

## Excerpts from Butler's *Lives of The Saints*

### **ST ROSE OF LIMA, VIRGIN (A. D. 1617)**

SHE was of Spanish extraction, born at Lima, the capital of Peru, in 1586, her parents, Caspar de Flores and Maria del Oliva, being decent folk of moderate means. She was christened Isabel but was commonly called Rose, and she was confirmed by St Toribio, Archbishop of Lima, in that name only. When she was grown up, she seems to have taken St Catherine of Siena for her model, in spite of the objections and ridicule of her parents and friends. Hearing others frequently commend her beauty, and fearing lest it should be an occasion of temptation to anyone, she used to rub her face with pepper, in order to disfigure her skin with blotches. A woman happening one day to admire the fineness of the skin of her hands and her shapely fingers, she rubbed them with lime, and in consequence was unable to dress herself for a month. By these and other even more surprising austerities she armed herself against external dangers and against the insurgence of her own senses.

Her parents having been reduced to straitened circumstances by an unsuccessful mining venture, Rose by working all day in the garden and late at night with her needle relieved their necessities. These employments were agreeable to her, and she probably would never have entertained any thoughts of a different life if her parents had not tried to induce her to marry. She had to struggle with them over this for ten years, and to strengthen herself in her resolution she took a vow of virginity. Then, having joined the third order of St Dominic, she chose for her dwelling a little hut in the garden, where she became practically a recluse. She wore upon her head a thin circlet of silver, studded on the inside with little sharp prickles, like a crown of thorns.

God favoured St Rose with many great graces, but she also suffered during fifteen years persecution from her friends and others, and the even more severe trial of interior desolation and anguish in her soul. The last three years of her life were spent under the roof of Don Gonzalo de Massa, a government official, and his wife, who was fond of Rose. In their house she was stricken by her last illness, and under long and painful sickness it was her prayer, 'Lord, increase my sufferings, and with them increase thy love in my heart'. She died on August 24, 1617, thirty-one years old. The chapter, senate, and other honourable corporations of the city carried her body by turns to the grave. She was canonized by Pope Clement X in 1671, being the first canonized saint of the New World.

### **ST SIGFRID, ABBOT OF WEARMOUTH (A. D. 690)**

WHILE St Benedict Biscop was away on his fifth visit to Rome his coadjutor abbot at Wearmouth, St Esterwine, died, and the monks, together with St Ceolfrid, coadjutor abbot of Jarrow, elected in his place the deacon Sigfrid. On Sigfrid's promotion and St Benedict's return to his monasteries both saints were stricken with sickness and had to take to their beds; they knew that death was upon them and wished for a last conference about one another's welfare and that of their monks. Sigfrid therefore was carried on a stretcher to Benedict's cell and laid on his bed, but they were too weak even to embrace one another unaided. After consultation with Sigfrid, Benedict sent to Ceolfrid and, with the approval of all, appointed him abbot of both monasteries, that so peace, unity and concord might be preserved. Two months later St Sigfrid died. He was buried in the abbey-church of St Peter beside his master, St Benedict, and his predecessor, St Esterwine.