 280).

IV. **Treatise of Obedience**

   a. **Here begins the treatise of obedience, and first of where obedience may be found, and what it is that destroys it, and what is the sign of a man’s possessing it, and what accompanies and nourishes obedience.** (pp. 281-285)

      i. Where can obedience are found?

         1. “Find it in its completeness in the sweet and amorous Word, My only-begotten Son” (p. 281).
2. In Jesus you find patience “perfectly accomplished” (p. 284).

ii. What destroys obedience?

1. Look to the “first-man” (i.e. Adam).

2. Pride—produced by self-love and the need to please his companion (i.e. Eve) (p. 281).

iii. What is the sign of a man who possesses obedience?

1. One has patience (p. 282).

2. Cannot be obedient without being patient—the two are united.

3. Impatience is a sign that you do not have the virtue of obedience.

iv. What accompanies and nourishes obedience?

1. No one can reach eternal life that is not obedient (p. 282).

   a. When Jesus died He left the “key of obedience” (p. 283).

   b. Goes back to the fact that the only way to God is through the Son (which is mentioned in this section too).

2. True humility feeds obedience, because humility is tied to charity love.

3. Jesus accompanies humility and patience, which leads to obedience
a. The sister of obedience is patience.

b. A virtue.

4. Self-love accompanies pride and no humility, which leads to disobedience.

   a. The sister of disobedience is impatience.

   b. A vice.

b. How obedience is the key with which Heaven is opened, and how the soul should fasten it by means of a cord to her girdle, and of the excellence of obedience. (pp. 285-290)

   i. “The whole of your faith is founded upon obedience, for by it you prove your fidelity” (p. 285).

   ii. In general to obey the Law

      1. Love God above anything else (1st Commandment)

      2. Love your neighbor above yourself (2nd Commandment)

   iii. Following this “principal commandment” is being obedient.

      1. How should the soul fasten obedience by means of a cord to her girdle? The cord of self-contempt.

      2. This soul does not despise man, rather praises man.

   iv. Obedience is excellent.

      1. Obedience contains all the other virtues.

      2. “She (obedience) is conceived and born of charity on her founded the rock of the holy faith” (p. 288).
c. **Here both the misery of the disobedient and the excellence of the obedient are spoken of.** (pp. 290-292)

i. States: “By My providence the Word repaired the key of obedience” (p. 290).

1. The disobedient: “What is the reason of all this, and of such blindness that prevents them recognizing this treasure?”
   a. Self-love.
   b. Pride.

2. The obedient: “What has placed them in so blessed a state?”
   a. The blood of the Lamb (p. 291).
   b. The obedient observe the Law—“Love God above all things, and love thy neighbor as yourself” (p. 291).

d. **Of those who have such love for obedience that they do not remain content with the general obedience of precepts, but takes on themselves a particular obedience.** (pp. 293-294)

i. Those who take on a particular obedience become “observers of the counsels both in deed and in thought” (p. 293).

ii. This section sets the stage for a discussion of particular obedience.

1. General obedience and particular obedience are NOT divided.
2. Particular obedience is simply more perfect than general obedience.

e. How a soul advances from general to particular obedience; and of the excellence of the religious orders. (pp. 294-301)

   i. The soul advances to particular obedience by the same “light” as reaching general obedience.

   1. Through perseverance and learning God’s truth.

   2. Continuing to looks for ways to pay her/his debt to the Lord. A debt created by Christ’s crucifixion.

   3. The metaphor of the “ship” used to illustrate the soul who perseveres.

      a. “This ship is rich, so that there is no need for subject to think about his necessities either temporal or spiritual, for if he is truly obedient, and observes his order, he will be provided for by his Master, who is the Holy Spirit, as I told thee when I spoke to thee of My providence, saying that though thy servants might be poor, they were never beggars” (p. 296).

      b. These souls rig their ship with the three (3) ropes of obedience, continence and true poverty.

   ii. The excellence of the religious orders is illustrated through discussion of specific figures including, Francis, Dominic,
Aquinas, Peter, and Paul. These figures are exemplars of excellence in religious orders.

f. Of the excellence of the obedient, and of the misery of the disobedient members of the religious orders. (pp. 302-311)

i. Place self-hatred as a “servant in his soul” to get rid of the enemy, which is self-love (p. 302).

ii. This soul’s spouse is obedience, its mother charity, and sister patience.

iii. Enemies.

