

Homily
Friday of the 30th Week in OT
November 3, 2023

Who did not come from a mother and a father? Each of us has two distinct sources for our DNA, a mother and a father. Our mothers are unique individuals with their own mother and father. Our fathers are unique individuals with their own mother and father. My mother come mostly from what I call northern European descent; Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Norway. This is where I get my Viking-like personality. My dad's ancestry is solely German. This is where I get my strict, organized, methodical qualities.

We all come from two sources with varying degrees of diversity. This is what makes America so wonderful and exciting; we are made up of nearly every ethnicity and culture from around the world. We were once described as a melting pot, where all these ethnic and cultural backgrounds merged and mixed, producing amazing and astonishing results. We are the most productive and resilient country in the world for many reasons, but mostly because of the mixing of our diversity.

Today, we celebrate the Memorial of Saint Martin de Porres, the illegitimate son to a Spanish gentlemen and a freed slave from Panama. At a young age, Martin's father abandoned him because of Martin's dark skin color, and his mother and his younger sister as well, leaving Martin to grow up in deep poverty. After spending just two years in primary school, Martin was placed with a barber/surgeon where he would learn to cut hair and the medical arts. He was known for his devotion to the Eucharist and constant prayer, and he refrained from eating meat as an act of austerity. He had great compassion for all people, regardless of their race or status, and his loving care extended to animals, including stray cats and dogs, beasts of the field, and even kitchen vermin. He is the patron saint of many things, but mostly known for African Americans, Barbers, Social Justice, and Race Relations.

Martin exhibited an unconditional love that aligns with the Greatest Commandment message heard in today's Gospel. We love God, with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds. This begins with the Eucharist. Jesus is truly, substantially present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. And when we see Jesus, we see His Father. And where the Father and the Son are, so also is the Holy Spirit, One Triune God. And when we partake in this most august Sacrament, we become also one with Him and one with each other, one big happy, loving family.

How do we love unconditionally? We listen to God's Word proclaimed; we partake of His Body and Blood; we align our will to His, always putting God first, always loving our neighbor. We love our enemies; we forgive all who offend us; we look humbly and sincerely inside ourselves to recognize those things we need to change, embracing virtues and abandoning vices. We listen to Paul's exhortation to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always." We seek forgiveness and God's grace through the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

All this is very simple, but it is not easy. That is why we must come daily to the Lord in prayer, never giving up, always seeking His love and guidance.

