

November 11 **Martin** Bishop of Tours, 397

Martin, one of the patron saints of France, was born about 330 at Sabaria, the modern Szombathely in Hungary. His early years were spent in Pavia in Italy. After a term of service in the Roman army, he traveled about Europe, and finally settled in Poitiers, whose bishop, Hilary, he had come to admire. According to an old legend, while Martin was still a catechumen, he was approached by a poor man, who asked for alms in the name of Christ. Martin, drawing his sword, cut off part of his military cloak and gave it to the beggar. On the following night, Jesus appeared to Martin, clothed in half a cloak, and said to the saints and angels surrounding him, "Martin, a simple catechumen, covered me with this garment." Hilary ordained Martin to the presbyterate sometime between 350 and 353, and Martin, inspired by the new monastic movement stemming from Egypt, established a hermitage at nearby Ligugé. To his dismay, he was elected Bishop of Tours in 372. He agreed to serve only if he were allowed to continue his strict, ascetic habit of life. His monastery of Marmoutier, near Tours, had a great influence on the development of Celtic monasticism in Britain, where Ninian, among others, promoted Martin's ascetic and missionary ideals. The oldest church in Canterbury, which antedates the Anglo-Saxon invasions, is dedicated to St. Martin. Martin was unpopular with many of his episcopal colleagues, both because of his manner of life and because of his strong opposition to their violent repression of heresy. He was a diligent missionary to the pagan folk of the countryside near his hermitage and was always a staunch defender of the poor and the helpless. Martin died on November 11, 397. His shrine at Tours became a popular site for pilgrimages and a secure sanctuary for those seeking protection and justice.

Collect Lord God of hosts, you clothed your servant Martin the soldier with the spirit of sacrifice, and set him as a bishop in your Church to be a defender of the catholic faith: Give us grace to follow in his holy steps, that at the last we may be found clothed with righteousness in the dwellings of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lessons

Galatians 6:1–2

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Psalm 15

1 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *who may abide upon your holy hill?

2 Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, * who speaks the truth from his heart.

3 There is no guile upon his tongue; he does no evil to his friend; *

he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.

4 In his sight the wicked is rejected, *but he honors those who fear the Lord.

5 He has sworn to do no wrong *and does not take back his word.

6 He does not give his money in hope of gain, *nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

7 Whoever does these things *shall never be overthrown. other."

Luke 18:18–30

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"

"Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."