



# **Black Saint of the Americas: The Life and Afterlife of Martín de Porres (Cambridge Latin American Studies)**

*Professor Celia Cussen*

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In May 1962, as the struggle for civil rights heated up in the United States and leaders of the Catholic Church prepared to meet for Vatican Council II, Pope John XXIII named the first black saint of the Americas, the Peruvian Martín de Porres (1579-1639), and designated him the patron of racial justice. The son of a Spanish father and a former slave woman from Panamá, Martín served a lifetime as the barber and nurse at the great Dominican monastery in Lima. This book draws on visual representations of Martín and the testimony of his contemporaries to produce the first biography of this pious and industrious black man from the cosmopolitan capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru. The book vividly chronicles the evolving interpretations of his legend and his miracles, and traces the centuries-long campaign to formally proclaim Martín de Porres a hero of universal Catholicism.

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