

Martin de Porres House of Hospitality
225 Portero Ave • San Francisco, CA 94103 • (415) 552-0240

i have sung your praises from the highest mountains to the deserts of the Holy Land. i have watched your fallen angels worship the firmament. i have heard your love songs in the taste of tears. i have held your holy ones, your broken ones, in my arms.

Solstice Revelation

Spring 1996

Dear Friends,

I came to Martins over 20 years ago, a somewhat lost soul searching for God. What I first found at Martins was more garbage than I had ever seen in my life; huge piles of day old bread, produce that was almost compost, and people dirtier than I had ever thought humanly possible. All these things cast off by society were now my daily community.

The next thing I found at Martins were miracles. Real, alive, touch in your hands miracles. The miracles of being down to the last piece of bread and a truck pulling up with 100 loaves of fresh French bread. The miracle of a group of people who barely thought they could tie their own shoes, buying and renovating a building and raising a million dollars to pay it off. These were the easy miracles.

The real miracles were more involving human transformation. For example, when a new volunteer would first encounter one of our long term guests, they would often be visibly shaken. Ray, who came to Martins when he was 17 (he is now 34) and has lived on the streets continuously, has always eaten at Martins. Autistic? Schizophrenic? Put your labels on him, to us he is part of the family. He is, one might say, different looking, and to most of our volunteers, repulsive at first. After a few months they come to realize his beauty, see his gentleness, learn his humor, recognize his humanity. They ask me sincerely, "Do you think Ray will ever talk to me?" I say "Stick around 5 or 6 years and he might." The day I come to work and the same volunteer hugs me saying, "Ray asked me for milk the other day, he knows my name" they smile grinning from ear to ear. This is the true Miracle I see.

Then I found Faith. When we were evicted from our 23rd Street location where we had been located for 15 years I lost my faith for 3 days, forgetting faith in God. Now 10 years later at New Martins, I can laugh at my lapse.

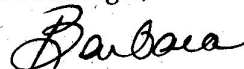
Then still searching for God I found Love. The love of a family that had no boundaries, no limits, no separations. Each day I work at Martins is a transcendent experience. Truly during those few hours all the love hidden inside of each soul bursts forth, and the light of love makes each person beautiful, forever.

I reflect on all this, this spring, for I will be 50 on Palm Sunday. I will be celebrating it by working our 5th Sunday Meal. For I did, and I proclaim this publicly to the world, find God at Martins.

I found God at Martins; in the garbage, in the miracles, in faith and in love. More than these though I have had the privilege and gift to see God. To see God in each person, in each something, in each nothing.

This is my love letter to God, to be ever grateful for the moments of grace when I feel God, am touched by God, kissed by God. I celebrate my 50 years of life with you all. I give thanks for the precious gift of life, no matter how short or long. Thank you all for allowing me to share my joy with you.

In God's Light,



Barbara