

Suzanne Aubert's

*Spiritual
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ABOUT SUZANNE

Suzanne Aubert was born in France in 1835. On leaving school she felt called by God to become a missionary. In preparation for this calling Suzanne worked alongside the Sisters of Charity, nursing patients who had cholera and casualties of the Crimean War. Suzanne also studied healthcare, chemistry, botany and pharmacy. In Lyon, the Aubert family were friends of the Marist Fathers, a new missionary congregation founded in France by Father Jean Claude Colin. Suzanne knew many of the Fathers and was inspired by them. One of the most important influences in her early life was St Jean Vianney, the Curé d' Ars. He was Suzanne Aubert's spiritual director and made some predictions that mirrored the course of her vocation.

On arrival in Auckland in 1860 with 23 missionaries, including three other French women, Suzanne soon made friends with Hoki, known also as Peata. Peata taught Suzanne Māori knowledge and customs and helped her in the study of rongoa. Suzanne left Auckland in 1871, having taught Māori girls at the Nazareth Institute.

During the next 11 years, Suzanne lived and worked with the Marist Fathers as a lay missionary at the Marist Māori mission station in Meanee, Hawkes Bay. It was in Meanee that Suzanne started in earnest to make her herbal remedies. There were only two doctors in the Napier area and the need for medical care was great. The Māori community called her the 'Doctor of Doctors.' In the year 1873 Suzanne treated 1,353 sick people.

INTRODUCTION

This book of short reflections and quotations originated in Rome, where it was suggested by Suzanne Aubert's friends, Father Lipidi and Father Paul Balzaar, that she write down her thoughts to leave to her Sisters.

Father Balzaar gave her a set of notebooks to use, which were headed up under different subjects. When Suzanne Aubert went home in the evening, she wrote down what she had been thinking of that day under the appropriate heading. Unfortunately her eyesight became so bad she often entered her notes in the wrong book. The result of these jottings is what is known as her 'Spiritual Tonics.'

This book of quotations from the writings of Suzanne Aubert provides many insights into her vibrant spirituality and the faith that was the foundation of her life. Hopefully it will be of help to you on your spiritual journey. At the end of Suzanne Aubert's letter to the Novices she wrote 'May this scribble help you somewhat on the way to heaven!'

The Māori quotations at the beginning of each Spiritual Tonic are taken from *New and Complete Manual of Māori Conversation*, published by Suzanne Aubert in 1885.



Suzanne Aubert's life was a long act of faith. She believed that God should be given credit for everything she did. Suzanne abandoned herself to God and thought only of pleasing Him. She had that simple, blind, trustful faith in God, and it was her example of living faith that inspired others to join her in religious life. In her writing she extols her Sisters to see God in the people they nurse and care for. Suzanne's own example spoke louder than words and she was admired by many in New Zealand colonial society. It was this faith that enabled Suzanne and the Sisters to attend the needy with such great love.



My Lord and my God, make me believe in the love you
have for me.



Jesus cured on account of the faith that called forth His
wonder: 'be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee
whole'. (Matt 9:22)





Jesus is the great Oculist who makes us see by the light of faith.



Everything is possible to him who believes. The obstacles that we have to overcome are not in the things which we have to do for God, they are in ourselves, in the weakness of our faith.



Faith is the light of the mind, the life of the just, the soul of great actions; and consolation during life and at the hour of death.



Faith, by showing another Christ to us in every one of our unfortunate brethren, is the source of our devotedness. A great spirit of faith alone can inspire and vivify virtue. By that spirit, our interior life will never be more intense than when our exterior life is overloaded with most absorbing work.





O my God, I humbly beg you to give me a spirit of simple, humble faith which will make me see you everywhere, rest entirely on you in everything, never doubting your paternal love, your power, your desire to come to my help.



Strengthen my faith, Lord, so that I will see you and accept you in whatever form you take. May my whole life be one long fervent prayer, and may my many external actions and occupations become a powerful means of union with you, instead of a cause of dissipation.



If I cannot do anything else, may I simply look at Jesus and use my imagination. Let Him look at me, and then wait! He will speak to you!



Lord, fill me with a spirit that makes me understand what you expect from me. Help me to confine my desires to the one only desire to know and do Your Holy Will.



May Your Holy Will be done, O Lord, and not mine!



Faith is the virtue which sets in motion all the others.



The simplicity of faith touches the Heart of God, and obtains prodigies.



To believe in Jesus Christ is to consider Him as the only one capable of helping us to realise our destiny; it is to believe that He has come on earth not only to save us, but also to bring us the vivifying and salutary lessons of His example.



The reason that we make so little progress in virtue, and so little progress with affairs which concern the glory of God, is that we do not rely on the maxims of faith, and we rely only on the light of our reason.



We have need to cling to the great thoughts of faith. We busy ourselves, and God guides us. He has His own eternal designs of justice, and mercy, and goodness.



It is when the Pope is teaching that he represents Jesus Christ. Let us have faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in His Vicar. Let us abide by His word, without being shaken by any opposition. Is it not the Highest Authority on earth, the personification of our Lord?



Let us live with faith in a close and intimate union with God. Let us believe in the work of God, which never deceives us. Let us not have only a sentimental devotion, which is not true devotion. Let us have faith in Jesus Christ, and let us be ready to give our life in defense of truth. Truth and Charity are everything for the life on earth and everything for the life in heaven.



Let us have a big heart and great courage, so that, while we are doing the work of God, He does His own in us.





Let us place our happiness in faith. What is blessed is at the same time excellent; there is nothing more excellent and better than faith, which, resting on the Divine promises, abandons itself to God and thinks only of pleasing Him.



Far from allowing our soul to be despondent, let us rise by faith and hope, by an invincible faith in the goodness of God, and with a conviction of the nothing of ourselves. Let us pursue our task, striving to sanctify ourselves more.



Having a great responsibility on our shoulders, let us walk by the light of faith without obstinacy or pusillanimity. There will be, perhaps, here and there dispositions unforeseen, and painful ingratitude, but what does it matter when one sees God in others? It is He whom we have in view to serve, and in obliging Him, we do not oblige an ungrateful human being.





When Suzanne Aubert died in 1926, at the age of 91, The Evening Post said of her: Aubert “may rightly be described as one of the greatest women in public effort and loving self-sacrifice New Zealand has known.”

Suzanne Aubert was a remarkable woman. She was a scholar, social welfare pioneer, champion of disadvantaged children, advocate for the poor and the sick ‘of all creeds and none’, friend to Māori and expert in their language.

She was also a woman of deep faith who founded New Zealand’s only indigenous religious order, the Sisters of Compassion.

The Spiritual Tonics are a selection of reflections and quotations written by Suzanne Aubert herself. They provide a fascinating insight into her vibrant spirituality and the faith that was the source of her hope and tireless charity.

