Servant of God
Fr. Martin de Porres Maria Ward,
O.F.M.Conv.

March 20,
1918
To
June 22,
1999

+

Missionary
in Brazil
1955-1999







who by his love desired to offer his life for the education and service of the youth, the poor and the sick".

O Glorious Most High God, who deign to glorify
in Heaven the souls of those who served and glorified
you on Earth, hear our prayers (petitions in silence),
and according to the design of Your Divine Providence,
deign to glorify your
Servant Friar Martin Maria,
who by his love desired to offer his life for the education
and service of the youth, the poor and the sick,
that like our 'compadre' we
too may progress in the service of the most needy.
Amen!

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Friar Martin de Porres Maria Ward

passed away on June 22, 1999, at the age of 81. He had dedicated 51 years of his life to the Conventual Franciscan Friars, much of which was spent in Andrelândia, Brazil.

Born in 1918 in Boston, Massachusetts, to a bi-racial family, Friar Martin began his journey toward Franciscan life with a heartfelt letter to the vocation director. In it, he mentioned that he was "colored." The director responded, indicating that they had not previously considered the acceptance of colored applicants, as none had applied before. However, he noted that they were beginning to work in fields that could provide opportunities for colored applicants. It was during the Provincial Chapter in June 1945 that a decision was made to accept missions in Latin America, including Brazil.

Friar Martin became the first African American Conventual Franciscan in North America. Shortly after his ordination to the priesthood on June 4, 1955, he volunteered for missions in Brazil. He was well-known in his religious community and among the people he served for his cheerful, charitable, and humble demeanor. He dedicated himself to the people of Andrelândia, particularly the poor, and was often called upon to celebrate funerals, conduct marriages, and hear confessions.

As part of his encounters with men aspiring to become Franciscans, Friar Martin would share the story of his calling. He spoke about overcoming the challenges of prejudice due to his African American heritage and his battle with infectious pulmonary disease. These struggles were met with faith in Divine Providence and devotion to the Immaculate Virgin, to whom he entrusted his vocation and turned for support during difficult times.

His commitment to faith was reflected in his practice of the virtues of simplicity, joy, poverty, and humility, especially in his interactions with the poor. Friar Martin was a devoted Franciscan friar and priest with a profound devotion to the Eucharist.

https://www.olaprovince.org/locations/the-cause-for-fr-martin-de-porres-maria-ward-ofm-conv-2/ (Engish and Portuguese)

Update: Cause of Fr. Martin de Porres Maria Ward, OFM. Conv. - Our Lady of the Angels Province

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