

Blessed Anna Rosa Gattorno
born 14 October 1831, Genoa, Italy
died 6 May 1900, Rome, Italy

Rosa married at twenty-one, and for six years she was a happy wife and mother. Then, after the birth of her third child, a sudden illness left her firstborn, Carlotta, deaf and mute; her husband died; and she lost her infant son. These tragedies only strengthened the widowed Rosa's conviction that God was calling her to make a total gift of self.

Rosa felt called to found a new and innovative congregation called the Daughters of St. Anne, Mother of Mary Immaculate. Members would serve the sick of either sex and teach in a coed elementary school. This would mean separation from her surviving son and daughter, to whom she was devoted. She consulted with Pius IX, who urged Rosa to begin immediately, adding: *"This Institute will spread in all parts of the world as swiftly as the flight of the dove. God will take care of your children; you must think of God and His work."* Rosa entrusted her children to relatives and officially founded the Daughters in 1866. In spite of Pius IX's encouragement, it took Rosa twenty-six years get Church bureaucrats to recognize the Daughters as a religious order. Among other issues, they objected to her plan to admit widows, ignoring the fact that she herself was a widow. Long and heated negotiations did not keep Rosa from sending her Daughters to missions all over Italy and South America, until at one point the Sacred Congregation annulled the Daughters' charter and threatened to deprive them of the sacraments. Calmer heads finally prevailed, and in 1892 Rosa won approval of her Rule. Today thirty-five hundred Daughters continue her mission on three continents.

The Genius of Anna Rosa Gattorno:

Drawing her strength from almost constant prayer, Rosa advised: "Prayer is the key to grace: it opens up the Lord's treasures."

Reflection:

*"LORD, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy mountain?
Whoever walks without blame,
doing what is right,
speaking truth from the heart."*

Psalm 15.1-2