

Maria Anna Barbara Koob,

Saint Name: Saint Marianne Cope or Saint Marianne of Moloka'i

Dates: January 23, 1838 – August 9, 1918

Location: United States immigrant

Feast day: January 23



Maria Anna Barbara Koob (later adopting the name Cope) was born January 23, 1838 to Barbara Witzenbacher and Peter Koob in Heppenheim, Germany. When she was one year old she and her family immigrated to the United States settling in Utica, New York. Marianne attended catholic schools, achieving an 8th grade education until her father fell ill forcing her to go to work to help support the family until she was 24 years old. When her father passed away in 1862, Marianne left her job to pursue her dream – a religious life. She joined the Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis based in Syracuse, New York and took the name Marianne when she completed her formation. Marianne taught German speaking immigrant children and later took the responsibility of principal at a school for immigrant children. She also helped direct the opening of the first two Catholic hospitals in central New York. Marianne arranged for students from the Geneva Medical College in New York to work at the hospital and stipulated that patients should have the right to refuse treatment. This was one of the first times in history that the right to refuse medical treatment was recognized. In 1883, Marianne received a plea from King Kalakaua for help to those isolated on the island of Moloka'i, Hawaii suffering from Leprosy. Answering King Kalakaua plea, Marianne (known by then as Mother Marianne) and six sisters arrived in Hawaii on November 8, 1883. Mother Marianne first managed a hospital on the island of O'ahu, where leprosy victims were first sent for triage. The most severe patients were sent to the island of Moloka'i. She also helped establish a hospital on the island of Maui. For many years, Mother Marianne continued to help all who were diseased. Eventually the work became too much for her aging body and she was confined to a wheelchair. Despite this challenge, Mother Marianne continued to work without complaint. All her years of working with leprosy, she never contracted the disease herself which was considered a miracle. Mother Marianne died on August 9, 1918 at the age of 80 in Kalaupapa, HI. There have been miracles attributed to her name: in 1993 a woman was miraculously cured after multiple organ failure following prayers to Mother Marianne - the woman's recovery was certified by the Church; and on December 6, 2011, an additional miracle was credited to her and approved by Pope Benedict XVI.

Saint Marianne Cope was Beatified May 14, 2005 and Canonized October 21, 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI. She is the patron of lepers, outcasts, those with HIV/AIDS. Her Feast Day is celebrated January 23.