

# ✧ Suzanne Aubert ✧ ✧ Meri Hōhepa ✧

Suzanne Aubert's 183rd birthday – Rā Whānau o Meri Hōhepa



A colourful floral display for Suzanne Aubert's birthday

Flowers festooned St Anne's church, Newtown where Cardinal John Dew celebrated Suzanne Aubert's 183rd birthday on June 19th with a special Mass.

In response to Suzanne Aubert's invitation to 'Always pick the little flower of hope', young people from Invercargill to Auckland made flowers in all shapes and sizes, from paper and harakeke, and sent them to Wellington for the occasion.

Cardinal John Dew remarked that "Suzanne certainly

knew how to bring hope to people with her words as well as her work." After the Mass the flowers were brought back to the Home of Compassion where they form an impressive display at the entrance to the Suzanne Aubert exhibition.

Deirdre Hanlon from the Compassion Schools programme said, "Suzanne Aubert's example is so relevant today. It inspires young who really get what she was about. The response to the birthday flower activity was impressive and heartening."

## Keep in touch

Would you like to receive regular updates and news by email? If so please give us your email address. You can do this by registering on-line or by emailing [kerry@suzanneaubert.co.nz](mailto:kerry@suzanneaubert.co.nz)

## Great resources available

There are some terrific resources that have been produced to help in the promotion of the spirituality and good works of Suzanne. More details on the website: [www.suzanneaubert.co.nz](http://www.suzanneaubert.co.nz)

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- Please keep me informed of progress  
 Please send me information on resources available  
 I would like to make a donation to Sisters of Compassion

Please send to: Sisters of Compassion, PO Box 1474, Wellington or scan and email to: [info@compassion.org.nz](mailto:info@compassion.org.nz)

For more information please visit our website: [www.suzanneaubert.co.nz](http://www.suzanneaubert.co.nz)

# SUZANNE AUBERT NEWS

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Issue 7

## The Journey to Sainthood and Miracles

Only 2 years ago, Pope Francis officially recognised Suzanne Aubert as a truly holy woman who had lived her life as a follower of Jesus Christ to a heroic degree. Last year he declared her Venerable Suzanne Aubert. The next steps in the process of her Beatification and Canonisation follow the formal recognition of two miracles; the result of her intercession before God on behalf of people who have asked for her help.

Naturally, the recognition of a miracle is ultimately a matter of trust on the part of believers who believe in the Communion of Saints; the link between those of us who are living and those who have gone before us on the journey of faith. We believe that God can and will work miracles through Suzanne's intercession, if that is God's will for those concerned.

For such intercession to be formally declared a miracle, the Church requires us to follow a strict process so that our faith will be based on truly solid grounds. This process begins when a person/s declares their belief that something truly remarkable has happened after they and others have prayed for Suzanne's help in the face of a seemingly impossible health problem. They meet with Fr Maurice (the Postulator) and representatives of the Sisters to explain what has happened.

Should it be agreed to investigate further, the medical records are examined by an independent specialist who confirms (or otherwise) that something truly remarkable appears to have taken place; not easily

explained by medical science. If the latter is the case, then arrangements are made for a Diocesan Enquiry which consists of a small panel comprising the Bishop, a Canon lawyer and representatives of the Sisters. This panel reviews all aspects of the case and interviews as many witnesses as possible (both medical and members of the faith community) who have been involved. Naturally this includes the person who has received the alleged miracle.

Once the enquiry has been completed, the Postulator sends a report to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome.

A team of medical experts and theologians then examines this material. Following their agreement that the event

is extraordinary, it is referred to a group of Bishops associated with the Congregation for their acceptance or otherwise of the alleged miracle. If they concur, the matter is referred to Pope Francis for his declaration that, as far as we can see by the light of faith, a miracle has occurred. The way is then open for the eventual Beatification of, in this case, Venerable Suzanne Aubert.



For more information please visit our website: [www.suzanneaubert.co.nz](http://www.suzanneaubert.co.nz)

## Personal Reflection from Sr. Margaret Anne Mills

“The works of God are done little by little, by beginning and progress; so then, we must act gently, pray much, and work conjointly with our fellow-labourers.” Suzanne Aubert Directory 261: 30

While pondering Suzanne Aubert’s words I reflect on the idea of pilgrimage and the legacy that she has left all the people of Aotearoa. Pilgrimages are accessible for all of us today and we go on them intentionally or unwittingly. For some it may be going through a photo album or scrapbook and remembering the joy of a journey when we were young. Pilgrimages can be challenging and difficult. At the journey’s end, there is a gift, a grace, which is uplifting for the soul. I would like to encourage you to take the opportunity to go on pilgrimage to a place near you where Suzanne Aubert and her sisters travelled or stayed. There are pilgrim refreshment places at Hiruhārama, Whanganui River and at Our Lady’s Home of



Compassion, Island Bay where you can stop, stay, and just embrace the environment and rest for a while. I am learning to pause and take notice of what Suzanne wrote to her Sisters many years ago. **“Life is a journey by road. On the way we travel the dust is thick and shade is scarce – Let us know how to select the best place to halt to bathe our eyes, to shake off the dust that covers us, and to wash our sore feet.”**

