



Born in Spain, **St. Peter Claver** became a Jesuit priest in 1604. He dedicated himself to saving “millions of perishing souls” and went to Columbia to be of service to the Negro slaves, which arrived by the thousands every month. Boarding the slave ships as they entered the harbor, he would hurry to the hold of the ship and offer whatever meager food and drink he could afford; he would care for the sick and dying, and instruct the slaves through Negro catechists before administering the Sacraments. Furthermore, he did not lose sight of his converts when they left the ships, but followed them to the plantations to which they were sent, encouraged them to live as Christians, and convinced their masters to treat them humanely. *Through his efforts three hundred thousand souls entered the Church.* He labored continuously for the rescue of the African slaves and the ending of the Negro slave trade for 33 years. He died in 1654. St. Peter Claver is a Patron Saint of Missionaries to African Peoples and Human Rights Defenders. His Feast Day is September 9th.

