



## Themed Gathering: Emerging Religious Life *The New Story* *Mulgoa – August 2010*

Recently fourteen Brothers gathered at Mulgoa to explore – Emerging Religions Life – The New Story. What religious life means today? Terry Casey and Luke Quinn facilitated the gathering.

The Brothers explored together their experience and understanding of ministerial religious life in today's world. By sharing their experiences the Brothers gained insights and challenges in the living of religious life and reflected on new ways of living religious life more deeply.

Each day was focussed on a theme:

*Presence:* My experience of religious life

*Compassion:* Listening to the stirrings of the heart

and *Liberation:* Call of action



Back row: (left to right) Cyril Bosco, Steve Cram, Peter Coe, Chris Meehl, Tim Barnes, Luke Quinn

Middle row: Brian Davis, Michael Ryan, Peter Sheldon, Ray Weston, Arthur O'Kane, Terry Casey

Front row: John Henry Thornber, Brian Berg, Bernard White

Photo: Dave Curtin

Each Brother was able to reflect, explore and share their understanding of religious life and a spirituality which is relevant to contemporary ministry. Insights on the essence of religious life today were shared as well as the challenges each Brother faces in living their religious life. The group reflected upon practical responses to challenges.

Brothers were able to share their challenges and nominated a practical way forward to live their religious life more deeply. Much reflection was devoted to our identity as Brothers, deepening relationships in community, entering mystery, community living and ministry at the margins.

Appreciation to Luke and Terry for facilitating the gathering and to the Brothers for the participation, exploring, reflecting and sharing on what Brotherhood means today.

## Inter-faith Calendar

August	29	Beheading of John the Baptist	Christian
September	01	Ecclesiastical Year begins	Orthodox Christian
	02	Krishna Janmashtami	Hindu
	06	Laylat al Kadr	Islam
	08	Nativity of Mary	Christian

## Summer at Mount Sion

The Edmund Rice International Heritage Centre continues to have a variety of activities during the quieter summer months. In June some of the regular programs, such as the English language classes wound down for the summer and while other summer programs were being put in place.

On June 26<sup>th</sup> the Presentation Brothers' Novitiate community from Killarney were welcomed for a day of reflection and relaxation. Presentation Br. Joseph Mukasa renewed his annual vows in the Edmund Rice Chapel. Coincidentally Br. Declan Power and several Brothers visiting from Africa arrived the same day and were able to join in this ceremony and lunch. Parish priest, Fr. Michael Mullins who recently launched his latest book – a commentary on the Gospel according to Luke and the community took part in the celebration and stayed for the afternoon.

For the first two weeks of July, the I.S.U. sponsored a summer school for foreign national teenagers needing assistance with intensive English classes in the morning. Various outings and activities were provided for them in the afternoon.

On July 18<sup>th</sup> Mount Sion hosted the Waterford Inner City Family Fun Day with a series of games, entertainment and tours of the museum. Despite the constant rain, a fine number of people braved the elements to enjoy a relaxing and enjoyable Sunday afternoon with their neighbours.

Edmund Rice Summer Camps were held in Waterford and the Edmund Rice Camp in Kilkenny visited for a tour of the museum and chapel.

Stephen Hale  
European Province Updates

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## A visit to Belarus raises questions about 'voluntourism'



Liam O'Meara, Peter Dowling & Francis Hall  
in Minsk

Francis Hall and I have just returned to Rome after nearly a week in Belarus, seeing the work of the Burren Chernobyl Project (BCP), with Brother Liam O'Meara from Ireland as the Director on the ground in Belarus. Liam's presence, personality and relational skills, the great commitment of a good number of Irish volunteers, and meeting many people in Belarus, made it a very stimulating time.

Peter Dowling

[Full text](#) on global website

## Journeying across our great history

Pilgrimage is the word that keeps emerging in my soul whenever I think of my journey to Australia. And by the way, why should it not be? PILGRIMAGE. During my journey in Australia, I was not only conscious that I was touching great lands but I knew so well that I was walking deep across the heart of history which is very much part of me as a Christian Brother. And as we know, the East African Brotherhood story, is an offshoot of Australian Brotherhood history, we therefore cannot tell our full story without touching the Australian story.

Being a member of the Sustainability Committee, I had a thirst to listen to the stories of brothers in Australia. Many times, I was keen to know how the Brothers, the Christian Brothers, made it up to where they are? What did they do? What did they not do? How come brothers did a lot to the community from scratch? How come they built an empire from nothing? How could they be so successful?

