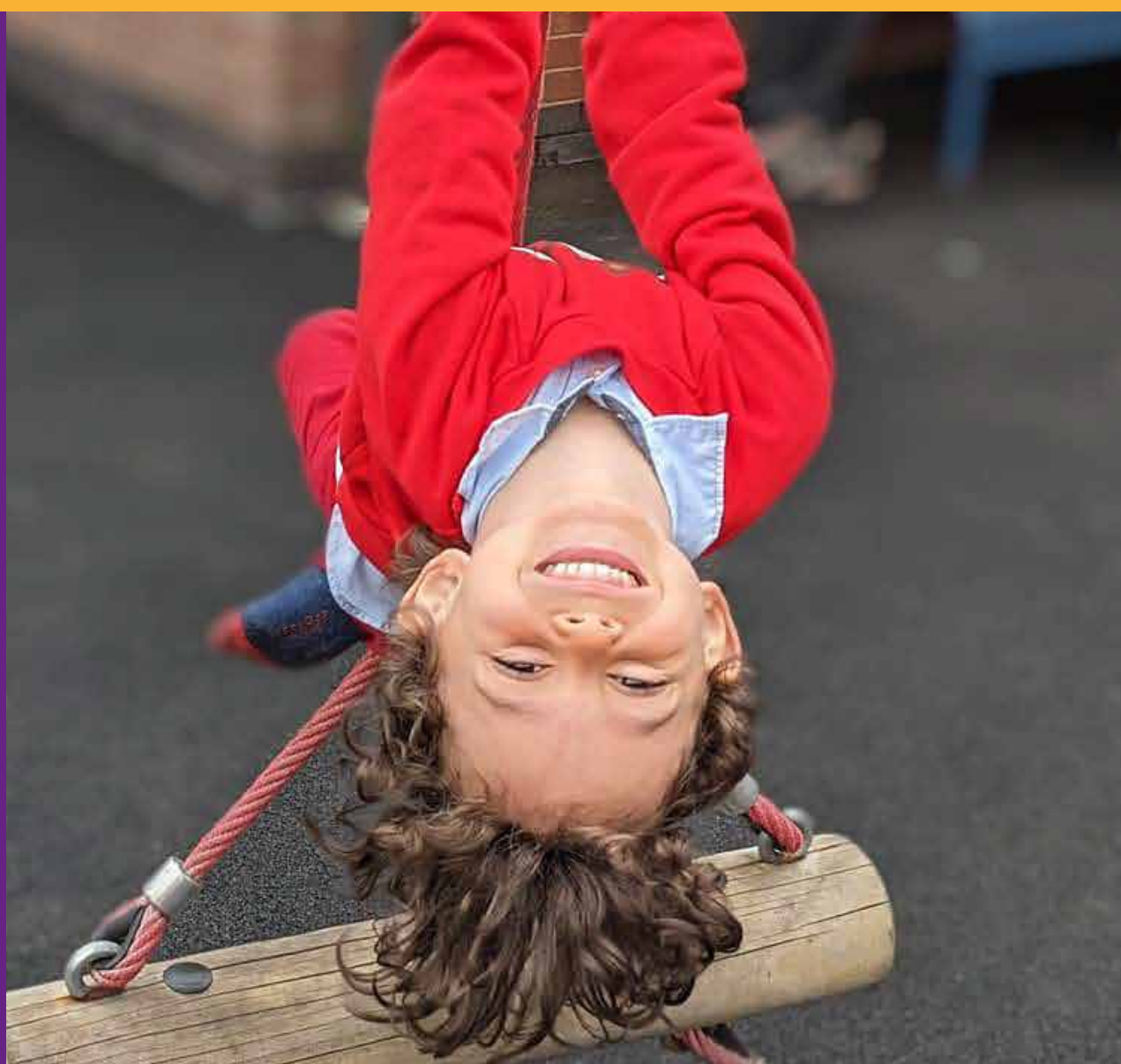




PRESENCE

The voice of Edmund's people in the English Network



We are all faced with a series of great opportunities
brilliantly disguised as impossible situations



Welcome to this Summer’s issue of ‘Presence’

I sincerely hope you find this edition an engaging and thought-provoking read, I certainly found it to be so whilst compiling it for you. Despite obvious difficulties, our pages are again filled with news and experiences from many contributors all across our Network, to all of whom I extend my grateful thanks.

The amazing resilience of our Edmund Rice family; schools, Brothers’ Communities and ministries is much in evidence throughout these pages. Great commendation must firstly go to the staff in our schools who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to deliver an excellent and transformational education under COVID restrictions. Students and staff have continued to ‘look outside their windows’ and to engage enthusiastically with the international Edmund Rice network. We, in the office team, have enjoyed supporting schools, both within and outside our network, with wellbeing programs, spirituality, advocacy work and leadership opportunities.

