

# SAINT MARTIN DE PORRES

## LIFE

St. Martin de Porres, also known as the Saint of the Broom, was born in Lima on December 9, 1579, to Juan de Porres, a Spanish knight of the Order of Calatrava and Ana Velázquez, freed black Panamanian. Juan de Porres moved to Guayaquil, Ecuador, commissioned by the Viceroy Don García Hurtado de Mendoza. There he claimed his two children who left for Ecuador along with him. Years later, Monsgr. Juan Porres was appointed the Governor of Panama, so the children, Martín and Juana, returned with their mother to Lima in 1590. Martin was then eleven years old. At the age of twelve, Martin worked as a hairdresser apprentice and a dental assistant. The fame of his sanctity spread from mouth to mouth throughout the city of Lima.

He met Friar Juan de Lorenzana, a famous Dominican known as a theologian and a man of virtue. He invited St. Martin to enter the Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary.

However, the legislation then prevented being a religious by color and race, so Martin de Porres entered as a lay brother, but he surrendered to God and led a service oriented life, full of humility, obedience and love beyond measure.

St. Martin had a dream that was disposed by God: "Go unnoticed and be the last". His ardent desire was to follow Jesus of Nazareth. He was entrusted with the cleanliness of the house; his broom was, along with the cross, the greatest companion of his life.

He served and took care of everybody, but he was not understood by many. One day he was cutting the hair and fringes of a student: the student, annoyed, in spite of the pleasant composure of Friar Martin, did not hesitate to insult him: "Mulatto dog! Hypocrite!" Friar Martin's only response was a generous smile.

St. Martin had been in the convent for two years, six years had passed since he had seen his father, so he visited him and after speaking with the Provincial, the Conventual Council decided that Friar Martin would be a cooperator brother.

On June 2, 1603, St. Martin de Porres was consecrated to God via his religious commitment. Father Fernando Aragonés testified: "He practiced charity day and night, healing the sick people, giving alms to the Spaniards, native people and black ones; he liked, loved and healed them all with secular love". The porter's office at the Convent was a trail of humble soldiers, natives, mulattos, and blacks; He used to repeat: "There is no greater taste than giving to the poor."

St. Martin de Porres brought with himself an overflowing universal love. His sister Juana enjoyed a good social position, so, in one of her farms, she gave shelter to the sick and the poor. And in his yard, he welcomed dogs, cats and mice.

The religious of the Viceroyalty city faced surprises after surprises. The Superior forbade him from doing anything extraordinary without consent. One day, while he was returning to the Convent, a mason shouted at him as he fell from the scaffolding; the Saint beckoned him and ran to ask permission from the superior: he and the other person involved were captivated due to his docility. His life ended in praise by the crowds, on November 3, 1639.



## SPIRITUALITY

John XXIII felt true devotion towards St. Martin de Porres, he had a small image of him in ivory over the table in his office and he himself canonized St. Martin on May 6, 1962.

St. Martin de Porres testifies the Gospel through his personality: "He who humbles himself will be exalted." This man who tuned in with the darkness of his skin and enjoyed the love of God, who saw himself humiliated and repressed, never knew after centuries he would be declared a Saint, who centers in his person the two continents: Europe and America. St. Martin is loved by all, invoked by rich and poor, sick and needy, men of science and the ignorant. His image or stamp goes on trips, found in homes and hospitals, in prayer and study books, all because he was humble, obedient, and, as John XXIII said, "Martin is the Apostle of Charity". There is no surprise that he is a Patron of the Dominican Cooperator Brothers, of the hairdressers' guild, of the public cleaning, of the pharmacists and the nurses, the Dominican Sisters of St. Martin de Porres and many more. All of them rejoice that the Saint of the Broom ("Fray Escoba") is their patron and their role model.

## MODEL FOR YOUTH

- Named as "Martin: The Apostle of Charity"
- "He surrendered to God and his life dwelled on service, humility, obedience and love without measure."
- "Go unnoticed and be the last".
- It does not matter what the color of the skin is. The Saint of the Broom ("Fray Escoba")
- Patron of the Dominicans
- Of the hairdressers
- Of Public cleaning
- Of the Pharmacists and Nurses