These were difficult questions. However, two things emerged. The initial Brothers did not only have a common mission and vision but they had also a strong sense of self and congregational identity. They were so proud to be Brothers. They knew what they wanted to do and they also knew who they were. They asked the right questions, they risked and they evolved.

**Vision and mission:** the Australian story as I heard was a journey from grass to grace. These men had nothing at the start but because they rightly recognized the need of the country by then, people were able to not only recognize them but to work and support their mission. They worked objectively in unison like bees. The question is this: What about us? What is the deepest need of the society in Africa? Do you know what the brothers' objectives and mission for this year are?

As a district, are we moving forward in one direction with a common mission and objectives? As an individual, are you part of that mission and vision? And do you engage with this mission and vision? Do

you understand it? And what do you understand? Or is everything the same for you and you do not care much???

**Self and congregational identity:** Brothers in Australia were not iron Jones!! No, they were and are human beings who struggle for self perfection and self understanding. But one thing is true though. The Brothers have got high self esteem; they played or are still playing big! And most importantly, brothers had and still have the congregation at heart! In the communities I visited, I could not help but to fall in love with the deep spirituality brothers had. It was physical; I could sense it in the community life, it was conspicuous in the nature of hospitality, the humility of brothers who for some of them had worked in highly regarded positions both within and without the congregation. The love that flowed among the brothers was enormous. And seeing brotherhood in Africa bloom in deed brightened their hearts and faces. They loved the story of Africa and brotherhood in Africa. They felt so close to Africa and while other congregations struggle and sublime into nothing, brotherhood is sprouting in Africa. This special transition of life did not only connect our souls together and bring hope to our hearts but it also made us laugh with ease with one another. After all we were brothers, Christian Brothers at last.

**Another question is:** do we understand who we are? Last year, I heard a Brother trying to define what Christian brotherhood is and I must confess, I was not very happy!! And so, who are we? Where is the congregation in our lives? Is it part of me? Do I play a part in its growth? How?

Benjamin Mbasu  
East Africa District Newsletter

## From the Philippines

At the beginning of June, the Brothers officially moved to a new location here in the Diocese of Maasin. After almost two and a half years of living in a small rented house in the town of Hilongos, the opportunity came to move to a more appropriate location (in terms of space and facilities), when the FCJ Sisters (Faithful Companions of Jesus), made the decision to withdraw from the Diocese, and invited the Brothers to either rent or purchase their large (7 bedrooms) house, located in the Barangay of Maria Clara, about 7km from the centre of Maasin City.

For full story see [website](#)

Frank Perkins

## Network of Callan Services – National Conference

The Network of Callan Services works with children and adults with disabilities. The work involves ensuring that children or adults can get education, training or employment, and can receive the right health care. The work also focuses on assisting people with disabilities to participate in the life of their families and local communities.

The Conference was sponsored by CBM (a Germany based non-government organisation) and the European Union and was held at Sivarai Namona Catholic Pastoral Care Centre in Boomana on the outskirts of Port Moresby.

This allowed two representatives from each of the seventeen (17) Resource Centres in the Network of Callan Services and eight (8) staff members of the Callan Services National Unit to participate in the Conference. With them were representatives of the PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons, the Inclusive Education section of the Education Department and of the Disability and Child Welfare Sections of the Department of Community Development.

The exploration of how to conduct services that protect children was lead by Dr Pauline Meemeduma who is the Child Protection Consultant for the Oceania Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers. The Christian Brothers conduct Callan Services National Unit.



This workshop is the beginning of the development of Children’s Services and Child Protection policies, procedures and training of all staff employed in the Network. This will be done in the context of the Strategic Plan (2009 – 2015) of the Callan Services National Unit. This Strategic Plan was formally launched and explored at the Conference. Work commenced at the Conference will continue over coming months.

For full report see [website](#)

Kevin Ryan

Left to right: Ms Rosemary Tonove (Dept Community Development – Child Welfare), Mr Augustine Koroma (Acting Director Callan Services National Unit, Ms Susan Govaki (Principal Callan Services Resource Centre Kimbe), Dr Pauline Meemeduma (Child Protection Consultant – Christian Brothers Oceania Province)



## More on the Edmund Rice Centre Lions



The Edmund Rice Centre Lions is an Australian Rules Football team of newly arrived young people. The team was formed in March 2010 and have been training together since then. The team is coached and captained by the Sports Team of the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka Youth Leadership Group and supported by the WA Football Commission and other sponsors. We are looking to build a supporter-base to provide a HUGE home ground atmosphere for all of the matches that the team will play in 2010. The Edmund Rice Centre Lions is a community Australian Rules Football team and are dedicated to serving their community.

