

## November Holy Hero

### The Story of St. Martin de Porres

*Feast Day Nov. 3*



Hello, my name is Martin and I was born in the city of Lima, Peru in 1579. My father was a Spanish nobleman and my mother a freed slave from Panama. Father spent most of his time in other countries, and left Mother, Juana, my sister, and me to fend for ourselves. I grew up very poor, but that was ok, I believe being poor gave me a deep understanding and love for all God's less fortunate and a desire to help them. My mother used to get so upset with me when she sent me shopping with just a few pennies and I returned home empty-handed, having given the food to the poor on my way home! I spent much of my early youth working for a barber-surgeon. There, I learned about medicine and how to care for the sick. I felt so blessed that I was able to help others while earning a living.

At age 15, I became a servant boy in a Dominican abbey. Later, I became a lay, Dominican Brother. With joy, I did my daily work in the laundry, kitchen, and caring for the sick in the infirmary. God also generously blessed my efforts begging for money in the streets of Lima, to help the many poor and sick people of the city. I felt love for all my brothers and sisters in Christ, no matter their race, color, or status in society. Even the mice and rats that troubled the abbey kitchen deserved kindness and understanding. They were hungry, that's all!

In my later years I founded an orphanage and a hospital, and cared for slaves brought to Peru from Africa. I even ran a shelter for stray cats and dogs at my sister's house. When I was young, I dreamed of traveling the world as a missionary for Christ, but God needed my help serving the people of my native city, and I was happy doing it!

*Martin's superiors saw in him the heroic virtues needed for the difficult job of caring for the sick. Soon, many miracles began to happen due to Martin's presence: instantaneous cures, bilocation (being seen in two places at once), and light filling the room in which he prayed. He often healed the sick just by giving them a simple glass of water. In his humility, he still referred to himself as "Brother Broom". St. Martin de Porres died of a fever on November 3, 1639. He was canonized by Pope John XXIII on May 6, 1962.*