



the Voice of Compassion

 compassion
te pūaroa

*Always pick the
little flower of hope.*

www.compassion.org.nz

Supporters and friends news

Issue 49 March 2020



Sister Margaret Anne Mills in Westport, New Zealand

Nau mai

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of this year, I had the opportunity to travel to the West Coast. It was a wonderful opportunity to make a pilgrimage. My intention was to follow in the footsteps of Suzanne Aubert and Sister Magdalen.

In 1889, they travelled to the West Coast to collect funds to replace the church at Hiruhārama, which had been destroyed by fire. Their Collecting Tour was successful; they collected £1000 in cash and blessings from people who supported them with their affection and love. The oral stories continue today among the sisters and the families of more than twenty sisters who came from the Coast.

Entries in Suzanne Aubert's diary note words of welcome and hospitality, e.g. "Came down to Hokitika..." "Were most cordially received at the Convent." "Walked to Māori Gully. Miss McGuire escorted us. Slept at Hinnegan's. Very kind."

The hospitality of the Coasters remains today and I experienced this from the people I met every step of the way. I stayed with the Mission Sisters in Nelson, Sister Lusiana in Westport, family friends in Hokitika and Totara Flat, my niece Jessica in Christchurch and the Mercy Sisters in Timaru.

Recorded in Sister Angela's Reminiscences, 1945, is a note that sums up the 1889 experience:

"The net result of thirteen months of hardship and travelling in all weathers, and the roughest country amounted to be little over £1,000.00 in cash. But who can estimate the spiritual results. That is the secret of God, and will never be known in this world."

The Collecting Tour was worthwhile in terms of both a collection, but more especially with the relationships and friends Suzanne Aubert made with the families from the Coast that continue to this day. On visiting the different places, I met people who had a story to tell. To my joy and surprise, I met Mark Keenan at Sunday Mass in Hokitika who was handing out the Suzanne Aubert prayer card. He also gave me a warm greeting while I was waiting at the train station in Greymouth on the following day. It was a wonderful pilgrimage for me personally.

The pilgrimage gave me time to reflect on the goodness of people. Thank you for your generous support of the Sisters of Compassion. Your financial support enables the Sisters to provide services. Your friendship and kindnesses provide a link with the past and hope for the future. Stories reflecting this bond; are retold many times and are passed down through the generations.

I thank you for your patience and understanding concerning the mail delays experienced since early October and into the New Year.

I would like to express my congratulations to the following women: Sister Sia retired after ten years of service to Wellington Hospital; Sister Catherine Hannan received a QSM and Mary Schumacher an ONZM in the New Year Honours. Mary is a director on the Sisters of Compassion Board.

I pray that you and your family receive many blessings throughout 2020. Thank you for your prayers and support.

Sister Margaret Anne Mills

Sister Margaret Anne Mills
Congregational Leader



Water feature at Island Bay

An Urban Monastery

Throughout Church history, the faithful have regularly retreated to quiet places to practice prayer. Some of today's religious movements and institutions hark from a founding vision to retreat from the noise and power of surrounding culture and reimagine a life of devotion. The common threads of this retreat have been the practice of hospitality, of learning, work and creativity. All bound together in the cultivation of a prayerful place in stillness, reflection and beauty.

Henri Nouwen describes this impulse by noting: "We cannot change the world by a new plan, project, or idea. We cannot even change other people by our convictions, stories, advice and proposals, but we can offer a space where people are encouraged to disarm themselves, lay aside their occupations and preoccupations, and listen with attention and care to the voices speaking in their own centre."

Nestled on a hillside, and minutes from the city, Our Lady's Home of Compassion sits as an Urban Monastery. It is a welcome

respite for the weary and a living witness to the imagination of faith. In that light, Suzanne Aubert's original vision and wairua inspires us today to be a fertile ground for hope and life and the opening of future possibilities.

The monastic life is said to be the most powerful and enduring instance of counter-culture. In our gardens, the smiles and welcome of Sisters, staff and volunteers, and the architectural thought towards landscaping and building design offer the invitation for guests to drink from a well of nourishment.

We take great joy in hosting pilgrims, schools, retreatants and workshop and conference groups with the hope that seeds of compassion will fall and be picked up and be planted in our world. Our invitation is that you might find opportunity to retreat, be that here at Our Lady's Home of Compassion, or another place. If it is here, we welcome you.

