

Novena to St. Martin de Porres
Patron Saint of Social Justice



October 2020

Prenote: In light of this turbulent year of pandemic and a new wave of violence plaguing people of color, it seemed fitting for us to pray a Novena to the patron of justice and human rights in the Americas, St. Martín de Porres on the eve of a critical election.

**Novena to St. Martín de Porres
Patron Saint of Social Justice
at Our Lady of Lourdes
Atlanta, Georgia**



Martín de Porres was born in 1579 into the turbulent world of Lima, Peru, a generation after Pizarro's conquest of the Incas. He was the son of Juan de Porres, a soldier from northern Spain, and Ana Velásquez, a free Panamanian woman of African descent. Although we do not know his birth date, we have a record that Martín was baptized on December 9, 1579, in the same font where Rosa de Lima was six years later. Both would become saints. Martín and his sister Juana were educated for several years in Columbia by his paternal uncle, and he was schooled in the healing arts by his mother and also as an apprentice barber in the Malambo Road area of Lima.

At fourteen, he became part of Our Lady of the Rosary Dominican priory as a “donado” – a self-donation. There is debate about whether or not he became a Dominican brother in light of rules barring non-Europeans from becoming vowed religious, but what is unquestioned is that it was Martín who became a saint. His holiness, good cheer and humility were evident as he used his many gifts, including healing, outreach to the poor, friend of the oppressed, lover of animals, peacemaker, mystic contemplative, and protector of youth. He died at the age of 60 in 1639 and was declared a saint by the people immediately. It took the Church until 1962 to bless the people's canonization. For many years, Saint Martín was known as “Blessed Martín” – since he had been beatified in 1837. At Our Lady of Lourdes, a

statue of Martín was prominent in the school and is in the church sanctuary even today. The Dominican friars who serve at Lourdes are members of the Southern Dominican Province of St. Martín de Porres. His Feast Day is November 3, which this year is Election Day.

Before you begin praying the novena, you may wish to listen to this classic choral piece written by jazz legend Mary Lou Williams, who was a Catholic convert. It was first preformed at St. Ignatius Church in New York City in 1962 after St. Martín was canonized.

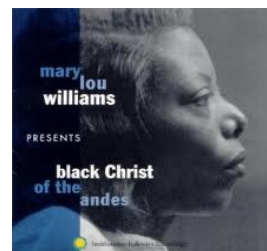
St. Martin de Porres, his shepherd's staff a dusty broom.
St. Martin de Porres, the poor made a shrine of his tomb.
St. Martin de Porres, he gentled creatures tame and wild.
St. Martin de Porres, he sheltered each unsheltered child.

This man of love, born of the flesh, yet of God,
This humble man healed the sick, raised the dead,
his hand is quick.
To feed beggars and sinners, the starving homeless and
the stray,
Oh, Black Christ of the Andes, come feed and cure us now
we pray.

Oh God, help us,
Spare, oh Lord,
spare thy people,
Lest you be angered with me forever.
Lest you be angered with me forever.

This man of love, born of the flesh, yet of God,
This humble man healed the sick, raised the dead,
his hand is quick.
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[Music link from Smithsonian Folkways](#)





Novena Prayer

Begin with this prayer each of the nine days.

Most humble Martín de Porres, your boundless charity embraced not only the poor and the oppressed, but even the animals of the field. Hear the prayers of your sisters and brothers who seek to imitate your virtues. Pray that we will have the courage and strength to carry our cross and follow in the footsteps of our blessed Redeemer. Continue to inspire us to be people of good cheer who care for the poor and the rejected and who are peacemakers and healers. AMEN.

DAY ONE Monday, October 26, 2020



SERVING IN FAITH

St. Martín imitated our Lord Jesus who was “meek and humble of heart.” There was no pride or vanity in him. May we at Lourdes who assist and serve the poor and homeless do so with graciousness and gentleness of spirit. The Lourdes Pastoral Care Team and our Stephen Ministry embody our love for one another. We pray for more caregivers to come forward to be trained for this wonderful calling.

Prayer: Dear St. Martín, somedays our hearts are cold and our spirits pre-occupied. Help us to love unconditionally and know that the path to the Beloved Community is through serving God and each other with whole hearts, minds and souls. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY TWO Tuesday, October 27, 2020

“In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent the Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” [1 John 4:10-11]. This inspired saying of St. John could be taken as a summary of the way Martín lived his life. This spirit is displayed by many Lourdes’ outreach ministries, such as Simon’s Call, which serves people living with HIV and AIDS.



Prayer: Dear St. Martín, help us to deepen our awareness of the greatness of God’s love for us, so that we may ever seek true happiness in loving service of God and of our neighbor. Help us to dream a world and imagine a Beloved Community that is ever expanding. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY THREE Wednesday, October 28, 2020



Martín was called “the Father of the Poor” and lived by the call in Matthew 25:40 that challenges us to respond: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.” Martín spent his life caring for the poor, the suffering and the afflicted – in all of them he saw Our Savior. Our Lourdes Chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society extends that kind of outreach and availability to the poor and distressed among our neighbors in the Old Fourth Ward.

Prayer: Dear St. Martín, teach us to be generous with the gifts that God has given us. Pray that our hearts may not be hardened or selfish. Pray that we may be kind and generous to our neighbors who are suffering or

in need, because they, like us, are children of God. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY FOUR Thursday, October 29, 2020

Martín sought to keep his mind and heart centered on God. His prayer came from the depths of his soul. The Dominican friars wondered if he ever slept, since they would observe and hear him at all hours in prayer. Prayer is deeply important to our Lourdes community, as is evidenced



by our vibrant weekend liturgies, our commitment to pray for those in need, the hundreds of members who have made a silent retreat, and the monthly Taizé Prayer gatherings. If there is not prayer in the pews, there cannot be preaching in the pulpit.

