

Bernardine of Siena and John Capistran appeared in Italy : St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Catherine of Siena shone like torches from heaven in the rôle they played in these events. In France a humble maiden, not sufficiently known by Christians, Colette, was the instrument that God used to confound the proud and give strength to tottering religious life in the fifteenth century.

Colette Biolet was born in the year 1381, when her mother was sixty years old, and up to that time barren. The miraculous nature of her birth foretold sufficiently the high destinies of the child. Though of humble birth and, like her Divine Master, the daughter of a carpenter, she had from her tenderest years a deep knowledge of Christian virtues, and she gave practical proof of her love of God. Prayer and mortification were her pastime, and instruments of penance, her playthings. She learned on the knees of her mother to meditate on the Sacred Passion, and in the same school she acquired a devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. So deeply set was her love for Our Lord in the Sacrament of His love that she doubled her respect and reverence for her mother on the days she saw her going to Holy Communion.

Colette was for a long time undecided as to her calling, and she could see nowhere the perfection her soul longed for. She became a sort of recluse in her own home in Picardy, and passed her days and nights in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. An opening in the wall of her cell enabled her to see the tabernacle where her Well-Beloved dwelt a prisoner. Numerous revelations made to her doubled the fervor of her prayers and the rigor of her austerities. She offered herself, innocent and pure that she was, a victim of expiation for the sins of the world. In a vision, Our Lord appeared to her just as He was when He was presented to the Jews by Pilate. He even vouchsafed to instruct her in all the details of His Sacred Passion and made her realize the immensity of His sorrows.