

Saint Rose of Lima

1586 - 1617

PARADISE

Saint Rose of Lima and Louise Serrano, her closest friend, had promised each other to appear after death, with God's permission, and reveal the place where they were. St. Rose was the first to die. While Louise was resting in her parent's house, she was awakened by an extraordinary light which flooded the room. She had a vision of St. Rose ascending to Heaven, accompanied by a host of joyful angels.

Louise described her vision to some theologians of Lima and after a thorough examination; they declared the vision to be authentic.

Even a doctor John of Castiglia offered sworn testimony in a deposition that St. Rose appeared radiant in beauty and glory clothed in the Dominican Habit. Her Habit was covered in red and white roses; she held a branch of lilies and rays of light shone from her countenance and the flowers she was holding. "Rose spoke so tenderly to me - said the doctor - and stayed with me, telling me about the happiness she was enjoying. I'm unable to repeat all that she told me."

Saint Rose was born in Lima on April 20, 1586, the tenth child of thirteen. Her baptismal name was Isabella. She

was the daughter of a very noble Spanish family. When the family suffered a financial downfall, Rose was forced to help her parents provide for the daily necessities. She was finally compelled even to manual labor. From her earliest childhood she nourished a desire to consecrate herself to God in a cloistered life. Since it was impossible, she remained "a virgin in the world." She chose St. Catherine of Siena as her life's patron and joined the Dominican Third Order. She organized her maternal home as a place of refuge for the needy, caring for the abandoned children and the aged among the natives. In 1609, she chose to live in a hut built in the garden of her maternal home. It barely measured two square meters. She left it only to participate in the religious services. She spent the greater part of the day in prayer and conversation with God. She possessed many spiritual gifts and experienced many mystical visions. In 1614 she was compelled to join the household of the noble lady, Maria de Ezatequi. Weakened by her many penitential practices, she died on August 20, 1617, the feast of St. Bartholomew.