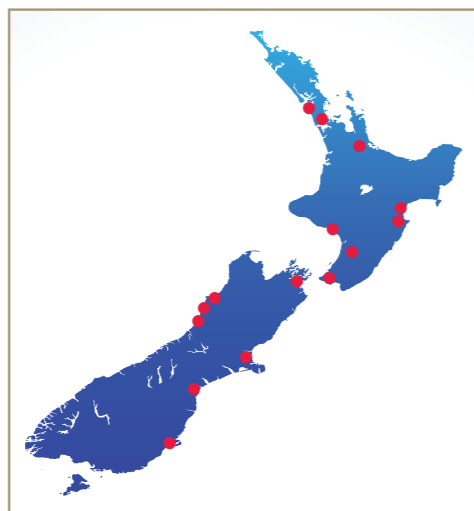
I breathe in the air and I feel lighter as the sounds around me whisper that it is okay, as those before have had their struggles and have been inspired by Suzanne to continue to have courage, to know that if it is God’s work it will continue for as long as it is required. **“Nothing is wasted in the service of God”** as Suzanne assures us.

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## Have you thought of going on Pilgrimage in NZ?

We often travel overseas to visit famous shrines and places where saints walked. Now we can go to places in New Zealand where Venerable Suzanne Aubert worked and lived, and showed the compassionate face of Christ to those in need.

Venerable Suzanne journeyed throughout New Zealand stopping at many towns and cities during her 60 years in our country. Her remarkable journey has now been captured in a digital map which can be accessed on the website. At each of the key places where Suzanne spent considerable time, a special video and accompanying podcasts will be available which background the significance of her choice and the work she achieved there. The first dozen footsteps will be available from Celebration Sunday and others will be added as they are completed. Please check out details at [www.suzanneaubert.co.nz/footsteps](http://www.suzanneaubert.co.nz/footsteps).



## Words from the Bishops

Bishop Paul Martin of Christchurch and Bishop Michael Dooley of Dunedin were recently interviewed about their thoughts on Venerable Suzanne Aubert and why she is a candidate for sainthood.

Also you can view Bishop Charles Drennan of Palmerston North explaining the rationale for going on pilgrimage in New Zealand.

You can see their thoughts and reflections on the Bishops Q&A page on the website (<http://suzanneaubert.co.nz/home/resources/questions-and-answers/>)

## Personal Pilgrimage

Recently Merrilyn George, an avid supporter of the spirituality and good works of Suzanne Aubert and the author of the award winning “Set Apart” art work, travelled to Europe to retrace the early footsteps of Suzanne in her birthplace of Lyon in France and her later journey to Rome between 1913-1919 when she was given the decree of praise for the NZ order of the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion.

Here Merrilyn recounts her experiences and reflections:

Arriving in Lyon I climbed the hill to the Basilique du Notre-Dame de Fourvière, which is visible from all over Lyon and was a source of inspiration to Suzanne. I also visited the smaller Virgin Mary’s Chapel where Suzanne’s mother Clarice Aubert was healed, and where a plaque and a Whanganui River stone records the return of Bishop Pompallier’s remains to NZ soil.

At the church of St Nizier, Suzanne’s parish church from the age of five until her departure for New Zealand at twenty five, I presented a water colour painting of Venerable Suzanne Aubert by artist Noleen Sommerville to the parish, which was received with great excitement. I used my bi-lingual book ‘Set Apart’

to explain to the parishioners the purpose of my visit and the story of my quilts. Knowing Suzanne walked these paths, I also did floor rubbings here on fabric and harakeke paper made by Pakohe Papers in Whanganui. As I departed for Italy, I reflected on my gratefulness to France for sending missionaries to NZ particularly our Venerable Suzanne who did so much to improve the living conditions for many people with her initiatives.



Merrilyn with St Nizier’s parishioners

Arriving in Rome, I was particularly interested in the church of Santa Maria D’Aracoeli where Suzanne prayed every day during her 6 years in this city.

Here, in an especially dedicated chapel, is the Bambino, the figure of the baby Jesus which (according to Jessie Munro’s biography) became Suzanne’s symbol for the work she was doing with the babies in NZ. In the peace of this space, I couldn’t help reflecting on the connections we have and giving thanks in this place for Kuia Wiki Pumipi who first introduced Suzanne to me by way of memories, and who wrote to Suzanne on her death bed. And for my family and friends, and the supportive network I have which enables me to share my expression of Suzanne’s life work.

## Wellington Pilgrimage



Convention attendees at Island Bay

Over 120 educators made a pilgrimage following in Suzanne Aubert’s footsteps during the triennial Catholic Education Convention in June. The first stop on the tour was Buckle Street, where Suzanne began her work in Wellington in 1899. Her historic crèche is now restored as the Pukeahu Education Centre and here educators were introduced to the Compassion Schools programme and the dream that all students will visit this and other significant places at least once in their thirteen years of Catholic Education. The next stop was the Compassion Soup Kitchen around the corner in Tory Street. In the dining room, Soup Kitchen staff spoke of today’s needs and their response which includes serving breakfast and dinner 6 days a week to all who seek it. The final stop was Our Lady’s Home of Compassion in Island Bay. Pilgrims kept the silence of the Chapel as they entered and experienced the wairua of this sacred place.