



MEMO: Oceania Province – Ministry Directorate Update
From: Director of Ministry – Peter Clinch
To: Regional Ministry Coordinators and Ministry Leaders
Date: 22nd September 2011

Introduction

Right Relationships is one of the five Characteristics of an Edmund Rice Ministry where we are challenged to stand in solidarity with the poor and the earth. A major shift from previous writings on standing with the poor is the inclusion of standing in solidarity with the earth, which means advocating for all marginalized life on the planet.

The need to restore right relationship with all forms of life is an issue Edmund Rice ministries are being asked to grapple with and make sense of in today's world of climate change, carbon tax debate and consumer driven economies. We are being invited to widen our traditional biblical perception of the marginalized when we recognize the pain and burden felt by the whole earth community, not just the human community. The planet and cosmos are sacred and an expression of the divine. The rapid increase in human population and the growth of agriculture and industrialization are having a major impact upon the whole planet. It is causing the breakdown of ecosystems that enable life to happen and co exist upon earth. Present trends of growth, development and consumption are unsustainable and the breakdown of economies, cities and societies is evident. For Edmund Rice ministries to stand back and do nothing is entering into the darkness of death and destruction. Edmund Rice people open their hearts and minds to a world in need of healing, transformation and reconciliation and therefore are called to be people of hope.

Edmund Rice ministries promote prophetic leadership and that leadership is required today to advocate for the marginalization of life on our planet due to human consumption and greed. The environmental prophets of our time mainly come from the green and environmental groups, which can assist Edmund Rice ministries to change their day-to-day operation and lessen their ecological footprint.

Small groups within the Edmund Rice Network are responding to the issues connected with the suffering earth and the new cosmology that are bringing a new spirituality and understanding of how life came to be and the cosmic journey that commenced billions of years ago. This new way of seeing life is a profound change that will usher in a new era and paradigm for humankind. Edmund Rice ministries are encouraged to engage with people and groups who can empower ministry staff, volunteers and participants *to celebrate the beauty and dignity of all life and affirm the interconnectedness of creation as revealing something deeper and more intimate than our individual reality* (taken from *Characteristics of Edmund Rice Ministry – The Sacred*).

Catholic Earthcare Australia

Recently I have been in contact with the office of Catholic Earthcare Australia. The mandate of Catholic Earthcare is to bring about ecological conversion at a personal level as well as at a systems level. Earthcare are keen to work with the Ministry Directorate in fulfilling its Strategic Plan, which states:

- *Develop and model an environment practice that reflects our awareness of and spiritual connection with planet earth that reduces and provides a responsible and appropriate Province carbon footprint.*

- *Provide assistance to communities and ministries to audit the impact of their lifestyles and activities on the environment.*

My hope is to make the above a key focus for 2012.

Advocacy and Training Workshop

At a videoconference of Ministry Coordinators it was resolved that a Workshop will be held in Sydney at the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education on 24 and 25 October 2011. The Workshop will involve the Regional Ministry / Formation Coordinators, the Regional Justice Contact Persons and other invited participants. The Workshop is to be facilitated by Shane Wood and Phil Glendenning. Part of the Workshop will spend time exploring a coordinated approach to the burning issues for Oceania, keeping in mind the desire of the Oceania Chapter and the Strategic Plan of the Oceania Leadership Team to focus on ministry with Indigenous peoples, Refugees and the Earth.

Oceania Province Ministry Conference – October 2012

In response to a suggestion by Steve Bowman, Ministry Leader of Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka, a gathering of key ministry personnel across Oceania is being planned. The theme / title of the Gathering will honour the memory of Brother Ambrose Treacy, the leader of the group of brothers who arrived in Melbourne in 1868, and whose 100th anniversary of his death is next year (he died 2nd October 1912 while living at St Joseph's College Gregory Terrace and he is buried at Nudgee cemetery).

