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Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne: A Heart On Fire Across Frontiers



Synopsis

Two hundred years ago, Rose Philippine Duchesne set out across the Atlantic to establish the Society of the Sacred Heart and educate the children in the new world. Opening the first Catholic school west of the Mississippi, Mother Duchesne, known as “the woman who prays always,” crossed frontiers to bring faith, love, and education to the world. From a convent in France to the frontier of the New World, a child and then a nun in a convent boarding school dreamt of bringing the Gospel to the native peoples. She persevered through Revolution, uncertainty, and long years of waiting, finally to follow her dream on the Missouri frontier, only to find it not at all what she had imagined. The life and relationships of Rose Philippine Duchesne reveal the heart and soul of a pioneer woman of faith on fire with love of God, in the context of the rapidly-expanding settlement of the Midwest in the first half of the nineteenth century, and its catastrophic effects on the native peoples in its wake.

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Customer Reviews

Carolyn Osiek, RSCJ, is Charles Fischer Catholic Professor of New Testament emerita at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, and now Provincial Archivist of the Society of the Sacred Heart, United States-Canada Province. She is the author of many books and articles on topics in the New Testament and early church and now works on the early history of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the Americas.

This short biography is an excellent introduction to the life and work of Saint Philippine Duchesne, a

19th century French woman who came to America 200 years ago for the specific purpose of working with Native Americans. In the course of her life she founded schools for different races and socio-economic classes. Some of these schools still function in the U.S. The author tells the story of Saint Philippine's girlhood in the shadow of the French Revolution, her struggles to become a nun and a missionary, her hard life on the frontier in Missouri and her sojourn among the Potawatomi nation at the end of her life. A student of Philippine's life and writings for many years, the author brings alive this holy and enterprising woman for the 21st century reader.

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