



## From the Province Leader OCEANIA

“Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes –  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.”

(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)



We come again to Advent and Christmas, our annual invitation to enter the cycle of longing, searching, waiting and faith. Augustine told us long ago that “our hearts are made for you, O God, and they can never find rest until they rest in You”. Browning’s words above suggest that at any time we may see what is of ultimate importance, or we may miss the point altogether.

A favourite reflection of mine for the Christmas season comes from long ago, a poem “*A Letter to the Most Illustrious the Contessina Allagia degli Aldobrandeschi, Written Christmas Eve, Anno Domini 1513*” by a Dominican monk, Fra Giovanni

I salute you. I am your friend, and my love for you goes deep.  
There is nothing I can give you which you have not. But there is much,  
very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can  
come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. Take heaven!  
No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant.  
Take peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within  
our reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in darkness, could we but see.  
And to see, we have only to look. I beseech you to look!

Life is so generous a giver. But we, judging its gifts by their covering,  
cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering, and you  
will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love by wisdom, with power.  
Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you.  
Everything we call a trial, a sorrow or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there.  
The gift is there and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Your joys, too,  
be not content with them as joys. They, too, conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering,  
that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it; that is all!  
But courage you have, and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together,  
wending through unknown country home.

And so, at this time, I greet you, not quite as the world sends greetings,  
but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you, now and  
forever, the day breaks and shadows flee away.

On behalf of the Oceania Leadership Team I wish all readers of *Oceania Updates* a peaceful and blessed Christmas season, and pray that we all experience something of “the diviner gifts” at this time.

Vince Duggan cfc

## Directors' Meeting Report OCEANIA



The Directors met at Xavier Dunes Tugun on 11 and 12 November to plan for 2011 and to have a business meeting. Bernie Gartland, Max Montisci, Mary Murphy and Peter Clinch were in attendance while Anne Pinzon was an apology.

The first day was an evaluation of 2010 and some dreaming for 2011. It was a creative and fruitful day. After evaluating the year a new understanding emerged how the Directors might relate to each other next year. Instead of a "Team" approach we shared about being in "partnership" – being partners is different from belonging to a team. In time the Directors will share further their growing awareness of

being partners.

The second day we discussed a variety of topics which included: How to maintain contact with each other despite the busy schedules people have, budget for 2011, communities and ministries in remote places, protocols for visiting ministries in the developing nations of Oceania, Development and Foundation workshop, Formation opportunities and events for 2011, ERN Centre at Amy Street Hobart, travel and accommodation protocols for Province staff and a variety of other matters.

The meeting being located at Tugun allowed for times to share informally over a meal and listen to the personal stories of each other.



Peter Clinch

## New Website – Edmund Rice Foundation AUSTRALIA

The Edmund Rice Foundation has recently launched a new website at [www.erf.org.au](http://www.erf.org.au). The site is in its early stages and developments remain ongoing. To receive notification of updates, on the home page, under **Stay Informed**, enter your email address, click on **Subscribe** and follow the prompts. You will receive email notification of your application. Click on the link in the notification to activate your subscription. In future, **Reaching Out** will be available online. To reduce costs, it would be the Foundation's preferred option for supporters to subscribe and access **Reaching Out** online. **Reaching Out** will continue to be available in hardcopy for those who prefer that option.

## Oceania Province and Terrace Timor Network (TTN) luncheon OCEANIA

The Oceania Province Centre hosted a wonderful table serviced luncheon on the 19 November 2010 to celebrate its partnership with TTN, with 26 people in attendance. The luncheon was graced by TTN Patron, Br Ted Magee, followed with speeches by Br Vince Duggan and the President of TTN, Cathy See. Br Vince and Cathy spoke about their solidarity and commitment in working with the Timorese people and supporting Br Bill Tynan in the Comunidade Edmund Rice (CER) ministry in Timor Leste.

The **joint vision statement** was read and formally accepted during the luncheon.

Terrace Timor Network and Oceania Province – an evolving Partnership

Vision 2011 – 2015

*Dare to be Courageous*

As we journey with each other in collaboration for the people of Timor Leste, in a contemporary expression of the Edmund Rice Story, the Oceania Province and TTN are committed to a mutual partnership characterised by heartfelt relationships, trust, respect, and listening.

