



# the Voice of Compassion

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te pūaroa

Let us speak to  
God as a friend.

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Supporters and friends news

Issue 48 October 2019



Sister Margaret Anne with students of St Mary's College, Wellington

## Nau mai

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support and interest. Enjoy the stories within this newsletter. As the years go by, I value the importance of friends and acquaintances. Through the celebrations of jubilees, funerals and other occasions, I have had the opportunity to meet and spend time with many of the friends and relations of the Sisters of Compassion. Recently I was at St Anthony's Church, Seatoun, for the vigil service of Pauline Hastings. She was a faithful friend and supporter of the Homes of Compassion. Many people at the service were friends of the sisters. I saw a woman whom I thought I knew. I reintroduced myself to her, Eileen Maher. She reminded me that she was the cousin of our late Sister Camillus, Eileen Ryan. The reconnecting with friends and relations of the sisters is something that I do appreciate.

Suzanne Aubert refers to the French theologian when she talks of friendship – "Friendship, according to Lacordaire, is the most free, most pure, and most profound of feelings. Nature gives us our relations, but we may choose our friends."

Each month I meet with members of the 1966 Class of St Mary's College. We share breakfast together. It is such fun; we talk about current events and laugh about the old days. This time refreshes my friendships and I leave with a bounce in my step.

On the French National Day, at the ambassador's residence, I met a current group of St Mary's College students. They sang the New Zealand National Anthem in French, Te Reo Māori and English. They were enjoyable. Members of this group later stayed at Our Lady's Home of Compassion. Their task was to prepare a proposal to develop the curriculum for the future, for the board of trustees. I enjoyed the energy of the students and the teachers, one being Rachelle Hautapu, my Te Reo Māori teacher many years ago. Lasting memories of friends where you have shared the good and hard times has an energy of goodness and hope.

As we all prepare for Christmas, I pray that you have many opportunities to meet with your friends and family.

Thank you again for your generous support and the friendship that you offer the sisters and their co-workers. You are remembered in the sisters' daily prayers.

*Sister Margaret Anne Mills*

Congregational Leader



# Rā Whānau!

Celebrating the 184th anniversary of the birth of Suzanne Aubert, Meri Hōhepa



Members of Suzanne Aubert Scout Group cutting Suzanne Aubert's birthday cake

The annual commemoration of Suzanne Aubert's birth was celebrated on 19th June by the Sisters of Compassion who were joined by ever-growing numbers of people who are inspired by the life and work of Suzanne and her legacy of compassion.

The evening was mild and the atmosphere warm and cheerful inside St Anne's Newtown, in the parish of Wellington South. The Mass was celebrated by Cardinal John Dew along with Fathers David Dowling, Dennis Nacorda and James Lyons. Cardinal John commented on how the readings of the day\* seemed almost chosen for the occasion. "They all focused so obviously on the opportunity that Suzanne had and that we all have to generously share God's abundance!"

Students from local primary schools and colleges, and members of the Suzanne Aubert Scout Group played a large part in the Mass. Colourful footsteps made by young people from around the country adorned the walls of the church. At the end of the Mass, students joined Sister 'Alisi to read messages, explaining how young people are inspired to walk in Suzanne's footsteps today.

Afterwards in the Hall, Lifeteen ran the hospitality with hot chocolate being the order of the night. The birthday cake was made by talented baker, Sister Rachel, iced by Sister Josefa, and enjoyed by all.

Earlier in the day, student representatives from five local colleges had come together for a Birthday Mass held in the Chapel at the Home of Compassion. Following lunch, the afternoon was spent learning more about Suzanne Aubert and the Compassion Soup Kitchen. Students shared social actions they had participated in to support the Soup Kitchen. A highlight of the day was hearing from whānau from the Soup Kitchen who shared their stories with the students.

\*(2 COR 9:6-11, PS 112:1BC-2, 3-4, 9, MT 6:1-6, 16-18)

## Te Whare Hupa

A poem by the Te Hā Tangata Writing Group, who meet at the Compassion Soup Kitchen every Wednesday

*Ngā tāngata: Skill, knowledge, beauty, energy. Sharing trust. Kind. Giving, listening, helping.*

*Kai: Warm bread, coffee. Yum. Stomach full, warm, comfortable. Made by hand with Aroha.*

*Guests: Smart-as, well travelled, quiet, dignified. Vulnerable. Human.*

*Te māra: Kaka beak. Green, spindly, twisting, growing, promise. Splash of colour brightening hurt spirits.*

*Soupies: Mercy, compassion, time, rejuvenation, friends.*







Residents of Compassion Housing, Upper Hutt

## Living with Compassion

Paul had only moved in a few weeks ago and found he didn't have the necessary things to keep him warm as we are in the middle of winter, and money was very limited at the time.

