

*“Let us carefully cultivate hope,
that small flower which we should
always bring to those who suffer”*

THE VOICE OF COMPASSION

supporters and friends news

www.compassion.org.nz

ISSUE 44 | OCTOBER 2017

Nau mai

Dear Friends,

Thank you all for your prayers and gifts to the Sisters of Compassion. We were blessed by a sunny day for our Street Day in Wellington in May and the Chanel Home of Compassion had a successful Bazaar in Suva in July.

This newsletter highlights the recent Jubilees of our Sisters Veronica Hurring, Telesia 'Iva Afungia and Josefa Tikoisolomone. It is with joy that we can celebrate with each of them. In a variety of ways they have been beacons of hope to many people by their lives of prayer and faithful service.

Hope and peace are vital as we all face the challenges of each day. Suzanne Aubert wrote, “We can never exceed in true hope, which can never be too great since it is founded on the mercy of God and on the merits of Jesus Christ.”¹ Pope Francis echoes this deep hope in his many quotes referring to the Mercy of God. Their voices encourage us to seek out hope and peace in our daily life.

I was most fortunate to have 5 weeks at the Centre for Ecology and Spirituality at Glenburn Victoria, Australia, operated by the Christian Brothers. I appreciated their wonderful hospitality and was furthered cared for by Sister Colleen King Turner RNDM, who is a staff member at the Centre. It is a country version of the retreat and spirituality centre at Island Bay. I was surrounded by the bush and all its inhabitants; fortunately it was cold so the snakes and mosquitoes were hibernating. There was ample time for rest and reflection. I was fascinated by the mystery of the fungal kingdom. The rapid appearance after rain of colourful and strangely formed fruiting bodies was magical. I now understand why artists and photographers have been inspired by their beauty. I was drawn to reading a number of mystics, e.g. Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich as the beauty of all that was around me surprised me each day. I am sorting through a number of my own photographs and get joy each time I view them. This time of refreshment came as a result of our General Chapter in



New leadership team. L-R: Sisters Sue Cosgrove, Alisi Tu'ipulotu, Margaret Anne Mills and Lusiana Raratini.

May. I have been re-elected as the Congregational Leader for a further term. Sisters Sue, Alisi and Lusiana were elected onto the Leadership Team.

As I write I am aware of how much has happened since I was away and since my return. Our neighbour, Bruce Stewart of Tapu te Ranga marae, passed away. Our Sisters Yvonne Manera and Peggy Brown also passed away. You will read in this newsletter how all of them influenced Compassion significantly.

I noticed that the refurbishment area of the Retreat Centre and Courtyard have progressed significantly and are on track for the opening and rededication, on 14 October. This development will make visiting Suzanne Aubert's Crypt so much more accessible for all. The ambience of quiet and prayer will offer space and a place to pause to all visitors. The prayer of our retreatants and pilgrims adds to the ongoing support for Suzanne's Beatification process.

“Nothing is little in the service of God.”² With these words of Meri Hōhepa / Suzanne Aubert, I sincerely thank you for your prayers, encouragement and support.

May God Bless you and protect you.

Mā te Atua koe e manaaki, e tiaki hoki.

Sister Margaret Anne Mills

Congregational Leader.

¹ Spiritual Tonics p. 31

² Ibid. p. 121

News from Our Lady's Home of Compassion



*The pohutakawa-lined driveway provides a sense of arrival at Our Lady's Home of Compassion, Island Bay.
Photo credit: Nina Cuccurullo*

Now that the construction and refurbishment works at Island Bay are complete, Our Lady's Home of Compassion can open its doors fully as a place of "prayer, pilgrimage, respite and retreat".

Redeveloped from its days as a hospital, the Home of Compassion is open to everyone as a retreat and conference centre. Groups and individual retreatants enjoy coming here for the peacefulness, natural setting, comfortable facilities, and because it is the home of the Sisters of Compassion. Some people simply stay a night or two to take time out or while visiting Wellington to see relatives or attend an event.

No matter the reason for coming, retreat and conference centre guests and day visitors alike enjoy the new garden rooms, refurbished central reception area, refreshment space and Heritage Centre spaces. These new facilities allow us to extend our hospitality and provide the opportunity for people to encounter more fully the charism of Compassion.

