



## OLT COMMENTARY

### From the Province Leader

“Charism” is a word that was little heard 50 years ago. It emerged in the 1960s, and for a long time seemed to be used mainly for religious congregations. In our world the thinking at that time seemed to be that the charism of Edmund Rice was something for Presentation Brothers and Christian Brothers. Fortunately wiser views have prevailed in more recent times, and it now seems self-evident that the charism of Edmund Rice cannot be limited in such a way. The briefest survey of the people and the ministries of Oceania Province reveals so many people in many walks of life who are somehow enlivened and nourished by the gift that Edmund Rice offered our Church and our world 200 years ago, and who are making a real difference in the lives of others.

We express Edmund’s charism these days as “Presence ... Compassion ... Liberation” and I am becoming more and more convinced that the people of our world are thirsting for just these qualities. Look around you, look in your own home or community, look at the people where you work or study or recreate, look at the daily news in papers or radio or television - how often do you find people who are looking for life-giving relationships, or who are suffering or oppressed? Traditional religion is not providing any help for many of these people. I have been to Sunday Eucharists in recent times where I wondered if I was the youngest person in the Church. And yet so many of those who have deserted our Churches are searching and thirsting and longing and hurting. Many are “praying to a God who is larger than religion”. We who proclaim to be enlivened by the Edmund Rice charism are well-placed to reach out to those who, for whatever reason, do not see traditional religion as relevant to their situation. I do not have any crystal ball to tell me what is around the corner, but it seems possible that the traditional religions of this world (or own amongst them) are coming to a point where an absolutely major change of heart and direction is needed if they are to have any relevance at all.

In the past few weeks I have been privileged to experience this “making a difference” amongst some of the youngest (school-leavers at Edmund Rice camps) and some of the oldest (Brothers in their 90s) people involved in the Edmund Rice Network. This week in Sydney we celebrated the life of Brother Norman Lewis Lipman, just as we did two weeks ago for Brother Francis Irenaeus McCarthy; both men died at age 89, but what an extraordinary contrast there was between these two men in so many other ways. Edmund’s charism has so many different expressions, and it is up to each of us to find what is genuine for us. This week we also farewelled two Papua New Guinean candidates as they depart Sydney and head for their two year novitiate program in Zambia. We pray God’s blessing on them as they discern their call to the Edmund Rice charism, and let us pray also for their fellow novices in Africa and for Br Tom Kearney and the formation team who will accompany them. – **Br Vince Duggan**

## NEWS

### Jude Butcher – Australia Day Honour

Congratulations to Br Jude Butcher, Professor at Australian Catholic University who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (AM) in this year's Australia Day Honours list.

Jude received the award for his marvellous service to teacher education, particularly in the Catholic sector, and to the community through his commitment to social justice. Congratulations Jude.

### Richmond Housing Estate Project

After considerable consideration, it has been decided by the leadership of the Province not to proceed with the establishment of a brothers' community within the Richmond Estate. The Province wishes to express its appreciation and gratitude to Mrs Sue Corby, Chair of the Richmond Estate Action Group (REAG), Mr Pravin Ram, Department of Human Services for their generous assistance, and to Mrs Pauline Meemeduma and Br Peter Richardson who researched and developed an appropriate structure and framework for the Province to be in ministry within the estate.

The Province also acknowledges the Brothers who expressed interest in being part of the Richmond Estate Project. It has been a long process to reach such a decision and hopefully other new ministries with people on the margins will emerge into the future. -  
**Br Peter Clinch**

### Province Communications Team

A warm welcome to Br Neville Thornton who will join the Province Communications Team and work from the Oceania Province Centre. Nev has returned from Rome after working for the Congregation Leadership Team and he will undertake a number of tasks in Oceania including coordinating the Province's publications. Thanks for your presence Nev and we look forward to your contribution. – **Br Steve McLaughlin**

### Intern/Community Opportunities at Glenburn

Internships of up to six months are available at the Christian Brothers Centre for Ecology and Spirituality, at Glenburn in Victoria. The Centre is a teaching and learning community, trying as far as possible to live sustainably and spiritually.

The program includes weekly supervision sessions for interns. Interns also attend Centre

events throughout the year and are encouraged to take an active involvement in these

events. Interns will also be given personal free time during the week. There is a minimum of two days free time per week which is pre-arranged with the Director of the Centre.

The interns gain knowledge and skills by assisting our staff in the support of our ongoing mission. Activities and opportunities include participating in presentations, hospitality, cooking, cleaning, gardening, and care of the houses and property.

More information is available from Trevor Parton at +61 (0)3 5797 8532 or [centreecology@bigpond.com](mailto:centreecology@bigpond.com)

## EVENTS

### (North West NSW) – Brothers and Others Program

Are you a Christian Brother? Are you a member of the Edmund Rice Network? Do you have a friend or family member that works for the Edmund Rice Network? Then this program is for YOU!

From 13 to 20 February 2010 the Brothers and Others Program will be conducted in North West NSW. Throughout the journey a variety of issues effecting Indigenous peoples, cultures and communities will be explored.

The Program will travel through communities such as Brewarrina, Goodooga, Lightning Ridge and Walgett. Participants will also be involved in cultural activities such as:

- Aboriginal art and dance
- Bush foods and medicines
- Smoking ceremonies
- Elders Yarn Ups, to name but a few.

The overall cost of the Program is \$850.00 which includes all meals, travel, tour costs and accommodation. To register your interest or to apply contact Ashlee Lasalo at the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education on +61 (0)2 8762 4207 or email: [ashleeb@erc.org.au](mailto:ashleeb@erc.org.au)

## OCEANIA UPDATES

*Oceania Updates* is distributed by email every fortnight to Brothers, members of the wider Edmund Rice Network (ERN) and interested groups and individuals. Its purpose is to provide regular news and information on the Oceania Province, its people, places and happenings as well as on Congregation issues.