

# *Guide to Saint Catherine's Dialogue*

An understanding of the structure of the *Dialogue* illuminates the vitality of Catherine's spirituality and suggests its relevance for contemporary Christian life.

Benedict Ashley, O.P.

THE *Dialogue*<sup>1</sup> of Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church, is one of the chief classics of spirituality, yet most readers find it difficult to understand. After struggling with it myself, I would like to offer some helps for those just beginning to study it.

The first problem is that we have only one modern English translation and this, by Algar Thorold, dates from 1896. Sufficiently accurate, its style is ponderous, burdened with *Thees* and *Thous* and long, entangled sentences. Even this translation is available in most libraries only in the abridged edition of 1906, and in print only in the still more drastically abridged edition of 1943, reprinted in 1970.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore Thorold followed the traditional division of the work in the Italian editions into treatises on divine providence, discretion, prayer, and obedience. Today scholars are agreed these divisions are the inept work of later editors and only serve to obscure the true structure of the work and confuse the reader.<sup>3</sup>

Besides these editorial difficulties, most modern readers are likely to be put off by Catherine's often prolix and exclamatory style, and

Fr. Ashley is a professor at Aquinas Institute of Theology, Dubuque, Iowa, where he teaches a course in Dominican Spirituality.

above all by her medieval penchant for allegory, especially allegories of the "virtues and vices." I will try to give some help with these difficulties and to bring out the essential lines of Catherine's spirituality which, once understood, is vigorously alive and highly relevant to present-day Christian concerns.

#### BASIC STRUCTURE

Today critical historians generally admit the authenticity of the *Dialogue* (completed in October, 1378), but reject the claim that it was dictated by Catherine in ecstasy in the course of only five days.<sup>4</sup> It was probably composed by her over at least a year's time and is a fusion of a number of originally separate writings. The basic structure of the *Dialogue* is derived from a vision related by Catherine in a letter to Raymund of Capua, the spiritual director officially appointed for her by the Order of Preachers of which she was a member. Raymund became Master of the Order soon after her death.<sup>5</sup> Catherine says that in this vision she begged God for four things: (1) the reform of the Church; (2) the conversion of the world; (3) Raymund's spiritual needs; and (4) the conversion of a certain unnamed person deep in sin. She received an instructive answer to each petition. In the *Dialogue* all this is repeated, but the last petition (which probably by this time had been answered) is replaced by a petition for her own spiritual needs, and this is put in first place.

Many recent writers have followed P. Hurtaud<sup>6</sup> who argued that the theme of the entire work is the divine mercy and analyzed its structure as follows:

- Introduction (chap. 1)
- First petition and answer: Mercy for Catherine (chaps. 2-16)
- Second petition and answer: Mercy to the World (chaps. 17-97)
- Third petition and answer: Mercy to the Church (chaps. 110-34)
- Fourth petition and answer: Providence of Mercy (chaps. 135-65)
- Conclusion (chaps. 166-67)

This scheme seems very neat, but Guiliiana Cavallini<sup>7</sup> has shown that Hurtaud's outline is inadequate and artificial for two reasons. (1) the *Dialogue's* central theme is God's *truth* rather than his *mercy*. In all four petitions Catherine pleads for a deeper understanding, an enlightenment of the "eye of faith." (2) Each of the four petitions

receives not one but two answers, the first brief and the other much elaborated. Cavallini demonstrates that, while the basic design of the *Dialogue* is based on the four petitions with four brief answers enclosed in an introduction and a conclusion, Catherine has also inserted into this framework of her vision a number of other "treatises," probably composed previously, since some of them have parallels in various letters of hers.<sup>8</sup> Catherine somewhat forcedly made these separate treatises function as second, more detailed answers to the four petitions, already briefly answered in the basic framework. The reader should refer to the diagram (adapted from Cavallini) which I will now explain.

#### PRAYER FOR SELF-UNDERSTANDING

In her vision Catherine makes four petitions to God the Father (chap. 1) and then, while she eagerly awaits the Father's answers, she offers her whole being to him to prepare herself to receive his truth in faith (chap. 2).

