

# Fr. David's Weekly Newsletter



November 11, 2011

## Happy Veteran's Day • Memorial of Saint Martin, Bishop of Tours

Today is Veteran's Day. Please say a prayer for those who have served their country in the military. Also, please remember those who died in while in the service of their nation as well as their families and loved ones.



### Liturgical Calendar

Today the Church celebrates the memorial of St. Martin of Tours, bishop. St. Martin is the first bishop and confessor honored by the Church in the West. He was a principal apostle of Gaul, where his feast was celebrated as a holy day of obligation with an octave and popular celebrations.

According to the 1962 Missal of Bl. John XXIII for the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is also the commemoration of St. Mennas, an Egyptian soldier and martyr, put to death during Diocletian's reign around the year 295 AD.

### Veterans Day (US), Remembrance Day (Canada)

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day in the eleventh month of the year 1918, an armistice was signed, ending the "war to end all wars." November 11 was set aside as Armistice Day in the United States to remember the sacrifices that men and women made during the war in order to ensure a lasting peace. In 1938 Congress voted Armistice Day as a legal holiday, but World War II began the following year. Armistice Day was still observed after the end of the Second World War. In 1953 towns-



people in Emporia, Kansas called the holiday Veterans Day in gratitude to the veterans in their town. Soon after, Congress passed a bill renaming the national

holiday to Veterans Day. Today, we remember those who have served for our country in the armed forces in our prayers.

Father, we thank you for our military men and women and their courageous service and sacrifice for our country and its people. Keep and protect these heroes and their families, in the holy and precious name of Jesus. Amen.

**St. Martin of Tours** was born around the year 316 AD at Sabaria, a town in Pannonia near the famous Benedictine monastery dedicated to his name. Against the wishes of his parents he associated with Christians and became a catechumen at the age of ten. At fifteen he entered the army and served under the Emperors Constantius and Julian. While in the service he met a poor, naked beggar at the gates of Amiens who asked alms in Christ's Name. Martin had nothing with him except his weapons and soldier's mantle; but he took his sword, cut the latter in two, and gave half to the poor man. During the following night Christ appeared to him clothed with half a mantle and said, "*Martin, the catechumen, has clothed Me with this mantle!*"

Martin was eighteen years old when he received the sacrament of holy baptism. At the pleading of his superior officer, he remained two years longer in the army. Then, upon requesting dismissal, Julian accused him of cowardice. "*With the sign of the Cross,*" Martin answered, "*I shall more certainly break through the ranks of the enemy than if armed with shield and sword.*" When released he sought out St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, and was ordained. Later he was made bishop of Tours. Close to the city he built a monastery (*Marmoutier*), where with eighty monks he led a most holy life. On one of his numerous visits to the imperial court at Trier, a certain man besought him to help

his daughter, "*I firmly believe in the Lord that my daughter will be healed through your prayer.*" Martin healed the girl with consecrated oil. Tetradius, who witnessed this extraordinary manifestation of divine power, asked for baptism.

Martin also possessed the gift of discerning spirits. Once the devil appeared to him radiant and clothed in royal apparel, and spoke as if he were Christ. Martin, recognizing the deceit, replied, "*The Lord Jesus Christ never prophesied that He would come in purple robes and royal crown.*" The apparition immediately vanished.

Three dead persons he raised to life. While celebrating holy Mass a luminous sphere appeared over his head. He was far advanced in age when he fell into a grievous fever during a visitation at Candes, an outlying parish of his diocese. Unceasingly he begged God to release him from this mortal prison. His disciples, however, implored him with tears, "*Father, why are you leaving us? To whom will you entrust the care of your disconsolate children?*" Deeply moved, Martin turned to God: "*Lord, if I am still necessary for Your people, I will not refuse the labor. Your will be done!*"

When the bystanders saw that despite his great fever he remained lying on his back, they besought him to change position to alleviate somewhat the pain. But Martin answered, "*Brothers, rather let me look toward heaven than to earth so that my soul in its journey home*

*may take a direct flight to the Lord.*" Shortly before death he saw the evil spirit. "*What do you want, horrible beast? You will find nothing in me that's yours!*" With those words the aged saint breathed forth his soul on November 11, 397, at the age of eighty-one.

*From "The Church's Year of Grace"*

### **More about St. Martin**

St. Martin's feast, also known as "*Martinmas*" in Europe arrives in autumn, the beginning of the wine harvest. This was also the time of slaughter of the stock for winter meat. His images are usually depicted with a goose, symbolizing that Martinmas was the last festive meal before Advent, because in France in the Middle Ages, the strict 40 day Advent fast (called *Quadragesima Sancti Martini* or Forty Days' Fast of Saint Martin's) began the next day. So in past centuries November 11 was celebrated as a thanksgiving day. Thus it was the custom to have "*St. Martin's goose*" and taste the new wine ("*Saint Martin's Wine*") on his feast day. A quick spell of warm weather around his feast day (usually termed "*Indian Summer*" in the US) is known as "*St. Martin's Little Summer*" in Europe.