David Cross, Island Bay Manager

Congratulations!

Our warmest congratulations to Sister Catherine on being awarded the Queen's Service Medal (QSM) for services to the community.

The citation in the New Year Honours List reads:

"Sister Catherine Hannan has contributed to the care and welfare of those in need and advocated for human rights for more than 60 years. Sister Hannan joined the Sisters of Compassion in 1953. She was a Senior Social Worker at Catholic Social Services Wellington for several years and acted as Arohata Women's Prison Catholic chaplain. She has served as Superior General of the Sisters of Compassion, as member of the Wellington Roman Catholic Archdiocese Pastoral Council and as New Zealand representative at several international religious leaders' forums. She continues to volunteer at the Compassion Soup Kitchen in Wellington after 20 years. She has presented submissions to Parliamentary Select Committees on a range of bills, and was appointed to the Prostitution Legislation Committee from 2005 to 2008, subsequently providing lay person's views to the Legal Complaints Committee. She served on the Board of Challenge 2000, a Wellington based youth development and social service. As Board member and later Chair of Caritas Internationalis in New Zealand she reviewed and supported Caritas projects in Asia

on sustainable agriculture, the empowerment of poor women, counteracting human trafficking and the response to the 2004 Asia Tsunami. Sister Catherine helped initiate and is a Trustee of the Wellington Women's Homeless Trust and was President of Wellington South Rotary in 2014 and 2015."



Sister Catherine Hannan

Reflections

“Gratitude is the most beautiful ornament of the human heart” - Suzanne Aubert

Each month's picture in the Compassion Calendar provides the inspiration for a brief reflection, along with a question or thought the reader might ponder, and a quote from Suzanne Aubert. While each month's reflection is written in isolation of the others, it is often possible to look back at previous reflections and pick up a common thread which links them all, January through to December. There is, as one would expect in such reflections, a recurrent theme of “Suzanne Aubert and the historic works of Compassion”. The real purpose of these reflections, however, is to encourage insight and a thoughtful, personal response.

The similarities and differences in the lives of our people between those allegedly gentler times and today can be startling. Some of our bitterest and most persistent social issues have their roots in the attitudes and turmoil of an immigrant nation – then as now. How refreshing then, to know that everyday dawns with new hope, and every generation brings new gifts in a tradition of wisdom. How humbling to know this is the story of each of us.

Suzanne O'Rourke, Mission Animator

To be added to the mailing list for the monthly Compassion Calendar reflections, please email: mission@compassion.org.nz



Quinces from Hiruhārama/Jerusalem

Not just soup!

What does the Compassion Soup Kitchen provide? Well, soup of course! Six days a week nourishing meals for Wellington's vulnerable, all served with dignity and respecting the mana of the whānau.

But, that is not all the Compassion Soup Kitchen offers. Access to computers and the internet, a garden, sewing classes, pilgrimages to Hiruhārama, haircuts, access to a registered nurse and a clothing cupboard to name some of the meaningful activities and services offered by the kitchen.

And now our community workers, in cooperation with the Remakery and Remutaka Prison have set up traditional carving classes scheduled to begin mid-February. In cooperation with the Wellington Homeless Shelter, cooking classes will start in April and will provide basic cooking classes to those moving out of the shelter into more permanent housing. And let's not forget, hosting the Orange Sky laundry and shower service twice a week!

Compassion isn't just seeing a need, it's doing something about it.

Gary Sutton, Compassion Soup Kitchen Manager

Would you like to volunteer for the Compassion Soup Kitchen annual appeal on June 12th? Email: volunteers@compassion.org.nz



Mural on the Soup Kitchen building

The Story of Compassion

To us, compassion means helping people who have less than us. Every day people need compassion. When we went to the Home of Compassion, we learned a lot about Suzanne Aubert and how she cared for people and children. We learned about her remedies and what they were for. While we were there, we explored the Heritage Centre, hunted for Suzanne's sayings, and enjoyed the most delicious hot chocolate, served by Frankie. It was so much fun! We think everyone should go to the Home of Compassion to learn about compassion. We stayed with Aunty Sue and watered her garden, saw lots of tuis (thirty-two to be exact), and had some good kai that dad cooked.

