

especially timely during the holiday season, when so many inmates feel particularly alone and abandoned. Collecting small packets of toiletries, or Christmas gifts for inmates or their children, is one way to show God's love to those who truly need it.

St. Martin de Porres exhibited such true humility that blessed Pope John XXIII gave the following testimony at his canonization: "He excused the faults of others. He forgave the bitterest injuries, convinced that he deserved much severer punishments on account of his own sins. He tried with all his might to redeem the guilty; lovingly he comforted the sick; he provided food, clothing and medicine for the poor; he helped, as best he could, farm laborers and Negroes, as well as mulattoes, who were looked upon at that time as akin to slaves: thus he deserved to be called by the name the people gave him: 'Martin of Charity.' It is remarkable how even today his influence can still move us toward the things of heaven. Sad to say, not all of us understand these spiritual values as well as we should, nor do we give them a proper place in our lives. Many of us, in fact, strongly attracted by sin, may look upon these values as of little moment, even something of a nuisance, or we ignore them altogether. It is deeply rewarding for men striving for salvation to follow in Christ's footsteps and to obey God's commandments. If only everyone could learn this lesson from the example that Martin gave us."

*Saving
Grace*

Prayer for the Intercession of St. Martin de Porres

To you, Saint Martin de Porres, we prayerfully lift up our hearts filled with serene confidence and devotion. Mindful of your unbounded and helpful charity to all levels of society and also of your meekness and humility of heart, we offer our petitions to you. Pour out upon our families the precious gifts of your solicitous and generous intercession; show to the people of every race and every color the paths of unity and of justice; implore from our Father in heaven the coming of his kingdom, so that through mutual benevolence in God men may increase the fruits of grace and merit the rewards of eternal life. Amen.



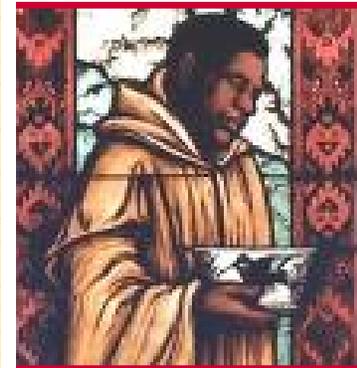
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**St. Martin de Porres
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“Martin of Charity”

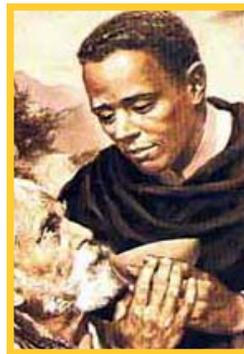
“If you are convinced of your ‘poor quality’, if you know yourself, you will react to events supernaturally. Joy and peace will take a firmer root in your soul, in the face of humiliations, being despised, calumnies...” In his comments on humility, Saint Josemaria Escriva could have easily been describing the life of St. Martin de Porres.

Born in Peru in 1579, Martin de Porres was the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed black slave. He was abandoned by his father and lived a life of poverty and obscurity with his mother and sister. He was apprenticed as a young boy to a barber-surgeon, where he learned basic medical care. He then entered the Dominicans as a lay helper because he didn’t feel worthy enough to ask to become a brother. After nine years, his intense piety and miraculous cures convinced the community to accept them as one of their own, and he was made a full Dominican brother. Martin lived his life in constant service to the poor and sick, regardless of race or status, establishing an orphanage and children’s hospital. He considered even the most menial tasks sacred, and looked upon himself only as “a poor slave” and “the property of the order” to the extent that when the Brothers were in severe debt, he asked to be sold.

The life of St. Martin de Porres is a true example of what great humility and obedience to God can accom-

plish. He accepted his mixed race and illegitimacy as a gift, and used his own misfortune to try and bring about social justice for others. To celebrate his feast day on November 3rd, you might consider the following:

- “We need to respect the human dignity of every person (regardless of race)...All social institutions should serve and enhance the dignity of people. Society has the responsibility to create the conditions that favor the growth of virtues and of authentic spiritual and material values...Racism is an attitude that rejects the fundamental equality of all human beings.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 1898.) Make your parish aware of the heroic virtue of Martin’s life through the bulletin and/or other parish communication methods. Host a Prayer Service that focuses on the theme of Martin’s example of humility as a way to foster understanding among different races. Find a suitable space in the parish where an “exhibit” of Martin’s life may be offered so more people could come to know of the good example he offers us in following Christ. Include in this exhibit images of how various races depict the person of Christ.



- Around the time of his feast day, offer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Highlight the parish’s ministry to the sick and homebound. Use Martin’s love for the outcasts and forgotten ones of society as an inspiration for those involved in serving the sick and needy. Have parishioners submit names of those neighbors who are ill who would appreciate receiving the Sacraments at home and would be open to a visit from a parish representative.
- St. Martin cared deeply about children, and had an amazing rapport with animals. Ask children in the parish to become evangelizers by setting aside November 3rd as a day for them to serve other children. Arrange for them to make Christmas cards to be distributed to children’s hospital wards in December. Tell them some appropriate stories of St. Martin, and ask them to write about or illustrate them in their cards (e.g., the story of how St. Martin de Porres was said to be able to feed a dog, a cat, and a mouse peacefully from the same dish because of his love of animals).
- Convinced that his sins were worse than other people’s, St. Martin would work tirelessly with criminals and the outcasts of society to try and rehabilitate and redeem them. Research ways that your parish can connect with a prison ministry (such as our Diocesan Prison Ministry under Br. Jack Moylan, OSF, 631-969-0837 at drvc.org under Social Services; or PNCEA, the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association at: www.prison-ministry.org). This is