

Come pray with us

We need all of the faithful to join us in prayer. That's as simple as it can get. Your intentional prayer is needed. After all, we have already witnessed throughout history that the voices of many are heard by God. Let's join together, families to families, churches to churches, religious communities to other religious communities to unite, lifting up in prayer the advancement of the cause for canonization of the *Servant of God*, Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, an Oblate Sister of Providence.

Let's come out in strong numbers with strong voices of prayer and join Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, members of the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Mother Lange Guild Board of Directors May 8 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Mass at 5:30 p.m.

So many of us have been directly or indirectly touched throughout Baltimore and beyond by the ministry of Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange and her daughters, the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Now, we in turn can exhibit our love and support for such holy service, by showing up in prayer joining the Oblates Sisters of Providence, their associates and the guild members as Mass is celebrated for the intention that God will elevate Mother Lange to the high altar of sainthood.

Mother Lange was a phenomenal woman of faith who travelled the streets of Baltimore, ministering to God's people. As she prayerfully sojourned from George Street to Fells Point to Paca Street to Richmond Street to Chase Street, perhaps the scriptural passage from St. John became her mantra... "Behold, I say until you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are ready to be harvest (John 4:35)."

Mother Lange saw that the fields were ready for harvesting and that harvest time comes only once a year. With all of her faith and all of her love for her people an urgency to catechize, to educate and to evangelize anchored Mother Lange's life.

It is believed that Mother Lange was born around 1784 in what is today Haiti. She, along with hundred others fled that country in the late 18th century when a revolution occurred. By 1818 and perhaps even earlier, Mother Lange was educating black children in her home in Baltimore at her own expense with another female

refugee. At that time, there was no public education for blacks in Baltimore.

In 1828, with the help of Sulpician Father James Joubert, Mother Lange and two other black women started the first black Catholic school in America - St. Frances Academy. A year later, three black women and Mother Lange pronounced their first vows to become the first religious order of women of African descent. In 1829, Mother Lange became the first mother superior of the order. Despite discouragement, racism and financial challenges, Mother Lange continued to educate and catechize children and met many spiritual and physical needs of the black community. Mother Lange died at St. Frances Academy Feb. 3, 1882, and is buried in New Cathedral Cemetery on Old Frederick Road.

Come out, come out wherever you are, my brothers and sisters, and let us pray for this special intention for the cause of sainthood May 8. All are welcome.

For more information call the Mother Lange Guild Office at 410-242-6861

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