



Introductions

On my return from five years in Rome as archivist for the CLT, I have been appointed the Oceania Province Publications Co-ordinator. It is a great privilege to work in the important area of communications and I hope to fulfil this role to the best of my ability. On behalf of the Networking, Communications and Development Directorate I would like to thank Mr. Tom Cranitch, the former Province Communications Manager, for his work on behalf of the Province since its inception. I look forward to working with the Director, Brother Steve McLaughlin and the rest of the team. I hope to hear from Brothers and members of the wider ERN about all the positive work in ministry being done so I might communicate this good news that the work and spirit of Edmund may be known and appreciated by as wide an audience as possible.



Nev Thornton

From the OLT

The Gate of the Year

*I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
'Give me a light that I may tread
safely into the unknown.'
And he replied:
'Go out into the darkness and put
your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better
than light and safer than a known way!'
So I went forth and finding the
hand of God, trod gladly into the night.
And He led me towards the hills
and the breaking of day in the lone East .*

Minnie Louise Haskins

Peter Faulkner sent me this poem on a card recently. It surely is an invitation to continue to let go the chains with which we have bound our God and to go beyond our boundaries, beyond our tried and true ways of living and walk in places of the heart beyond our wildest imaginings. It is the invitation the Congregation Chapter (2008) expressed in different words. 'Whose hand will I grasp this year when I sense the darkness closing in, begin to lose energy and look for someone else to blame for my predicament?'

But 'Is this the moment of grace when I must let go and risk falling?'

At present there are many important questions that are demanding the OLT's attention. How are we going to sustain the mission to the earth-community of Kabankalan and Hilongos in the Philippines? How can our mission in East Timor be further shaped to enable the local community to be effectively engaged in creating their future? What evolving structures will best serve Callan services (PNG) to meet the needs of those who suffer disability? Where might we begin new ministries in Oceania to serve the needs of the new wave of asylum seekers? How do we ensure the voice of the indigenous person is heard in all our decisions? How might communities be re-configured to release new life and bring a renewed vigour to outreach to the marginalized? How do we best meet the needs of our ageing brothers? How do we develop partnerships and find funding

to sustain our existing ministries at the margins? How do we best promote vocations in Oceania? What is the best way to care for our candidates and younger brothers in PNG?

These are a few questions that will be at the forefront of the OLT meetings and dialogue as we begin 2010. What we do know is that the answers to our burning questions lie within us, all of us, and our task is to listen carefully to the murmurings of the Spirit in our midst to find our way forward. It is about walking hand in hand into the unknown.

Drew Dellinger's poem 'Hieroglyphic Stairway' begins:

*it's 3:23 in the morning
and I'm awake
because my great great grandchildren
won't let me sleep
my great great grandchildren
ask me in dreams
what did you do while the planet was plundered?
what did you do when the earth was unravelling?
Surely you did something
when the seasons started failing?*

It reminds us that we live at a time in history when the starting point for a new way of living, thinking and organizing ourselves must begin with a focus on the security and well-being of the children of the future which means caring for the health of the planet today. Our current economic system, of which we are an integral part, is generally based on an exploitive and extractive way of seeing the world, not a self-sustaining way of living. The earth's riches are for the use of humans and have value only in their usefulness to the human species. Excluded often from this 'market economy' are the household or community economies, the natural economy of our earth and the volunteer economy. Three economies that are of key interest to the Edmund Rice Community. It is important that our Oceania Province enact in its daily way of operating, the centrality of a community of right relationships with people and all of life.

What would a more equitable, sustainable and caring system look like? It would surely be one of partnership, not one of patriarchy and domination. What are the signs of a movement towards a partnership way operating, away from one of dominance? Over the past few years there has been a move towards forming communities of shared leadership where the community comes together in a spirit of dialogue to discern how they might decide to live together, outreach to the margins and challenge systemic injustices in government and church. Groups of young people are gathering to share their vision and dreams for a better world, to work towards being part of an Edmund Rice community through immersion experiences and to build strong networks with others of like mind and passion. Women are becoming part of community life and their presence is bringing new life to our mission and formation programs. Some communities are growing their own vegetables while others are supporting farmers' market as opposed to the transnational grocery chains. Places like Mulgoa, Mt Archer and Glenburn have tree planting programs to revitalise the fauna and flora of these properties. Communities are working with the CREAT team to explore new ways in which they can live the spirit of the Munnar Chapter (2008). We have much to celebrate about living the direction of the Munnar and Oceania Chapters.

Perhaps at the beginning of the year it is good to take time to look at our community and, together as a community, list how we are moving towards a 'partnership' way of living. When we decide what we can do then plan to ensure words become actions. How do we as a Province partner the most marginalized and ensure the diversity of nature is promoted? Are we living more consciously and sustainably as we realize our responsibilities to the next generation of young people? Our Province's foundational values of presence, compassion and liberation impel us to create a future in which all children can realize their potential for consciousness, empathy, caring and creativity – the capacities that make us followers of Jesus and Edmund.

