

Saint Martin de Porres

SAINT OF THE DAY

03_11_2023



There are many supernatural gifts with which God adorned the humble soul of Martin de Porres (1579-1639), a great Peruvian saint who did not have an easy childhood. He was born of a Panamanian servant girl of African origin and a Spanish aristocrat. Until he was eight years old, his father did not recognise him because he was mulatto. Then he repented and began to take care of Martin's education and that of his little sister Juana.

Growing up in an America that had already been evangelised by missionaries for decades

, Martin soon felt the call of the Lord. When he was only 15 years old and he had already learnt the barber's trade and had a passion for medicine, he went to the Dominican convent in Lima. Here he was welcomed as a "donado" (i.e. a tertiary), with the main duty of cleaning, which explains why the saint is often depicted with a broom.

His superiors soon realised his extraordinary humanity. One day Martin chased the prior who was going to the square to sell the precious objects of the convent, then in great economic difficulty, and offered to be sold as a servant. He heard the answer: "Go back, brother, you are not to be sold". In the meantime he had begun to help in the infirmary of the convent, where he welcomed the poor and sick. He proclaimed to everyone the virtue of faith in God and gave advice on how to live it in daily life. His charity and great dedication to the Order induced the superiors to let him make his solemn profession as a lay brother. From that day, 2 June 1603, Martin dedicated himself more intensely to the ascetic life, practising fasting, spending hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament and meditating on the Passion of Jesus.

The bilocations, the ecstasies, the levitations (witnesses at the cause of beatification said they saw him raised a few inches off the ground), prophecy and miraculous knowledge are some of the charisms he manifested. While he continued to dedicate himself to the poorest, who flocked to the convent's infirmary in great numbers, his wisdom and fame as a healer became public knowledge. For this reason, a number of prominent people turned to him for advice or healing. When the plague struck Lima, he gave great help to the population and cured sixty confreres. Between one miracle and another (it is said that even animals, especially mice, listened to him), he collected funds to build the college of the Holy Cross, which he dedicated to the reception and education of beggars, orphans and the poor, one of the very first institutions of its kind in the New World. Martin knew that he was loved by God and wanted to make His love known to all.

Patron of: barbers, social justice, sick people, street sweepers