

**Saint Mariana de Paredes**  
born 31 October 1618, Quito, Ecuador  
died 26 May 1645, Quito, Ecuador

Mariana's was a "family of consequence" in one of the most beautiful and sophisticated cities of colonial South America. She was educated at home, and like Rose of Lima, she made her home her convent. Every day at noon, she welcomed the poor at her door with a large basket of fresh bread. Mystery surrounded this "angel's brea," which never seemed to run out.

In 1645, Quito was rocked by earthquakes that killed more than two thousand people, followed by epidemics of measles and diphtheria that claimed thousands more. At the beginning of Lent, a long-dormant volcano erupted. Many viewed these calamities as a judgment from God, and on the Fourth Sunday of Lent they filled the church of La Compania. Father Alonso de Rohas, Mariana's confessor, celebrated the Mass and declared that these tragedies had been caused by sin. He called upon the people of Quito to repent and offered himself to God as a victim to save them from the punishment that they had brought on themselves. Mariana stood up in the crowded church and announced that she would ask God to take her life instead of the priest's. After Mass, she went home and was immediately hit with a serious illness. As her health declined, the earthquakes stopped, the plagues ceased, and the deadly volcano went silent. Mariana lingered for more than a month, cheerfully receiving many visitors. On Ascension Thursday, surrounded by her family and friends, she breathed her last. The entire city of Quito gathered for her funeral, and her coffin was covered with flowers. From that moment the people considered Mariana a saint, and they continue to credit their Lily of Quito with protecting Ecuador from invasion and epidemics.

**The Genius of Umiliana De'Cerchi:**

With little education or life experience, and without ever leaving home, Mariana managed to start a small school, the first free clinic in Quito, and a nursery for children, all supported only by the love of God.

**Reflection:**

*"I command you: be firm and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go."*

Joshua 1.9 (theme of Father de Roja's homily)

From The Big Book of Woman Saints, written by Sarah Gallick, page 159