

Rose was very generous and caring with others. For example, she took seriously Jesus' calling to care for the poor, but she also knew she had a duty to be at home and tend to her grandmother. So, she would bring poor and orphaned children home and there tend to their needs. She said, "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus. We must not stop helping our neighbors because in them we serve Jesus."

People who were sick and in need of care began coming to see Rose, who had a room set up with a little statue of the Child Jesus, to whom she had a great devotion. Rose believed very strongly in the power of the name of Jesus, and here she would pray in his name with the sick people who came to her. Because of the many miraculous healings that occurred, the little statue became known as El Divino Doctorcito (the Divine Little Doctor).

Amid an intimate prayer life, Rose lived every day for fifteen years spending one or two hours daily in what is called the Dark Night of the Soul. During these times she suffered a feeling like hell, that she was lost, even rejected by God, and that no one would hear her prayers. What kept her going was her resolution of will; she always remained completely determined to say, "Thy will be done, O Lord."

Around 1614, Rose was put under examination by the Inquisition because of all the miracles, visions, and prophecies she was known for among the people. In the end, they confirmed that she was a holy woman who had deep communion with God.

In 1617, Rose became very sick, and died on August 24. She was laid to rest in her habit in the church of St. Dominic. She was canonized as a saint on April 12, 1671. Her earthly remains are now entombed in St. Rose of Lima Church, built on the site of her birthplace.

Socials with the Saints
PILGRIM CENTER of HOPE | Guiding People to Christ
PilgrimCenterofHope.org | 210-521-3377

Sources include Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, Florence Mary Capes' *St. Rose of Lima: The Flower of the New World* & Dominican Fr. John G. Arintero - (1) is a direct quotation.



St. Rose of Lima

Born: 20 April 1586 at Lima, Peru

Died: 24 August 1617 at Lima

Canonized by Clement X in 1671

Feast Day: 23 Aug (24 Aug in Lima)

Patronage: of gardeners & florists, embroiderers, people ridiculed for their piety; against vanity; of the Americas, Peru, India, the Philippines

Maria de Oliva, a Spanish woman with some indigenous Peruvian ancestry, bore a daughter in Lima, Peru, and named her Isabel after the baby's godmother (whether an aunt or grandmother is not entirely clear). Maria's husband, Gaspar Flores, was a Spanish immigrant by way of Puerto Rico. He was a master scribe who translated from the native Peruvian language, Quechua. Thus, Isabel would have learned the history of the ancient Incans from him.

It is said that one of her indigenous nurses called her 'my little Rose' as a pet name, but the name did not catch on until one day when she was laying in her crib and suddenly a beautiful rose seemed to appear in her little face—so remarkable that it attracted many onlookers in the house. From that time on, she was known as Rose.

This, however, caused a rift in the family because she had been named after her godmother. Her godmother insisted on calling her Isabel, while everyone else—even the bishop who confirmed her, called her Rose. Rose was very embarrassed of the family turmoil which stemmed from the nickname. One day, she went to church to pray about this, and she experienced a tremendous peace. She heard in her heart a message of the Virgin Mary, who told her that Jesus was very pleased with the name of Rose, and asked her to add the name of Mary to her name. After this experience, Rose embraced her name and was known as Rosa de Santa Maria (Rose of St. Mary).

As a girl, Rose enjoyed playing and tending to plants in the family garden. Instead of the usual games, she preferred to play church, or to sing songs to Jesus that she would make herself. She learned guitar

and brought it into the garden to sing. Rose also learned embroidery, and was handy with a needle and thread. Her parents were pleased with these qualities, which would make her more attractive for marriage. Her mother liked to adorn Rose's outward beauty by making her floral crowns to wear.

Rose, however, was uncomfortable with such attention to her outward appearance. She was concerned about vanity, and preferred to ensure her interior beauty by doing penances. For example, she loved eating fruit, but because she loved it so much, she thought it was one of the best things she could give to others; she did. In prayer once, she saw Christ appearing to her and asking her to keep a strict diet of abstaining from eating meat. Soon after this experience, she became ill. When she started gaining health again, doctors ordered her to eat meat. However, she grew worse. Because of this, her family accepted that Rose should continue her strict diet of going without meat. It was after this that she regained her health again.

In fact, Rose is one of those rare people who lived for years on only bread and water, and for some time only on the Eucharist. To our modern ears this might sound extreme, and in a way, it is; probably none of us are called to live in such a way. However, it seems God calls a few rare individuals like Rose to show us in a physical way, the spiritual reality that it is ultimately God who sustains us.

As with other girls of her age and social class, Rose was expected to learn to read and write, but she became frustrated at her difficulty with this, as it kept her from her from spending more time in prayer and devotion to Jesus. So, she asked Jesus to teach her—and the next time her mother attempted to teach her, she was shocked to find that Rose immediately knew how to read and write!

When Rose's family went to live where it was often very cold, she became ill, and her mother grew so desperate to heal her that she followed a folk remedy of tightly wrapping Rose in an animal skin. Rose obediently went along with her mother's wish, even though the binding caused her terrible skin inflammation. When she was finally unwrapped, her mother was horrified at the state of Rose's skin, and asked why she hadn't spoken a word about her being in pain. Rose only replied that she had wanted to do her mother's will.

At age sixteen, Rose's attention was spent on caring for her ailing father and grandmother. She created beautiful lacework to sell to the nobility, to support her parents and ten siblings.

Naturally, Rose's family wanted her to find a husband who would take on such responsibilities, but Rose was determined to live out a promise she had made to Jesus from her childhood, that she would belong only to him. Her role model was St. Catherine of Siena, who in Italy had advised nobles and even popes. On August 10, 1606, Rose became a Dominican tertiary like Catherine, meaning that she lived as a single woman but followed the spiritual life of the Dominican religious order.

Shortly after St. Rose of Lima had been clothed in the Dominican habit, our Lord presented Himself to her to be espoused with her, but He came in the guise of a sculptor and He charged her to fashion certain blocks of marble. Since she was not able to perform such an arduous task, she excused herself to Him by saying that she knew very well how to sew and spin, but to sculpture stones, she was not able. Then He showed her an immense workshop where a great multitude of young women was employed at the same task. With great ease and zeal they were wielding, not a needle, but a chisel and hammer. That their work might be accelerated..., they watered them with many tears. Some of the stones were yet to be finished, but others were sculptured with such finesse and delicacy that not the slightest defect could be seen in them. In the midst of such lowly labor the young women were decked out in their best finery but, instead of being soiled with dust, they were resplendent with supernatural beauty. We are those hard stones, filled with impurities and roughness, which must be worked and polished with great care. All of us are called to the same task of working and watering with our sweat and tears this unpolished stone of our nature in order to change it into a masterpiece in which the image of Jesus Christ shines forth perfectly.¹

Rose took this task very seriously. She made for herself a silver crown of thorns, which she wore to understand what Jesus suffered. She also rubbed peppers and lye on her skin when it appeared clear, to mar her appearance and ensure that vanity would not take hold in her heart. She experienced an invisible stigmata, which are the wounds that Christ suffered in his crucifixion. She experienced the pain, but there were no visible, physical signs of stigmata.