



# MISSIONARIES IN ACTION

## DOMINICAN MISSION FOUNDATION

Fr. Martin de Porres Walsh, O.P., Director Lesley Warnshuis, Office Manager Nancy Keating, Finance Manager

2506 Pine Street P.O. Box 15367 San Francisco, CA 94115-0367 415-931-2183 [www.dominicanmission.org](http://www.dominicanmission.org)

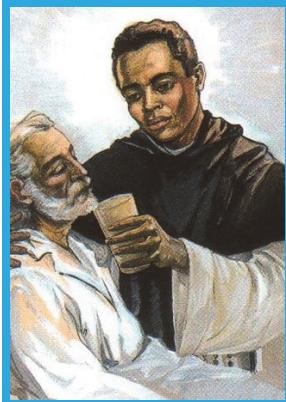
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### *A Healing Presence*

#### **St. Martin de Porres Feast Day Triduum**

In honor of the November 3rd feast day of St. Martin de Porres, the patron of our missions, Masses will be offered at St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco on November 1, 2, and 3. We invite you to fill in and return the enclosed list of petitions which will be placed on the altar and remembered each day. And please join us in praying the Triduum in his honor (back page).



*A patient with tuberculosis at Hospital San Carlos, where the sick and impoverished have always been treated with dignity and compassion, as exemplified by St. Martin de Porres in the 1600s.*

Dear Mission Friends:

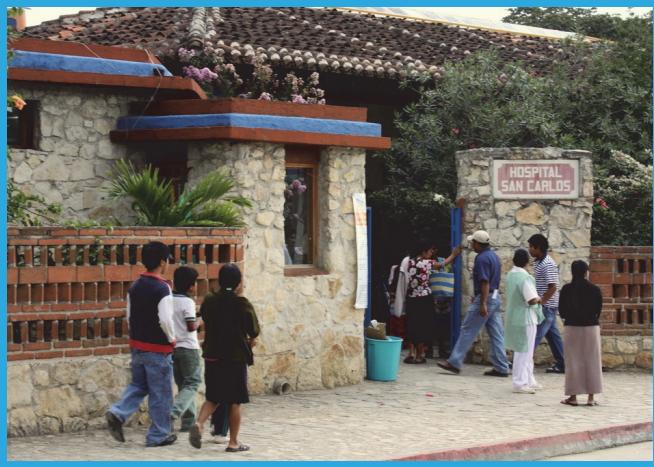
November 3rd is the feast day of St. Martin de Porres, the patron of our missions. Martin's response to growing up poor and ostracized in Lima, Peru was selfless compassion for others and intense devotion to Our Lord. At the age of 15, he was admitted to the Dominican laity and began living and doing janitorial work at the Dominican monastery. It would not be long, however, before his healing skills were recognized, and he became medical assistant at the community's infirmary. Within a few years he was seeing to the medical needs of 300 Dominican friars, the monastery's labor force, a nearby convent of sisters, and all of Lima's sick and marginalized who were in need of his gifts. He would regularly roam Lima armed with medicine and bandages, food and clothing, visiting hospital wards, prison cells, and hovels, often staying

by sick beds through the night. **He would seek out ostracized Indian families and diseased beggars and slaves, treating all with the same dignity that he knew Jesus would have done.** One story describes him bringing an elderly homeless beggar, his body covered with ulcerated sores, to his own bed to treat and watch over him. When one of the brothers told him he had gone too far, Martin replied, "Compassion, my dear Brother, is preferable to cleanliness. Reflect that with a little soap I can easily clean my bed covers, but even with a torrent of tears I would never wash from my soul the stain that my harshness toward the unfortunate would create."

#### **All Souls' Day Remembrance**

November is the month for us to pray especially for our loved ones who have gone before us. You are invited to list the names of your departed family members and friends on the enclosed slip and send it in to be placed on the altar at St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco. Your loved ones will be remembered at daily Mass throughout the month.

