



YEAR OF FAITH 2012 2013

Witnesses of Love

Living signs of Christ's presence in the world

Saint Martin de Porres (1579–1639)

Jean Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru, on December 9, 1579. His father was a Spanish gentleman, his mother a former slave from Panama. Martin's racially mixed heritage denied him any rights as a Spanish citizen. After two years of primary school, Martin was apprenticed to a surgeon-barber for training as a pharmacist, doctor, and surgeon.

At age 15, he was received at the Dominican Priory of the Rosary first as a servant and then as almoner, begging money from the rich to assist the needy. He was dubbed the saint of the broom because of his willingness to do any work. Martin's universal charity was expressed by tender compassion for the individual. No one was turned away. His gift was that of "ministry to all." He even opened an animal hospital at his sister's house.

Devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, Martin spent hours in prayer. When he was 34, Martin became a Dominican lay brother. He established an orphanage and a hospital for poor children and oversaw the community infirmary. When an epidemic broke out, novices who fell ill were confined to locked quarters. Undeterred, Martin passed through locked doors to care for each patient. Miraculous cures and an outpouring of graces were attributed to Martin before and after his death at age sixty.

Martin was beatified in 1837 and canonized in 1962. This first black saint of the Americas is the patron of racial harmony, people of mixed race, barbers, innkeepers, and public health workers. His feast is celebrated on November 3.

Sister Mary Lenette Marcello, SND

LIVING OUR Relationship WITH JESUS CHRIST



"Please correct me if the rule of obedience takes precedence over that of charity."

St. Martin de Porres

Reprimanded for disobeying by bringing a sick person into his room, Martin told the Prior, "Please correct me if the rule of obedience takes precedence over that of charity." The Prior then gave Martin the freedom to serve others in any way necessary.

For Reflection

1. How can St. Martin's witness of love inspire attitudes and actions in today's world?
2. How might I express universal charity as well as compassion for each person?
3. What "outpouring of graces" can I ask for in prayer today, for myself, and for others?

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