We invite you to spread the word, and get in touch, to make a visit, or hold a retreat, meeting or conference at the Home of Compassion.

Find more information at www.compassion.org.nz or call (04) 383 7769

Visit Suzanne Aubert's Resting Place and the Suzanne Aubert Heritage Centre

Fresh new facilities and a new team of volunteers greet visitors and pilgrims to the Chapel and Heritage Centre which are open again to the public following a time of construction.

Suzanne Aubert's resting place in the Chapel provides a beautiful and accessible space for the increasing numbers of visitors and pilgrims wishing to visit and pay their respects.

The Suzanne Aubert exhibition, telling the story of the life and work of Venerable Suzanne Aubert, is complemented by:

- a multipurpose activity room where movies will play, exhibitions will be held and a range of gatherings and activities can take place.
- a refreshment space where simple fare is offered and where

visitors and pilgrims can relax and reflect inside or outside in the landscaped cloister.

- a shop stocked with a range of quality books and other gifts and mementos

A new exhibition space will follow soon. It shares the story of the Sisters of Compassion and how they have lived the legacy of Suzanne Aubert over the last 125 years – including the present response to the needs of our times.

Volunteers are on hand in the Heritage Centre and the Chapel to welcome and guide visitors and pilgrims, with tours available.

For opening hours visit: www.compassion.org.nz/locations/suzanne-aubert-heritage-centre

Bring learning to life with Compassion School Resources

A wealth of activities and resources are on offer for schools visiting Our Lady's Home of Compassion and the Soup Kitchen. Schools can hold their own retreat day or choose from a range of activities encompassing the curriculum from art to science to social history and social justice. Students are inspired by the story of Suzanne Aubert and the ongoing work of the Sisters. Opportunities to take time out and just be in a beautiful and tranquil setting are especially welcomed by school groups. Learning about the work of the Soup Kitchen and issues of homelessness, food insecurity, mental health and addiction provides new insights and positive ways for taking action.

The Home of Compassion is also an ideal space for staff planning and retreat days or simply a place for some individual reflection away from the activity of the classroom.

More will be developed for schools in the coming months and we are always happy to talk to educators about tailoring the programme for your group of students.

Book a school visit or find out more at: www.compassion.org.nz/schools/visit-us



A garland of birthday bunting for Suzanne Aubert's birthday, Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Thorndon

I am Sister Alisi



Sister Alisi Tu'ipulotu dolc

"Tirohia e koe ki ahau"

Mathew 25:36

I started my journey from a place of Love, Forgiveness, Mercy and Hope.

As a Prison Chaplain, we are living signs of the closeness of Christ to

prisoners and we bring them hope in the reality of God's mercy. This was highlighted in *"The Jubilee Year of Mercy"* We must witness by our presence to the love of God, as shown by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

My time as a prison chaplain has had many highlights as well as challenges and disappointments and like all journeys, it contains many successes as well as opportunities for personal and spiritual development. I could name many highlights but I will be brief. My particular joy was working with and supporting fellow Pacific Islanders, singing and praying in their own language when possible. The Family outreach was an important part of my ministry, particularly with activities such as an angel tree at Christmas time. It was so pleasing to see the joy on the faces of the prisoners' children as they received their presents. Feeling the support and trust of both staff and prisoners meant a lot to me. I was also trusted to get in touch with the family of the prisoner who was being deported home.

The prisoners grow a lot of vegetables each year and I was able to distribute them to people in need in the area. Wood from the prison was provided to families in the wintertime.

The prisoners see me as a "Big Mama", a mother figure, like Mother Aubert who had a heart big enough for everyone. Moreover, as Mother wisely said, "Let your soul be in your eyes when you listen to any tale of sorrow" "I see Christ in them all." During my journey I enrolled in a family violence course to enable me to support families. As a Sister of Compassion, I am called by the Gospel to empathise with all people in their pain, story, lack of freedom, shame, and separation from their families which becomes an everyday journey for them. I am blessed to have the support of a parish prayer group, also our prison church volunteers and St Vincent de Paul. I also attended the annual national in-service training for prison chaplains; and attend our regional and diocesan Hui.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to sincerely thank my co-workers, the dioceses, the Sisters of Compassion, Hawke's Bay Prison and Hawke's Bay Parish for their continued encouragement. The biggest highlight would have to be my farewell, which I received when I completed my time at Hawke's Bay Prison in 2017 an occasion I will long remember.