Prayer: Dear St. Martín, teach us to pray ceaselessly. Help us to embrace the Lord’s words “Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” May

we be granted a deep spirit of prayer, complete trust in its power, and patience that they will be answered in God’s time, not ours. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY FIVE Friday, October 30, 2020

Martín was called “Father of the Poor.” He saw the poor, the sick, the homeless, and the dying as part of his family. Every day he distributed alms to the poor and found the means to feed and clothe them. The committed volunteers of Lourdes Lunch feeds hundreds of guests twice weekly through much of the year. Crews from Lourdes have helped build nearly a score of Habitat for Humanity houses for homeless families.



Prayer: Dear St. Martín, help us to be sympathetic with those we serve. Help us prepare meals with love and care and receive our guests with respect and dignity. Inspire us to extend our caring and concern to those in prison and those who are refugees. Show us how to open up our hearts to everyone we meet. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY SIX Saturday, October 31, 2020

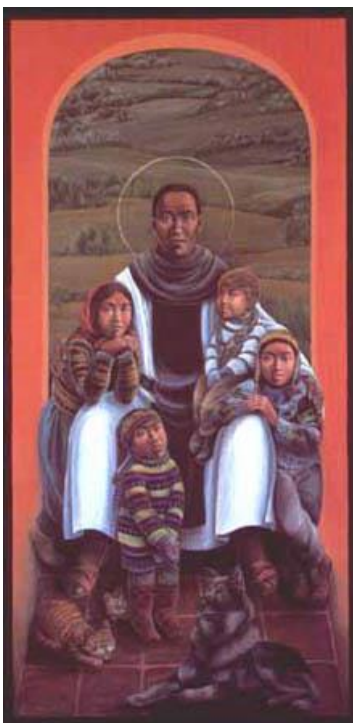
Martín studied the healing arts from his mother who knew folk medicine and herbal cures. As a trained barber, he had been schooled in medical arts of the early 17th century. His devotion to healing the sick, including



animals, was legendary. The one phrase he would say was, “Criatura de Dios, sana” [Creature of God, heal]. Lourdes is committed to holding frequent Blood Drives and is blessed with a Health Promotions Ministry, which both energetically embody this spirit of St. Martín.

Prayer: Dear St. Martín, help us to be wounded healers in our world. Help the many health professionals in our parish to be people of both skill and compassion. Guide us all to be cheerful caregivers in our world. And in our current pandemic, inspire all those in health care and public health. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY SEVEN Sunday, November 1, 2020



Martín cared for children, especially the many abandoned youth living on the street. In fact, he built an orphanage for children in Lima. Since 1912, Lourdes has been devoted to the education and care for children, embodied for 90 years in its school and for decades in its strong religious education program and youth ministry. Each week Lourdes community members help tutor elementary students. For more than a decade, Lourdes had a Sister Parish relationship in Haiti and supported a number of schools. And our social action ministry has partnered with other groups to combat child trafficking.

Prayer: Dear St. Martín, help us to see the gift that each child is to our world. Be our role model to be nurturers and encouragers. Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY EIGHT Monday, November 2, 2020

Martín was noted for using his calming presence to be a peacemaker in early colonial Peru where there was much conflict in the streets. He bandaged up both sides of some fights and coaxed them into serenity. ERACE is a group at Lourdes seeking to end racism through encounter. Many parishioners also engage in interfaith dialogue. The symbol for Martín’s non-violent skills is a puppy, kitten and mouse all peacefully lapping up soup from a common bowl.



Prayer: Dear St. Martín, help us to be agents of non-violence in our families, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods and the world at large. We Lourdes members carry a special responsibility as a worshipping community within the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District to be peacemakers and hope bearers. St. Martín, pray for us.

DAY NINE Tuesday, November 3, 2020



The name Martín de Porres became strongly linked to the causes of social justice and racial justice by the very process of his beatification and canonization. When in 1837 Pope Gregory XVI proclaimed him Blessed Martín, he was making a statement about the Church’s condemnation of the slave trade. And 125 years later in 1962, when Pope Saint John XXIII canonized him as Saint Martín de Porres, he was turning the papal spotlight on the stalled Civil Rights struggle and the work of the other Martin of Atlanta. The Lourdes Social Action committee embodies Pope Paul VI’s slogan: “If you want peace, work for justice.” It is our choice whether we wish to en flesh the spirit of Martín in our work for justice. Our Social Action Committee has been addressing many key areas, including Care for the Earth, human trafficking, ex-offender employment, and the

Death Penalty to name only a few issues. Of late, we have gathered on Friday rush hours to “Stand for Justice” with placards calling for an end to police violence. And for more than a decade, our Eracism ministry has kept alive the process of ending white supremacy.

Prayer: Dear St. Martín, help us to keep our eyes fixed on the task of working for God’s reign to come here on earth as well as heaven. Guide us to be people who care for the earth and respond to the injustices of

our time. Pray that we have the hearts and courage to reach out to refugees, serve the homeless, shelter those who might be trafficked, and be alert to those who are bullied, menaced, or unfairly treated. St. Martín, pray for us.

Bless our nation on this Election Day 2020. Inspire leaders to rise up and address the many injustices you took on during your holy, consequential life. Bless our land. Bless us all.

Lift Every Voice and Sing