We share a vision of a positive future with the people of Timor Leste gained through strong cultural identity, freedom from poverty, self-worth and self-determination.

Peter Clinch



Left to right: Elaine Kan, Vince Duggan, Ted Magee, Kate Kelly Duke, Donna Cook, Cathy See, Kaylene Benson, Peter Clinch, Conor Finn, Dympna Danaher.

## Inter-faith Calendar WORLD

December	2-9	Hanukkah	Jewish
	6	Saint Nicholas Day	Christian
	7	Hijra – New Year	Islam
	8	Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)	Buddhism
		Immaculate Conception of Mary	Catholic Christian
	12	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Catholic Christian
	16	Ashura	Iskam
		Posadas Navidenas through Dec 25	Hispanic Christian
	21	Solstice	
		Zarathosht Diso (Death of Zarathushtra)	Zoroastrian
		Yule	Wicca (Northern hemisphere)
		Litha	Wicca (Southern hemisphere)
		Yule	Christian
	25	Nativity of Jesus	Christian
	26	Holy Family	Catholic Christian
	28	Holy Innocents	Christian
	31	Watch night	Christian

## Necrology

Readers who knew or lived or worked with Leslie Linus Bowler are invited to send their reminiscences to Terry Casey at [tmcasey@edmundrice.org](mailto:tmcasey@edmundrice.org) who will write his life for the Christian Brothers Necrology. Any recollections will be gratefully received preferably by early in the New Year.

Terry Casey

## The country's Religious are older and fewer but they are doing many new things AUSTRALIA

Leaders of Religious orders gathered in Sydney on 15 November for the launch of 'See, I am doing a new thing', the report on the 2009 survey.

Commissioned by Catholic Religious Australia (CRA), the survey was undertaken on CRA's behalf by the Pastoral Planning Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC). Its authors, Stephen Reid and Robert Dixon from ACBC and Father Noel Connolly SSC, Regional Director of St Columban's Mission Society, Australia/New Zealand, joined with Religious leaders at CRA's Annandale office to mark the report's release.

CRA commissioned the survey to get a picture of the membership at the present time, to consider trends for the future, and to understand more fully the important role that Catholic Religious play in the Australian Church and society.

The last time a similar survey was conducted was 34 years ago. While the 1976 survey was completed by individual priests, brothers and sisters, this survey was with religious congregations. One hundred and sixty one congregations, orders, societies and associations responded to the 2009 survey, which could be completed online or in print form.

'See, I am doing a new thing!' contains statistical information on Religious in Australia including numbers, age, locations, areas of work, as well as ownership and operation of institutions, and partnerships with other congregations and organisations. It also includes seven personal reflections on the findings of the report from leaders of religious institutes.

Key findings were that in 2009 there were 8422 Religious in Australia compared with 17,029 in 1976. Religious Sisters make up just over 70 per cent of the cohort. In 2009 there were 5,927 Religious Sisters, 884 Religious Brothers and 1,611 Religious order priests. The median average age of Religious in 2009 was 73.

While the survey shows that Sisters, Brothers and clerical Priests are ageing and decreasing, they are broadening the type of ministry they are involved in, with a movement away from institutional ministries like education to the more social and pastoral work found on the margins of society.

Today, many Religious are working with refugees and asylum seekers, indigenous Australians, as prison chaplains, for organisations against human trafficking, and for the environment. Other apostolates include congregational leadership and administration, contemplative life, parish work, pastoral care, healthcare and aged care, media, publishing and the arts, overseas mission, social services and spiritual direction such as retreats and further study.

Read [more](#)



Left to right: Father Tim Norton, Sister Anne Derwin, Sister Veronica McCluskie and Father Noel Connolly

## Youth Apostolate Team/Edmund Rice Formation Services farewell N.S.W.

An enjoyable celebration of the 36 years of ministry to youth through the various retreat teams - based at Mulgoa – was held mid-November to mark the close of the Team in the form many would be familiar with.