The Father does not keep her waiting but immediately responds to her petitions, though only briefly (chaps. 3-20). In answer to her first petition, made for her own spiritual needs, he answers that he is entirely satisfied by her offering of herself in love, since with him love alone counts (chap. 3). In answer to the second petition for the needs of the Church, he replies he will reform the Church if only those who truly love him will offer themselves courageously in prayer and penance for that renewal (chaps. 13-15). The third petition, made for the whole world, the Father answers with a promise to show mercy to all his creatures in virtue of the prayers of the faithful (chaps. 16-18). The final petition which Catherine made—that the Father should extend his loving care to every single creature and especially to her "spiritual father" (evidently Raymund of Capua)—is answered by God's telling her to urge Raymund to work courageously for the spiritual good of others as his sole concern (chaps. 19-20). This undoubtedly refers to the reform of the Order of Preachers, which had lost its first fervor and had become disorganized by the ravages of the Black Death. Raymund, through Catherine's inspiration, was actually to undertake this reform when he became Master of the Order.

This Part A (along with the conclusion in chap. 167) forms a complete work in itself. However, evidently Catherine decided to expand it

by adding other units of material. She regularly refers to the work as "my book" and she probably wanted it to be as complete a presentation of her teaching as possible.<sup>9</sup> She achieved this by adding a number of short treatises, each quite complete in itself, in such a way that they constitute more lengthy and detailed expansions of the four brief answers of the framework. It is the ordering of this added material that somewhat obscures the structure of the *Dialogue*, although greatly enriching its content.

First of all Catherine added a treatise, "Doctrine of Discretion," to fill out the response to her first petition for her own spiritual needs and especially her need for self-knowledge (chap. 4-12) and fused it with this response. The theme of this treatise on self-knowledge is how God corrected Catherine's excessive reliance on corporal penance as a means for her spiritual growth. The Father carefully explains that while such penance is indispensable, spiritual growth takes place only through love grounded in humility. Moreover, that love must be "discrete," a discerning, understanding love enlightened by the truth of faith.

This important instruction is incorporated into Part A in continuity with the brief response to the first petition. Thus it is somewhat disconcerting to the reader to find a relatively lengthy answer to this first petition (chaps. 3-12) compared with the brief answers given to the other three (chaps. 13-15, 16-18, 19-20). Perhaps this was the result of Catherine's decision to depart from her original vision by dropping the last petition for an unnamed sinner, substituting a petition for herself and placing it first.

PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

In Part B Catherine orders a number of other treatises as the longer answers to the last three petitions, but again some confusion is caused because she now reverses the order of the answers to the petition for the world and the petition for the Church, without noting this change of order or giving any reason for it. I suspect that Catherine made this change because she saw that the discussion of the reform of the Church would be more intelligible if it followed rather than preceded the extensive discussion of salvation history which is given in the response to the petition for the world.

DIALOGUE OF SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA  
(numbers refer to chapters)

INTRODUCTION: Catherine's Four Petitions (1)  
Catherine's Self-Offering (2)

A. THE HEAVENLY FATHER ANSWERS THE PETITIONS

First Petition: For Herself: *Doctrine of Discretion* (3-12) 12-  
Summary  
Second Petition: For the Church (13-15)  
Third Petition: For the Whole World (16-18)  
Fourth Petition: For God's Providence Over All, especially her  
spiritual father, Raymund (19-20)

B. ELABORATION OF THE ANSWERS

*Doctrine of the Bridge* (21-87)  
21-22 The Bridge—its Three Steps  
23-24 The Vine and Workers in the Vineyard  
25-30 Explanation of the Bridge  
31-35 Evil Tree and Four Vices  
36-50 Three Judgments, Temptations, Thorns  
50-55 Three Steps and Three Powers of the Soul 55-  
Summary  
56-76 Mounting the Three Steps, Three States of the Soul  
78-85 Fourth State of the Soul  
*Doctrine of Tears* (86-97), Five Kinds of Tears, Four Winds  
*Doctrine of Truth* (98-109), Three Lights  
*Doctrine of the Mystical Body* (110-34)  
110-18 Dignity of Sacraments and Priests  
118-Summary  
119 Virtues of Priests  
120-Summary  
121-33 Sins of Priests  
134 Prayer for Reform of the Church  
*Doctrine of Providence* (135-53)  
*Doctrine of Obedience* (154-65)

CONCLUSION: Summary of Whole Book (166)  
Prayer of Praise (167)

