



The Edmund Rice Network "encompasses all those (groups and individuals) who identify with, share in, or are in intentional relationship with the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice."

- General Chapter, Munnar 2008

We are about what Edmund was about: his understanding of the mind and heart of Jesus. We centre on three strands of Edmund's story grounded in Jesus' life and ministry:

- SPIRITUAL SEARCH
- COMPASSIONATE ACTION
- AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

These three pillars are integral to any expression of the Edmund Rice movement and to a new emerging church.

A community, ministry, trust, school, or local group, is an authentic expression of the Edmund Rice charism when it commits to, and actively engages with, these three elements in the name of Edmund in the name of Jesus.



Edmund

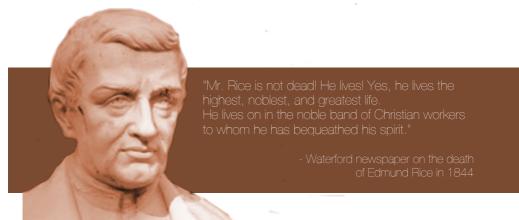


In his own life and context Edmund brought together these three facets of Jesus' mission, first as a layperson praying, reflecting, and acting with his friends in Waterford, and then, after 1802, as a vowed Brother in religious community.

As a layperson in Waterford, Edmund, with a group of friends immersed in the world of jobs and families, formed a little Gospel community active in the world. They shared prayer, the study of Scripture, and spiritual reading, and they combined this with active outreach, reaching out to the margins, to the destitute, orphans, prisoners, slaves, immigrants.

As a religious Brother, Edmund gave himself totally to selfless service, combining life in community with love direct toward others in action, a life-long apostolic ministry in education and in works of charity and justice.

Both as a layperson and as a Brother Edmund was moved by a heightened sense of the presence of Christ in the poorest and most vulnerable.



Spiritual Search

Like Edmund, we find Jesus:

- Praying and showing us how to pray: alone, in twos and threes, with the Twelve, sometimes 'sitting in a circle', sometimes withdrawing to a 'place apart'
- Searching, struggling, to understand the Father's will, and his own identity and mission
- Stretching his listeners' understanding of the divine power, filling them with astonishment and awe, and questing for a larger, more loving, more inclusive, idea of God
- Asking questions and being asked questions, refusing to be forced into answers, challenging pharisaic orthodoxies, using parable and paradox to challenge received views of God, neighbour, and the practice of faith - turning received thinking upside down, and provoking paradigm shifts in understanding



Of 132 conversations of Jesus recorded in the New Testament, six were in the temple, four were in the synagogue, and 122 were out in the mainstream of life.



 Journeying and conversing, engaging in continuous personal encounter and conversation, dialoguing with the disciples, and with people on the way, rich and poor, well and sick, young and old, insiders and outsiders, privileged and rejected

For our Edmund Rice Network this means:

- · Sharing prayer and new ways of praying
- · Engaging in the search for the larger God
- Embracing and responding to the new cosmology and its implications for our understanding of our faith
- Sharing our search with one another, with people of different faiths and with people of no faith
- Creating opportunities for face-to-face spiritual conversation in small groups
- · Respecting the dignity of each person, their story and journey
- Engaging in significant experiences that call us to transformation, for example: immersion, pilgrimage, and spiritual programmes



Compassionate Action



Like Edmund, we find Jesus in his:

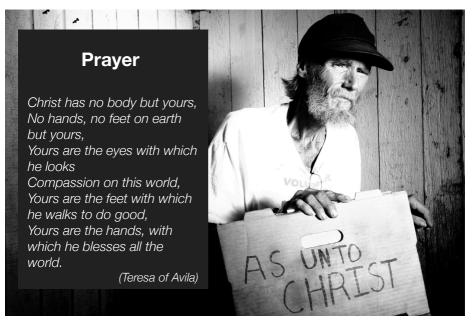
- Overcoming ego to live a life of outward-turned self-giving love, which is the life of God
- Abandoning the Temple and living out his mission on the road, in the street, in the community, deliberately locating himself 'outside the camp', on the margins, among the excluded and unloved
- Commitment to encounters where he is moved by compassion to heal, support, feed, forgive, restore, make whole, responding to suffering which is invisible and inconvenient to others.
- Making himself present especially to the most damaged and rejected
- Setting the test of our humanity: whatever we do, or fail to do, to and for a fellow human being with a call on our compassion, we do, or fail to do, to and for him

