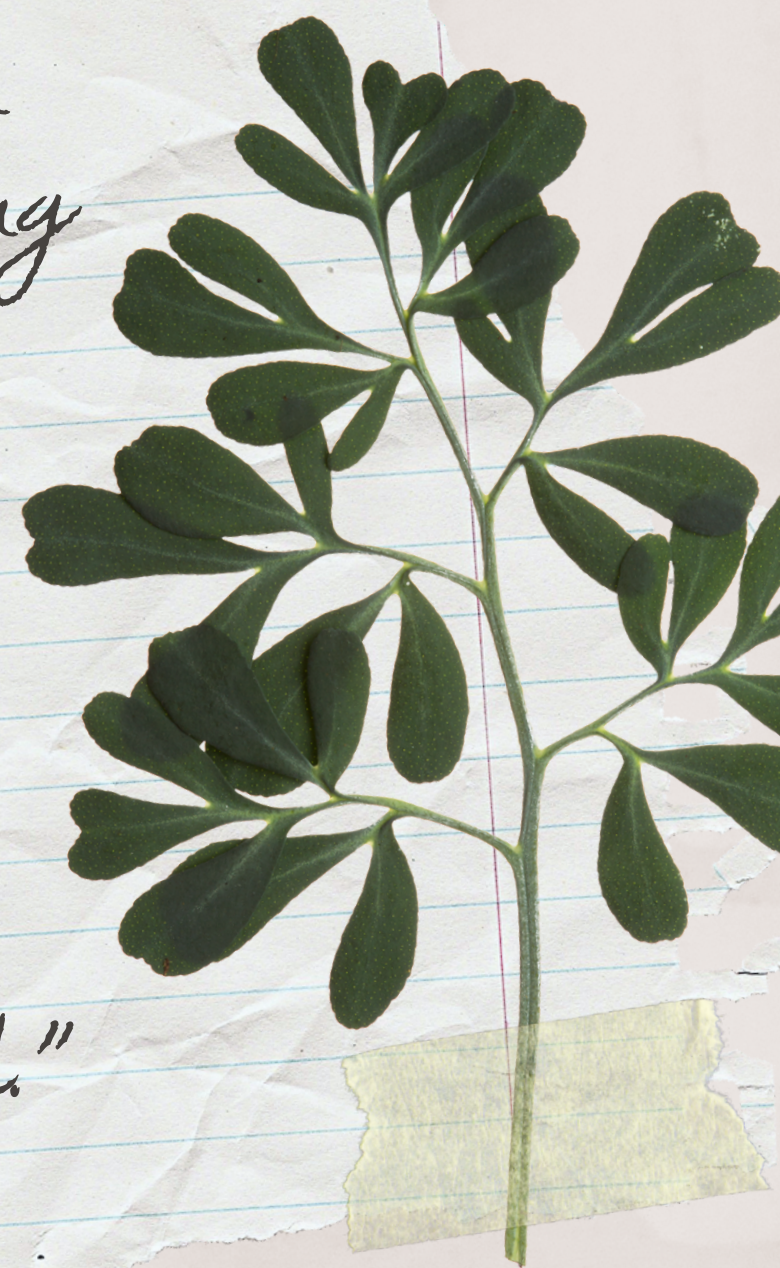


Saint Martin de Porres

- Feastday: November 3
- Patron Saint of: Mixed Race, Barbers, Public Health Workers, Innkeepers
- Birth: December 9, 1579
- Death: November 3, 1639
- Canonized: by Pope John XXIII on May 6, 1962



"Everything, even sweeping, scraping vegetables, weeding a garden, and waiting on the sick, could be a prayer if it offered to God."



St. Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru on December 9, 1579. Martin was the illegitimate son of a Spanish man and a freed slave. Martin grew up in deep poverty, and after spending just two years in primary school, he was placed with a barber/surgeon where he would learn to cut hair and the medical arts. As he grew older, Martin experienced a great deal of ridicule for being of mixed race. In Peru, by law, all descendants of Africans or Indians were not allowed to become full members of religious orders. Martin found his only way into the community he longed for was to ask the Dominicans of Holy Rosary Priory in Lima to accept him as a volunteer who performed the most menial tasks in the monastery. After eight more years, Martin was granted the privilege to take his vows as a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. Martin grew to become a Dominican lay brother in 1603 at the age of 24.

He became known for encompassing the virtues needed to carefully and patiently care for the sick. Martin was praised for his unconditional care of all people, regardless of race or wealth. It is said he had many extraordinary abilities, including aerial flights, bilocation, instant cures, miraculous knowledge, spiritual knowledge, and an excellent relationship with animals.

During an epidemic in Lima, many of the friars became very ill and were locked away in a distant section of the convent. However, on more than one occasion, Martin passed through the locked doors to care for the sick. He became disciplined for not following the rules of the Convent, but after replying, "Forgive my error, and please instruct me, for I did not know that the precept of obedience took precedence over that of charity," he was given full liberty to follow his heart in mercy.

At age 60, he became very ill with chills, fevers, and tremors, and passed away in 1639. He was exhumed 25 years after his death and his body exhaled a splendid fragrance and he was still intact.