Jenny Scally rsj, the current retreat team coordinator, was able to contact many of the past members of (mostly) Youth Apostolate Team (YAT) and more recently Edmund Rice Formation Services (ERFS), though she was admittedly distracted by some weeks on pilgrimage to Rome for the canonisation.

The evening commenced with Mass celebrated for us by Fr Peter Connolly, currently PP of Springwood and longtime supporter of the retreats.

Reinforcing the “Kairos – time” theme which was so often stressed at the start of retreats, the nominated commencement time proved fairly flexible!



**Back Row (standing, L-R):**Graham English, John Giacon cfc, Gerard Brady cfc, Brian Murphy cfc, Greg Holland

**Seated:** Fr Paul Roberts, Peter Hancock cfc, Jenny Scally rsj, Jim Grovenor cfc, Brian Moylan cfc, Helen Tannous, Cathy Jensen, John Wiley

**At front (on floor):**David Curtin cfc, Fr Paul Marshall, Mark McDonald, Gary Wellsmore cfc, Cyril Bosco cfc

Prayers of the Faithful gave a wonderful opportunity for many to express their thanks and appreciation of the blessings which so many (students and presenters) received as a result of their retreat time. The great contribution of the late Des Kelly cfc was joyfully recalled, along with many other team-members who were unable to be with us.

After a convivial dinner a simple year-by-year list of retreat Teams prompted much reminiscing including some fascinating history from Peter Hancock, the instigator of the YAT way back in 1974.

Unsurprisingly, since some hadn't caught up for many years, much further catching-up occurred, in some cases until the wee small hours of Saturday morning. Congratulations to all involved in making the evening such a successful and joyous time.

Dave Curtin



At the YAT farewell dinner (left to right): Brendan Versace cfc, Mary Murphy, Michael Walsh cfc, Peter Coe cfc, John Giacom cfc, Gary Ferguson cfc



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***Joan Rafferty***

## A Forgotten Centenary TASMANIA

### *Br Alphonsus Prünster, founding Christian Brother in Tasmania*

In 2011 there will be celebrated the Centenary of St Virgil's College, Hobart. The school was opened on the old cemetery hill in Barrack St in February 1911 for boarding and day pupils, one of whom was the father of the current Archbishop of Hobart, Adrian Doyle. The first Superior and Principal was Brother L. Carroll. His religious and first names have been difficult to unearth as he left the Brothers not long afterwards.



However there had been one and sometimes two Christian Brothers in Tasmania since at least July 1909. These Brothers were William Alphonsus Prünster and William Mark McCarthy. The Barrack St Community Annals record that in that month: "...Brother Alphonsus, the lay brother, and Br McCarthy, Consultor, decided on the plans for the building and the levelling and excavation. Under the able and energetic direction of Br Alphonsus the (work) proceeded rapidly. ...For two years he worked indefatigably".

[More](#)

Sean McManus

## A.C.U. farewells Chancellor Brother Julian McDonald AUSTRALIA



Mr Alan Druery. Br Brian Julian. Prof John Devereux

ACU has been holding a series of formal farewells for Chancellor Br Julian McDonald cfc, who is retiring after 10 years service.

Br Julian was appointed Chancellor of ACU in November 2000. He has been a member of the University Senate since 1992, and was previously Pro-Chancellor from 1995 to 2000.

Associate Vice-Chancellor (Brisbane), Professor John Devereux said Br Julian will be sorely missed. "It's always sad to lose one of your own... and it's been an absolute pleasure to have him as Chancellor, "We have appreciated the gentleness,

compassion and humility he brought to the role." says Professor Devereux.

Mr Alan Druery, who has served on the Senate with Br Julian since 1992, also spoke at the proceedings and described Br Julian as "dependable, reliable, resilient, determined and committed. His chairmanship of the Senate has been expert – always firm and clear sighted, yet always compassionate," he says.

Br Julian retires from his position of Chancellor, to be succeeded by General Peter Cosgrove. He delivered his farewell with his usual humour, warmth and grace, "I want to leave by saying thank you, to all you are, and all you have been. God bless you all".



Thank you to all the contributors to Oceania Updates  
in 2010 and to all our readers.

**Happy Christmas  
and  
a peaceful New Year  
to you all**