Dom Pedro Casaldaliga from Brazil said: "We must keep repeating it: without the poor there is no salvation, without the poor there is no Church, without the poor there is no gospel" (Philip Pinto cfc, Address in Maynooth on the 40th Anniversary of TROCAIRE)



For our Edmund Rice Network this means:

- Accepting the challenge to step outside our comfort zones in respectful service of our brothers and sisters, especially those made poor
- Being proactive, as individuals or as members of a group with an agreed ministry, in actions of outreach and justice
- A willingness to engage in the radical critique of contemporary social values, policies, and practices
- Making a personal commitment to be involved in, or support, a Network project at home or abroad
- Being advocates for those who have no voice, or whose voice is suppressed or ignored
- Within our immediate family, neighbourhood, employment, a readiness to take an extra step for others





Like Edmund, we find Jesus in:

- Creating community, a koinonia of fellowship, joint participation, and brotherly love, which reaches its fullness in the breaking and sharing of bread
- Sharing, celebrating, praying together, engaging in face-to-face spiritual conversation
- Subverting conventional concepts of community to welcome and include the marginalised and rejected
- Working with others to advance the kingdom of God, the reign of love and justice, on earth
- Asking and answering the question, 'What does it mean to be brother or sister?'
- Inspiring the apostles to live as gospel communities sharing fellowship, prayer, and eucharist while reaching out in action for those in need (Acts 2:42)

For our Edmund Rice Network this means:

- Growing forms of associational life, new ways of being church, 'little
 Gospel communities of the heart', as contexts for sharing spiritual
 conversation and personal truth, as opportunities for exploring beliefs,
 values and meanings, with reverence and loving attention for what is
 shared, without fear of judgement, ridicule or recrimination
- Journeying in the company of friends, firmly rooted in the human condition - , embracing our fragility, sharing our humanity and connectedness, and willing to be changed by what we discover together



- Exploring the new consciousness and living out our interconnection with one another, the earth, and all creation
- Inviting one another into new ways of being together, more radical lifestyles which are counter-cultural
- Challenging one another to grow and transform, offering opportunities to live in community on a short or long term basis
- Engaging with the international Edmund Rice community, being one with communities across the globe

Interconnectedness





Edmund's charism is a Holy Spirit-inspired example of how he tried to make Christ present in his social reality, and a pointer to how we might seek to do so in ours.

The charism is a lived expression of the love of Christ, a way of living 'the dangerous memory of Jesus.'

It invites every community, ministry, corporate entity, school, local group, and every individual committed to the charism of Blessed Edmund to commit to realising the three pillars of the spiritual search, compassionate action, and community in their communal and individual lives.

It means:

- making space for the spiritual search, 'going into the deep', questing for the deeper mystery of God
- · being attentive to the spiritually charged presence
- praying and reflecting
- · sharing faith and sharing doubt
- drawing insight and inspiration from the new cosmology and new ecology
- · building authentic community
- · conversing with the poor
- · committing to a spirituality of action and personal transformation that

Reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalised in loving care, advocacy and action for justice



takes us beyond the prism of selfishness

- · welcoming encounters which change us
- · risking other-directed relationships based on love
- reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalised in loving care, advocacy, and action for justice





Edmund Rice Spirituality calls us to Journey, gathers us in Community and commits us to Others

- Edmund Rice people of the future will seek to live consciously the openness and vulnerability of Christ and to be inspired to compassionate action through solidarity with the forgotten.
- We will recognise our interconnectedness as brothers and sisters, with the cosmos, with the earth and all creation, and with the whole human family.
- We will seek to live Gospel values of freedom, dignity, love, beauty, healing, growth, wholeness, and engage together in the spiritual search for oneness with the mystery we call God.

"It is not possible to share in the mission of Jesus, in the mission of the Gospel, without sharing in the desert experience, its poverty, its hunger."