

# Saint Catherine of Genoa

Part 2

1448 - 1510

PURGATORY

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

“4. I do not think that contentment can be found to compare with that of a soul in Purgatory, except that of the Saints of Paradise. And this contentment increases every day, through God’s influence in these souls, which increases because its impediment is consumed. The rust of sin is the impediment; and fire consumes the rust: and thus the soul exposes itself ever more to the Divine influence. Therefore since something that is covered cannot respond to the reflection of the sun, not due to a defect of the sun, which shines continuously, but for the resistance of the cover, then if the covering will be consumed, the thing will be exposed to the sun. And the more it will respond to the reflection, the more the covering will be increasingly consumed. Thus the rust (that is sin) is the cover of the souls; and in Purgatory it is consumed in the fire; and the more it is consumed, the more it responds to God, the true sun. But contentment grows as much as the rust diminishes, and the soul then is exposed to the Divine rays. And in this way as one increases the other diminishes, until the time is finished. However pain is not diminished, but the pain remains only for the established time. And as expected from the will of those souls,

they can never say that those pains are punishments: so satisfied they are with the plan of God, with which their will is united in pure charity.

5. Nevertheless they suffer such an extreme pain, that there is no tongue that can explain it, nor intellect that can understand even a smallest spark of it, if God were not to show it through a special grace. That spark God showed to this soul through grace; but I cannot express it with my tongue. And this sight that the Lord showed me, has never left my mind. I shall tell you what I will be able to; and those to whom the Lord will decide to open the intellect, will understand.

6. The root of all sufferings is sin, either original or actual. God created the soul pure, simple, and spotless from every stain of sin, with a certain beatific instinct towards Himself; but the inherited original sin draws away the soul from this instinct. Then when actual sin is added, it separates the soul even further; and the more it strays away, the more malevolent it becomes; since God corresponds less. And because all the good that can exist is through the participation of God. To the irrational creatures, He responds as He wills and as He has ordained, and He never fails them; but



to the rational soul He responds to the extent in which He finds it purified from the impediment of sin. Therefore, when a soul is approaching the original pure and spotless state of its creation, its beatific instinct becomes exposed, and thus it increases, with such force, and with such vehemence of fire of charity (drawing the soul to its ultimate purpose) that it appears an unbearable thing to be hindered, and the more it sees, the more extreme is its pain.”

