



Born to Greek Orthodox parents, and baptized in that tradition. She was a shepherdess in her youth, spending her solitary hours in prayer, and began to have visions of the Christ child. When she was 12 years old, the visions were followed by an odd desire to travel to the town of Cattaro, Dalmatia (modern Kotor, Montenegro) where she felt she could pray better. Her mother arranged a position for Catherine as a servant to a wealthy Catholic woman who allowed the girl as much time as she wished for church visits. In Cattaro, Catherine converted to Roman Catholicism.

In her late teens she felt a call to live the hard, spiritual life of an anchoress. Though she was very young for such a calling, her spiritual director had her a walled up cell built near Saint Bartholomew's church in Cattaro. She later moved to a cell at Saint Paul's church, and became a Dominican tertiary, taking the name Osanna in memory of Blessed Osanna of Mantua; she would follow the Dominican rule for the next 52 years. A group of Dominican sisters took up residence near her, consulted her for guidance, sought her prayers, and considered her their leader; there were so many that a Dominican convent was founded for them.

In her tiny cell she received many visions including the Christ as a baby, Our Lady, several saints, and demons who opposed her prayer life. Satan appeared once in the guise of Mary; she knew it was the devil when the vision tried to get her to give up the religious life. When the city was attacked by the Turks, the towns people credited their deliverance to her prayers. Tradition says that her prayers saved the city from the plague.