

SAINT ROSE PHILIPPINE DUCHESNE

NOVEMBER 18

Introduction

Born August 29, 1769 at Grenoble and educated by the Visitation nuns at Sainte Marie d'en Haut, Rose Philippine Duchesne entered the Visitation community at the age of 17. During the Reign of Terror the community was expelled from France and Philippine returned home. After the Concordat of 1801, she and her companions attempted to rebuild their convent but were unsuccessful. In 1804 she persuaded Mother Barat, Founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to accept the convent of Sainte Marie, and Philippine and four others became postulants. She was professed in 1805.

In 1818, with four companions, she was sent to the United States of America to found the first American house of the Society, a log cabin at St. Charles, near St. Louis, Missouri. She opened the first American free school west of the Mississippi, received the first American postulant in 1820, and, by 1828 had founded six houses. In 1840, Rose Philippine Duchesne resigned as superior to devote herself, at the age of 71, to beginning a school for the Indians at Sugar Creek. Deteriorating health forced her to resign this much cherished work and on November 18, 1852, she died, having spent 34 years of her life extending the work of the Society as an international community.

Biographers of Philippine Duchesne have stressed her courage in frontier conditions, her single-mindedness in pursuing her dream of serving the Indians, her self-acceptance, and her contemplative presence which was so evident that the Indians called her the "Woman who prays always." A remarkable passage from her biography testifies to her ability to incorporate into her prayer a universal dimension not particularly common to nineteenth century devotions; in this passage she speaks of an all-night vigil before the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday. During the vigil she prayed that she might be sent as a missionary to America:

All night long I was in the New World, and I traveled in good company. First of all I reverently gathered up all the Precious Blood from the Garden, the Praetorium, and Calvary. Then I took possession of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Holding him close to my heart, I went forth to scatter my treasure everywhere, without fear that it would be exhausted. St. Francis Xavier helped me to make this priceless seed bear fruit, and from his place before the throne of God he prayed that new lands might be opened to the light of truth. St. Francis Regis himself acted as our guide, with many other saints eager for the glory of God. All went well, and no sorrow, not even holy sorrow, could find place in my heart, for it seemed to me that the merits of Jesus were about to be applied in a wholly new manner.

Philippine's openness to extending the mystery of Christ to a new world, in a manner which continues to be "wholly new" because as yet unexplored, is at the heart of her spirit. Whatever conditions have changed, her spirit continues to inspire those who have been touched by her life to proclaim Christ in a "wholly new manner" for every wholly new context.

Rose Philippine Duchesne was beatified in 1940 and canonized in 1988. Her feast is observed in the Society of the Sacred Heart on the day of her birth into eternal life.

Memorial of Rose Philippine Duchesne
(November 18)

Introductory Rites

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.

(Isaiah 52:7)

Opening Prayer

Gracious God,
you filled the heart of 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. Amen.

Alternative Opening Prayer

Lord God,
Master of our lives,
you led Rose Philippine Duchesne
from the silence of the cloister
to an intense apostolic life.
Through her intercession
enable us to respond to your call
with the same generosity
which she drew from the Heart of Jesus,
your Son, our Lord,

who lives with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings may be chosen from the Common of Virgins or the Common of Holy Men and Women.

Preferred readings in the Society of the Sacred Heart:

Isaiah 52:7-10
2 Cor. 5: 14-17
John 12:20-26

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord,
receive the gifts which we offer to you
on this feast of Philippine Duchesne.
As she held fast to you by prayer
and by the sacrifice of herself,
so draw us to yourself
through this sacrifice of praise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alternative Prayer over the Gifts

As we bring our gifts to the altar, Lord,
we beg of you:
fire us with the same burning zeal
which consumed Saint Philippine,
that we might celebrate these mysteries
with pure and undivided hearts.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preface

Preface may be chosen from the Preface of Virgins and Religious or the Prefaces of Holy Men and Women.

Communion Rite

All I long for is to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

(Phil. 3:10)

Prayer after Communion

Nourished by this banquet of life,
we ask you, Lord:
be as generous with us as you were with Philippine.
Keep us faithful to your desires for us
and zealous in establishing the reign of your Son
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Alternative Prayer after Communion

Lord our God,
through this communion
revive in us the passion of charity
and make us burn
with the same fire which devoured your servant
Philippine Duchesne
so that, like her,
we might labor for the coming of your kingdom.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.