This petition for the world receives its longer answer in the form of three quite distinct treatises only loosely connected with each other. The first of these (chaps. 21-87) is the longest section of the whole work. It is Catherine's salvation history and her Christology: "Doctrine of the Bridge." Its theme is that the salvation of the world can come through Christ alone, by his blood or sacrificial love. D'Urso has shown that this symbol of the bridge was almost certainly derived by Catherine from the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, which she probably knew from the translation of Dominic Cavalca, O.P. (c. 1270-1342), a spiritual writer whose *The Mirror of the Cross* was one of the most important influences on Catherine's thought.<sup>10</sup> Almost alone among her chief symbols, it is not directly biblical but a way of visualizing such biblical concepts as the way (John 14:6) and the mediator (I Tim. 2:5). In this single symbol Catherine has fused three other equivalent symbols which appear frequently in her letters: Jacob's ladder, the cross, and the tree of life.<sup>11</sup>

Catherine imagines this bridge to be one of those covered bridges seen in Tuscan cities which arches over a rapid and dangerous torrent and has little shops and taverns on either side of the thoroughfare. She uses it as a multivalent, allegorical parable for the doctrine of the Incarnation. Since the way to God was disrupted by Adam's sin, the incarnate truth is the only bridge that can join sinful humanity to God. To return to the Father we must pass over Christ, the bridge, taking three steps which correspond to the traditional three ages of the spiritual life. By these also we mount the cross and the tree of life to gather its fruits of eternity.

The first step takes us to Christ's wounded feet and is the stage of our Christian life when we obey God more out of fear than love. The second step arrives at Christ's wounded heart. Now we act out of love, but a love still mixed with selfishness, because we still lack perfect understanding. Meditation on the heart of Christ is a central theme in Catherine's spirituality based on her own mystical experience of the "exchange of hearts" by which Christ fulfilled for her the biblical promise to give his people "a new heart" (Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 3:3).<sup>12</sup> The third step is the mouth of Christ by which he speaks the truth and claims his bride with a nuptial kiss. There remains only a fourth and final step into eternal life in the presence of the Father.

Catherine sees with anguish that some refuse to cross the bridge of faith in Christ and foolishly try to swim the treacherous river beneath.

Sadly, she compares them to the fortunate ones who go over the bridge. These not only have safe passage, but refresh themselves on the journey by stopping at a tavern on the bridge-side for the food and drink of the Eucharist.

## OTHER PARABLES

Into this principal parable Catherine inserts others. In chaps. 23-24 she adapts the gospel parables of the vine (John 15:1-8) and the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16) to show that we must not only accept Christ's grace, but we must cultivate it, pruning it both that we may grow and that our neighbors in the vineyard of the Church may also have room to flourish. In chaps. 31-35 she uses another biblical symbol of the good and evil trees (Gen. 3; Jer. 17:5-8; Matt. 7:15-23) to show that spiritual health is manifested by the fruits we bear. The evil tree is rooted in self-love. Its higher branches are pride, its lower impatience and indiscretion. Its fruits are impurity, avarice, injustice, and envy.

These fruits are tested by three judgments: our own conscience aroused by the word of God, our judgment by God at our death, and the final judgment of the world by God at the end of history. God assures Catherine she should not fear the thorns of trial because, for those who love God, temptations are necessary for spiritual growth. Thus in "Doctrine of the Bridge" we have reflected in our individual lives a complete history of salvation from Adam to the new Adam, Christ, to his second coming at the last judgment.

To this treatise Catherine appends two others which further explain the two sides of spiritual growth: the affective or emotional side, and the cognitive or intellectual side.<sup>13</sup>

The former is treated in "Doctrine of Tears" (chaps 86-97), which deals with five kinds of emotion: (1) the servile fear of God suffered by those who refuse to follow Christ; (2) the servile fear of those who follow him but still only for selfish motives; (3) the consolations experienced by those who have begun to serve Christ out of pure love; (4) the compassion felt by those who love their neighbors for Christ's sake; (5) the perfect peace and joy of those finally united to God in love. She is told that what counts for spiritual growth is not mere feeling, "bodily tears," but deep spiritual longing, "tears of fire." She also hears of the "four winds of passion" which ceaselessly toss worldly

persons so they never can find rest or peace—the winds of success, failure, anxiety, and empty regret.

The other treatise, "Doctrine of Truth" (chaps. 98-109), deals with the more intellectual side of spiritual growth, namely, growth in self-knowledge. Consequently it is closely related to "Treatise on Discretion" in answer to the first petition (as Cavallini notes). Christ is the light of truth which is shared by his disciples in three degrees: (1) the faith received by all who are baptized; (2) the spiritual "discretion" or prudence gained by those who live a disciplined spiritual life; and (3) the wisdom achieved by those who are able to recognize the will of God in all the events of their lives.

Catherine then asks God for instruction on how she should counsel those who come to her for spiritual direction. She first asks what objective she is to follow in her counseling. God answers by repeating the advice he gave her in "Doctrine of Discretion": teach them to value love more than penance. Secondly, Catherine asks how to evaluate the spiritual growth of sincere Christians when some tell her they are experiencing great spiritual light, while others say they experience only great spiritual darkness. The Father cautions her not to jump to conclusions about either kind of experience, but patiently to await insight from God as to the true significance of such experiences in each individual case.

Finally, Catherine asks for the safest test of spiritual progress. The Father assures her that there is no sure sign of such progress except a profound inner peace which bears good fruit in active Christian living. Catherine completes this treatise with a prayer to God to give light and guidance to her two spiritual directors, presumably Raymund and the English Augustinian hermit, William of Flete.<sup>14</sup>

#### PRAYER FOR CHURCH RENEWAL

The next section of the book is "Doctrine of the Mystical Body," which constitutes the longer answer to her second petition, her prayer for the reform of the Church on the eve of the Great Western Schism (chaps. 110-34). To work for this reform had been Catherine's life work. The theme of the treatise is the wonder of the Eucharist and the other sacraments as the source from which the life of Christ flows into his body, the Church, making it his spotless bride (Eph. 5:25-27), cleansed and nourished by his sacrificial blood flowing from the heart of his

love. Nothing, therefore, is more necessary for the revitalization of the dying Church than good priests to minister these life-giving sacraments and to instruct them in the truth of the gospel. Then, in horror, Catherine hears the prophetic denunciation of the clergy of her time (chaps. 121-33), whose neglect of their ministry has led to the miseries of God's people, although she is assured that their sins do not render the sacraments inefficacious for those who continue to receive them in faith.

#### PRAYER FOR GOD'S CARE

The last two sections of the *Dialogue* provide the longer answer to Catherine's prayer for Raymund and for all the crises of the times in which she and Raymund are struggling. Quite naturally they center on the problem of the reform of religious life in which they are both engaged. The first of these two treatises is "Doctrine of Providence" (omitted from the 1906 and later English editions). It is a treatise on Christian hope, because it stresses God's loving care for the world which extends to every single person and every event of their lives, so that all things happen for the best for those who love God. God's loving care extends even to those dead in sin, as he sent the prophet Elisha to raise to life the widow's son, a type of Christ's own rising.

Catherine especially dwells on the role of Mary as a sign of God's providence for his children. The Eucharist is the sacrament of this same tender care. Catherine relates how once God showed this truth to her by giving her Holy Communion miraculously when the priests of the Church neglected her (chap. 142). Thus, if we accept the will of God in our lives, he provides for us in ordinary ways or, if all else fails, in extraordinary ways, while we are drawn into cooperation with his care for the world. When Peter obeyed the Lord he drew in a great catch of fish after his own efforts had failed. This treatise concludes with instruction on how Christian hope must be rooted in the spiritual poverty which Christ not only taught but lived. We might note that the virtue of chastity was prominent in "Doctrine of the Mystical body;" poverty is emphasized in this treatise; and a treatment of obedience naturally follows in the last treatise of the book, "Doctrine of Obedience" (chaps 154-65).

This final treatise applies the foregoing theme of cooperation with God's care of the world to a discussion of the religious obedience

which must be the foundation of the reform of the religious orders. Dominicans, in making religious profession, explicitly promise only obedience, because in their tradition this vow includes those of chastity and poverty. Catherine is true to this emphasis. We must not think, however, that for her obedience is a passive virtue principally concerned with the observance of the minutiae of religious life, stifling all originality and creativity. If this was her idea, then her life shows she was a striking failure in its observance!

For Catherine the model of obedience was the way in which Christ wholly gave himself to the mission entrusted to him by his Father "even to death on the cross" (Phil. 2:8). It is a cooperation with God's care for the world, in which the religious must turn away from selfish concerns to care for others and for God's work, employing every talent received from God to bring him a good return for his investment (Matt. 25:14-30).