He needed whiteware and bought a washing machine and fridge through WINZ, but was unable to get what he needed to keep warm so the residents and nurse provided him with two heaters, hot water bottle and cover, blanket and a TV. Paul was very grateful for the support given.

My motto is "We are here for each other", and certainly the residents living in Compassion Housing communities are doing just that. Looking out for one another.

I have received stories from residents who say they have had mail collected for them when they are away, a flounder arrive at the door from another neighbour, the gate open each time a resident takes his mobility scooter when backing through the gate, a resident taken to the doctor by concerned neighbour and having food taken over, advice given to other residents from neighbours, and most importantly, a listening ear and a cuppa. The list goes on. It is heartening to work with such a lovely bunch of people - all who live in Compassion Housing here in Upper Hutt.

They really live the gospel values which is very much needed in the society we find ourselves living in.

Frances Knoef RN CHL



## A Message of Gratitude

To me, visitation is a joyful experience. Everyday we set out to go and love and serve the Lord after Mass. "Go, I am with you always". I am happy, encouraged and assured by this message. Every visit I make is an opportunity for me to meet God's people. These people always look forward to my visitation! We laugh, share concerns, stories, experiences and prayers. We are in each other's trusting and respectful presence, there to give our time and a listening ear. I enjoy witnessing the love and support that people share, as they look out for each other.

"Love thy Neighbours". Life is too short. Talk to your neighbours, one of them may need to see or speak to someone. It doesn't cost anything, and is rewarded with joy and blessings.

May God bless you all. Ofa lahi atu.

Sister Mata Malani



# Climate Change & the Home of Compassion

One of Suzanne Aubert's great gifts was her practical response to the current issues of the day. The Compassion Soup Kitchen in Buckle Street was certainly a timely response to the growing social issues in Wellington, as was childcare at Island Bay, where new borns and infants were welcomed and nurtured with compassion.

The climate crisis is one of the great issues of our day. Our location on the slopes of the Tawatawa ridge connects us with the beautiful setting around us. And, as 'Laudato si' informs us, we are deeply connected to the natural world as we are with God. Therefore, we have made some changes.

The most noticeable change for our guests is the focus we are giving to plant-based meals in our catering. We now serve a variety of vegetable-based meals that are delicious and nutritious. There are compelling reasons for this change. For one, a plant based diet is one of the most effective changes to make to reduce one's carbon emissions. New Zealand's animal-based agricultural sector contributes to 48% of all CO2 emissions. More than all transportation emissions combined. While we still serve meat, at times, our regular meals are now vegetarian and with an increasing range of vegan ingredients. We compost food waste and all paper towels. We are also replacing our old lighting to LED light bulbs that last longer and are more energy efficient.

Of course, there is much more to do. So, to paraphrase Suzanne Aubert, "Let us be tenacious in the service of Compassion".

David Cross, Manager

## Suzanne Aubert Heritage Centre

Discover the inspiring story of Suzanne Aubert and her heroic life and ongoing legacy of service and compassion



Exhibitions, Chapel, Gift Shop & Cloister Café

Tuesday - Saturday: 10am-3pm

Sunday: 12pm - 3pm

Free entry

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Island Bay,  
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## Crafting at Westport

I am Lusiana Raratini, a Sister of Compassion living in Westport. In 2017, Cardinal John Dew invited the Sisters of Compassion to start a community there, a "community of presence". I remember vividly my reaction in response to the invitation. I punched the air and said, "yes, that's me, I will go!" I felt energised and happy. Reality sank in later. I had no idea where Westport was but that did not matter. Pope Francis' words on "going out to the peripheries" were an inspiration and the Congregation was responding to the need at hand. My response to the invitation and willingness to commit to the mission of the Sisters of Compassion in Westport is another way of being present.

Being a "community of presence" in Westport conveys for me the essence of the ordinary daily encounter with people wherever they are. Simply connecting with people, their stories and being present in the moment is life-giving for me. I show up to be present with people in their homes, at the O'Conor Rest Home, in hospital, and chat with people on the street.

I was asked to give a talk to the "Care and Craft" group to share my recycle-crafts with them. The group consists of women who live alone. The bus picks them up and drops them off. I board the bus and am greeted with smiles and hellos, I was introduced to people I have not met and there is great conversation. I enjoyed sharing with them flowers made from plastic- bottle waste and from toilet-paper rolls.

