



St. José Gabriel Del Rosario Brochero

B. March 16, 1840

D. January 26, 1914

Canonized in 2016

Earlier this year, Pope Francis canonized Saint Brochero, a fellow countryman from Argentina also known as the “Gaucho priest.” He was beatified in Sept. 2013 by Pope Francis, who said Fr. Brochero was a priest who truly “smelled of his sheep.” He was canonized Oct. 16, 2016.

Saint Brochero was born Jose Gabriel del Rosario Brochero in Argentina in 1840, the fourth of ten children to Ignacio Brochero and Petrona Davila.

St. Brochero entered seminary at the age of 16, and was ordained a priest at the age of 26 for the Archdiocese of Cordoba. As a priest, after teaching philosophy at a seminary for a few years, Fr. Brochero was assigned to the large diocese of St. Albert – 1,675 square miles with 10,000 far-flung parishioners in the rural, Great Highlands region of Argentina.

Not deterred by altitude, distance or bad weather, Fr. Brochero was known for riding throughout the countryside of his parish on the back of a mule to bring his people the sacraments, always wearing a poncho and sombrero in the style of a gaucho, or Argentinian cowboy.

On mule back, he carried an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, his Mass kit and a prayer book on his travels so that he was always prepared to offer the sacraments. He established a House of Exercises where his people could participate in spiritual exercises, and helped found a school for girls.

He is also credited with building post and telegraph stations, for building nearly 125 miles of roads, and for helping plan the railroad in the area.

“Woe if the devil is going to rob a soul from me,” he is held to have said, capturing his determined spirit to be close to his people no matter what.

Fr. Brochero was known for being particularly close to the poor and the sick, and helped care for those who contracted cholera during the epidemic in 1867. Eventually, he contracted leprosy from a leper in his parish, causing him to eventually become blind and deaf and to relinquish his parish duties, spending his last few years living with his sisters at home.

Fr. Brochero died on Jan. 26, 1914. His last words were: “Now I have everything ready for the journey.” A few days after his death, the Catholic newspaper of Cordoba wrote: “It is known that Father Brochero contracted the sickness that took him to his tomb, because he visited at length and embraced an abandoned leper of the area.”

In 2012, Pope Benedict XVI approved a healing miracle attributed to Fr. Brochero, in which 13-year-old Nicolas Flores, who was in a vegetative state after a car accident, was cured through the intercession of the gaucho priest.

By Mary Rezac