The world certainly seems to have become a smaller place during these extended months of lockdown, despite our physical isolation; great strides have been made in collective Edmund Rice projects such as ‘Connecting Classrooms’, the British

Council multi-school international environmental project, the establishment of ‘Global Classroom Partners’ – a scheme that enables Edmund Rice schools to set up simple class links around projects based on the UN’s sustainable development goals, ‘When Francis met Greta’ – a climate crisis and Laudato Si course for staff in schools across the globe, and the expansion of our Student Leadership Certificate into schools in Africa and South America, planning of the global advocacy campaign featuring the Women in Leadership across our Network, and workshops about COP26.

As I write, the sun is shining, schools are open and restrictions in the UK are due to be further relaxed. The optimism and joy we currently feel are tinged with anxiety though, being all too aware that this safety hangs upon a knife-edge, as COVID surges in many other areas of the globe and new variants, ever-more resistant and resilient take hold. Fratelli Tutti, dear brothers and sisters, if we are to become an equal ‘society of love that transcends geography and borders’ , much more effort is required in terms of aid for those most in need including most importantly, vaccine equity. Let us heed the World Health Organisation’s warning, “The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world’s poorest countries.”

‘Making the Poor a priority isn’t political, it’s the Gospel.’ 1, 2 Pope Francis

Ann Nichols, Network Facilitator

As we reflect on this past fifteen months or so, we can be certain that all our lives have changed, and that is dramatically true for those of our students who are leaving our schools this summer, whether in Year 11 or 13.

The pandemic is the most serious thing most of us have ever dealt with because it affects our health and way of life and there is so much that we can’t predict or be sure of. The uncertainty of everything has been and is hard to deal with. However, to quote A A Milne, from Winnie the Pooh, “You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.”

Whatever we do, we shouldn’t be discouraged; we need to be mindful of what is still within our power to do - and do it. Take time to reflect on who, or what, is most important to us. This is a good time to take good care of ourselves and to be kind to others. We can learn from those who lived before us and also struggled. In the words of St Padre Pio, “Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer.”

We need to find a blessing in everything. My mother always told me, and I truly believe, that we are not put into a situation that we cannot conquer. Seeing the light in the midst of darkness is a lesson we all should learn, not only during this difficult time, but all the time. ‘Do not be afraid.’

No one is ever really prepared for God’s greater plans, and it is so hard to comprehend as we look at the awful situation of so many of our sisters and brothers across the world, especially in India, but we have to figure it out, taking it one day at a time.

We have much to be grateful for; grateful for this extra time with family and friends, even though it may be through a virtual platform; grateful for our staff in schools who have continued to provide an education for our young people; and grateful to live in a country that is trying to keep us safe.

While there is a lot of uncertainty in the world right now, one thing is for sure; We will come out stronger on the other side, we will learn and grow from our mistakes and as author Vivian Greene said, “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass. It’s about learning to dance in the rain”.

Roisin Maguire,
Director of the English Schools Office



Br Garvey extends his thanks to all staff on our schools and to the Principals who are leading those schools.

Thank You to our Principals

It is an honour to express our ‘Thank You’ to the Principals of the Christian Brother Schools in England.

You have led the school communities through a challenging and difficult time that has had worldwide implications. There is so much for which to be thankful. In some ways it is easy to express gratitude and appreciation. Our words could hide so many of our thoughts and feelings. We do, however, acknowledge your leadership, service and generosity in times which brought you well beyond the obligations of duty. Your care for all in the school community is deeply appreciated. In time, we will all realise more and more the meaning and significance of living through the pandemic. For now, on behalf of the Trustees, we rejoice with thankfulness for your creative and devoted leadership. May God bless you and lead you in the pathways of new life.

Brother Edmund Garvey, Province Leader

Thank You to our Teachers

As Trustees, we acknowledge and salute all of the teachers in the Christian Brother Schools in England.

The last year has been one of great challenge for you all and words do not adequately capture the thanks and appreciation which we feel for the teachers in our schools. Your professional resources and creative skills have been tested. Your commitment to the students has required a level of heroism, as well as professionalism, which we are proud to acknowledge and to honour. We will live with heartfelt gratitude for you all, and your devotedness will be told in story when we reflectively look back on the significance of these past events. May you be blessed abundantly with hope in your own lives and work.

Brother Edmund Garvey, Province Leader

Wellbeing in Schools

The pandemic has highlighted a need to dedicate out time and efforts to the wellbeing of all our students and staff.