Peter Harney

Request for Prayers

Deanne Davis, the wife of my nephew, Andrew Davis, has breast cancer and is undergoing treatment. Andrew and Deanne have a sixteenth month old boy and the cancer, apart from threatening Deanne's life is preventing her from having more children. I have given Deanne a first class relic of Blessed Edmund Rice together with the following prayer:

Oh, God, we thank you for the life of Blessed Edmund Rice. Moved by your Spirit, he opened his heart to Christ present in those oppressed by poverty and injustice by affording them the opportunity of Christian education and by engaging on their behalf in works of compassion.

Inspired by his faith and generosity may we follow his example in our lives.

Grant us the courage and compassion of Blessed Edmund Rice and through his intercession grant the petition we now make that Deanne Davis be cured of her cancer. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

I would appreciate it if the Brothers would join with us in praying for a cure of Deanne's cancer through the intercession of Edmund Rice.

Brian Davis

Welcome home Denis Sullivan, Paul Coster and Laurie Collins

On behalf of the Oceania Province I would like to thank Denis Sullivan and Paul Coster for generously volunteering to go to our Philippine Hilongos community from July 2009 to January 2010. Ill health had caused Peter Thrupp to return to Australia for medical treatment. The OLT decided to approach Denis and Paul to think about becoming part of the Hilongos community for 6 months. Within a few weeks they had completed their preparation program and headed to their new mission. Their presence was much appreciated by the local people, the school community, the parish and the resident brothers Frank Perkins and Carl Sherrin. Denis and Paul returned to Australia on January 12 and are reconnecting with their brothers, friends and family. They will be given personal support through this period of re-entry and will take time to debrief their experiences. We pray their experience living amidst the people of Hilongos will bring new life and energy to their life and mission.

In December we welcomed Laurie Collins after he spent 6 months in Kabankalan replacing Peter Hardiman who returned to Australia for medical treatment. Laurie is taking sabbatical time in the first half of 2010. We thank Laurie for his generosity and wish him every blessing in his renewal time.'

Peter Harney

Award for Service

Christian Brother Mick Bible has been presented with an award in recognition of his 55 years service to Catholic Education to a standing ovation during Mass in Rockhampton's St Joseph's Cathedral celebrated by Bishop Brian Heenan. Diocesan Director Leesa Jeffcoat extended her best wishes to each school community of the 29 primary schools and eight colleges across the diocese.

(Photo courtesy of The Catholic Leader)



Oceania Website

Oceania has a new website. It is at the same web address as the old one but I think you will find it very different.

The most significant and I believe the most important thing is that it is not just for you to find information but also for you to contribute information, articles, short news items, calendar dates and to engage in a whole range of participatory activities.

To start with "Have a look". See if there are things there which interest you. If not know that you can put them there yourself. If you are young or adventurous, a user of a community site (Face book etc) you may not need any specific instructions and can start participating immediately.

I will include some instructions in each of the next few Oceania Updates.

How to use the Oceania Website Part 1

The site is now the Oceania official site.

Current site: found at www.edmundrice.org (there the old site was.)

Old site: found at www.edmundrice.org.au for anyone wishes to look up old articles.

There are two sections to the site.

1. The core part which is the Home Page section identified by Large round buttons. This is used to store articles, news items or ministry profiles.
2. The Community section identified by "you're inside our community network hub." This is used for blogs, forums, event calendars, groups, personal face-book type page

You can sign up to add data to either or both sections by using right hand panel Picture Buttons on Home Page

"Network: Sign Up & Participate in Our Community":

Top button in the right hand panel to sign up to the Community section.

"Contribute Content"

Second button in the right hand panel to sign up to enable you to enter articles or ministry profiles.

Once signed up each time you enter the site you can "Sign In" using the Menu at the very top of the web page in either section.

To add an article while in the "Core Section" you use the menu item "Submit Content" on the thin, blue menu bar below the Search Button.

To add an item to the community section choose the menu item for the type of entry you require:

GROUPS BLOGS FORUM EVENTS

then select "+Add a _____" from right hand side of the screen just below the blue menu line.

After that you have a text editor to add, text, graphics etc.

I will take questions if you have any. In fact I have started a forum "[How to Use Edmund Rice Website.](#)" It is the place to ask questions about the use of the site and have them answered.

To find these instructions on the website with colour and graphics go to.

<http://www.edmundrice.org/er:How-to-Use-Edmund-Rice-Website>

Bob Chambers

Oceania Updates

Please send any information or news items for Oceania Updates to the

Province Publications Co-ordinator: Brother Nev Thornton,

Email: ntthornton@edmundrice.org

Work: (61 7) 3621 9675.

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