

# “A Great Cloud of Witnesses”

A Historical Series of the Murals on the Walls of Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Church

## Saint Rose of Lima

*17th Century South America*

In 1586, St. Rose was born to parents of Spanish origin in Lima, Peru. She had an intense devotion to the Infant Jesus and His Blessed Mother, before whose altar she spent hours. She read about St. Catherine of Siena and took that saint as her model. So, St. Rose began practicing extraordinary penances, such as fasting three days a week and cutting off her beautiful hair. She struggled against the objections of her friends, the ridicule of her family, and the censure of her parents.



Many hours were spent before the Blessed Sacrament, which she received daily. She was determined to take a vow of virginity, but her family strenuously objected. She fought for her desire for 10 years before her parents relented. During this time, she increased her penances to daily fasting, a perpetual abstinence from meat, and then the eating of only the coarsest food just sufficient to support life. She spent this time embroidering exquisite lace to support her home, and at night retired to a little hut in her family's small grotto where she lived in solitude and prayer.

She finally became a Third Order Dominican at age 20, and her penances increased all the more – she constantly wore a metal spiked crown, concealed by roses, and an iron chain about her waist. Days passed without food, and when she could no longer stand, she sought repose on a bed constructed by herself, of broken glass, stone, potsherds, and thorns. She admitted that the thought of lying down on it made her tremble with dread. Fourteen years this martyrdom of her body continued without relaxation, but not without consolation. Jesus revealed Himself to her frequently, flooding her soul with such inexpressible peace and joy as to leave her in ecstasy for hours. At these times she offered to Him all her penances in expiation for offences against His Divine Majesty, for the idolatry of her country, for the conversion of sinners, and for the souls in Purgatory.

St. Rose died in 1617 and was the first person in the Americas canonized a saint. She is the patron saint of South America and the Philippines.

**Her Feast day is August 23.**

Each month, this series will feature the murals painted on the walls of Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Church along with history and commentary. You can also find this series on our website at [www.hcscchurch.org](http://www.hcscchurch.org).  
*Historical commentary researched and prepared by Anthony Lickteig (Seminarian).*