1. Chief enemy is self-love, which produces pride (the enemy of humility and charity).

2. Other enemies:

   a. Impatience of patience.

   b. Disobedience of true obedience.

   c. Infidelity of faith.

   d. Presumption and self-confidence do not equal true hope—true hope is found in God.

   e. Injustice of justice

   f. Intemperance to temperance

3. “These are a man’s enemies, causing him to leave the good customs and traditions of his order” (p. 306). Goes onto describe other “cruel enemies” (p. 306).
iv. Conversations of a “truly obedient” man are good and perfect no matter who he is talking to (a just or not just man) (p. 308).

1. “‘And in order that he may better keep to the path of humility, he submits to small and great, to poor and rich, and becomes the servant of all, never refusing labour, but serving all with charity’” (p. 310).

2. Obedient for God; not the self.

g. How the truly obedient receive a hundredfold for one, and also eternal life; and what is meant by this one, and this hundredfold. (pp. 312-314)

i. The soul leaves behind everything for God’s love.

1. The soul receives a hundred as much God.

2. God explains that a hundred is a perfect number and cannot be added to except by beginning at one, again.

ii. The soul also receives eternal life.

h. Of the perversities, miseries, and labours of the disobedient man; and of the miserable fruits which proceed from disobedience. (pp. 314-320)

i. The disobedient man dwells in the ship with pain.

ii. Everything for the disobedient man is contrary to what it is for the obedient man.

iii. The disobedient man disobeys the three vows of obedience, voluntary poverty, and continence.
iv. Produce fruit of death on a tree of self-love. All of his affections are corrupted.

v. His key of obedience that would have once opened the door to heaven now opens the key of disobedience and opens the door of hell (p. 320).

i. **How God does not reward merit according to the labour of the obedient, nor according to the length of time which it take, but according to the love and promptitude of the truly obedient; and of the miracles which God has performed by means of this virtue; and of discretion in obedience, and of the works and reward of the truly obedient man.** (pp. 320-325)

   i. The soul is not rewarded according to merit, rather the soul is rewarded according to the love the soul has for God. “The measure of your love” (p. 321).

   ii. Think about when God became a daily presence in your life.

   iii. Everything should be abandoned for the sake of obedience (p. 323).

j. **This is a brief repetition of the entire book.** (pp. 326-330)

   i. The soul made four (4) petitions of God.

      1. For self.

      2. Mercy to the world.

      3. Protect the Holy Church.

      4. For a particular individual.
ii. God is merciful—sent His only Begotten Son to rid original sin.

The Bridge is a representation of our salvation.

1. Bridge built on three (3) steps—the three (3) powers of the soul:
   a. The feet.
   b. The side.
   c. The mouth.

2. The steps represent the three (3) states of the soul.
   a. The imperfect state.
   b. The perfect state.
   c. The most perfect state—union with God.

3. The states connect to the three (3) judgments.
   a. In life.
   b. At death.
   c. The last judgment.

iii. Excellence of the ministers.

iv. Excellence of the sacraments.

v. States of tears.

vi. God’s providence—in general and particular.

vii. Perfection of obedience and imperfection of disobedience.

viii. God states: “I have manifested to thee My Truth” (p. 329).

1. The soul should never leave the “cell of self-knowledge” (p. 330).
2. The soul’s task is to follow in Christ’s footsteps.

k. **How this most devout soul, thanking and praising God, makes prayer for the whole world and for the Holy Church, and commending the virtue of faith brings this work to an end.** (pp. 330-334)

i. By the “light of faith” the soul has acquired wisdom “in the wisdom of the Word—Thy only begotten Son” (p. 333).

ii. “Grant that my memory may be capable of retaining Thy benefits” (p. 332).

1. So everything that has been made known to this soul be manifested in her memory.

2. That she lives her “mortal course with true obedience and light of only faith” (p. 334).

iii. The soul thanks and praises God for enlightening her through showing the soul the true ways to reach eternal life (e.g. reflecting on the self).

iv. The soul is “clothed” in the Eternal Truth (p. 330).

v. Prays for everyone and for the sake of the Church.