We are also focusing on improving the leadership qualities of these wonderful young people through footy training and a leadership development program. We would hope that these talented young footballers will inspire other young people who come to Australia to play footy, act as positive role models and encourage others to serve their community through sport. These updates will be sent out regularly to inform the community of the activities of their team! For more information contact Joe on 9440 0625 or 0417 923 873 or email the Youth Leadership Group on [ercyouthleaders@gmail.com](mailto:ercyouthleaders@gmail.com)

For further updates visit the [AFL website](#)

## Invitation to Australia Pacific Earth Charter +10 Festival

*Brisbane 16 - 18 September 2010*



The *Festival* is a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the launch of the Earth Charter and will focus on our collective ability to respond to the major impacts of climate change, the global financial crisis and regional conflicts using the values and principles of the Earth Charter as a way forward. The Festival will bring people to Brisbane from across Australia and from neighbouring countries in the Pacific region to share ideas in an atmosphere of celebration and collaboration.

For registration and more information contact [festival@earthcharter.org.au](mailto:festival@earthcharter.org.au)

Telephone: (07) 3735 5546

Fax: (07) 3735 7638

For more information please visit [www.earthcharter.org.au](http://www.earthcharter.org.au)

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## Speaking with the Voice of the Voiceless

The Oceania Province directly supports two of the three members of Edmund Rice International in Geneva – Brian Bond and Moy Hitchen. The Presentation Brothers, who are partners with the Christian Brothers in this project, have a presence through the work of Denis Claivaz who has the advantage of being a French speaking Swiss citizen. The North American Province have appointed Kevin Cawley as their Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation co-ordinator who joins the Geneva team for key meetings but mainly serves at the UN in New York. I am a member of the Edmund Rice International Board that meets 4 times each year that I usually attend using a skype conference call. This past week the Board met in Dublin to set the strategic priorities for 2011. For the present, Peter Clinch is the link person for ERI with the Oceania Province.

The Geneva Team has been evolving for the past 4 years and had a strong endorsement from the Congregation Chapter in 2008. In 2011 a major focus of for Congregation Advocacy will be the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Papua New Guinea. Each country that is a member of the UN is visited by a UN Human Rights Council delegation every 4 years and is asked to give an account of their stewardship with respect to their record re the 'rights of their citizens'. This is called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. ERI has already begun working to ensure the work of community development programs such as Callan services is recognized as part of the Review Report to the UN Human Rights Council. ERI works with

the local ERN to ensure ministries working to alleviate poverty and build the capacity of people to protect the rights of children and young people are acknowledged in the review report. Care for the environment is embedded in all reporting done by ERI. The ERI Report is developed in partnership with other faith-based groups who share our values of presence, compassion and liberation. In the next 12 months you will hear more about UPR so you might like to explore [www.edmundriceinternational.org](http://www.edmundriceinternational.org) and UPR-INFO: <http://upr-iinfo.org>

On 17 June the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a new report, entitled *What Will It Take To Achieve The Millennium Development Goals? An International Assessment*, which identifies eight concrete action points to accelerate and sustain development progress over the next five years.

According to the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, launched on 23 June, the economic crisis took a heavy toll on jobs and incomes around the world, but its impact does not threaten achievement of the Millennium Development Goals target of cutting the rate of extreme poverty in half by 2015. While the annual MDG accounting report highlights a number of successes, it also assesses the human impact of lack of adequate progress on many of the Goals.

Edmund Rice International is encouraging all Edmund Rice Schools and ERN communities and individuals around the world to organize their own *Stand-Up Against Poverty* event in September.

Please investigate this website and see if your community or you as an individual can stand up for those who are central to our lives as sisters and brothers in the earth community.

Peter Harney

## Oceania Updates

Please send any information or news items for Oceania Updates to the Province Publications Coordinator, Brother Nev Thornton, Email: [ntthornton@edmundrice.org](mailto:ntthornton@edmundrice.org)

I am particularly interested in receiving any good quality images of people, places, sights and faces throughout Oceania.