



St. Rose Philippine Duchesne

Feast day: November 18th

Today we celebrate St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, an extraordinary missionary who founded the Society of the Sacred Heart in the U.S.

Born on August 29, 1769 in Grenoble, France, Rose was one of eight children in a wealthy, established family. She was educated by Vincentian nuns and joined a religious order at the age of 18. She began to aid and educate prisoners, the marginalized, and the poor during the French Revolution – a watershed event in modern European history that began in 1789 and ended in the late 1790s. Her care for these people put her in grave danger.

In 1804, she joined the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in France. For 14 years, Rose prepared for a mission. During this time, she founded the first Sacred Heart convent in Paris (1815). Yet, she still wanted a mission abroad. An opportunity presented itself around 1817 when a bishop recruited French nuns to establish schools for the Native Americans and French children in his diocese in Louisiana. She and four other Religious traveled to New Orleans in 1818, but she, ultimately, sailed up the Mississippi River to St. Louis. Rose opened a school in a log cabin in St. Charles, Missouri in September 1818. Although the school closed, she opened a school in nearby Florissant a year later.

Gracious God, you filled the heart of St. Rose Philippine Duchesne with charity and missionary zeal and gave her the desire to make you known among all peoples. Fill us, who honor her memory today, with that same love and zeal to extend your kingdom to the ends of the earth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Courtesy of [Society of the Sacred Heart: US – Canada](#)

Rose was not deterred by the difficulties she faced in the Midwest. Rather, she was energetic in her mission to educate and assist others. She served as both superior of her religious community and head of the school. When the community attracted new vocations and opened a novitiate, she found herself responsible for five convents. In 1841, Rose's desire to serve among the native people came to fruition when she went with three other Religious of the Sacred Heart to Kansas to teach the Potawatomi children, a Native American tribe based in Sugar Creek, Kansas.

Rose Philippine Duchesne died on November 18, 1852, at the age of 83. She was canonized July 3, 1988 by Pope John Paul II. The Society of the Sacred Heart has largely evolved and grown since her time; they are active in more than 40 countries and have various ministries in the education of girls and women, socio-educational works for the poor and marginalized, and spiritual outreach.

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, pray for us.

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