

## St. Catherine of Siena on the Sacrament of Holy Communion

*St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) was an incredible Italian laywoman whose feast day is celebrated on April 29th. She had mystical visions of Christ as young as the age of six, and despite not having any formal education, carried on hundreds of correspondences with people ranging from popes to political figures to peasants on matters of the spiritual life and theology. She was hailed a Doctor of the Church in 1970 for her perennial contributions to the Catholic Church's understanding of the spiritual life. Her main writing is "The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena," conversations she dictated to her secretaries when in a state of mystical prayer with God. The following is an excerpt from this book on the topic of Holy Communion, adapted from <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/catherine/dialog.iv.iv.xxiv.html>.*

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You receive the whole Divine Essence in that most Sweet Sacrament concealed under the whiteness of the bread; for as the sun cannot be divided into light, heat, and color, the whole of God and the whole of man cannot be separated under the white mantle of the host; for even if the host should be divided into a million particles (if it were possible) in each particle should I be present, whole God and whole Man. When you break a mirror the reflection to be seen in it is not broken; similarly, when the host is divided God and man are not divided, but remain in each particle. Nor is the Sacrament diminished in itself, except as far as may be in the following example.

If you have a light, and the whole world should come to you in order to take light from it—the light itself does not diminish—and yet each person has it all. It is true that everyone participates more or less in this light, according to the substance into which each one receives the fire. I will develop this metaphor further that you may the better understand Me. Suppose that there are many who bring their candles, one weighing an ounce, others two or six ounces, or a pound, or even more, and light them in the flame, in each candle, whether large or small, is the whole light, that is to say, the heat, the color, and the flame; nevertheless you would judge that he whose candle weighs an ounce has less of the light than he whose candle weighs a pound.

Now the same thing happens to those who receive this Sacrament. Each one carries his own candle, that is the holy desire, with which he receives this Sacrament, which of itself is without light, and lights it by receiving this Sacrament. I say without light, because of yourselves you can do nothing, though I have given you the material, with which you can receive this light and feed it. The material is love, for through love I created you, and without love you cannot live. Your being, given to you through love, has received the right disposition in holy baptism, which you receive in virtue of the Blood of the Word, for, in no other way, could you participate in this light; you would be like a candle with no wick inside it, which cannot burn or receive light, if you have not received in your souls the wick which catches this Divine Flame, that is to say, the Holy Faith, which you receive, by grace, in baptism, united with the disposition of your soul created by Me, so fitted for love, that, without love, which is her very food, she cannot live. [...]

It is true that the soul becomes more or less lighted according to the material which it brings to the fire; for although you all have one and the same material, [...] each of you may grow in love and virtue by the help of My grace, as may please you. Not that you change the form of what I have given you, but that you increase your strength in love, and your free will, by using it while you have time, for when time is past you can no longer do so. So that you can increase in love, as has been said, coming with love to receive this Sweet and Glorious Light, which I have given you as Food for your service, through My ministers, and you receive this Light according to the love and fiery desire with which you approach It.

### Parish Eucharistic Adoration Times

First Friday of the month: 5 pm to 7 pm  
Saturdays (w/ Confessions & Rosary): 2 pm to 3:30 pm

*If you would like to contribute a Eucharistic reflection, testimony, book review, etc. to our Eucharistic Revival announcements, please contact us at [ImmaculateConceptionERC@gmail.com](mailto:ImmaculateConceptionERC@gmail.com).*



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