Similar compassion and bravery was surely intrinsic to the friars sent to Ocosingo, Chiapas in 1963 to establish our Western Dominican Province's first mission.



Responding to Pope John XXIII's call for religious communities to establish missions in poor areas of Latin America, Fr. Vincent Foerstler, Fr. Joseph Asturias, and Br. Raymond Bertheaux expected to see poverty, but they couldn't have imagined the severe and sprawling destitution that confronted them upon arrival.

Fr. H. F. Ward, O.P., former director of our mission office, would later write: "The work in every mission is primarily spiritual, but there must also be care of the material elements of people. The material needs in Chiapas are overwhelming—they are visible, awesome, and sometimes horrifying." The consequences of such destitution included widespread malnutrition and communicable diseases, but the friars, like St. Martin de Porres, were unflinching, determined to provide comfort and healing to the villagers, no matter how sick they were. In 1966, however, the friars were blessed with the arrival of recent medical school graduate, Fr. John Flannery, O.P. to begin his medical ministry, and he provided a welcome boost of professionalism to their efforts.

Still though, they were jerry-rigging equipment and trucking-in random medicines from San Francisco. But in 1969, after collecting enough capital from determined and resourceful fundraising efforts and overcoming numerous local bureaucratic obstacles, our province, with the support of the Dominican Mission Foundation, constructed and opened Hospital San Carlos in nearby Altamirano, under the direction of Fr. Flannery and the Presentation Sisters. Management was transferred to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in 1976, and the original building was replaced some years ago, but **Hospital San Carlos remains the area's vibrant and essential healing presence it has been for almost 50 years.**

Today the hospital is blessed to have been chosen as an official site for international medicine rotations of several U.S.-based residency programs, including UC San Francisco and Highland Hospital in Oakland. But its goals remain grounded to its original purpose. According to the hospital's current mission statement, it seeks to provide health care to those they serve, who are still mostly from the poor indigenous population,

"in a humanistic fashion, without discrimination, and with respect for and understanding of the diverse cultures in the region," and thereby "contribute to the development and economic promotion of the indigenous people in order that they may live a dignified life." And while written mission statements weren't as customary 50 years ago as they are today, the same passion for promoting equality and human dignity has been integral to the hospital's staff from its inception.

Practically speaking, the non-profit Hospital San Carlos has never veered from striving to provide quality service at an affordable price. Since only one-third of its revenue comes from patient fees, it is still dependent upon donations to be able to survive.

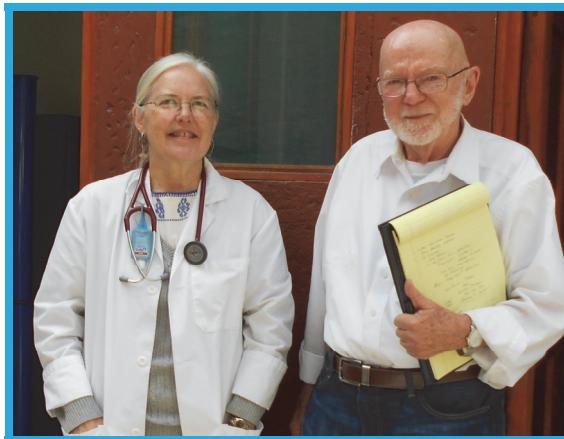


*Far left, the entrance to Hospital San Carlos; left, patients of all ages come from long distances, often on foot, seeking relief and healing; bottom, baby with pneumonia hooked up to new heart monitor. (All new blankets like hers and the one on page 1 were purchased from your donations!)*

According to their annual report, 2016 funds were utilized for the following: updating operating rooms, recovery rooms, and quarantine areas; advancement in Pediatrics, particularly with infants and school age children, in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and in laboratory procedures; and maintenance and replacement of equipment and supplies, including a much-needed store of bed linen and blankets, allowing for them to be changed at least daily, and more often when needed.

