

St. Rose of Viterbo (O.F.S.) [c. 1233 – March 6, 1251] (Feast Day: September 4)



(c. 1233 – March 6, 1251), was a young woman born in Viterbo, then a contested commune of the Papal States. She spent her brief life as a recluse, who was outspoken in her support of the papacy. Otherwise leading an unremarkable life, she later became known for her mystical gifts of foretelling the future and having miraculous powers.

Born of poor and pious parents, even as a child Rose had a great desire to pray and to aid the poor. When but three years old, she allegedly raised to life her maternal aunt. At the age of seven, she had already lived the life of a recluse, devoting herself to penances. She prayed much for the conversion of sinners. Rose was not yet 10 years old when the **Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have instructed her to enter the Third Order of St. Francis** and to preach penance in Viterbo, at that time under the rule of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor.

Rose was soon admitted to the Franciscan Third Order [**now known as the Secular Franciscan Order**] and adopted its religious habit, a simple tunic with a cord around her waist. While walking the streets with a crucifix in her hand, she would exhort others to be faithful to the Catholic Church. Rose attempted at age 15 to found a monastery. The effort failed and she returned to a life of prayer, penance and solitude in her father's home.

Rose is often depicted as a young woman wearing a crown made of roses and holding the cross that she used to explain the suffering of Jesus. She is the Patron Saint of people in exile, people rejected by religious orders, and Franciscan Youth.

Every now and then she would emerge from her solitude to entreat the people to do penance. Her mission seems to have lasted for about two years. In January 1250, Viterbo, her native city, was then in revolt against the pope. When Rose took the pope's side against the emperor, she and her family were exiled from the city and took refuge in Soriano nel Cimino. When the pope's side won in Viterbo, Rose was allowed to return.



On December 5, 1250, Rose allegedly foretold the speedy death of the emperor, a prophecy fulfilled on December 13. Soon afterwards she went to Vitorchiano, whose inhabitants, according to surviving reports, were affected by a supposed sorceress. Rose secured the conversion of all, even of the sorceress, reportedly by standing unscathed for three hours in the flames of a burning pyre.

Rose died on March 6, 1251, in her father's home. It was long believed that Rose had died of tuberculosis. In 2010, however, researchers examining her remains concluded that she had died of a heart condition called Cantrell's syndrome. Rose was canonized in 1457 achieving sainthood in only 18 years of life. *[Bold was added for emphasis and sometimes for clarification]*