



**“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

**—Luke 6:38**

I know you resonate with these verses. But you and I don't seek credit for following in the footsteps of Jesus. We do want to glorify our Father in heaven. Since 1954, people just like you have been letting their light shine to bring attention to the needs and achievements of people affected by leprosy on World Leprosy Day.

Celebrated on the last Sunday in January, it is not a day about you or me. It is a day to raise awareness, advocate, and break down the barriers of one of the oldest diseases in the world. It is a day to remember God's compassion and love and a reminder to keep going until the work is done.

Between now and the end of March you, your group, or church, are invited to hold a World Leprosy Sunday event. Use all or part of a service or meeting to shine a light on the needs of people affected by leprosy and the organisations that support them. **Will you join us?**

Get in quick to book a speaker for your service or event. Resources are available and for more information, or to talk about ideas to make your event stand out, please contact Glen, Church Engagement Coordinator at [engage@leprosymission.org.au](mailto:engage@leprosymission.org.au) or through the Leprosy Mission Australia office on 1800 537 767.

**Please pray for churches and groups to walk alongside people and communities affected by leprosy by holding World Leprosy Sunday services and events.**

**World  
Leprosy  
Sunday  
2025**

**Leprosy  
Mission**  
Australia



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**Keeping  
In Touch**

**Plant the SEED of  
a brighter future**



**“At first, I thought that the patches were a result of sap from mango or lemon trees. We used to play quite a lot around mango and lemon trees.”**

As a child Juku, from Nepal, didn't really understand the consequences of leprosy. At the time her grandfather was on Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) for leprosy but didn't think too much about it. A year later when her grandfather went to Anandaban for a check-up, Juku accompanied him and was diagnosed with leprosy. She was put on MDT for two years.

Despite getting support from her family, Juku was uncomfortable telling others about her leprosy saying, “I would often tell my friends and neighbours that I was taking medicines for skin problems.”

A common outcome for people with leprosy is that they self-stigmatise. Spending time at Anandaban Hospital helped relieve some of this for Juku.

“When I first came to Anandaban Hospital, I was really scared. Seeing so many of the patients with deformities and amputation really scared me.

But the more she stayed in the hospital, the more relieved she felt. She would often talk to the older patients who would tell her stories about how they faced stigma and had to hide from society when they were first diagnosed.

I think back that if I hadn't visited the hospital when I did with my grandfather, I would probably be in the same situation.”

Juku is grateful for the care that she received from Anandaban Hospital and the opportunity granted to her by the Supporting Empowerment through Education Development (SEED) scholarship.

“Things would have been very different for me if I hadn't received the scholarship. It pays for my school fees and I don't have to be too worried where all my books and stationery are going to come from...I am thankful to everyone who has supported me for my education. It is because of your support that I am able to continue my studies.”

Juku would like to work in the health care system one day as a nurse. Thanks to the support of Australians like you, Juku has a positive outlook and confidence to build a good career and help support her family.

**See inside... your prayers are needed  
for Juku and others like her!**



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Photo by Kaleomokuokanalu Chock

# A Mission of Love and Courage

By Anne Lim

**Over the last year we have shared with you stories of heroes both near and far away; people whose loving and sacrificial care for people affected by leprosy reflect the love of God. Some are remembered in books or movies, some, like St Marianne of Molokai, with statues. This is her story.**

“At a time when little could be done for those suffering from this terrible disease, Marianne Cope showed the highest love, courage and enthusiasm. She is a shining, energetic example of the spirit of her beloved Saint Francis,” Pope Benedict XVI wrote of the canonization of St. Marianne Cope of Molokai on October 21, 2012.

