

# Saint Rose of Lima

- Feastday: August 23
- Patron Saint of: embroiderers, gardeners, florists, those who suffer ridicule for their piety
- Birth: 1586
- Death: 1617
- Canonized: by Pope Clement X in 1671



*“Apart from the  
Cross  
there is no other  
‘ladder’  
by which we  
might get to  
heaven.”*



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Saint Rose of Lima was born to parents of Spanish descent in Peru. She seems to have taken Catherine of Siena as a model, in spite of the objections and ridicule of parents and friends. From an early age, Rose wanted to become a nun. But as a young woman, her beauty began to attract suitors and her parents wanted her to marry. In order to make herself unappealing for marriage, she cut her hair very short and rubbed pepper on her face to make disfiguring blotches. She faced intense opposition from her parents when she tried to enter a convent. In obedience, she spent the next ten years at home, working in the garden by day and sewing by night to help financially support her parents. Eventually, at age 20, she became a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic and her father gave her a room to herself in their garden where she could live a life of prayer, solitude, and penance.

Rose kept herself cloistered in her room, spending long periods in prayer, only leaving to receive the Eucharist. It was said she slept only two hours per night, on a bed covered with shards of broken pottery, so as to have more time for prayer. Out of love for God, she subjected herself to many painful and severe penances. She not only wore a hair shirt but also a thick circlet of silver on her head, studded on the

inside, like a crown of thorns. She was known to rub her lips with gall and chew bitter herbs to lessen her sense of taste. She quit eating meat and practiced intense fasting. During the last few years of her life, Rose set up a room in the house where she cared for homeless children, the elderly, and the sick. This was the beginning of social services in Peru. Rose died in 1617, at the age of 31. Her funeral was widely attended by many people in the city, and prominent men took turns carrying her coffin. Many miracles were reported after her death. She was the first saint to be canonized from the Americas.