Malo 'aupito mo e hufaki

Alisi Tu'ipulotu dolc

Creating Purpose and Hope

"I have a house, but I'm still homeless!" - Te Hā Tangata Participant

The Compassion Soup Kitchen will soon offer a programme of purposeful activities to support our guests in developing confidence, skills, and goals and hope for the future. These activities will also support our guests in taking their rightful place as valued members of our community. A new community garden on our Soup Kitchen site re-establishes our past gardening activity, and joins our Monday fishing trips as the first activities in the programme. There will be more to follow.

Purposeful Activity fits the kaupapa of the Soup Kitchen – where we not only provide healthy and nutritious meals but, in acknowledging the dignity of our guests, have developed a community of trust over time.

The success of the recent Te Hā Tangata project has provided the impetus for this expanded range of purposeful activities.

Te Hā Tangata wove together concepts from Te Ao Māori and The Human Library, promoting conversations and connections, and challenging prejudice and discrimination by shining a light on the human face of homelessness. The involvement of guests – reflecting their wants, needs and aspirations – was central to Te Hā Tangata and will also be core to our Purposeful Activity project.

This project is for the long-term. It will be cost-effective and sustainable. While our Purposeful Activity project will be led by the Soup Kitchen and our guests, we will involve community partners to ensure that it is inclusive, bringing guests and the wider community together – continuing the work of Te Hā Tangata.

Are you interested in getting involved? Contact Matt Petrie: matt.p@compassion.org.nz.

Ngā mihi nui for your generosity and support.

Jubilee Celebrations

Sister Josefa

I come from Fiji and the Sisters of the Society of Mary who taught me at school influenced my religious vocation. I left home in 1964 and entered the Sisters of Compassion in 1965. I was blessed to return to my own country to work at Chanel Home of Compassion during two different periods of my religious life. Changes and challenges have given me a lot to learn and now they influence the way I think and act.

As I rejoice and celebrate this occasion I remember and acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation the blessings and support I have received from the Sisters of Compassion, my family and friends. Now I can only thank God for the gift of Suzanne Aubert, for her faith and commitment to the Spirit of Compassion.



Sister Josefa

Sister Telesia

On 20th March in the presence of the Sisters of Compassion and her family and friends, Sister Telesia renewed her commitment to living her life as a Sister of Compassion, 50 years after she had made her first commitment.

Sister is from Tonga, the youngest of eight children- five brothers and two sisters. Sister came to New Zealand in 1963 to consider whether she would enter the Sisters of Compassion. She liked what she saw, felt this was where God wanted her to be and, as we now celebrate 50 years later, she stayed.

Sister entered the Sisters of Compassion Novitiate in 1964 and, in 1967, became the first Sister of Compassion from Tonga to make her final profession. Initially Sister nursed in our different Homes of Compassion and then worked in Tonga for a period where she was involved in the Pastoral Care Ministry. In recent years, Sister has worked in the Compassion Soup Kitchen here in Wellington, where she has enjoyed working with volunteers.

Sister's present mission is here in Wellington where her journey as a Sister of Compassion began all those years ago. On this special 50th anniversary of her profession, we thank Sister Telesia 'Iva for the wonderful work she has done and continues to do as a Sister of Compassion.



Sister Telesia

Sister Veronica

Entering Religious life in 1954 prior to the Second Vatican Council, youth, health, enthusiasm were valuable starters to embrace the challenges of my vocation to become a Sister of Compassion and a faithful follower of Suzanne Aubert. A periscope glimpse of my 60 years recalls many memorable moments of people and events that have influenced my voyage. I feel gratitude to family, religious family, professional and nursing colleagues, friends and benefactors of the congregation, plus the other amazing opportunities I have experienced and enjoyed. I trust in some small way I have contributed to their lives. The major changes seen within the church, the congregation and my family have enriched and influenced my life in some way or other. This Diamond Jubilee gives me an opportunity to rejoice and thank God for his generous gifts to me.



