

Lives of Saints

St Rose of Lima

1568 - 1617

Feastday: 23rd August



“Lord, increase
my sufferings,
and with them
increase Your
love in my
heart.”

St Rose of Lima

My real name was Isabel, but I was such a beautiful baby that I was called Rose, and that name remained. As a child I had great reverence and love for all things relating to God. This so took possession of me that I gave up my life to prayer and mortification. I had an intense devotion to the Infant Jesus and His Blessed Mother, and I spent hours before their altar. I was scrupulously obedient and hardworking, and I always concentrated on my studies, and on my domestic work.

After reading the life of St. Catherine I was determined to take that saint as my model. I began by fasting three times a week, adding secret severe penances, cutting off my beautiful hair, wearing coarse clothing, and roughening my hands with hard work. All this time I had to struggle against the objections of my friends, the ridicule of my family, and the censure of my parents. I received the Blessed Sacrament daily and I spent many hours praying at the altar. I finally decided to take a vow of virginity. At the outset I had to combat the opposition of my parents, who wanted me to marry. It took me ten years to win their consent and be able to continue my mission.

At around this time great temptations assailed my purity and faith, causing me terrible agony of mind and desolation of spirit, and urging me to more frequent mortifications. However, Our Lord manifested Himself daily, consoling me with his presence, filling my soul with such inexpressible peace and joy as to leave me in ecstasy for hours.

When I was twenty, I received the habit of St. Dominic. Thereafter I redoubled my penances. I offered all my mortifications and penances in expiation for offences against His Divine Majesty, for the idolatry of my country, for the conversion of sinners, and for the souls in Purgatory.

I was beatified by Pope Clement IX, in 1667, and canonized in 1671 by Clement X, becoming the first American to be so honoured.

