

The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church

“Thus it is evident to everyone that all the faithful of Christ, of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness, as such, a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image, seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history.” (Lumen Gentium, p. 40)

Pamphlet Resources:

Catholic.org/saints

Austindiocese.org

St.thomasirondequoit.com/SaintsAlive

St. Mary di Rosa,

*You weren't afraid to take
new opportunities. It's
frightening when we are
asked to do something that is
different or new. We would
rather stay in our safe and
comfortable routines. Help
us to embrace each obstacle
in our path as a new
opportunity to serve God.*

Amen!



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**Evangelization and the Lives of the
Saints**

**St. Mary di Rosa
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Bravery is not a quality always ascribed to women. But when soldiers tried to break down the door of a military hospital in war-torn Brescia, Italy one night, it was a small but very determined woman who met them there with a large crucifix in her hands. Two sisters stood by her side carrying candles. Faced with such heroic faith, the soldiers turned and left the hospital, destroying nothing.

Such was the faith and courage of St. Mary di Rosa, born Paula di Rosa in 1813. Her father owned a textile mill, and at a young age Paula established a women's guild for the girls who worked there, offering them retreats and missions. She also took an interest in their physical welfare, and by the time she was twenty-four she was managing a home for those who had no place to stay. She had a faithful friend, Msgr. Faustino Pinzoni, who supported her in her spirituality and her good works.

St. Mary di Rosa had a practical personality which led her to always "take the bull by the horns". When a cholera epidemic hit Brescia, she just naturally turned her energies to serving the sick in a local hospital. Because she nurtured both the physical and spiritual sides of her patients,

she began to think about forming a religious order who would care for the sick. With the help of Msgr. Pinzoni and a close friend, Gabriela Borrati, she founded "The Handmaids of Charity." When war broke out, she and her small group of sisters once again proved their bravery by not only attending to wounded soldiers in the hospital, but also on the battlefield. Always fairly frail herself, she died at the relatively young age of 42.

Below are some thoughts on incorporating the spirituality of St. Mary di Rosa in our lives:

- Because of her very practical nature, Mary di Rosa would not give in to excuses or put off what needed to be done. She just did it. And, much like the rose, Mary spread the "fragrance of Christ" with her good works. On her feast day, offer a rose to all parishioners with a prayer card containing the prayer on the back of this pamphlet.
- St. Mary di Rosa went through a difficult trial when she lost her two closest friends, Msgr. Pinzoni and Gabriela Borrati. In her case, the death of these dear friends forced her to fix her eyes even more closely on Christ. Sometimes we too, feel as if we have lost the help and support of others when they leave us or die. Let us always remember that while human help may fail us, God never does.
- She once told her sisters, "I cannot go to bed with a quiet conscience if during the day I've missed any chance, however slight, of preventing wrongdoing or of helping to bring about some good." Our consciences need to

be formed correctly or often retrained to hear "God's voice" speaking to us. Offer literature on strengthening people's consciences this month, such as "Forming a Catholic Conscience" on:

catholicculture.org.

- As her prayer says, Mary di Rosa was not afraid of change, or of stepping out of her "comfort zone". She saw every challenge as an opportunity to serve God. In our own lives, we are often hesitant to embrace change, especially if we are set in our ways. But God can only work through us if we say "Yes" to him. The next time we are faced with a decision to make a change in our lives, let us ask ourselves, "Could this be God prompting me?", and let us answer with a resounding, "YES, LORD!"
- The Handmaids of Charity worked to comfort the sick and dying. While we cannot all be involved in this work, in this month of Charity, why not make a special donation to a missionary group that does? Contact this office for more information.

Paula di Rosa took her final vows only three years before she died. She chose the name of Maria Crucifissa, Mary of the Crucified. Christ on the Cross had served her well as she served others for Him!

