

# Saint Catherine de' Ricci

1523 - 1590

PURGATORY

Saint Catherine de' Ricci had the gift of knowing the state of the deceased and she made various trips, in spirit, to the afterlife. The fame of her ecstasies reached even outside the monastery in Prato where she lived, and many faithful came to her to ask for news of their deceased relatives.

Numerous were those who turned to the Saint in order to know these things about their beloved departed. To each one she responded not to satisfy the thirst of their curiosity, but to promote suffrage. To Brother Timothy, out of obedience, she gave a list of the names of people whom she saw ascend into Heaven. But her zeal was not limited to that, because she offered herself to the Lord to take upon herself the sufferings that Phillip Salviati, great benefactor of the monastery of Saint Vincent Ferrer in Prato, was supposed to endure in Purgatory. Here is how the event is narrated: "She obtained from her spouse Jesus, to be able to do Purgatory for his soul, for which she endured forty continuous days of such intense pain for the rest of her life; and her flesh was all covered by blisters, she could not be touched

because she was scorching hot, in her cell room it seemed that there were flames for the great heat felt in there, when she drank it seemed that her mouth and tongue were frying like a pan on the fire. The doctors were stupefied by this illness, not seemingly possible to them this sort of infirmity, so that in the end, compelled by obedience, she confessed that she was doing Purgatory for a great benefactor."

Saint Catherine de' Ricci was born in Florence on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1523. At five years old she was left a motherless orphan and became entrusted to the care of her aunt, the Abbess of the Benedictine Monastery of Monticelli. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1535, she entered the Dominican Monastery of Saint Vincent Ferrer in Prato. After various mystical experiences and visions, the first Thursday of February of 1542 began in her the ecstasies of the passion. From noon on Thursday to four in the afternoon on Friday, she relived – every week – for twelve years, all of the events of the Passion of Christ. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1542 she received the stigmata. She died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1590.