At this stage Edmund Rice Centre Amberley has been booked for the Gathering from 21-26 October 2012. Further information will be published once they become available.

Edmund Rice Camps

A group of staff members from Australia and two volunteers of the New Zealand camps met at the Gold Coast QLD last month. I was able to spend an evening with the group and witness their commitment for ERC across Oceania.

Andrew McMaster, Executive Officer Edmund Rice Camps Tasmania, has resigned from his position. I wish Andrew every success with his new employment and thank him for his time with ERC Tasmania. I acknowledge the work of the Board in Tasmania as they now develop an employment process. Pauline Meemeduma and Laurie Collins are supporting the Board with this process and eventual appointment.

Edmund Rice Ministry Murgon

Gerard Keating and myself travelled to Murgon to meet with Marty Sanderson and Aunty Rhonda Sandow in late July to discuss the outcomes of the recent Ministry Review. The ministry is able to operate in Murgon because of its long-standing partnership with YACCA and the local Aboriginal community. The table conversation was positive of the relationship between the Christian Brothers and the Indigenous community. Over the years respect and understanding has developed and this has allowed volunteers to also participate within the ministry.

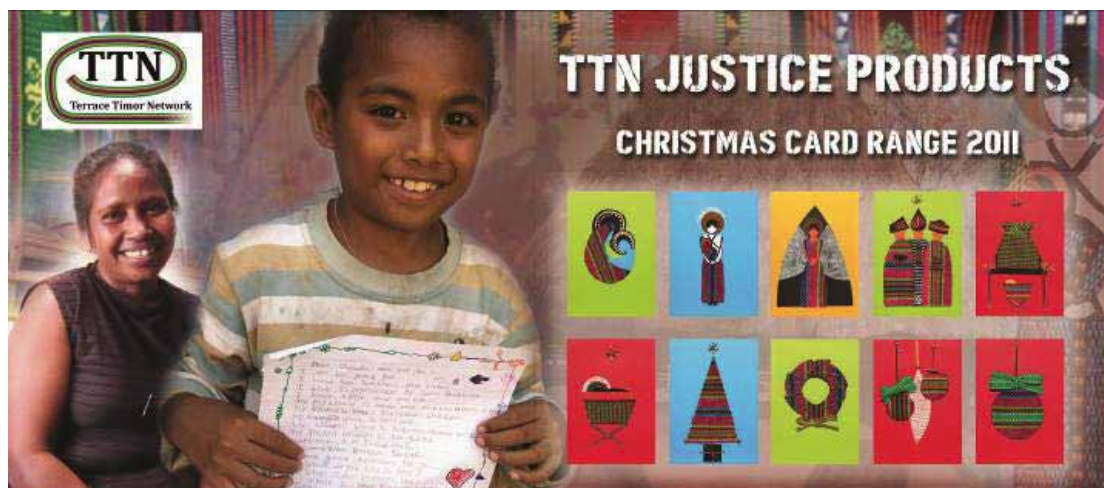
Gerard will continue to dialogue with Marty and Rhonda as the ministry in Murgon evolves and faces the never-ending issue of government policy and funding.

Comunidade Edmund Rice (CER) Timor Leste

A ministry review of CER is underway. The Convenor is Mr. Jim Willcox who is supported by Review Panel members Sister Odete Moreira (Timorese Canossian Sister) and Brother Marty McHugh. The Review Panel will spend about a week in Timor Leste in early October and then meet with CER support groups and individuals in Australia. The Terms of Reference for the review were developed in partnership with Terrace

Timor Network – Cathy See, TTN Convenor, led the workshop that developed the framework. The present Ministry Leader in Timor, Brother Bill Tynan has had his input into the planning of the Review and has been most helpful in meeting the needs of the Review Panel for their time in Timor. The Review Panel's report is presented to the Ministry Directorate and in close collaboration with the Oceania Leadership Team and the Timorese people will outline a vision and strategies for the future.