**Patron:** Against impoverishment; against poverty; alcoholism; beggars; Burgenland; cavalry; equestrians; France; geese; horse men; horses; hotel-keepers; innkeepers; Mainz, Germany; quartermasters; reformed alcoholics; riders; soldiers; tailors; vintners; wine growers; wine makers.

# The Three Saint Martins

Within ten days of each other are three saints, spanning twelve centuries; all who were named Martin. One a pope, one a bishop, and one a Dominican lay brother. Each demonstrated a life lived in God's grace, although unique from the others.

## Nov 3 - Martin de Porres



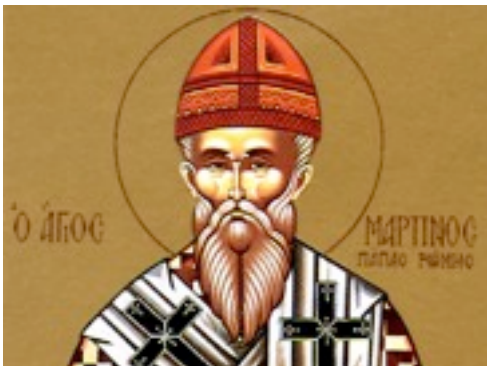
Martin de Porres (Dec 9, 1579 – Nov 3, 1639) was a lay brother of the Dominican Order who was beatified in 1837 by Pope Gregory XVI and canonized in 1962 by Pope John XXIII. He is the patron saint of mixed-race people and all those seeking interracial harmony. He was noted for work on behalf of the poor, establishing an orphanage and a children's hospital. He maintained an austere lifestyle, which included fasting and abstaining from meat. Among the many miracles attributed to him were those of levitation, bilocation, miraculous knowledge, instantaneous cures, and an ability to communicate with animals.

## Nov 11 - Martin of Tours



Martin of Tours (316 – November 8, 397) was a Bishop of Tours, whose shrine became a famous stopping-point for pilgrims on the road to Santiago de Compostela. Around his name, much legendary material accrued, and he has become one of the most familiar and recognizable Christian saints. He is considered a spiritual bridge across Europe, given his association with both France and Hungary. His life was recorded by a contemporary, the hagiographer Sulpicius Severus. Some of the accounts of his travels may have been interpolated into his history to validate regional devotions to him. He is a patron saint of soldiers and horses.

## Nov 12 - Pope Martin I



Pope Saint Martin I, born near Todi, Umbria in the place now named after him (Pian di San Martino), was pope from 649 to 653, succeeding Theodore I in July 5, 649. The only pope during the Byzantine Papacy whose election was not approved by a *iussio* from Constantinople, Martin I was abducted by Constans II and died in the Crimean peninsula. He was the last *apocrisiarius* (a high diplomatic representative, the title being used by Byzantine ambassadors as well as by the representatives of bishops to the secular authorities) to be elected pope.

## Homily for Veteran's Day

All gave some ... Some gave all.

Today is Veteran's Day. There is something very ancient, very visceral; in the sacrifice of someone who serves their country in the military. Love of family; love of the land of one's birth; love of country ... inspires a young person to choose to give the only thing they have - themselves ... in the defense of their nation.

The young have neither wealth, nor knowledge, nor experience ... yet there is something noble in the decision to sacrifice for that natural love and in defense of the things they love.

Today is also the memorial of St. Martin of Tours. Born in the fourth century; at 10 he entered the catechumenate; and at 15 he entered the military at the service of the Roman emperor.

Asked by a poor man ... in the name of Christ ... for alms - and having nothing but his cloak and his sword - Martin cut the cloak in two and gave half to the beggar.

Our Lord appeared to Martin in a dream wearing that half-of a cloak.

At 18 Martin received Baptism, and at 20 sought to be dismissed from the service of the Emperor to enter the service of Christ ... which was misinterpreted as cowardice.

He is remembered as saying: "With the sign of the cross, I shall more certainly break through the ranks of the enemy than if armed with shield and sword."

Natural met supernatural ... the sacrifice of self for land and nation met the ultimate Sacrifice of the Son of God ... the natural love of homeland met the supernatural Love for all humanity.

Martin, the young military man - became Martin ... priest, then monk, then bishop. His life was filled with many manifestations of God's power in the world.

Let us pray for the intercession of St. Martin of Tours - for the transformation of our natural abilities - through God's grace - into supernatural abilities that we might manifest the power of God in the world for the salvation of souls.

And let us remember those who served our own country - especially those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in that service.

All gave some ... Some gave all.