

# Corpus Christi

*This is the beginning of a letter Saint Catherine wrote to her niece [Noffke, Letters v. iv]:*

In the name of Jesus Christ crucified and of gentle Mary.

Dearest daughter in Christ gentle Jesus,

I Caterina, slave of the servants of Jesus Christ, am writing to you in his precious blood. I long to see you enjoying the food of angels. You were made for nothing less, and God ransomed you with the blood of his only-begotten Son so that you would be able to enjoy this food.

But reflect, dearest daughter, that this food is eaten up high, not on the ground. This is why God's Son wanted to be lifted up on the wood of the most holy cross, so that we might eat this food up high, at this table. But you will ask me, "What is this angelic food?" My response is that it is God's desire within us, which draws the desire within our heart to itself so that God's desire and ours are joined as one. This is a food which, while we are pilgrims in this life, catches the fragrance of the virtues roasted in the fire of divine charity and eats them at the table of the cross. I mean that we acquire virtue painfully and with hard work, by trampling underfoot our selfish sensuality in order to capture the realm of our soul with force and violence, the realm that is called heaven because God lives there by grace.

It is a food that makes our soul angelic, and this is why it is called angelic—but also because, as our soul is separate from our body, we taste God in his essence. It so satisfies our soul that we neither long for nor are able to desire anything except whatever will most perfectly keep this food for us and make it increase, and whatever opposes it we hate.