Sister Veronica

Our Dream Jobs at St Joseph's Home of Compassion, Heretaunga

Alma

My relationship with St Joseph's started when I was 10 years old. I would visit the Home in the school holidays to 'help' in the children's ward. To find myself working at the Home in the role of Pastoral Care Coordinator at the twilight of my working days, it seems as though I have come full circle.

I was recently asked what I enjoyed most about my role at the Home, to which I replied that my role allows me to express a long-held love and regard for the elderly. On further reflection, I would add that this brings with it many challenges as well as rewards and opportunities. I have learnt in my three years that it is less about me and more about the people who live and work here.

As well as providing pastoral care for the residents, family and staff at St Joseph's, I consider myself privileged to be a part of carrying on the legacy of Suzanne Aubert through our Mission, Vision and Values training sessions. These are attended by every staff member. For new staff members, hearing about Suzanne's life journey comes as a revelation, whereas many of our longer serving staff members have embraced her story and endeavour to integrate Suzanne's values into their daily work routines.

When watching the five minute DVD* that summarises Suzanne's life one of the key events that rings a bell with me is the fact that at the age of 78 she was immersed in the First World War in Europe, helping to look after the sick and the wounded. This encourage me to conclude that the twilight of my working days has many more challenges and opportunities to be experienced as I continue on my journey as Pastoral Care Coordinator.

* Link to five minute DVD: <https://youtu.be/Zk1uZSdo0-M>



L-R: Alma and Geraldine

Geraldine

I love working as the Recreational Coordinator at St Joseph's. This December I have been working here five years. It feels like my second home because I was brought up with the same values such as respect and compassion. The residents and my work colleagues are very supportive and caring, which makes it a lovely environment to work in. I can see myself here for many years to come.

I started working here in 2012 as a housekeeper. I really enjoyed seeing the residents daily for a catch up. I did some relieving for recreation staff when they were on leave and really enjoyed it. Then a job became available at the beginning of the year, and I was encouraged to apply by all. I feel very blessed to have the opportunity to do this role.

I feel so fortunate to work here and I feel very passionate about helping people feel valued, respected and heard. I really feel I have found my dream job.

diary dates

Oct – Dec 2017

Taizé prayer

7-8pm, 1st Friday of each month in Our Lady's Home of Compassion Chapel

Christian Meditation

7-8pm, every Monday in Our Lady's Home of Compassion Chapel

8 October – 5 November 2017

An Exhibition of Fibre Art by Merrilyn George
At Suzanne Aubert Heritage Centre, Our Lady's Home of Compassion

14 October 2017 – 6am to 3pm

Day of Celebration at our Lady's Home of Compassion

2 December 2017 – 10am to 3pm

Advent Waiting

On this day we take time to leave the busyness of Christmas preparation, and rest and reflect within the beautiful grounds of Our Lady's Home of Compassion

17 December 2017

Family Afternoon

Join us to put up our crib in Our Lady's Home of Compassion Chapel

All are welcome.

Venue: 2 Rhine Street (off Murray Street),
Island Bay, Wellington

For more information: islandbay@compassion.org.nz
or (04) 383 7769

Keep up with retreats and events at www.compassion.org.nz/events

Obituaries

Sister Yvonne Manera 27 Apr 1933 - 24 Feb 2017



Sister Yvonne Manera

Yvonne Manera was born in Hokitika on the West Coast. Her siblings were Bill, Noleen and Malcom.

Yvonne entered the Sisters of Compassion on 22 February 1952. She completed her novitiate training and was professed as Sister of Compassion on 15 September 1954.

After graduating as a State Registered Nurse in 1960 Sister Yvonne worked at Chanel Home of Compassion in Fiji and then at

St Joseph's Home, Heretaunga. At St Joseph's Sister cared for babies with disabilities and was infirmarian at nearby St Patrick's College.

