

encounter

Lent

Encounter ourselves.
Encounter our neighbors.
Encounter our God.



St. Marianne Cope of Moloka'i, Beloved Mother of Outcasts

Saint Marianne, born Barbara Koob January 23, 1838, in Heppenheim, Germany, and died August 9, 1918, Kalaupapa, Moloka'i. When Barbara was two years old, her family immigrated to Utica, NY where their name was changed to Cope. The family joined St. Joseph's Parish, where Barbara and her siblings attended the parish school. In 1862, she entered the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Syracuse, N.Y. where she was invested at the Franciscan Church of the Assumption and became known as Sister Marianne.

Marianne learned the pharmacology of her time, adopted the latest professional developments in equipment and learned the importance of cleanliness and hand washing as a way of controlling the spread of disease. Blessed with many talents, Marianne was a teacher and later a school principal, helped direct the opening of numerous schools and hospitals, and oversaw the expansion of a full novitiate and a new chapel at St. Anthony Convent in Syracuse.

She was summoned to Hawai'i in 1883 to care for people with Hansen's Disease (leprosy) and, with six Franciscan Sisters, answered the call. She lived the rest of her years there. Mother Marianne's understanding of sanitary procedures and spirit of self-sacrifice enabled her to live and work with leprosy patients for 35 years. She knew the importance of beauty in self-esteem, and boosted the morale of female patients with Hansen's Disease by providing clean living conditions, gardens, the latest fashions, and surrounding them with flowers and trees. In 1886, Marianne and the Sisters cared for Fr. Damien, later Saint Damien of Moloka'i, when he visited Honolulu during his bout with leprosy. Upon his death in 1889 on Moloka'i, Mother Marianne fulfilled a promise to him by continuing his work.

Saint Marianne was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 21, 2012. Her remains are enshrined in reliquary at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu. King Kalakaua decorated Mother Marianne in 1885 with the medal of the Royal Order of Kapi'olani in recognition and appreciation for "service, art and services rendered to the state or sovereign."

This write-up is courtesy of the Diocese of Honolulu. To learn more, visit the History section of the Diocese of Honolulu Cathedral website www.cathedralofourladyofpeace.com and the Catholic Essentials—Saints section of the Diocese of Honolulu website www.catholicahawaii.org.