

Lives of Saints

St Martín de Porres

1579 - 1639

Feastday: 3rd November



When his priory was in debt:

"I am only a poor mulatto, sell me. I am the property of the order, sell me please!"

St Martin de Porres

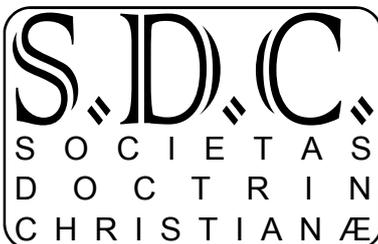
I was born in Lima, Peru, in 1579. My father was a Spanish nobleman and my mother a coloured freed-woman from Panama. I grew up in poverty. When I was 11, I became a servant in the Holy Rosary Dominican priory. I spent my whole life there. My superiors dropped the stipulation that "no black person may be received to the holy habit or profession of our order" and I took vows as a Dominican brother in 1603.

In the order, I served as a barber, a farm laborer, and an almoner. When I was placed in charge of the infirmary; I cared tenderly for the sick. Many miraculous cures, including raising the dead, were attributed to me. I also established an orphanage and children's hospital for the poor children of the slums. My love also embraced animals, including vermin, and I maintained a cats and dogs hospital at my sister's house.

I also possessed spiritual wisdom. I helped solve marriage problems, and resolved theological problems for the learned of my Order and for bishops.

I would have loved to go off to some foreign mission and to receive martyrdom. However, this was not possible, so I devoted myself to ceaseless and severe penances. I lived in self-imposed austerity, never ate meat, fasted continuously, and spent much time in prayer and meditation. I was a close friend to both Rose of Lima, and to John de Massias, and like them, I was deeply devoted to the Holy Eucharist. In turn, God endowed me with many graces and wondrous gifts, such as that of bilocation.

I died in 1639 and was canonized in 1962.



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