



Yara
Wood

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES

PATRON SAINT OF INTERRACIAL JUSTICE,
ALL WHO WORK FOR JUSTICE

1579 – 1639

“Those who oppress the poor revile their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him.”

PROVERBS 14:31

As we stop to reflect on our call to act on behalf of justice, take a moment to listen to the story of St. Martin de Porres, who was a man of great charity caring for the sick, abandoned and enslaved.

Born in Lima, Peru, the son of a free Black woman and a Spanish nobleman, Martin de Porres was never recognized by his father. At the age of 12, he trained as a barber, a role resembling that of a doctor — setting bones, dressing wounds and prescribing herbs. When he chose to volunteer at a Dominican monastery as a lay helper, he was given tasks that others despised. Some community members called for his dismissal because he was Black. Others recognized his talents and encouraged him to become a priest. As a brother, he was given charge of the monastery's infirmary. He acted with justice for the poor and abandoned by feeding those in need with leftover food and welcoming the homeless to stay in the monastery in any available space.

He took his care for all one step further by creating a home for abandoned street children open to all, regardless of race. In his community, the poor considered him their hero.



St. Martin spent his life caring and seeking justice for those in the minority, sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry and ministering to the enslaved. From his own experience as a Black man whose abilities were doubted, he practiced radical inclusivity, caring for all humankind and even animals that he encountered.

- ✦ In your current setting in the Catholic health ministry, how have you welcomed someone who has been excluded?
- ✦ When and by whom have you experienced welcome?
- ✦ Using your personal and organizational resources, in what ways, big and small, do you work for justice for the poor and marginalized in our communities?

O HOLY MYSTERY OF LOVE,

Guide us in our work for justice for all.

Give us the grace to act as St. Martin, practicing radical inclusivity and care for all in need.

May we know our place in creating a safe space for all to be well.

Recommit us today to serve you earnestly

With our hands, our eyes, our thoughts, and our hearts.

All you Holy Men and Women: pray for us.

AMEN.