

Saint Catherine of Genoa

Part 4

1448 - 1510

PURGATORY

The famous *Treatise on Purgatory* of Saint Catherine of Genoa continues:

“10. But the souls of Purgatory conform their will in everything to the will of God. And thus God responds to them with His Goodness, and they remain satisfied, as for their will, and purified from original and actual sin as for their guilt. Those souls remain as purified as when God created them. And for having passed from this life repented for all the sins committed and having confessed them, with the will not to commit them anymore, God immediately forgives their fault, and only the rust of sin remains with them, from which they then purify themselves through pain in the fire. And in this way, purified from every fault and united to God in will, they see God clearly according to the degree that He makes Himself known; and they see also how important is the enjoyment of God, and that the souls have been created for this end. Moreover they find such a uniting conformity with their God, which pulls strongly to Him (because of the natural instinct of the soul towards God), that there cannot be given reasons, figures or

examples sufficient to clarify this thing, in the way that the mind actually feels it and understands it by inner feeling. Nevertheless I will mention one that comes to my mind.

11. If, in the whole world, there were only one loaf of bread, which had to alleviate the hunger of all the human creatures, and that only by seeing it, the creatures were to be satisfied; since a human creature has by nature, when healthy, the instinct of eating, if he would not eat, and he could neither become sick nor die, that hunger would keep increasing; because the instinct of eating never leaves him. And the person knowing then, that only the said bread can satisfy him, and, by not having it, he could not alleviate his hunger, and therefore he would remain in unbearable pain. And the more he would draw near that loaf of bread and not being able to see it, the more his natural craving would increase; his instinct would focus him entirely on this bread, where all his happiness would be found. And if he were certain of never seeing that bread, at that moment he would have achieved Hell, like the damned souls, who are



deprived of all hope of ever seeing their bread that is God, the true Savior. But the souls of Purgatory have hope of seeing this bread, and satisfying themselves completely in it. Therefore they suffer hunger and are in pain, only until they will be satisfying themselves of that bread, Jesus Christ, true God, and Savior, and our Love.”

Saint Catherine was born in Genoa in 1448 and was gifted by God of great mystic graces. At the age of sixteen she was given in marriage to Giuliano Adorno, belonging to an important Ghibelline family. She led a frivolous and worldly life but after an encounter with her sister, a nun, she decided to change her lifestyle. Around herself she gathered a small group of spiritual children. She died on September 15, 1510.

