

Saint Rose of Lima
1586 - 1617

Born to a family of eleven children in Lima, Peru, in the year 1586, she was christened "Isabella," but was commonly called "Rose." Rose was noted for her beauty. She resisted her parent's efforts to have her marry. Rose practiced great austerity, taking St. Catherine of Sienna as her model. Hearing others comment on her beauty, and fearing lest it should be an occasion of temptation to anyone, she used to rub pepper on her skin so as to disfigure it with blotches.

When her parents found themselves in difficult circumstances due to a failed business venture, Rose helped by working all day in the garden. In addition, she would sew late into the night. To strengthen herself in her resolve not to marry, she took a vow of virginity. She also became a member of the Dominican Third Order. She experienced mystical gifts and visions of such an extraordinary nature that a commission of priests and doctors was appointed to examine her. The commission decided that these gifts were of supernatural origin. Stories of Rose's holiness spread and her simple garden became the spiritual center of the city. When earthquakes struck the city, her prayers were credited with sparing the city of Lima.

God favored Rose with many graces, but she also suffered during fifteen years of misunderstanding and persecution from friends and others, and the even more severe trial of interior desolation and anguish in her soul.

When she died on August 29, 1617, she was scarcely thirty one years old. The chapter, senate and other honorable dignitaries of the city carried her body to the grave. She was canonized by Pope Clement X in 1671. Rose of Lima was the first canonized saint of the New World.

