

St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church

THE DIALOGUE OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA: A TREATISE OF DISCRETION

14. How this soul wondering at the mercy of God, relates many gifts and graces given to the human race.

Then this soul, as it were, like one intoxicated, could not contain herself, but standing before the face of God, exclaimed, "How great is the Eternal Mercy with which You cover the sins of Your creatures! I do not wonder that You say of those who abandon mortal sin and return to You, 'I do not remember that you have ever offended Me.' Oh, ineffable Mercy! I do not wonder that You say this to those who are converted, when You say of those who persecute You, 'I wish you to pray for such, in order that I may do them mercy.' Oh, Mercy, who proceeds from Your Eternal Father, the Divinity who governs with Your power the whole world, by You were we created, in You were we re-created in the Blood of Your Son.

'Your Mercy preserves us, Your Mercy caused Your Son to do battle for us, hanging by His arms on the wood of the Cross, life and death battling together; then life confounded the death of our sin, and the death of our sin destroyed the bodily life of the Immaculate Lamb. Which was finally conquered? Death! By what means? Mercy! Your Mercy gives light and life, by which Your clemency is known in all Your creatures, both the just and the unjust. In the height of Heaven Your Mercy shines, that is, in Your saints. If I turn to the earth, it abounds with Your Mercy. In the darkness of Hell Your Mercy shines, for the damned do not receive the pains they deserve; with Your Mercy You temper Justice. By Mercy You have washed us in the Blood, and by Mercy You wish to converse with Your creatures.

...'Your Mercy constrains You to give even more to man, namely, to leave Yourself to him in food, so that we, weak ones, should have comfort, and the ignorant commemorating You, should not lose the memory of Your benefits. Wherefore every day You give Yourself to man, representing Yourself in the Sacrament of the Altar, in the body of Your Holy Church. What has done this? Your Mercy. Oh, Divine Mercy! My heart suffocates in thinking of you, for on every side to which I turn my thought, I find nothing but mercy.

'Oh, Eternal Father! Forgive my ignorance, that I presume thus to chatter to You, but the love of Your Mercy will be my excuse before the Face of Your loving-kindness."

(dictated to St. Catherine while in a state of ecstasy in the year of Our Lord 1370)