

In the Gospel this week, a scribe asks Jesus, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replies, “The first is this: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

I recall a young man in a Catholic High School commenting, “Christianity is just a bunch of rules and regulations ... don’t do this ... don’t do that; I just want to have fun!” On the contrary, Jesus teaches us that there is only one law in Christianity: the law of love. This single law is lived out in two ways: love for God and love for neighbor. All the teachings of the Church, all the dictates of the law and prophets, are simply instructions on how specifically we are to follow this law of love. In a word: love fulfills the law.

Like the young man quoted above, we all “want to have fun.” At the same time, we all want to be fulfilled as human beings and ultimately inherit

eternal life. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that human fulfillment sometimes requires hard work, pain, and sacrifice – there is more to life than just “having fun.” In a word, human fulfillment requires sacrificial love.

Pope John Paul II wrote, “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.” *Familiaris Consortio*, #18.

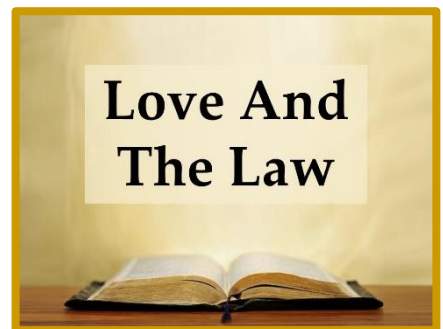
Jesus teaches us a different “bunch of rules and holy Catholic Church. stands the person of Christ created us in love, emptied and died because He loved our sins. The moral “rules and regulations,” are love. Living in fidelity to the rules means living in accordance with love—it may not always be “fun,” but we have it on the highest authority, it is ALWAYS FULFILLING – even when it requires sacrifice!

The moral teachings of the Church are an expression of God’s love – they specify how to love God and neighbor, and thus, how to find human fulfillment.

way of understanding the regulations” taught by our Behind each of these rules – perfect Love. Jesus, who Himself, suffered, sacrificed, us and wanted to save us from teachings of the Church, all the in fact an expression of God’s

Mother Teresa of Calcutta knows a thing or two about sacrificial love, she says, “My prayer for you is that you may grow in holiness through love for one another—for where there is love, there is peace.... And if there is peace, there is joy. So, keep the joy of loving one another in your hearts, and share this joy with all you meet.” All I can add to this is: AMEN!

Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Terry Staples





## Saint Martín de Porres

**Feast Day: November 3**

**Born: December 9, 1579**

**Died: November 3, 1639**

**Patron: Social justice, racial harmony, and mixed-race people**

**Canonized: May 6, 1962 by Pope John XXIII**

Saint Martín de Porres was born in Lima, Peru, to a Spanish nobleman, Don Juan de Porres, and a freed Panamanian slave, Ana Velazques. His mixed-race heritage immediately placed him at a disadvantage. His father initially refused to acknowledge Martín as his son due to his dark skin, leaving the boy and his sister to grow up in poverty under their mother's care. This early experience of discrimination and hardship would profoundly shape Martín's worldview and fuel his lifelong commitment to helping the less fortunate. Despite the challenges he faced, Martín developed a deep sense of empathy and a desire to serve others from a young age.

At the age of 12, Martín began an apprenticeship with a barber-surgeon, where he learned valuable medical skills that would later prove instrumental in his charitable work. By the age of 15, he had a spiritual awakening that led him to join the Dominican Order as a lay helper, which was the highest position available to him due to his mixed-race background. Within the Dominican community, Martín faced further discrimination. Peruvian law at the time prevented people of mixed race from joining religious orders. However, Martín's unwavering dedication and humility eventually won over his superiors and he was allowed to take full vows as a Dominican friar at the age of 24.

Martín's approach to combatting discrimination was not through confrontation, but through love and service. He treated everyone with equal respect and compassion, regardless of their race or social status. He worked tirelessly in the monastery's infirmary, using his medical knowledge to treat both fellow friars and members of the public. He distributed food and alms to those in need, often giving away his own meager possessions. He also founded a home for orphaned and abandoned children, providing them with shelter, food, and education. He took special care of African slaves brought to Lima, offering them medical treatment and spiritual comfort.

Martín's life was marked by numerous miraculous events, including reports of levitation, bilocation, and instantaneous cures. However, it was his everyday acts of kindness and his ability to see the divine in every person that truly set him apart. His humble demeanor and willingness to perform even the most menial tasks allowed him to transcend social barriers and touch the lives of people from all walks of life, from the poorest beggars to the most powerful person in the region.

**Reflection:** St Martín's life serves as a powerful example of how individual acts of kindness and a commitment to equality can effect real change in society. His life teaches us that true change begins with seeing the inherent dignity in every person, regardless of their race, social status or circumstances. As we reflect on St Martín's life, we are challenged to examine our own attitudes and actions. How can we, in our own spheres of influence, work to break down barriers of discrimination and extend a helping hand to those in need? St Martín de Porres shows us that even in the face of systemic injustice, individual acts of kindness and a commitment to serving others can create ripples of positive change that extend far beyond our immediate reach.