



St. Martin de Porres

Martin was born December 9, 1579 in Lima, Peru; the child of a Spanish noble, Don Juan de Porres, and freed slave woman, Ana Velasquez. Initially his father would not claim him or his sister Juana. Thinking better, he took them both when Martin was eight and provided for their mother and education. At age 12 Martin was apprenticed as a barber-surgeon, bleeding customers, shaving and dressing hair, and learning the medical skills of the day. Always a pious and generous child, he now felt an increasing call to the Dominican community at Holy Rosary Convent in Lima. A Dominican lay helper at 15, he brought dignity to the menial tasks assigned him.

Martin believed his mission to be a continuation of the redemptive mission of Christ. Prayer, humility, love, sacrifice was his life. Martin lived this life from an early age and by (the early) age of 20 his brothers believed he had completely and permanently surrendered his own will. In its place...God. Not all of his brothers were mature enough to see God in Martin. Some saw another faceless helper, to stupid to respond to their name calling. Martin in turn increased his prayers for those who ridiculed him; reforming the souls of his prosecutors, who in time saw themselves and Martin through new eyes. At age 24 he was asked to join the Dominicans as a full brother.

Martin's quick intelligence, joined with prayer in all he undertook ensured the success of the many tasks assigned to him as a new brother. He used his knowledge of medicine and plant remedies to cure many placed in his care in the

convent hospital. Martin often used herbal remedies as a cover for the real cure...Martin's own redemptive prayer and suffering. Others with Martins knowledge could not obtain Martins results. Hundreds of brothers and towns people testified to accelerated, instant, and "impossible" cures as Martin would pray over them. Martin prayed always and was seen by many elevated as high as 4 meters in prayer during his nightly prayer vigil. Martin offered no resistance to a deep indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Martin shared in the Spirit's virtues, life, and abilities, according to God's will which was now his will.

Animals too came to Martin to be healed of cuts, breaks, and disease. Animals would often scratch at the door of his room sensing their cure. A brother even witnessed Martin's use of diplomacy to rid the convent of mice that were destroying stored linen and food for the patients. Martin caught one of the mice and spoke to him saying "I will not harm you, but you are to assemble all your friends in the garden each day and I will feed you. In return you and your friends are to stop damaging the linen, agreed." The mouse jumped from Martin's hand and scurried towards the garden. The brothers all over the convent heard a great rumbling as a thousand mice left their hiding places to assemble in the garden for their meal! Thereafter the mice and Martin each fulfilled their daily promise. Martin raised both humans and animals from the dead, once raising an entire flock of sheep that had been struck by lightning. The miracles of Martin were not the core of his faith but a result of it and included bilocation (appearing in two places, even two countries at once), multiplying food, instant travel, and walking through locked doors alone or carrying patients. These were recorded from witnesses after Martin's death.

Martin founded Lima's first orphanage, raised dowry money for poor girls, fed over a hundred poor a day, and planted fruit trees along the road as free food for travelers. When the convent could hold no more poor or sick, Martin asked his sister Juana to take them into her own home with her family. She had no room for them but did it anyway. Sometimes it takes a saint to deal with a saint!

At age 60 Martin foretold his own death, and died of fever praying for the salvation of blind humanity. Martin left his body for paradise November 3, 1639 and will be seen by all who will join him in the resurrection of the just. Martin's prayers from Heaven have even more effect now than when on earth. Thousands of cures, and assists have come from his intercession. Martin was beatified in 1836, and canonized in 1962. His feast day is November 3 each year. Copyright © 2005 St. Joseph House Publishing, Permission granted for non profit reproduction. Down load a free miniccatechism and prayer sheets at www.freecatechism.com.



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