Having struggled with social isolation, a lack of opportunity to play team sports, and hours spent on screens, our wellness has suffered. The latest lockdown, being during the winter months, meant that people’s mental health deteriorated and opportunities to meet outside were very limited. Staff in schools were stretched even more than usual, having to juggle online lessons, their own families being at home, and unclear guidelines from government on assessment, examinations etc. Students too have been under great stress, parted from friends and teachers, and deprived of the usual routines that are so essential to our wellbeing.

The office team, motivated by the Capacitar (link) training course we are undertaking this year on wellbeing practices and trauma healing, wanted to offer as much support as we could to our staff and students.

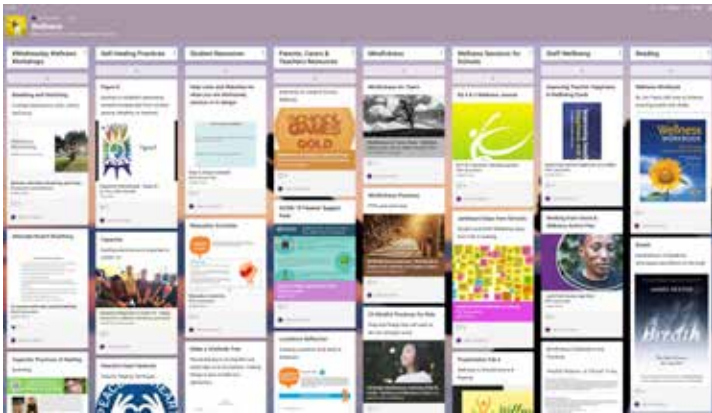
For students

We have put together wellbeing programmes that can be delivered by ourselves, or by staff, for students in primary, at Key Stage 3, 4 and 5.

We have worked with many schools, delivering practical sessions to examine ways we can all improve our wellbeing. Focussing on positive affirmations and wellness promises, our wellness programme explores what wellness is, how it can be impacted negatively, but most importantly on how we can improve on areas of wellness, such as our physical health, our mental health and our social or spiritual wellness.

We taught short, simple calming techniques such as colour breathing, EFT (tapping) and switching, and helped students to write wellness plans, and learn practises that they could use daily to improve wellbeing. Later, we revisited the groups to find out how they had got on and were so pleased by the results, by their dedication to the plans, and how taking positive measures every day can improve overall wellbeing for us all.

Many resources for schools; staff, students, and parents as well as general wellbeing resources can be found on our Padlet page.



For Staff

Supporting staff wellbeing has been another priority over the last few months.

We ran a workshop on wellbeing in schools, joined by over 60 Senior Leaders and Wellbeing Coordinators in schools within and outside of our network. We looked at how staff and students can be supported and how wellness can be brought to the forefront of what goes on in schools. We were privileged to have Anne-Marie Ritchie, Wellbeing Lead at Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, N.I. present for us on the fantastic work that she and her team do at their school to promote the wellness of their whole community. Great sharing of ideas took place on wellness practices in schools, (these can all be viewed on the Padlet) and a wellbeing group email was set up so that opportunities and suggestions can continue to be shared across many schools.



Wellbeing Wednesday Workshops

Throughout the pandemic, a social media hashtag #Wellbeing Wednesday really exploded.

It is used by wellbeing practitioners everywhere to promote and share wellness practices and opportunities online. It was to harness the positivity of this campaign that we chose to run our online zoom Wellness Workshop Programme each Wednesday over 14 weeks.

Each workshop offered the chance to engage in a wellness practice and an accompanying resource so that the activity can be practised and shared. Our programme was delivered by the office team and by Yoga and Wellbeing Practitioner, Gabriella Buxton, of Love and Light Shala and by Life Coach, Katie Poole, of Katie Poole Coaching. Our workshops covered meditation, coaching techniques, food for health, spiritual conversation, breathing techniques, and Pilates.

They were such amazing, relaxing, and special workshops, much appreciated by many network friends that we intend to run some more sessions next academic year.



Connecting Classrooms Live Launch

On 26th February the Edmund Rice Schools and British Council Connecting Classrooms Global Learning project known as #ERSCchoolsAgainstWaste enjoyed its official ‘Live Launch.’

We were kindly joined by Br Kevin Cawley and Br Brian Bond of Edmund Rice International who both presented to our schools on the importance of caring for our common home and gave the facts and figures, supported by the UN, on the need to change behaviour now to arrest the climate crisis. We appreciate the on-going support of ERI in our projects with schools. The launch event was featured in UK local press.