On a trip to Chiapas earlier this year, I visited the hospital to actually see the fruits of your generosity. I was warmly welcomed by Sr. Adela Orea, the director, and by Sr. Rosario Macias, an old friend (whose nephew, Fr. Alonso Palacios, is a diocesan priest in Mexicali.)

*Top, Sr. Adela Orea, HSC's director, and Sr. Rosario Macias, enjoying one of the many patios in the new hospital's open-air design; middle, Fr. Martin with Dr. Linnea Capps, MD, MPH; and below, Sr. Rosario and a student nurse, joining Dr. Capps and two of her volunteer doctors from New York.*



On my tour, I was delighted to see a familiar face from my previous visit in 2013, Dr. Linnea Capps, MD, MPH. As co-director of the "Primary Care and Social Internal Medicine Residency Program" at New York's Einstein/Montefiore Medical Center, Dr. Capps has brought medical teams from New York to offer their expertise. And having volunteered in medical programs in Uganda and El Salvador as well as Mexico, and currently serving as president of Doctors for Global Health, her presence is indeed a blessing.

At my last visit, I learned of—and later requested your contributions for—a new three-year program for indigenous students to become certified nurses, the hope being that they would stay on staff as nurses who could also interpret for patients who spoke their dialects. And during this visit, I was gratified to recognize some of those students, who are now professional nurses!

**How much good work has been achieved through your selfless and loving support and prayers! While the needs in Chiapas and all of our mission areas often seem overwhelming and never-ending, indeed while we all despair at times that tremendous suffering is still very present in so many parts of the world, I wish to acknowledge to all of you, our mission friends, that countless lives are a little better, and their sun shines a little brighter, thanks to you.**

In Christ's Peace,  
Fr. Martin de Porres Walsh, O.P.



*Left, newly arriving child is comforted by his mother and a Tzeltal-speaking sister; right, Jorge is all better and ready to go home; below, proud sisters with newly certified nurses Rosa Lopez, Gustavo Hernandez, and Ana Encino.*



### *Wise Words From a Missionary*

As Prior Provincial, Fr. Paul Scanlon, O.P. visited our mission in Chiapas in 1974, and wrote of the wonderful people he encountered: "Our industrial technology, agricultural science, and medical wisdom can be shared with them to ease their lives. This can be our gift. But when you walk through their forests and their fields and no one passes by without saluting you as 'brother' and stopping to chat, you know they have a respect for life, a concern for one another, and an awareness of God that is missing in our comfort-laden, but lonely, society. We ought not pity them; rather we ought to learn from them, and then share our knowledge and love in return."

### **St. Martin de Porres Triduum**

**November 1, 2, and 3**

**First Day:** St. Martin, you always had sympathy for the poor and those who were suffering. I need your help and now ask for it with great confidence in your goodness and power. Please remember me, as you adore God. Amen.

**(Your petitions, followed by Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Closing Prayer.)**

**Closing Prayer:** Dear St. Martin, I turn to you in my sorrow and anxiety to seek your friendly protection. Please intercede for me with our merciful Father in heaven so that I may be truly sorry for all my sins and be freed from the evils that shackle me. Ask that I might have something of your spirit of love and self-sacrifice, and so be at all times reconciled to God's holy will. Oh heavenly Father, in the name of your Son and of His blessed Mother, and by the merits of your faithful servant Martin, help me in my trouble and do not forsake me. Amen.

**Second Day:** St. Martin, we praise God for the manifestation of His love. The favors you received from God encourage us now to seek your intercession and help. We ask you most humbly to befriend and assist us from your place in heaven; but most of all, we beg you to commend us to our beloved Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**(Your petitions, followed by Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Closing Prayer.)**

**Third Day:** Brother Martin, when you were here on earth, you spent your life loving God and your neighbor. This we know from the testimony of your own Dominican brethren. Now that you live in the presence of God in paradise, intercede for those who stand so much in need of the healing help of God and beg the Divine Physician to give us health of the soul and body. Amen.

**(Your petitions, followed by Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Closing Prayer.)**