

November 11th — Martin, Bishop of Tours, 397

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*

Isaiah 58:6-12

Psalms 15

Matthew 25:34-40

Martin is one of the patron saints of France. He was born around 330 in what is now Hungary. He spent his early years in Italy, and eventually served in the Roman army. After his stint in the army, he settled in Poitiers, France. It was here that Martin came to know a bishop by the name of Hilary.

A popular legend regarding Martin says that while he was still a catechumen, he was approached by a poor man who asked for alms in the name of Christ. Martin drew 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 him, “Martin, a simple catechumen, covered me with this garment.”

Martin was ordained to the priesthood by Hilary sometime between 350 and 353. Inspired by a new monastic movement originating in Egypt, he established a hermitage to devote himself to prayer. To Martin’s dismay, he was elected Bishop of Tours in 372. He agreed to serve only if he could 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.

Martin was unpopular with many of his brother bishops, both because of his manner of life and his opposition to the violent repression of heresy. He was, by all accounts, a dedicated missionary to the pagans in the countryside surrounding the monastery and was always a staunch defender of the poor and helpless.

**November 14th — Consecration of Samuel Seabury,
First American Bishop, 1784**

We give you thanks, O Lord our God, for your goodness in bestowing upon this Church the gift of the episcopate, which we celebrate in this remembrance of the consecration of Samuel Seabury; and we pray that, joined together in unity with our bishops, and nourished by your holy Sacraments, we may proclaim the Gospel of redemption with apostolic zeal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Acts 20:28-32

Psalm 133

Matthew 9:35-38

Samuel Seabury was born in Groton, Connecticut in 1729. Ordained to the priesthood in England (where all priests were ordained prior to the American Revolution), Seabury was sponsored by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and served Christ Church, New Brunswick, NJ. In 1757 he became rector of Grace Church, Jamaica, Long Island and in 1766, rector of St. Peter's in Westchester County. During the American Revolution, Seabury remained loyal to the Crown and served as a chaplain in the British army.

After the Revolution, at a secret meeting of Connecticut clergymen in Woodbury, Seabury along with the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming were selected to pursue ordination to the episcopate in England — whichever one was willing to travel. Leaming declined and Seabury sailed to England. Seabury found it impossible to be ordained by English bishops (3 bishops are the minimum number required to consecrate a new bishop), because he could not swear allegiance to the Crown. Finally in 1784, in Aberdeen, Scotland, Seabury was consecrated a bishop by the Scottish Non-Juring bishops of the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

Upon his return home, Seabury was recognized as the Bishop of Connecticut. He was active in the organization of the Episcopal Church at the General Convention of 1789. He successfully kept his promise to the Scottish bishops and persuaded the American Church to adopt the Scottish Eucharistic prayer for inclusion in the first American *Book of Common Prayer*. This prayer remains in the 1979 BCP as Eucharistic Prayer I in Rite I (page 331).