Despite the obvious restrictions and hindrances thrown up by the pandemic – schools being closed, classes being delivered virtually, social distancing etc. we managed to keep working together on our collaborative pupil projects that highlight the plight of our planet, campaign to reduce waste, and learn about the environmental problems faced by and actions being taken in our fellow Edmund Rice schools across the globe. Enormous thanks go out to all the teachers that are leading the project in each school for their drive and commitment.

Below we hear from students at three of the participating schools about preparing for and presenting at the event, as well as their hopes for the project and our planet.

On Friday 26th February, CBC St John’s took part in the launch of the global Connecting Classrooms scheme, set up by the British Council. This was a very exciting experience and an amazing opportunity. For this we have teamed up with St Anselm’s College in the United Kingdom.

Other schools from the UK as well as India are also part of this project. The aim of the project is tackling waste, we will be focusing on zero food waste. At the event, we presented the aim, via Zoom, to members from the Edmund Rice Group, the British Council, the various participating schools, Brothers from around the world, and many more. The build-up to the meeting was quite daunting and nerve-racking, but once we were there and online, our nerves disappeared. Listening to Br Kevin Cawley CFC, Br Brian Bond CFC, and the other schools was very interesting. Learning about the havoc that is destroying the environment and the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals that are in place to combat this was an eye-opening experience. Listening to all the acts of service that the other schools have done was really inspiring. It was also really amazing to see the younger students so invested in saving the planet. When it came to our turn to present, the sense of pride we felt with our school was indescribable. Overall, it was an eye-opening experience that we are so grateful to be a part of. We are so grateful to be a part of this project and we are excited to see where this takes us in the future.

Zou Diminas and Thomas Muir, CBC St John's Cape Town



On Friday, 26th February Students, Staff, Christian brothers, and Edmund Rice leaders gathered from around the world to discuss the ever-growing important topic of climate change. The focus of the conference was 'Waste,' Not only the distribution of waste but the recycling of unwanted empty products. We heard from schools all over the world from England to South Africa through to India. Some fantastic ideas were displayed including turning broken glasses into flowerpots and an unwanted newspaper into a vase. These are just a few of the ideas that were discussed. We also talked about teaching young children and teenagers about Climate Change and how young people can change the dreadful course we, as a global community are headed for. If we do not change our ways now then the worst impacts of climate change could be irreversible by 2030, so we need to act now. That is why this project was launched. Called Connecting Classrooms, it is a scheme based on getting students from different schools around the world to come together and share their ideas on how we can work together as a global community to reduce our impact on the Earth, live more fairly and sustainably. Six schools took part, and each was paired with another school from a different country. Every school had to produce a 5-10 minute discussion to demonstrate what their school has done so far and what they

are looking forward to achieving in the future - this is just the beginning of an amazing project, one that could change the world for the BETTER!

Tom Jones & Harvey McGrath, St Anselm's College

In their endeavour to create a better world, the Edmund Rice Schools came together to promote "Zero Waste". The schools participating in this British Council's Connecting Classroom Schemes were: St Joseph's Preparatory School in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, St Aidan's Catholic Academy in Sunderland Tyne and Wear, St Anselm's College in Birkenhead, Merseyside, joining with the CBC St John's Cape Town and St Vincent's High and Technical School Asansol, India. The scheme focuses on pupil projects that are based around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A virtual live launch event to promote the same took place on February 26th where all the schools collaboratively presented the different projects they have undertaken under the Environment and Social Justice Framework in order to preserve, nurture and create a better and more liveable world for the future generations. This global outlook will definitely help to convert the vision of a sustainable future into a vivid reality.

The launch took a kick start under the organized coordination of Mrs Ann Nichols and the keynote address was given by Br Kevin Cawley from New York. Presentations from different schools were shown to create awareness about waste management and the urgent need to recover and rejuvenate this sick dying Earth. We the students of St Vincent's High and Technical School too did our bit towards this cause.

It was really great to meet the students from different schools and to learn their perspective for a global change. It was a fun and effective session, which taught us that together we can bring a change and save our environment which is being ruthlessly exploited. Impossible isn't something that can't be done. So just think before you bin it, there could be some use in it. Recycle today for a better tomorrow.

**Preeti Chatterjee, XII-B
St. Vincent's High and Technical School, Asansol, India**

If you would like to find out more about the project you can watch a video of the live launch here: www.vimeo.com/517356352/e43a89dde8 or look at our Padlet page about Connecting Classrooms: www.padlet.com/annnicholsero/18q4w5rhffhi4pxf
A useful page of resources on Care for the Earth and Climate Change: www.padlet.com/annnicholsero/t5shhkccimo5lxxg

Connecting Classrooms

#ERSchoolsAgainstWaste

Connecting Classrooms

Inspired by this project, EREBB has focussed on classroom connection projects going forward.

