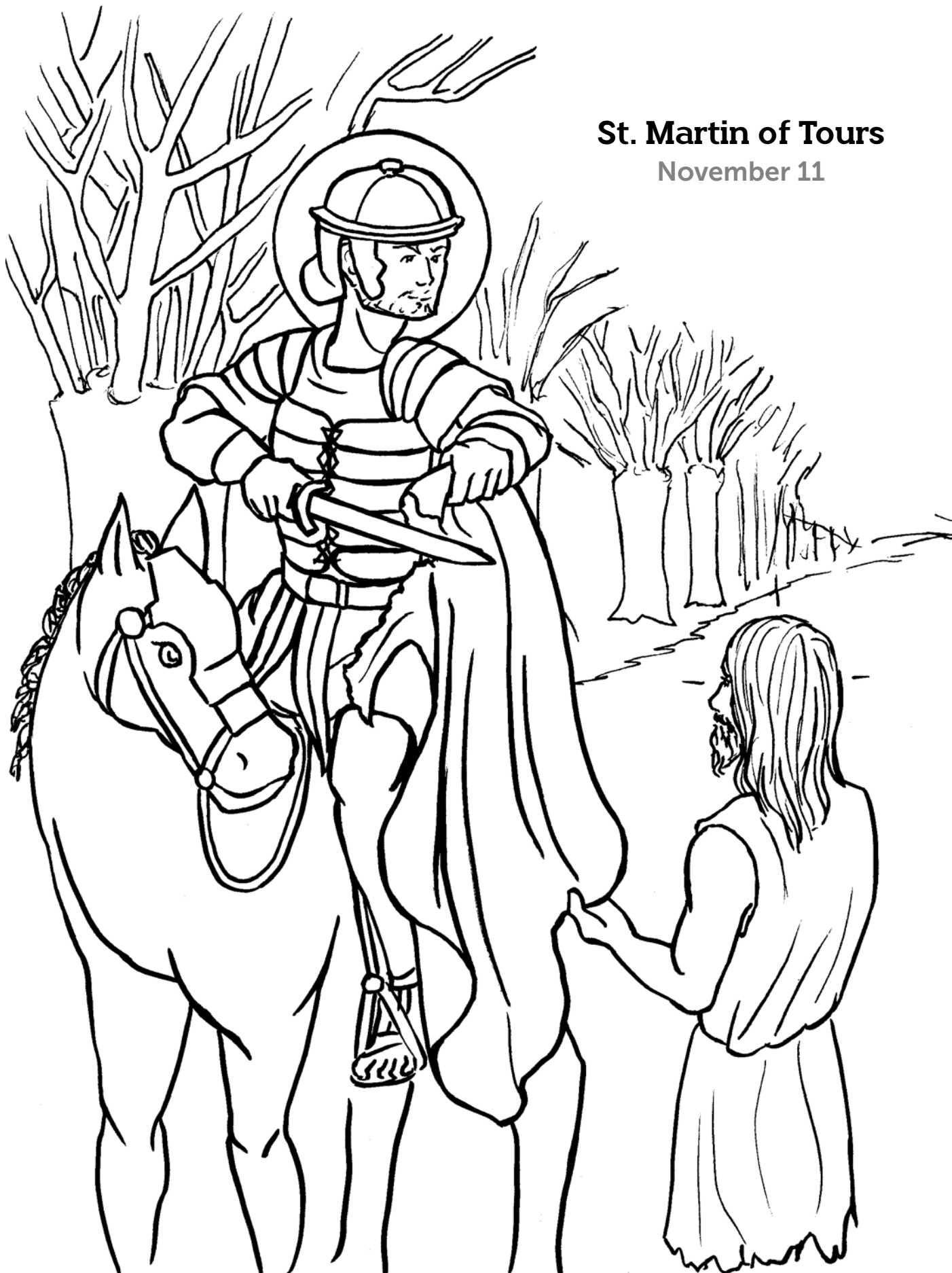


St. Martin of Tours

November 11



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c. 316–397 • Modern-day Hungary

Martin's father was an officer in the Roman army and wanted his son to be a soldier too. But Martin did not want to be a soldier. As a young boy, he had learned about Jesus. Now he was studying to be a Christian and did not want to fight in battle. But when Martin turned fifteen, his father forced him to join the Roman army.

Stationed at the city of Amiens, Martin rode up to the city gate in his soldier's garb and cloak. The day was cold with the bitter wind, and the ground crunched with frost. At the gate, Martin saw a naked beggar shivering in the cold and the wind. None of the people paid any attention to the beggar as they passed him by. Martin was but a poor soldier and did not have much, but he took his sword and cut his soldier's cloak in half. He wrapped the torn cloak around the beggar's shivering shoulders. When Martin returned to the garrison, the other soldiers pointed and laughed at Martin and his torn cloak.

But God rewarded Martin for his generosity. That night, Jesus appeared to Martin in a dream. He was surrounded by angels and wore half of a torn cloak. Jesus explained that by giving his cloak to the beggar, Martin had clothed Christ Himself. After his vision of Jesus, Martin was baptized. A number of years later, he was free to leave the army and wished to visit his parents.

On his way home, he was attacked by robbers in the mountains. One of the robbers lifted his axe to strike Martin down, and Martin faced him calm and unafraid. Another robber asked Martin how he could be so brave in the face of death. Martin replied that he was a Christian and that Jesus would take care of him in this life and the next. The robbers were so impressed with Martin that they let him go. One of them even became Christian and entered a monastery.

At home, Martin converted his mother to the Christian Faith. Martin lived for ten years in a monastery and was then appointed bishop of Tours. There were many pagans in Tours who worshiped trees and had temples to false gods. Through many miracles, Martin converted the pagans, and they cut down their tree-idols and built churches over the temples. Martin served the Church as bishop of Tours until he died a holy death.

St. Martin of Tours, help me remember that what I do for others, I do for Jesus!