

# SPANISH-AMERICAN

The **Medallion** shows a Spanish ship exploring the Americas. The Spanish brought the Catholic faith to the West and were the first Europeans to explore the Chesapeake Bay.

In 1531, **St. Juan Diego** (1474–1548) (December 9) saw a lady with a black sash, the symbol of pregnancy, who said: “I am your mother and the mother of God.” She asked him to build a church on that spot. Juan convinced the bishop to do this when he showed him fresh roses wrapped in his cloak in January. A picture of the lady was miraculously revealed in Juan’s cloak. Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12), appearing as a simple Indian woman, made the faith less foreign to Indians. She is the patron of the Americas and the pro-life movement.

**St. Peter Claver** (1581–1654) (September 9), a Spanish Jesuit, was sent to Cartagena, Columbia, where he discovered the horrible condition of African slaves brought by Catholics to work in the mines. He used his authority as a priest to talk his way onto slave ships to minister to the slaves. He tried to defend their rights, but had few supporters in Spain or in the Church.

**St. Rose of Lima** (1586–1617) (August 23), consecrated herself to God instead of marrying, as her Spanish parents wanted. She spent years as a recluse, then came out of her isolation to do works of mercy for the poor. In 1617, She died at the age of 31, and was the first resident of the New World to be canonized.

**St. Martin de Porres** (1579–1639) (November 3) was the illegitimate son of a black woman and a Spanish official and was treated terribly because he was mulatto. Because of race, he was not ordained a priest. He became a lay Dominican brother who did medical assistance. He is shown mixing medicine. He founded an orphanage for children of slaves and became spiritual director to many prominent people, including St. Rose of Lima. He was also famous for taking in stray animals.

**Oscar Arnulfo Romero** (1917–1980) was Archbishop of San Salvador during the 1970’s civil war. He became a defender of the poor and the oppressed and spoke out against the military government and their murders. He was murdered by them while he was saying mass. In one of his great homilies he said, “If God accepts the sacrifice of my life, then may my blood be the seed of liberty and a sign of hope. A bishop will die, but the church of God, the people, will never die.”

**Cesar Chavez** (1927–1993) was born to a migrant family in the southwest US. He was raised in migrant labor camps after his family lost their farm in the Depression. He attended 37 different schools as his family migrated doing stoop labor in the fields. They were a deeply devout Catholic family, and he developed a strong sense of justice. Influenced by a priest, he formed the UFW. He organized a grape boycott in the 1970’s. Many priests, bishops, nuns, and labor organizers joined this movement for the poor.