Ann Nichols of Edmund Rice England and Brian Garrone of EREA have developed our Global Classroom Partners project, launched on 10th June.

CONNECTING CLASSROOMS LIVE LAUNCH EVENT

#ERSchoolsAgainstWaste
Feb 26 2.00 pm GMT
Presentations from all participating schools:

St Anselm's College, Birkenhead, UK
St Aidan's Catholic Academy, Sunderland, UK
St Joseph's Prep School, Stoke-on-Trent, UK
CBC St John's, Cape Town, South Africa
St Vincent's High & Technical School, Asansol, India

Keynote speakers:
Br Kevin Cawley
CFC & Br Brian Bond
CFC
of Edmund Rice International
Interested in the project & climate change?
Join us by Zoom - contact Ann Nichols or the partner schools for the link

Creating a Better World Together through Student Leadership



The Justice Desk
A Human Rights NPO



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
Beyond Borders

THE VIRUS DOESN'T **DISCRIMINATE.**

The vaccine shouldn't
either.

#VACCINESFORALL

Join The Justice Desk and
Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders as we
campaign for fair COVID19 vaccine distribution.

For more information visit:
www.justicedesk.org
www.erebb.org

THE VIRUS DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE

The vaccine shouldn't
either.

#VACCINESFORALL

The Justice Desk
A Human Rights NPO



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
Beyond Borders



The Global Classroom Partners Program is an initiative of Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders and coordinated through Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and Edmund Rice England

This program offers a learning space for young people from around the world, where they will critically explore some of the world’s most important issues and come up with a specific project to be applied in their community.

Schools can sign up to be part of the program that facilitates collaborative learning between two Edmund Rice schools from different parts of the globe. Global Classroom Partner classes are linked via video conference and undertake a shared lesson theme, going on the carry out a joint project over the academic year.

The lesson topics that partners can choose to look at are:

- View from my Window:
- Faith as a Force for Good
- Generation UN - SDG
- Black Lives Matter Globally
- Sport Moves the World

With a launch on June 10th of our initial 40 schools taking part in the pilot scheme we hope that our Global Classroom Partners grows from strength to strength!

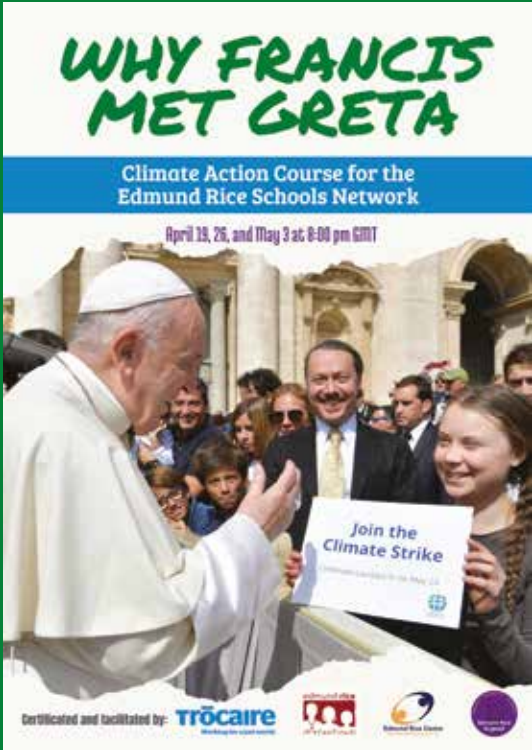
Why Francis Met Greta

Why did Pope Francis meet with young climate activist Greta Thunberg?

In response, we look to Francis’s words in his 2015 encyclical Laudato Si: In Care of our Common Home **“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?”**

The warnings that Francis sent out to the world back in 2015, not just to our Catholic community, but to everyone in world; people of all faiths and none and which are being echoed by Greta and other climate activists are still now not being responded to neither quickly nor rigorously enough. Are we truly hearing ‘the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor’?

Following some months of work with the schools in the English network on the sustainable development goals and the climate crisis, it became apparent that senior students and teachers wanted to deepen their knowledge around our environmental emergency in order to inform their own actions and those of the communities they belong to.



As a keen environmentalist myself, I was keen to harness the great work being done by many areas of the Edmund Rice global community and in the Global Catholic Climate Movement to provide some informative sessions for staff in schools across the network. I had worked with Br Kevin Cawley and Br Brian Bond on previous occasions, engaging them in projects such as Connecting Classrooms and Youth Ambassador formation sessions. Following some planning, ERI, Trocaire and Edmund Rice England facilitated a climate action course on three consecutive Mondays, ending on 3rd May 2021.

