

**Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne**  
born 29 August 1769, Grenoble, France  
died 18 November 1852, St. Charles, Missouri

When her parents refused to allow Philippine to enter a convent, she simply went there on her own and refused to leave. They let her stay until the French Revolution's religious suppression forced her to return home to Grenoble, where she worked among the poor.

When calm returned, Philippine spent three years trying to revive her former convent before recognizing that she could not recapture the past. At that point she met Sophie Barat, foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who agreed to receive her and four companions as novices. Though Philippine was elected secretary general of the society, she begged to be sent to a mission in America.

In 1818, Philippine was sent to the Louisiana Territory. She and her companions sailed for ten weeks to New Orleans, then took a steamboat to St. Louis and settled at St. Charles on the Missouri River. Philippine and her Sisters chopped their own firewood, cleaned their stables, milked their own cows, and grew their own vegetables.

Yet she could write, *"I never have the least doubt as to the will of God and his watchful care for the extension of his work in this country. My consolations exceed my trials...my prayer is one continuous thanksgiving for the knowledge of the much-desired will of God."*

In 1820 Philippine opened the first free school for girls west of the Mississippi. She went on to play a significant role in the development of the territory, founding schools and convents in Louisiana and Missouri.

At the age of seventy-two, Philippine was invited to join a mission to the Pottawatomie tribe in Kansas. She remained with the Pottawatomie for a year. They dubbed her Women-who-prays-always. Her health failing, Philippine returned to St. Charles, but never lost her love for them and wrote: *"I feel the same longing for the Rocky Mountain missions and any others like them that I experienced in France when I first begged to come to America."*

**The Genius of Philippine Duchesne:**

From the age of twelve, Philippine could not remember *"letting one day go by without praying for light to know God's Will and strength to do it."*

**Reflection:**

*"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?"*

John 14.2