Sister Lusiana Raratini



# Taizé in Aotearoa

Our Lady's Home of Compassion in Island Bay will welcome pilgrims from around the country to a weekend retreat of Taizé prayer on November 15-17. Br Matthew from the Taizé community in France, Fr Chris Skinner and many others are joining us for "Taizé in Aotearoa."

Our theme for the weekend, Remembering Hospitality (manaakitanga), has appeal to all who hold peace and justice in our world close to their hearts. Hebrews 13:2 reminds us, "do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it."

In hosting this ecumenical gathering, we are mindful of Suzanne Aubert who saw prayer as a "peaceful but all-powerful tool" and a sure foundation for loving "people of all creeds and none." The Sisters of Compassion first practised Taizé prayer in 1989 during a visit to the Taizé community in France. As well as celebrating 30 years of Taizé prayer, it's hoped that November's retreat will introduce a new generation to the depth and beauty of Taizé worship.

Registrations are now open. Please contact Christine Kelly for more information: [spirituality@compassion.org.nz](mailto:spirituality@compassion.org.nz) or phone (04) 383 7769.



Kia ora, my name is Arama Pou. I am a past recipient of the Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship.

My first encounter with Suzanne Aubert was in 2012, when I visited Jerusalem with the St. Bernard's College O'Shea Shield team. I was amazed hearing stories about this nun from France, who spoke Te Reo Māori. It was one of the things that further encouraged me to learn my own ancestral language. Intrigued, I researched more about her, and came to learn that she later helped people living in urban areas. This spurred me to volunteer at the Compassion Soup Kitchen.

In 2014, I was fortunate enough to receive the Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship, which helped fund my undergraduate studies at The University of Waikato. In December 2017, I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Te Reo Māori and Tikanga Māori. In 2018, I went on an OE to Europe. It was a humbling experience to visit some of the places significant in the life of Suzanne Aubert, such as, the parish church of Saint Nizier. I also went to Christchurch Teachers' Training College, undertaking a Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary), finishing in May of this year. I am now a primary school teacher at Southwell School.

Suzanne Aubert's example of servant leadership, encourages me to do that in my profession as a teacher, and to also share my culture and language. I think Suzanne Aubert would be proud!

Many thanks to the Sisters of Compassion and their benefactors, for the prayerful and financial support, enabling me to achieve my goals, and get to where I am today.

Ngaa mihi ki ngaa Tuaahine o Te Puuaroha moo too koutou aawhina i a au.

**Arama Pou**





# Holiday Hours

## **Suzanne Aubert Heritage Centre Chapel of Our Lady of Compassion The Resting Place of Suzanne Aubert**

Open 10am - 3pm, Monday to Saturday, 12-3pm Sunday  
Open 23rd-24th and 27th-31st December  
During holiday period - Koha Café  
Closed on 25th-26th December, 1st-2nd January  
As normal from 3rd January

## **The Cloister Café**

Open 8.30am-3pm Tuesday to Friday  
10am-3pm Saturday, 12pm-3pm Sunday  
Closed from 21st December and reopening on 7th January

## **Retreat House**

Open 8.30am-4.30pm, Monday to Sunday  
Closed from 21st December and reopening on 6th January

# Obituary

## **Sister Sarto Maramaciri (February 1945 - March 2019)**

Sister Sarto was born in Fiji on 1 February 1945, and entered the Sisters of Compassion during 1961. She attributed her faith to her parents who were devout Catholics. Sister received her secondary education from the Marist sisters at Ba.

Sister recalled the first Sister of Compassion she met was Sister Yvonne who was so bubbly and welcoming that she decided then and there that this was the life for her. After her Profession on 15 September 1964, Sister completed her community nursing training. While working in the different Homes of Compassion in New Zealand and Fiji, Sister Sarto always appreciated the nursing training she received in our hospital. She said, "You were well trained and looked after and were always given the help you needed to learn. I loved it." On completing her nursing training Sister moved to Timaru and was there until she was appointed to be in charge of Chanel Home in Fiji. She had this responsibility on two different occasions. Finally returning to New Zealand, Sister lived at Marian Court, Silverstream, where she used to travel into Wellington each day to work in The Crypt under the church of St Mary of the Angels. The clients who visited The Crypt were people mainly off the street; everyone was welcome to come in for a cup of tea, or coffee, served with nourishing sandwiches. Unfortunately, Sister became ill and had to have her leg amputated. She accepted this with peace of mind and courage believing that God was with her. The only other Sister of Compassion to have her leg amputated was Sister Martha Hinnegan in 1937.

Sister Sarto died on 11 March 2019. May she rest in peace.