**Niamh and James Scott
Aged 7 and 9**



James and Niamh outside the exhibitions

Brother Matthew's Pilgrimage

This article first appeared at:

http://www.taize.fr/en_article26464.html

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During November 2019, a brother of the community spent some days in Aotearoa New Zealand visiting Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin as part of his pilgrimage. Here is his story.

The wind always seems to howl as you fly into Wellington. For those who have not experienced it before, it can be a white-knuckle affair. But the pilots know what they are doing. At the airport, Sr Margaret Anne from the Sisters of Compassion was waiting for me with Linda, a lady who has spent all her life close to the sisters and who visited Taizé on her own even before my first trip there.

Thirty years ago, Sr Catherine and Sr Margaret Anne had been to Lyon, where their community's foundress, the Venerable Suzanne Aubert (her name in religion was Sister Mary-Joseph), was born. After this pilgrimage, they visited nearby Taizé. Returning to Aotearoa, they began a monthly prayer with songs from Taizé at first in Compassion House in central Wellington, and then at the Home of Compassion in Island Bay. My visit was a response to their invitation to celebrate those thirty years of common prayer with them and all who had shared in that journey.

Venerable Suzanne Aubert came in 1860 to New Zealand with a heart for the Māori. She learned their language, te reo Māori, before learning English. Māori culture ran through the whole weekend retreat at the Home of Compassion. Beginning with the traditional Mihi whakatau welcome, the participants were called into the chapel by the local people and exchanged the hongi greeting.

Several Taizé songs had been translated into Te Reo Māori and used for the times of worship. Piano, double bass, flute, guitar and trumpet, played by a group of young people, some of whom had been volunteers in Taizé, accompanied the prayers. During the silence, the wind kept howling, but the chapel held firm!

Times of reflection on the 2019 Proposals of Brother Alois, "Let us not forget hospitality!", inspired the sharing for Saturday. Bible study in the morning and five afternoon workshops covered a range of themes based on the proposals, including the welcome of God to the peoples of Aotearoa and the generous welcome that



Brother Matthew from Taizé, France

can be discovered through hospital chaplaincy. A Māori hangi meal brought much joy on Saturday evening!

Like in Taizé, Friday evening saw prayer around the cross and Saturday evening, a celebration of the Easter light. On Sunday morning, there was the offer to take part in local church services or the Eucharist in te reo Māori in the chapel. The retreat ended with a simple poroporoaki (farewell) in the hope that our journey together will continue.

Before the retreat, I visited a drop-in café in Naenae, in the Lower Hutt Valley, where members of the missional order Urban Vision have built relationships in the community leading to the construction of much-needed new social housing. Later in downtown Wellington, I met with volunteers at Compassion House soup kitchen, which serves homeless people in the Wellington CBD, and, on my final evening in the city, prayer and Bible study took place at St Peter's Anglican Church on Willis Street.

Something vibrant is taking place in Wellington. There are many intentional communities for young adults across the denominations, trying to reach out to people on the margins of society and live the testimony of the Gospel. At the same time, established communities are seeking how to renew their witness.

Thank you to everyone who came to Taizé in Aotearoa, you made the weekend truly remarkable.

Brother Matthew, Taizé Ecumenical Community, France

A Diamond Jubilee

Recently, the Sisters of Compassion celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Sister Therese Couderc Nansett during the Parish Mass at Wainuiomata. Sister Therese's family and friends made the occasion all the more special.

Before entering the Sisters of Compassion in 1957, Sister had completed courses in commerce, and later qualified as a general nurse and obtained a Post Operating Technique Certificate. After her Profession as a Sister of Compassion, Sister Therese was the Theatre Nurse in our hospital for many years. Her mission changed when she left for Rome to study Theology at Regina Mundi College. Sister was later appointed Secretary General and then Novice Mistress.

Today, Sister Therese lives at Wainuiomata where she does pastoral work in the parish, including running Sacramental programmes for adults and children.



Sister Therese Couderc Nansett



Sister Valensia 'Otuhiwa

A Journey to Remember

It was a privilege for me to accept the call for this ministry, because it is a very special and fulfilling ministry, deeply in tune with our Spirit of Compassion. As Venerable Suzanne Aubert (Foundress of Sisters of Compassion) wrote in her Directory "Wherever you are, or wherever you may be, by the bedside of the sick, the dying... in the Wards of Hospitals.... Be everywhere true Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion." (*Directory*, p. 3, no. 6).