I encourage ministries to support Terrace Timor Network by purchasing their Christmas Justice Packs and Christmas cards.



*The Terrace Timor Network has recently released new designs of beautiful hand-made cards from the women of Railako. *We are currently taking orders for our special Christmas range. Your purchase makes a significant difference to the lives of these women! The new hand-made Christmas Cards contain a Christmas greeting and are available to order in packs of 10. In addition, our well-known range of quality All-Occasion Cards is also available for purchase in packs of 10. Your orders can be emailed to TTN@terrace.qld.edu.au*

Edmund Rice Refugee Services St Albans

The outcomes of the ministry review at ERRS have commenced being implemented. An Implementation Workshop, facilitated by Pauline Meemeduma, was held during August. The Workshop commenced the process of re structuring the ministry to meet the present needs of refugees (mainly Sudanese) within the west of Melbourne. Brother Frank Perkins is the Acting Ministry Leader. It is encouraging to see that a ministry after ten years of operation can realign itself in order to keep meeting the needs of people and remain relevant by standing in solidarity with marginalized people.

Philippines

The Brothers living in Maasin Leyte continue to develop policies and structures that will put them in a sound position to commence Edmund Rice Services within the coming months. The Oceania Leadership Team is presently considering documents sent by the Maasin community to the Ministry Directorate – Constitution for Edmund Rice Services and an Agreement between the Bishop of Maasin and the Oceania Province Leader. It is an exciting and promising new initiative of both the Oceania and Indian Provinces in close collaboration with the Diocese of Maasin and the local Filipino people.



Christian Brothers' Community Maasin (L – R) Roshan, Paul, Graeme and Theo.

A productive and worthwhile workshop called *Sustaining the Charism* was held recently in Kabankalan Negros to assist the local Christian Brothers in developing a vision and strategies for the future. Rod Ellyard assisted by John Moodie enabled the workshop to happen with significant support and interest by local Filipino people.



Left are the participants of the workshop held at the Columban Retreat Centre near Kabankalan. (L – R) **Back** row – Brs Peter Clinch, Graeme Leach, Rod Ellyard, John Moodie. **Middle** – Sr Teresita Garabato, Mrs. Leah Samson (facilitator), Mrs. Angie Gayares, Ms. Gigi Tropa **Front** – Fr Ramon Florete, Mr. Rolando Dela Cruz, Mr. Matt Hawkins.

Applications for Province Support and Ministry budgets

Thank you for the return of applications for Province financial support for next year accompanied by preliminary ministry budgets for 2012. The process for constructing the Ministry Directorate budget for next year is under way. I will be in communication with individual ministries to discuss their application during the weeks of October. I have had two meetings with the Oceania Leadership Team regarding the 2012 Ministry budget and I am hopeful an acceptable version of the budget will be presented to the OLT for ratification by the end of October.

Announcement – Regional Ministry Coordinator NSW / ACT

Due to Bernie Gartland's acceptance of the Directorship for Networking and Communication, Gerard Brady has agreed to be appointed to Regional Ministry Coordinator in NSW / ACT. I thank Gerard for his generosity in accepting this responsibility, as he will continue as Regional Formation Coordinator as well. Gerard's commitment to the Mission of Oceania, his relational skills and organization capacity will hold him in good stead to manage the two roles. Many thanks to Bernie for his commitment to the ministries of NSW over the years and wish him well as he prepares for his move to Brisbane.

Conclusion

Ministries are the lifeblood of Oceania as they capture the Mission of Oceania Province in action and in doing so nurture the emerging and evolving charism of Blessed Edmund Rice. In the times of doubt and frustration take a walk outside and allow the air you breathe and the many forms of life that surround you refresh your spirit and bring enlightenment to the source of your melancholy.



Dawn at Tugun Beach Gold Coast Queensland – Immersed in the Grandeur of creation calls forth a response from the heart.

Peter Clinch
Director of Ministries
Oceania Province