

SAINT MARIANNE COPE

Office of Readings

Second Reading

From an address of Pope Benedict XVI

(May 16, 2005: Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI, I [2005], 111-112)

Witness to sacrificial love

It is with great joy that I welcome you to Rome, dear brothers and sisters, for the Beatification of Mother Marianne Cope. I know that your participation in Saturday's solemn liturgy, so significant for the universal Church, will have been a source of renewed grace and commitment to the exercise of charity which marks the life of every Christian.

Marianne Cope's life was one of profound faith and love which bore fruit in a missionary spirit of immense hope and trust. In 1862 she entered the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse where she imbibed the particular spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi, dedicating herself wholeheartedly to spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Her own experience of consecrated life saw an extraordinary apostolate unfold, adorned with heroic virtue.

As is well known, while Mother Marianne was Superior General of her Congregation, the then-Bishop of Honolulu invited the Order to come to Hawaii and work among the lepers. Leprosy was spreading rapidly and causing unspeakable suffering and misery among the afflicted. Fifty other Congregations received the same plea for assistance, but only Mother Marianne, in the name of her Sisters, responded positively.

True to the charism of the Order and in imitation of St. Francis, who had embraced lepers, Mother Marianne volunteered herself for the mission with a trusting, "Yes!" And for 35 years, until her death in 1918, our new Blessed dedicated her life to the love and service of lepers on the islands of Maui and Molokai.

Undoubtedly the generosity of Mother Marianne was, humanly speaking, exemplary. Good intentions and selflessness alone, however, do not adequately explain her vocation. It is only the perspective of faith which enables us to understand her witness—as a Christian and as a Religious—to that sacrificial love which reaches its fullness in Jesus Christ. All that she achieved was inspired by her personal love of the Lord, which she in turn expressed through her love of those abandoned and rejected by society in a most wretched way.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us today be inspired by Bl. Marianne Cope to renew our commitment to walk the path of holiness.

May the Virgin Mary obtain for us the gift of continual fidelity to the Gospel. May she help us to follow the example of the new Blesseds and to strive tirelessly towards holiness.

SAINT MARIANNE COPE

Office of Readings

Responsory

Matthew 25:35-36, 40; John 15:12

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me,
ill and you cared for me.

—Amen, I say to you: whatever you did for one of the least of my brethren,
you did it for me.

This is my commandment:
love one another as I love you.

—Amen, I say to you...

Prayer

O God, who called us to serve your Son
in the least of our brothers and sisters,
grant, we pray, that by the example and intercession
of the Virgin Saint Marianne Cope,
we may burn with love for you and for those who suffer.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.