# *Hope in the Good Life*

**St. Catherine of Bologna/Kathy Florence**

# In humble service

Over the centuries, the Church has named many saints as patron saints of artists: St. Luke, Blessed Fra Angelico, and St. Hildegard to name just a few. But one saint that might not immediately come to mind is a fifteenth-century cloistered nun named St. Catherine of Bologna. When taking a closer look at this gifted and humble saint, it doesn't take long to see how her creative spirit, talents and struggle with doubt make her a saint that artists can relate to.

St. Catherine was born on Sept. 8, 1413, in Bologna, Italy to an aristocratic family. When she was 11, her father, a diplomat to the Marquis of Ferrara, sent her to court to be a companion to the Marquis' daughter, Princess Margarita. Ferrara was becoming a cultural center, and so the young girls had an excellent education in music, literature, painting, and dancing. This is when Catherine discovered her deep love of art. Then, at 14, she became a Franciscan Tertiary, an order of lay women who followed the ways of St. Francis. A few years later, dissension in the community led Catherine and others to join the Poor Clares, a contemplative order founded by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

In spite of her aristocratic background and education, Catherine willingly served in the more humble roles at the convent, including laundress, baker, and caretaker to the animals. She continued in her artistic pursuits, playing the viola, painting religious pictures (her painting of St. Ursula hangs today in a gallery in Venice), copying and illuminating her breviary, and writing spiritual guides and poetry.

St. Catherine was a humble servant whose artistic talents elevated not just her faith, but the faith of those who looked upon her art.

Kathy Florence has a love of art, and of the mission of Catholic Social Serv-

**Last year our volunteers provided 16,860 hours of service to our Auburn, Hastings, Imperial and Lincoln sites**

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### In humble service (continued)

ices. "I have been blessed to work with CSS in various ways for many years in Auburn. Its mission to perform the works of mercy is so important." Kathy has always been attracted to mosaic art, and about 13 years ago, she began creating mixed media mosaics. "The desire to learn how to mosaic in a more traditional way was always on my mind, however. In 2015, I was able to find a one-day workshop in Kansas City with an amazing artist. I learned a few of the basics and then dove right in!"

Kathy is now using her talents to help those we serve at our Auburn location. We are blessed to have several of her beautiful creations for

sale at our St. Francis Gift & Thrift. "My decision to donate to CSS in this way is, in a small way, my thanks to God for his gifts to me. Auburn has been a wonderful place to raise our three children and I'm pleased to have found a way in which to give a little back."

Those who purchase one of her items receive more than just a beautiful work of art. "My time designing a mosaic often turns into prayer for the future owner of that piece." We're honored to have several of Kathy's beautiful items for sale in our Artist's Corner at St. Francis Gift & Thrift in Auburn. Thank you, Kathy, for using your talents to help our neighbors across southern Nebraska!

### CSS Hastings

## Give Hastings Day set for May 5th

Mark your calendar- the 9th annual Give Hastings Day takes place on Thursday, May 5th. We are excited to again be a part of this important event. Your gift to CSS on Give Hastings Day will help us serve our neighbors in need through our Hastings regional site. Keep watching csshope.org for more details.

**Learn more about Kathy by listening to our latest Hope in the Good Life Podcast episode. Just scan this QR code!**