

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING by S. Casarotto 11/16/08

The Stigmata of St. Catherine of Siena

On April 1, 1375, Catherine, while in Pisa, received the stigmata from the Crucifix above the altar of the church of St. Christine. Fr. Raimondo of Capua, her spiritual director, testified: "Catherine came to the city with others. Among whom myself, and was hosted in the house of a nobleman which was near the chapel of St. Christian. In this chapel, on the 4th Sunday of Lent, upon the request of Catherine, I celebrated Mass. As soon as she received the Eucharist, he entered into ecstasy. We waited for her to come back to her senses so that we could receive, as usual, some words of spiritual comfort, when suddenly we saw her body, which lay prostrate, rise slowly and, leaning on her knees, she extended her arms and hands as her face became radiant. After she remained rigid for a while, her eyes closed, we saw Catherine fall suddenly to the ground as if she had been mortally wounded. Soon after she came back to her senses. Then Catherine called for me and with a soft voice she said: 'Father, know that by the mercy of God I am now carrying on my body the wounds of Christ.' I asked her how all this happened. She replied: 'I saw the Lord nailed to the Cross coming toward me with a great light and my soul was so taken by the desire to go toward Him that my body was lifted up. Then, from His wounds I saw 5 rays of light strike my hands and feet and side. Realizing what was happening, I cried out: 'Oh, my Lord, I beg You not to allow these wounds to be visible'. As I was saying this, before the rays touched me, they changed from red to bright color and in the form of pure light they touched my hands and feet and side.'" The following Sunday, Fr. Raimondo asked Catherine: "Do you still feel the pain of those wounds?" She answered: "No, those wounds do not cause me any more pain, rather they bring to my body a great strength and comfort." St. Catherine carried the stigmata until she died in 1380, age 33.

ONE EVENING in 1353, St. Catherine was returning home with her little brother Stephen from visiting their sister Bonaventura. All of a sudden, high above the Church of St. Dominic on the upper part of the city of Siena, Jesus appeared in pontifical vestments, together with St. Peter, St. John and St. Paul. Later, St. Catherine said this prayer: "*O God, you once gave us the light of the Apostles; now, in this hour of darkness, we need even more Your light. Send us again St. Paul to enlighten the world.*"