The first, delivered by Br Kevin and Br Brian, focussed on the current distress the Earth is experiencing. The causes and some consequences of the climate emergency were presented, as well as the measures being taken to try to manage the rise in Earth temperatures, work of activists and the global response via climate summits - starting in Paris and which will be followed up this November at COP26. With over 30 participants from the UK, US, Africa, and Ireland. Great discussion was had about the enormity of the situation, how best to engage in climate action, and how to turn climate anxiety into hopeful action.

The next session, delivered by Jane Mellet, Laudato Si officer from Trocaire in Ireland, explored in detail Laudato Si, the key messages being put forward by the Church in terms of our role as loving neighbours to those suffering this crisis, integral ecology, lines of approach and action and ecological education as part of our spirituality. We witnessed the human cost of this crisis through the story of Joanna Sustento, from the Philippines, who lost her family in typhoon Tyan and has gone on to fight for the basic human right of a safe, stable climate for the whole planet, especially for those most vulnerable communities. She concluded with Pope Francis’s words **‘Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope’**. Laudato Si, 244,180.

The final session in the series built on this picture, again exploring the impact that the climate crisis is already having on another vulnerable community; those peoples who call the beautiful Pacific Islands their home. With us as facilitator, we welcomed Corinne Fagueret from the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education, who coordinates the ‘Pacific Calling Partnership’ advocating for and with the peoples of the Pacific Islands of Kiribati and Tuvalu in terms of the negative impact climate change is having on them. Corinne told us about the impact of rising sea levels as well as increased intensity and frequency of storm surges, all of which are having devastating effects on these island communities.

Under serious threat of annihilation due to other countries’ selfish consumption of fossil fuels, the plight of these nations needs to be heeded and seen as a warning of what more is to come. Corinne and the Justice Centre are going to continue working with the UK schools on the run up to COP26 where we hope to have a stand to advocate on the plight of the Pacific Islands nations.

This last session was concluded with a summary of key information and some calls to personal and community action. ‘There are no passengers on this journey to a sustainable future, we are all crew’. Participants on the course declared the series to have been ‘extremely useful in their role as educators’ that they had gained ‘accurate scientific information and genuine guidance on activism’, they also said it ‘reinforced their will power to make simple changes, to have faith for the future’ and that they ‘will be urging school leaders to take action and require climate conversations in our schools’.

You can find links to the recordings of each session, plus many resources on climate change, climate action and care for the earth on a Padlet resources page: www.padlet.com/annnicholsero/t5shhklccimo5lxcg

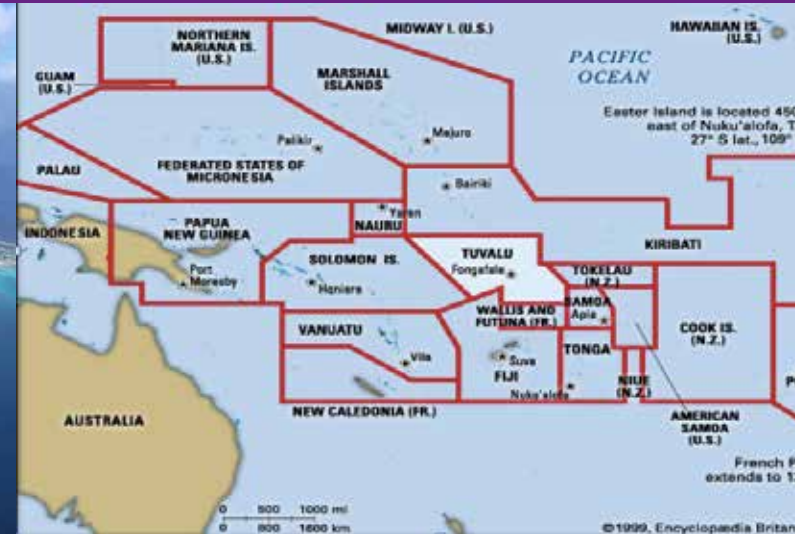
In terms of follow up, the English Edmund Rice office has applied for a stand at COP26 where we hope to take a group of students that will represent advocacy projects from across our Network, focussing in particular on the Pacific Calling Partnership. Just prior to COP26, in Glasgow this November will be COY16 – the UN Climate Conference of Youth. This event gathers 1000s of young change-makers from many countries to directly forward the official youth position on climate to those at COP26.

The Network is planning to work with its young people to create our own Edmund Rice Network youth statement that can be put forward as part of the COY policy document that will be forwarded to the UN Climate Negotiations. We envisage this will happen through our Justice Desks and ERI Youth Ambassadors.

