

Venerable Suzanne Aubert | Meri Hōhepa

# *Celebration Sunday*

At home reflection



“Let’s pray today for the grace to see in others a little of what God sees, and the grace to be able to treat them always with the respect they reserve”

Venerable Suzanne Aubert



“Kahupapangia te awa ki te rakau  
kia whiti tatou ki tera taha.”

“Throw a plank across the stream for us to  
cross to the other side. Us, together.”

From Suzanne Aubert's Māori phrase book



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# Pray with response

**Leader:** Let us pray

**Response:** In our business and desire for justice,  
may we be always be people of discernment  
guided by the kind of prayer Suzanne knew,  
prayer that is the speech of the heart lifted up to God.

**Leader:** Let us pray

**Response:** We pray that we witness as resurrection people  
Seeking the good in all things and each day  
picking as Suzanne invites, the small flower of hope.

**Leader:** Let us pray

**Response:** We pray as a wider compassion family,  
For faith and courage  
In affirming the gifts of our different traditions.  
May we embrace new and practical ways  
of fanning the flame of compassion that warms us all.

**Leader:** Let us pray

**Response:** We pray  
We cherish vulnerability in all its forms,  
May our hearts remain soft and  
Teachable so that first and foremost  
We find our joy, thanking God  
For all He has done and is doing for us.

**Leader:** Let us pray

**Response:** We pray that we who honour Suzanne  
as servant of God, express something of her puaroha  
in our communities.  
May we recognize and welcome  
the stranger among us  
learning to love once more by loving.



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## Hymn

### A Tribute to Suzanne Aubert

She saw in each of these a Christ grown old,  
A Christ with tattered soles and ragged sleeves  
A Christ with withered hands, a crippled Christ  
A Christ that all the world rejects and grieves.

And those who followed her she taught to be  
Voice to the dumb and to the helpless, hands,  
Eyes to the blind and feet unto the lame  
And to the small and homeless, roof and lands.

And when God walks His rounds at eventide  
On the New Zealand side, and comes on them  
She will have still her brood beneath her wings,  
As once He yearned to hold Jerusalem.

*Eileen Duggan*

## Scripture Reading

### Right with God

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

*Romans: 5: 1-5*



As a young girl, Suzanne Aubert's desire to become a missionary met with strong opposition from her father. Unable to overcome this, in 1860, at the age of twenty-five, she secretly left France with a band of missionaries led by Bishop Pompallier, the first Bishop of New Zealand.

She first worked in Auckland with the Sisters of Mercy, already established there, and later joined the Congregation of the Holy Family, set up by the Bishop for the care and education of the Māori. Thus did Suzanne Aubert commence her long, faithfully and arduous service for the Māori people.

From Auckland, Suzanne Aubert went to Hawke's Bay to work with the Marist Fathers among the Māori there. She remained there for eleven years, putting to good use the knowledge she had gained of medicine and botany before leaving France. Her medicines, made from native herbs and plants were highly esteemed sought after and used by both Māori and Europeans.

In 1883, at the invitation of Archbishop Redwood of Wellington Diocese, Suzanne left Hawke's Bay for a Māori settlement called Hīruhārama {Jerusalem}, on the Whanganui River, to help revive the Mission there. She gathered companions about her and in 1892, the Archbishop raised them

to the status of a Diocesan Congregation under the title "Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion."

In 1899, Suzanne went with three Sisters and one half-crown to Wellington where she continued her works of compassionate charity, pioneering district nursing and opening a Home for Incurables, to which she soon added a crèche and soup kitchen.

In 1913, at the age of 78, Suzanne Aubert went to Rome to seek papal approval for the Sisters of Compassion. She obtained the Decree of Praise in 1917. She died at the Motherhouse in Island Bay on 1st October, 1926. She was ninety-one years of age. She received the greatest and most inspiring funeral ever given to a woman in this country. This spontaneous tribute of thousands of all creeds and classes was a fitting recognition to her life's noble work.

The spirit with which Suzanne Aubert was animated was one of simple and Humble faith which made her see God everywhere and rest entirely on Him in everything. This, with the spirit of charity and of sacrifice, she inculcated in her spiritual daughters. The place of charity in her life was "Charity must be the principle and the end of all the actions of the Sisters- love of God and love of souls."



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# Prayers of Petition

O God you chose Mother Aubert to found a Congregation dedicated to works of compassion. With grateful hearts we pray.

Reared in a time and in a city emerging from religious upheavals, Suzanne experienced great tolerance and acceptance; grant that the differences among us may enable us to grow in respect and appreciation for one another.

You are a God of compassion and love-give us a spirit of moderation in all that we do. Like Mary beneath the Cross, Suzanne suffered the loss of many she dearly loved - strengthen those who attend and serve loved ones who are dying.

In your wisdom you led Mother Aubert to found the Sisters of Compassion - grant them the graces they need to carry on your works of compassion in this world.

Let us pray in thanksgiving for Venerable Suzanne Aubert. We pray that her faith, her courage and her unconditional love will live on in us all.

## Prayer

The Corona virus has isolated us from one another, starving us of company and the means to live in the joy of community. Feed us now with awareness of how necessary our connection is to one another and to all creation. May our care and love become the daily bread that feeds every life.

*Father James*



# Reading from the writings of Suzanne Aubert

Jesus is our hope, our Saviour. Jesus is the Name of His Heart, of His Being. It is as Jesus that He has come, that He lives, that He works, that He reveals Himself, that he loves us. Let us then abandon ourselves to Him without reserve, and He will grant us such joy, such peace, that those alone can understand who have tasted its sweetness. Let us will only what God will and nothing else.

## Final Prayer

God of compassion, take us to the ones who hurt.  
May we see you in every face,  
May we hear you in every voice,  
May we welcome you in each relationship,  
May we give freely with true generosity,  
May we look upon ourselves with love and with a belief, that we too need tending and care.  
Compassionate God, move through us that we may know the strength that comes from living with passion and compassion.  
Amen



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compassion  
*te pūaroa*

For more information  
about Suzanne Aubert  
and a collection of her  
reflections, go to  
[www.suzanneaubert.co.nz](http://www.suzanneaubert.co.nz)

VENERABLE  
✦ **Suzanne Aubert** ✦ | ✦ **Meri Hōhepa** ✦  
A Woman of Great Faith | He wahine whakapono nui