

SAINTS ALIVE! JANUARY 23: ST. MARIANNE COPE

Marianne Cope OSF was born January 23, 1838, in Germany but in 1839, her family emigrated to the New York. As a teenager and young adult, she worked to support her family. In 1862, she entered religious life.

In 1870, she was appointed administrator of St. Joseph Hospital, a position she held until 1883 when she moved to Hawaii to care for lepers on the island of Molokai.

She remained in Hawaii until her death in 1918.

Marianne was the first sister to move to Molokai and care for those with leprosy. Four dozen different religious orders had previously declined this ministry.



St. Marianne Cope is patron saint of lepers and outcasts.

Pope Francis wrote about the outcast in *Joy of the Gospel*: “We have created a ‘throw away’ culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. **The excluded are not the ‘exploited’ but the outcast, the ‘leftovers.’**”

A society is judged by its treatment of the most vulnerable. In biblical times, these were the widow, the orphan, and the alien. These most vulnerable are not on the margins but are cast out far beyond the margins into the nether regions of exclusion.

Jesus ate and drank with those on the margins. He also touched those who were society’s outcasts and healed them. The marginalized and the outcasts were often the center of his parables.

Lepers were treated as outcasts by many. The King of Hawaii (who invited Marianne to Hawaii), Fr. Damian, and Marianne Cope treated lepers as Jesus did: brothers and sisters.

Who are today’s outcasts? The sick? The prisoner? The elderly neighbor who lives alone? The homeless? The stranger?

Saint Marianne Cope, please intercede on our behalf that we might welcome the outcast.

Embracing Father,
You grace each of us with equal measure in your love.
Let us learn to love our neighbors more deeply,
so that we can create
peaceful and just communities.
Inspire us to use our creative energies
to build the structures we need
to overcome the obstacles
of intolerance and indifference.
May Jesus provide us the example needed
and send the Spirit to warm our hearts for the journey.
Amen
—from *Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice*