

A New Secular Franciscan Saint - Marguerite Bays

This 19th-century Swiss laywoman and stigmatist dedicated her life to prayer and service to her parish community without marrying or entering a religious community. As a Third Order Franciscan, she lived a simple life as a dressmaker and carried out a lay apostolate as a catechist.

When Bays was diagnosed with advanced cancer in 1853, she prayed to the Virgin Mary to be able to suffer with Jesus rather than to be healed. However, on the day that Blessed Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Sept. 8, 1854, she was miraculously healed. Pius made the proclamation on Marguerite's 39th birthday.

“From that moment on, after Marguerite was healed of her illness in a completely inexplicable way, she proclaimed the passion of the Lord, because every Friday she had these moments of suffering in which there was blood and the stigmata, the very pain of the Passion,” Father Carlo Calloni, the postulator for Bays' canonization cause, told EWTN's Vaticano.

Blessed Marguerite died on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1879 at the age of 63. After her death the Vatican approved a miracle attributed to her intercession in which a 2-year-old child was completely healed after being run over by a 1,800-lb tractor wheel. She was beatified by St. John Paul II in 1995.

Source: *National Catholic Register*, Oct 11, 2019