If a school in the Network would like their students to be further informed about COP26 and how they can engage with the Climate Negotiations, Ann Nichols (annnichols,ero@gmail.com) from Edmund Rice England can run a workshop for you, just drop her an email.

Feedback from some of our participants:

- I found the course extremely useful, it made me feel more connected to the Edmund Rice Network in terms of the environment and reinforced my willpower to make simple changes and to have faith.
- The course gave me correct scientific information and important guidance on activism.
- This course gave me so many terrific ideas on how to engage and to nudge the students and adults in my community.
- In July I begin a challenge to end my use of single-use plastics and I have changed to become vegetarian on weekdays. Our school leaders need to take an 'action attitude' and we require climate conversations.
- It has made me rethink how to get involved in, and care for, our common home and I feel moved to engage my school community in this project.
- Very useful in terms of learning about ways in which I can promote this issue in my school. On a personal level it has made me really think about my living habits and my diet and in particular, water use.



Empowering Pacific Voices on Climate Change

The Pacific Calling Partnership (PCP) is an initiative of the Sydney-based Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education (ERC).

PCP began in 2006 in recognition of the negative impact climate change was having on small Pacific islands, such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, and in response to calls for solidarity from Kiribati church and community leaders.

PCP seeks out and provides opportunities for Pacific Islanders to tell their stories and promote understanding of the impacts of climate change on their homelands.

Our values are underpinned by the Earth Charter, the UN Human Rights Charter, Catholic social teaching, and the Edmund Rice ethos.

Climate Change and the Pacific

The Pacific region lies to Australia's north and east and is at the forefront of human-induced climate change. Small, low lying island nations, such as Kiribati, Tuvalu and others, are particularly vulnerable and are seeing the quality of their lives rapidly deteriorate due to the impacts of human-induced climate change. They are experiencing rising sea-levels, destructive king tides, stronger cyclones, increasing land and water temperatures, increasing acidity of oceans, destruction of coral reefs, and loss of freshwater, arable land, and fish stocks

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) acknowledges that the very existence of low-lying atoll nations, such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, is threatened by climate change. Several other scientific reports also point towards the very real possibility that climate change impacts might leave these islands uninhabitable by mid-century (see for example www.advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/4/eaap9741).

Tragically, projections of climate displacement are not limited to the Pacific islands and science predicts that hundreds of millions of people across the globe could be displaced by mid-century due to the impacts of climate change. When they can no longer live on their homelands, where will these people go?

PCP is committed to collaborating with our island neighbours to communicate and amplify their stories and voices on the need for urgent climate action, both within Australia and internationally.

What we do

Every year PCP conducts climate leadership training in Tuvalu and Kiribati. This is usually followed by a visit to Australia by some of our training participants, where they meet with community groups, church groups, politicians and media, telling their stories and changing hearts and minds (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eBk3qU2Z_E). For example, in 2016, participants travelled 3 hours north of Sydney to meet with coal mining workers and mine management. It was a powerful experience for everyone involved and one that we know will not be forgotten.

Understandably, this aspect of our work has been significantly affected by international COVID-19 travel restrictions, however, we are hopeful of being able to resume travel within the next 12 months and have also started to work more closely with the Pacific Islander diaspora within Australia.



Over the years, key examples of our work around Pacific climate advocacy have also included:

Organising an Australian tour by His Excellency Anote Tong, former President of Kiribati (2018)



Facilitating an Open Letter to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, urging him to adopt more urgent and stronger climate action (December 2020). This letter was signed by 15 high profile Pacific leaders, including former nation heads, and was widely publicised in the Australian and international media.

