



St. Toribio confirmed both St. Rose of Lima and St. Martin de Porres, patrons of Peru. Their Feast Days are celebrated with processions and festivities throughout the country.

St. Toribio wasn't just a wanderer; he was a builder. He established a network of schools, hospitals, and the first seminary in the Americas to ensure that when he moved on, healing and education remained. His spiritual reach was so wide that he even confirmed two other legendary figures—St. Rose of Lima and St. Martin de Porres— weaving the "Saints of Lima" into a single, magnificent legacy.

Toribio died in 1606 in the remote village of Zaña, far from the grandeur of Lima, fulfilling his promise to stay with his flock until the end. His relics are being translated to our deanery later this year and our parish community is looking forward to their arrival, here in our parish of Our Lady of Peace, concealed in a life-size statue. As we mark 300 years since his canonization, St. Toribio should not be the easily "forgotten" saint. He remains a powerful testament to the idea that evangelisation isn't measured by how much theology we know but by the distance we are willing to travel to serve "the least of our brothers and sisters."

~ With thanks to Fr. Simon Cadwallader for this article.

With Every Good Wish in Christ,

Rev. David Costello, Director



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Photo: <https://perucatico.com/fiesta-seminario-santo-toribio-de-mogrovejo-cumple-427-anos-de-formar-sacerdotes/>

"The Epic Journey of a Peruvian Archbishop..."

Dear Friends,

Who is a silent giant in the history of Latin America? While St Martin de Porres and St Rose of Lima attract global devotion, St. Toribio of Mogrovejo was the spiritual architect of an entire continent, a man whose life was an epic feat of endurance and a masterclass in human rights. This year, we celebrate the 300th anniversary of his canonization and there is a buzz of excitement across Peru. Anticipation is high that Pope Leo will arrive this fall, travelling from the historic streets of Lima to

the quiet town of Chiclayo, where Toribio drew his last breath, to honor a legacy that still breathes today.

Toribio was not a native Peruvian, nor was he originally a priest. He was a brilliant Spanish jurist and judge. His integrity caught the eye of King Philip II who nominated Toribio as Archbishop of Lima. Toribio was naturally shell-shocked. Like so many biblical characters that balked at being called to a higher assignment, he resisted. Overwhelmed by his own perceived unworthiness, historical accounts describe him throwing himself at the foot of a crucifix, weeping and praying for God to take away a responsibility he felt was far beyond

his capability. He knew the "moral chaos" and corruption awaiting him in the New World. Yet, when the call was confirmed, his resistance transformed into a fervent "yes." He realized the indigenous people of Peru needed a defender, and he was ready to be their shield. After a "fast-track" ordination, he set sail in 1581 for a territory that stretched from Panama all the way to Chile.

Today, we talk about an "Outgoing Church," but Toribio was the original blueprint. In an era where Bishops were treated like princes, expected to govern from golden thrones in the capital, Toribio rejected the "palace culture."

Google AI generated images (above and below) of St. Toribio, April 2026.





High in the Andes of Peru, the periphery, where St. Toribio worked.

He spent eighteen of his twenty-five years as Archbishop outside of Lima. He understood a simple truth: you cannot love a people you do not know. By walking an incredible 40,000 kilometers—roughly the circumference of the Earth—he moved the heart of the Church from the city to the periphery. He sought out the existential outskirts, visiting enslaved miners in the freezing Andes and exploited laborers on the burning coast. He made the Gospel a physical presence in their mud-brick villages rather than a distant decree from a Spanish palace.



Toribio knew that true outreach requires speaking the "mother tongue." He realized that preaching in Latin to the indigenous population was like speaking Chinese to the average American. He didn't just hire translators; he became fluent in Quechua and Aymara.



In an act of radical inclusion, he oversaw the printing of the first book in South America—a trilingual catechism. He refused to ordain any priest who couldn't communicate with the people in their own language. This was "inculturation" centuries before the word existed. Being a church of outreach meant stepping out of political comfort zones. Toribio was a constant thorn in the side of colonial authorities. He fearlessly confronted wealthy landowners and Viceroy's, famously declaring, "*Christ is Truth, not custom.*"

Toribio moved the Church from being a silent partner of the State to being a vocal advocate for human rights, denouncing the horrific abuses in the silver mines.

The Statue of St. Toribio of Mogrovejo at the Archbishop's Palace of Lima.