More than 50 religious congregations in the US had already declined a request

from Hawaii’s King Kalakaua for Sisters to care for leprosy patients because the disease was considered to be highly contagious. But when the German-born American religious sister received a letter from the Hawaiian King asking for sisters to care for people affected by leprosy, she responded enthusiastically to the letter:

**“I am hungry for the work and I wish with all my heart to be one of the chosen Ones, whose privilege it will be, to sacrifice themselves ... I am not afraid of any disease.”**

Marianne, then aged 45, had just become the second Mother Provincial of her Order in Syracuse, New York, and initially she intended to return to that role. However, she spent the last 30 years of her life in Hawaii.

Mother Marianne, with six other Franciscan sisters, arrived in Honolulu to a royal welcome on November 8, 1883. Within months, Mother Marianne took leadership of the Kakaako Branch Hospital for leprosy patients, established Maui’s first general hospital and co-founded the Kapiolani Home for orphan girls. She and her sisters also oversaw St Anthony School in Wailuku, Maui. These institutions became open to everyone, regardless of race, color and creed.

After five years managing a hospital in Honolulu, Marianne volunteered to go to Molokai, a rugged island where more than a thousand people had been exiled to spend the rest of their days on an isolated settlement on the Kalaupapa peninsula, cut off from their families and communities.

She arrived at Kalaupapa with two of her sisters in November 1888 – just months before the death of Belgian priest Damien De Veuster, who had contracted leprosy after years of providing

medical and emotional support to the community. With her two youthful assistants, she consoled the ailing priest on his deathbed by assuring him that she would continue the work he started for which he was known internationally. She also made a bold promise to her sisters that that none of them would contract the disease.

From the outset, Mother Marianne instigated cleanliness protocols such as frequent handwashing to protect herself and her Franciscan sisters from leprosy. By such measures, she and her sisters spent decades ministering to the emotional and physical needs of the people at close quarters without becoming infected.

After Father Damien’s death, Marianne took charge of the refuge he had built for boys, in addition to her role of caring for the colony’s female residents. According to witnesses, Molokai was like a combination of a graveyard and a prison at the time, with harsh living conditions that were considered intolerable for women. Mother Marianne, Sister Vincent McCormick, and Sister Leopoldina Burns showed unwavering faith and courage in bringing hope and the joy of God’s love to this desolate place. They restored dignity and beauty, encouraging dresses to be sewn in the latest fashions and planting flower gardens and fruit trees.

Marianne was about 50 years old when her mission at Molokai began and she died at age 80 on August 9, 1918, from kidney and heart disease and was buried on Molokai.

At her death, a Honolulu newspaper wrote: “Seldom has the opportunity come to a woman to devote every hour of 30 years to the mothering of people isolated by law from the rest of the world. She risked her own life all that time, faced everything with unflinching courage, and was known for her gentle smile.”

Marianne herself sought no acclaim. “What little good we can do in this world to help and comfort the suffering, we wish to do it quietly and so far as possible, unnoticed and unknown,” she said. “We rejoice we are unworthy agents of our Heavenly Father through whom he designs to show his great love and mercy.”

Today, a statue of St Marianne stands in Kewalo Basin in Honolulu. Her outstretched hand pointing toward Molokai symbolises her unwavering love and service. Families, homeless people, surfers, and tourists share the park, connected by the aloha she left behind.

**Give thanks for Marianne Cope for her devotion to God and the call she received to love and care for people with leprosy. Pray that in the telling of her story people will be inspired and moved to continue the work of bringing dignity and love to affected people.**

You can watch screenings of Molokai in Newcastle and Adelaide this February. Tickets available online only at <https://fan-force.com/films/molokai/>



Make a difference to those who need it most <https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/where-needed-most/kit01>



## Your prayers for a brighter future!

Pray for Juku as she continues to study. Pray that she will look after her physical health and inner wellbeing so that her future will be a bright and healthy one.

Pray for the SEED project as it supports young people throughout their education. Give thanks for the staff who provide counselling and other support to ensure students feel safe and confident to participate in their education as well as the wider community.

You can give someone like Juku a chance to have a brighter future <https://www.leprosymission.org.au/sole-saver/kit12>

