

# Valuing...

## CONSCIOUS COMPASSION



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**Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish ... Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.**

- Henri Nouwen

Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart. This is expressed in the foundation of a Religious Order which paid homage in its name – the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart. In their witness to the Gospel, they made a commitment to God, who is compassionate love. The Hebrew word for ‘compassion’ is *rechemet* which translates to mean ‘womb’ – reflecting the depth of God’s life-giving love for us. The Latin derivation of ‘compassion’ means ‘to feel with’ – God feels with us.

Mary and Julian’s experience of the compassionate love of God, symbolised in the Sacred Heart, compelled them to express Conscious Compassion in the ordinariness of life. This was seen in their purposeful works for justice such as education and care of the neglected – action for God’s people.

Once a poor lady was sitting in the gutter, ill. Sister Mary’s companion thought she was drunk but Mary sat down with the woman and realised that she needed help as she was ill. She helped the woman to the chemist where she could get assistance for her.

In their outreach to others Mary and Julian became a voice of God’s love as they responded to those in need. Today as we live and grow in Conscious Compassion they implore us to:

***Love each other, help and comfort each other***

- Mary MacKillop 1878

***Be very considerate of others***

- Julian Tenison Woods 1870

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is resonating with me from this reflection?
- How have I experienced Conscious Compassion in my life?
- Where would I like to be more confident in emanating Conscious Compassion?

### PRAYER

Loving God,  
you have revealed your love for us in the Compassionate Heart of Jesus. As we walk in the footsteps of Mary and Julian, may we be present to and respond to the circumstances in our midst which call us to respond in mercy and love. Amen.