Such obedience is required of every Christian. Catherine, in anguish over the Great Schism which was just beginning, calls for the unity of all Christians through fidelity to the pope as the symbol of Christ's continued presence in his Church. True obedience cannot be rooted in legalistic fear, however, but only in love. Love is the mother of obedience, patience in suffering its sister, and humility or true self-knowledge its nurse. Such obedience is the key of heaven given to St. Peter, which alone can open the way into the kingdom of God.

While obedience is necessary for all members of the Church, it is the very essence of the vowed life of religious men and women. A religious order is the Church in miniature. It is like the fishing boat of Saint Peter with the Holy Spirit as its captain. In a vision she sees Saint Benedict, who based his order on "discretion," Saint Francis who based his on poverty, and Saint Dominic who based his Order of Preachers on "the light of learning." Catherine sees her Order as "a broad and joyous way" whose charism is symbolized by the two saints who accompany Dominic, the only two of the Order other than the founder who had then been canonized: Thomas Aquinas, the theologian, and Peter Martyr, the courageous preacher.

However, it is the spirit of obedience in love, not the labor or time spent in religious life, which counts. Catherine emphasizes that the laity are often holier than religious because religious, unwilling to learn self-knowledge by constant meditation, soon grow worse than

they would have been if they had never taken vows. True obedience must be discrete, based on an enlightened discernment of the true purpose of the law, and not on its letter. Such discrete obedience enables us to be cooperators with God in his loving care of the world, so that we experience, even in the midst of all the activities and trials of the ministry, a profound peace in him whose power can never be frustrated.

The conclusion of the *Dialogue* is a summary of its contents (chap. 166) and then a magnificent hymn of praise (chap. 167) which reminds us of a great eucharistic prayer. In ecstasy Catherine thanks God for his care for all his creatures and for answering all her petitions. Above all, she praises God for the light of truth which is given to Christians in the faith. By this light she has come to recognize his care for her and for all whom she loves, and she has experienced the abiding peace promised through his Son. Like a river flowing to the sea, she finds herself mystically engulfed in the Trinity, "the Peaceful Ocean."

#### CATHERINE'S SPIRITUALITY

I believe that when the reader has grasped the structure of the *Dialogue*, the characteristic themes of Catherine's spirituality stand out in clear relief, revealed rather than concealed by her rich symbolism and her frequent repetition of the same ideas as she strives to show their interrelationships.<sup>15</sup>

For her the spiritual life is centered in Christ, who alone is the way, and in his heart, that is, in the sacrificial eucharistic love which led him to shed his blood to give life to his body, the Church, and the whole world. He is the incarnate Word, the very truth of God, who alone can give us the light of faith by which we recognize God as our Father, so that we can find our way to him. This truth in us is Christ's life-giving Spirit, who causes us to grow spiritually and renews the Church for the salvation of the world. Thus, for Catherine, the doctrine of the Trinity is not theological speculation but a practical reality, the experience in faith of God's active presence in our own hearts and in the events of history. To live by faith in the Trinity is to move toward eternal rest in the peace of God's overflowing life.

However, this light also produces in us a profound humility of self-knowledge. We come to see who we are and what our goal is. This insight implies also a mission and a ministry from God. We cannot love

and serve God except by loving and serving our neighbor with the same identical love by which we love him and by which he cares for us and all his creatures. Christian living entails heroic labors and sufferings ("sweat," "blood," and "tears" are favorite expressions of Catherine); yet it consists essentially not in these but in selfless love and service of others, which alone give value to our crosses. This love for our neighbor is cooperation with God's fatherly love for all his creatures, however sinful; and our obedience to him is not a narrow way of arbitrary rules but a "broad and joyous way" enlightened by spiritual understanding and beatified by our share in God's generosity. Consequently, our life begins and ends in contemplation of God's truth, but it must bear fruit in a courageous work undertaken by the power of his Spirit for the renewal of his Church and the evangelization of his world.

To me, Catherine's spiritual teaching is more relevant for our times and closer to the heart of the gospel than that of many other mystics, even some of the greatest. She is little concerned with imaginative meditations on the Lord's life, like Bridget of Sweden or Henry Suso; nor with metaphysical speculation, like Meister Eckhart; nor with the psychological phases of dark nights and inner illuminations, like Ruysbroeck, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross. Although her life is filled with extraordinary experiences and crises both within and without, yet none of this is central to her spirituality. What concerns her is to gaze with the "eye of faith" into the clear light of the gospel and, by this light, to work ceaselessly for the renewal of the Church, of the world, and of those dear friends who have need of her.