I enjoyed this ministry and I always felt privileged, at the same time humbled to be able to minister to the staff, patients and their families. I have experienced many graced moments, as well as challenges and disappointments. Like all journeys, it contained many joys and sorrows for personal and spiritual development.

I thank God for the experience of ten years of love and service in this ministry as a Roman Catholic Chaplain at Wellington Hospital.

Sister Sia DOLC

Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship

Suzanne Aubert knew the importance of tertiary education for young people. In 1992, the Centennial Year of the Sisters of Compassion, the Suzanne Aubert Tertiary Scholarship Grant was established by the Congregation. Since then, many students have benefitted from the grant and have gained national recognition in their respective professional careers.

In December 2017, the Government announced details of the "fees free tertiary education" plan so it was decided to limit applications to third year plus, tertiary students. The Committee was overwhelmed by the depth of compassion, commitment and character of the applicants and would have happily handed out scholarships to all the applicants of the Suzanne Aubert Scholarship. It made the selection of the recipients very difficult. Initially, only three Scholarships were to be awarded, but once again, the generosity of a benefactor allowed for two more Scholarships to be granted, and we gratefully and thankfully acknowledge this gift.



Joseph Mettrick is studying at the University of Auckland and will be entering his third year of medical school in 2020.



Tessa Dalgety Evans is studying at the University of Otago. She is passionate about the arts and humanities, and hopes to be part of building a better future for Aotearoa through language, reo, pūrākau, narratives, art and music.



Chelsea Coplestone is entering into her fourth and final year of a Bachelor of Teaching (Primary)/ Bachelor of Arts majoring in History at the University of Waikato to become a primary/secondary school teacher.



Jessica Tombs has been accepted into her final year of study with Otago Polytechnic, completing a Bachelor of Midwifery.



Daniel Chow from New Plymouth is entering his third year of studying Medicine at the University of Auckland.



Graphite on slate - Jo van der Velde

Many were moved when artist Jo van der Velde shared her graphite on slate art at the recent pilgrimage to Hiruhārama/Jerusalem on the Whanganui River. Jo brought to life the Psalm 46: "whose streams make glad the city of God."

A Note to our Supporters

IRD has advised as follows:

Your donation tax rebates from IRD has become simpler! There's no need to complete a paper form this year because you can now claim donation tax credits online in a myIR account, Inland Revenue's secure online service.

- You will receive your refund much sooner.
- Your receipts can be electronic receipts, photos, or scans of paper receipts.
- Your receipts can be uploaded anytime during the year.

You can find more information on:

www.ird.govt.nz/donations

Thank you very much for your donation to the Sisters of Compassion charitable work.

What's on?

Christian Meditation

Mondays 7 - 8 pm, Thursdays 11 am - 12 pm

Sunday Miha (Māori Mass)

Sundays 11 am

Taizé Prayer

First Friday of the month, 7 pm

Quiet Days with Suzanne Aubert

Second Thursday of the month, 10 am - 2 pm

Way of the Cross

April 10th, 10 am

For more information on our events:

Website: www.compassion.org.nz/events

Email: spirituality@compassion.org.nz

Phone: (04) 383 7769

Obituary

Sister Patricia Kraus (August 1927 - December 2019)

Mary Patricia Kraus was born in Wellington on 21 August 1927. Her parents were William and Ellie Kraus. Patricia was the eldest of four children, followed by Suzanne (Sister of Mercy), Bill and Helen. Great sadness befell the family when Mrs Kraus died. Patricia was only ten.

Patricia entered the Sisters of Compassion in 1945 and made her first profession in March 1948. During the early 1950s, Sister trained as a nurse, graduating in both General Nursing and Midwifery. Patricia passed her Midwifery exam with honours gaining the top marks in the country. Her father was so proud of her.

In 1963, Sister Patricia was appointed matron of Our Lady's Home of Compassion Hospital where she contributed to the hospital with her meticulous, compassionate administration.

On completion of her term as matron, Sister Patricia worked at Whanganui, Flaxmere and Silverstream. Besides caring for the sick, Patricia enjoyed the outdoors and loved exploring the Wellington walking tracks.

Sister Patricia died in the early hours of the morning on 13 December 2019 aged ninety-two. Pat faithfully lived her call as a Sister of Compassion and proclaimed with her life that God's presence and love is with us always and everywhere. May she rest in peace.



Sister Patricia Kraus