On returning to Island Bay, Sister Yvonne was asked to relieve on what we call the 'Van Duty' for 2 weeks. Well, she stayed on for 42 years! The Van Duty involved collecting fruit, vegetables and anything else shopkeepers might like to give for the two Homes of Compassion in Wellington.

The following years were spent in Pastoral Work at Carterton and Marian Court. At both places she was able to pursue her hobby of card making. We are all recipients of some of her beautifully made cards.

Sister Yvonne died suddenly on 24 February 2017. Yvonne was such a gift to so many Sisters and others. She is missed dearly.

Sister Peggy Brown 21 Oct 1947- 26 Jul 2017



Sister Peggy Brown

Peggy Brown was born in Raglan in 1947. She was the 7th child in a family of 9. In 1965, Peggy entered the Sisters of Compassion, and was professed as a Sister of Compassion on 15 September 1967.

Once professed, Peggy cared for the elderly, the

children and babies. She excelled in all aspects of her care.

It was while she was in Broken Hill that she became unwell and returned to Island Bay in 1977 to begin her treatment for kidney failure. In 1983, Peggy received a kidney from her biological sister Marie. This enabled her to resume work, the work she enjoyed with the children. Her last role at Island Bay was as sacristan. She loved caring for the chapel, especially preparing for the different liturgical celebrations.

Towards the end of 2014, Peggy moved to Auckland to be close to family and eventually she moved into St Catherine's Home. Sister died on 26 July 2017. Sister Peggy Brown was a very generous person and a true woman of faith and prayer.

Stalwart – Bruce Stewart – our neighbour



Bruce Stewart

Bruce Stewart founder of Tapu Te Ranga marae died recently and several of the Sisters along with David Cross, Guest Services Manager were able to be with the whānau for Bruce's farewell and burial. Bruce came to Wellington in 1974. He embarked on his vision of building an urban marae, with

"just \$25 and a dream". The marae, adjacent to Our Lady's Home of Compassion, has delivered social services and work cooperative for Māori who were moving out of the provinces and into the cities, including the homeless, unemployed and gang members.

Today the Marae serves the community as an active hub for learning, sharing and health. Over the years, many of us visited Bruce and his whānau and Bruce would delight in telling us that Mother Aubert was the inspiration for his Mission in the city.

Sister Sue offered the following tribute at his burial.

*E te whānau,
Tēnā koutou tēnā koutou,
Tēnā koutou katoa.*

It is a deep honour for me to stand here and speak on behalf of Sister Margaret Anne and the Sisters of Compassion.

Our relationship with Bruce and with Tapu Te Ranga is centred on a dream, a common vision and a passion to make a difference.

The dream given by the Giver of all good Gifts, our God, was held deeply from the very beginning and it was through the dream that all things have come to be.

Our sacred stories have their beginnings in the depths of Papatūānuku and the heights of Ranginui and emerging within this sacred space, the light and the reality of a vision for the people dwelling there.

Mother Aubert came to Wellington with 2 shillings and six pence in 1899. Bruce came with \$25 dollars 73 years later. The parallels are fascinating and will be the material of study in the years ahead.

In the meantime both characters had deep affection, huge respect and the energy and faith to be a voice for the voiceless, a safe haven for those at a loss for a period in their lives. They were both intelligent and creative. They were healers. They were lobbyists. They were movers and shapers...

The relationship with the Sisters of today began in the early '70s with Sister Paschal and Sister John attending a Hui. Then the creative writing course where Bruce met, and had an enduring friendship with Sister Loyola! Witness the story "The Bull Paddock" – skilful satire that Bruce and I spoke of just a couple of months ago. In addition, Bruce would say – Sister there was no bull paddock – I was left knowing and feeling a deep sense of care – one for the other.

So Bruce – thank you for reminding us so often, that we sisters will always have a home over here.

We are committed to lovingly learn from the lessons of the past.

We continue to hold onto the vision of Suzanne Aubert,

We will continue a lively engagement with the present

All the while trusting the Cosmic Christ among us.

E te Rangatira,

E Bruce,

E moe ki te Ariki.

Sister Sue Cosgrove