## NOTES

- 1 A disciple of Catherine, Stefano Maconi, gave it the title "Dialogue" in the foreword of his Latin translation. Another disciple, Christifano di Gano Guidini, called it "The Book of Divine Teaching." It was also called "Book of Divine Revelation" and (especially appropriately I think) "Book of God's Care," i.e., providence. On these titles, see the edition of Matilde Fiorilli, 2nd ed. (Bari, 1928), p. 409-12.
- 2 There is a Renaissance translation by Dane James under the title *The Orchard of Syon* (London: W. de Worde, 1519), which I have not seen. The only modern translation is *The Dialogue of the Seraphic Virgin Catherine of Siena*, translated from the Italian by Algar Thorold (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Tuber, 1896), republished in abridged form (omitting chaps. 135-65, the "Treatise on Providence") in 1907 by the same publishers and by Benziger in New York City, and reissued by Burns, Oates and Washburne (London) and Benziger (New York) in 1925. This was further drastically abridged by Westminster Press, Maryland, in 1943 and reprinted in Rockford, Ill., by Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. (the last is still in print). This most abridged edition has no enumeration of chapters, but omits the following chapters: 12, 16-20, 23-24, 46-49, 55-56, 67-72, 76-79, 86, 90-91, 94-96, 102-7, 114-18, 121-30, 133, 135-53.

- 3 Alvaro Grion, O.P., *Santa Caterina da Siena* (Brescia-Cremona: Morcelliana, 1953), pp. 167-74.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Letter 272 (Tammaseo ed.). It can be found as Letter CCXXII in the edition of P.M. Lodovico Ferretti, O.P., *Lettere di S. Caterina Siena* (Siena: Tipografia S. Caterina, 1927), 4: 176-96.
- 6 *La dialogue de Sainte Catherine de Sienna*, traduction nouvelle de l'italien par le R.P. J. Hurtaud (2 vols.; Paris: Lethellieux, 1931).
- 7 "La struttura del Dialogo cateriniano nella edizione francese del 1913 e in quelle italiana del 1968," *Rassegna di ascetica e mistica* 21 (1970): 343-353. Her edition of the *Dialogue* was published in 1968 (Rome: Edizioni Catheriniane).
- 8 E. Dupré-Thesider, "Sulla composizione del Dialogo di S.C. da S.," *Giornale Stor. D. Lett. Italiana* 117 (1941): 161-02.
- 9 See Arrigo Levasti, *My Servant Catherine* (Westminster, Maryland: Westminster Press, 1954), chap. 110, "The Book," p. 281-11.
- 10 Giacinto D'Urso, O.P., "Il pensiero di S. Caterina e le sue fonti," *Sapienza* 7 (1954): 335-88. The passage in Gregory the Great is in *Dialogorum*, lib. IV (Migne, P.L., 77, cols. 384-86).
- 11 See Gabrielle Anadol, "Le immagini del linguaggio cateriniano e la loro fonti: La Scala," *Rassegna di ascetica e mistica* 23 (1972): 332-43.
- 12 Angelus M. Walz, O.P., "Il segreto de cuore di Cristo nella spiritualità cateriniana," *Studi Domenicani* (Rome, 1939).
- 13 It is noteworthy that chap. 166, the summary of the whole book, mentions the doctrine of tears only very briefly and omits any reference to the doctrine of truth. This treatment of these two doctrines shows that they do not play an essential role in the central argument of the book, but are like appendices.
- 14 However, Innocenzo Taurisano, O.P., in his edition *Dialogo della divina provvidenza* (Rome: Lib. Ed. Ferrari, 1947), p. 264, n. 2, identifies the other director as Tommaso della Fonte, who was Catherine's confessor before Raymund. There is good reason to think, however, that Flete exercised a very important influence on Catherine. See the article of M. Benedict Hackett, "Guillaume Flete" in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1964) vol. 6, cols. 1204-07; Levasti, *op.cit.*, p. 152-54.
- 15 On the basic themes of Catherine and the critical problems as regards their sources, see D'Urso, *op.cit.*, and Maxim Gorce, O.P., "Catherine de Sienna (Sainte), *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. II, cols. 1327-48.