

## Readings for Thursday April 15, 2021

Remembering DAMIEN and MARIANNE of MOLOKAI PRIEST AND LEPER, 1889;  
RELIGIOUS 1918

### Psalm 103:13-22

13 As a father cares for his children, \*  
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

14 For he himself knows whereof we are made; \*  
he remembers that we are but dust.

15 Our days are like the grass; \*  
we flourish like a flower of the field;

16 When the wind goes over it, it is gone, \*  
and its place shall know it no more.

17 But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever  
on those who fear him, \*  
and his righteousness on children's children;

18 On those who keep his covenant \*  
and remember his commandments and do them.

19 The Lord has set his throne in heaven, \*  
and his kingship has dominion over all.

20 Bless the Lord, you angels of his,  
you mighty ones who do his bidding, \*  
and hearken to the voice of his word.

21 Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, \*  
you ministers of his who do his will.

22 Bless the Lord, all you works of his,  
in all places of his dominion; \*  
bless the Lord, O my soul.

## **Isaiah 57:14-19**

It shall be said, 'Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way. For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not continually accuse, nor will I always be angry; for then the spirits would grow faint before me, even the souls that I have made. Because of their wicked covetousness I was angry; I struck them, I hid and was angry; but they kept turning back to their own ways. I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will lead them and repay them with comfort, creating for their mourners the fruit of the lips.\* Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord; and I will heal them.'

## **Matthew 11:1-6**

Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah\* was doing, he sent word by his\* disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers\* are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

## **The Collect**

Bind up the wounds of your children, O God, and help us to be bold and loving in service to all who are shunned for the diseases they suffer, following the example of your servants Damien and Marianne, that your grace may be poured forth upon all; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Damien and Marianne of Molokai, Priest and Leper, 1889; Religious 1918**

In the 1800's, the Hawaiian Islands suffered a severe leprosy epidemic, which was dealt with largely by isolating lepers on the island of Molokai. They were simply dumped there and left to fend for themselves. The crews of the boats carrying them there were afraid to land, so they simply came in close and forced the lepers to jump overboard and scramble through the surf as best they could. Ashore, they found no law and no organized society, simply desperate persons waiting for death. A Belgian missionary priest, Joseph Van Veuster (Damien of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart), born in 1840, came to Hawaii in 1863, and in 1873 was sent at his own request to Molokai to work among the lepers. He organized burial details and funeral services, so that death might have some dignity. He taught the people how to grow crops and feed themselves better. He organized a choir, and got persons to sing who had not sung in years. He gave them

medical attention. (Government doctors had been making regular visits, but they were afraid of contagion, and would not come close to the patients. They inspected their sores from a distance and then left medicines on a table and fled. Damien personally washed and anointed and bandaged their sores.) There was already a small chapel on the island. It proved too small, and with the aid of patients he built a larger one, which soon overflowed every Sunday. Damien contracted leprosy himself in 1885, and continued to work there until his death on 15 April 1889.

**Mother Marianne Cope** (January 23, 1838 – August 9, 1918), was a Franciscan nun of the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis, a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church. Born in Heppenheim (Germany) and entered religious life in Syracuse, New York, she worked, lived and died for the lepers on the island of Moloka'i in Hawai'i. She was not herself afflicted by the disease, a fact arguably declared to be miraculous considering her close contact with the patients over the course of several years.

At the age of three her family moved from Germany to the United States, settling in Utica, New York. After joining the Franciscans, she spent nearly a decade as a teacher and then principal in newly established schools for German immigrants. She was also a founding member of two of the first Catholic hospitals in the United States.

In November 1883, Mother Marianne, then Provincial Mother, traveled from Syracuse to Honolulu with six other nuns to answer a call for aid to the Hansen's disease sufferers. In 1888, she moved to Kalaupapa to help the ailing Father Damien of Moloka'i. When the famed priest died, Mother Marianne Cope took over the care of the patients of Kalaupapa. She remained there until her death in 1918.