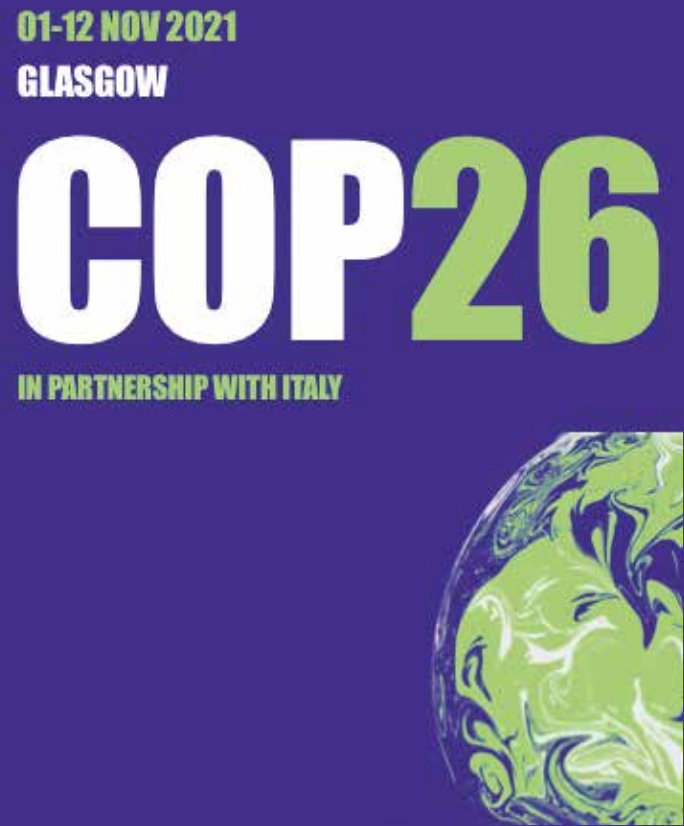


Co-founding and supporting a group known as the Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change, comprising more than 20 congregations in Australia with links in the Pacific. The aim of this group is to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on the Pacific within the Church and the broader community

More information
If you would like more information on our work, please visit our website at www.erc.org.au/pcp.

We also have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/PacificCallingPartnership, Twitter account www.twitter.com/Pacificcalling and Instagram account www.instagram.com/pacificcallingpartnership/

You are also very welcome to contact our Coordinator directly, Corinne Fagueret, at cfagueret@edmundrice.org



In order to further our advocacy campaign highlighting the climate crisis and to support the work being done by the Pacific Calling Project, Edmund Rice England has applied to occupy a stall in the ‘Green Zone’, an exhibition space at COP26 that aims to facilitate discussion and engagement – a focal point where attendees can convene and have conversations.

This outlines our application:

Edmund Rice Schools and Global Network commitment to combatting Climate Change and ensuring a Sustainable, Compelling future for All

At COP26 the Edmund Rice Schools Network would like to occupy a stand in the Green Zone in order to convene a global discussion on Climate Change impacts, particularly focusing on the Pacific Island communities being dramatically impacted by the effects of the climate crisis.

Young people from our 11 UK schools are working together on educational campaigns that highlight the principal facts of Climate Change and the degradation of the Earth. They link in with other schools, human rights NGO, and social justice groups from across the global Edmund Rice network (covering the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania) to engage discussion about and advocate on the urgency of the situation we all face.

Once such campaign is a cross-continent advocacy project to campaign for the rights of those communities in the Pacific Islands being devastated by Climate Change. The Edmund Rice Centre www.erc.org.au in Homebush, near Sydney has been working to highlight, since 2006, the negative impacts of climate change on the people of Kirabati, Tivalu and the islands of the Torres Strait – it facilitates links between the peoples of the islands and Australians. The centre has many educational resources and expertise as well as indigenous employees to work with schools locally and globally to educate young people about this situation.
www.erc.org.au/resources_for_schools Our schools in England will be having Zoom lessons by the staff from the ERC and using their resources to become better informed about areas of the world where the devastating effects of rising temperatures are already being felt.

At COP26, a delegation from the ERC in Australia intends to attend depending on travel restrictions. The Edmund Rice England school group will run an interactive educational stand, focussing on the Pacific islands as an example of a community where adaptation and resilience to climate change is already having to be put into place. It will highlight work of the ERC and other campaigns that are helping the peoples of the Pacific islands and examine the ecosystems there and how they too are impacted and can be restored. We will have live links to schools in our network and many others showing the campaign, we can reach over 200,000 young people in our network schools alone. We will be assisted by our network’s NGO – Edmund Rice International, an NGO that works at the international level to promote and protect the rights of children and young people particularly in regard to education. Care for the environment is a value that is embedded in all that they do. ERI is run by the Christian Brothers, our founding religious order, and based in Geneva and New York.

Our stand will be run by and for young people, it will engage many schools, faith groups, NGOs, justice desks and individuals across four continents. This is an opportunity for young people from schools in the UK show leadership in the campaign for creating a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable planet for all of us to occupy.



COP26 and the wider Edmund Rice Network The Edmund Rice Journey to COP26

As a focus for the entire Edmund Rice global community on the urgency required in terms of acting to save our beautiful planet, Edmund Rice England, ERI and the European Province Spirituality Group are collaborating on a simple campaign.

Each month from June to October, the Edmund Rice community will be offered an opportunity to engage with one common campaign action, one lifestyle change and a reflection to lead us all, in care of our common home, towards the United Nations Climate Conference. The campaign will be shared in the ERI newsletter and widely by email and social media. We are currently inviting the global community to give their suggestions for the campaign action and lifestyle change. One voice for justice, together we are stronger!

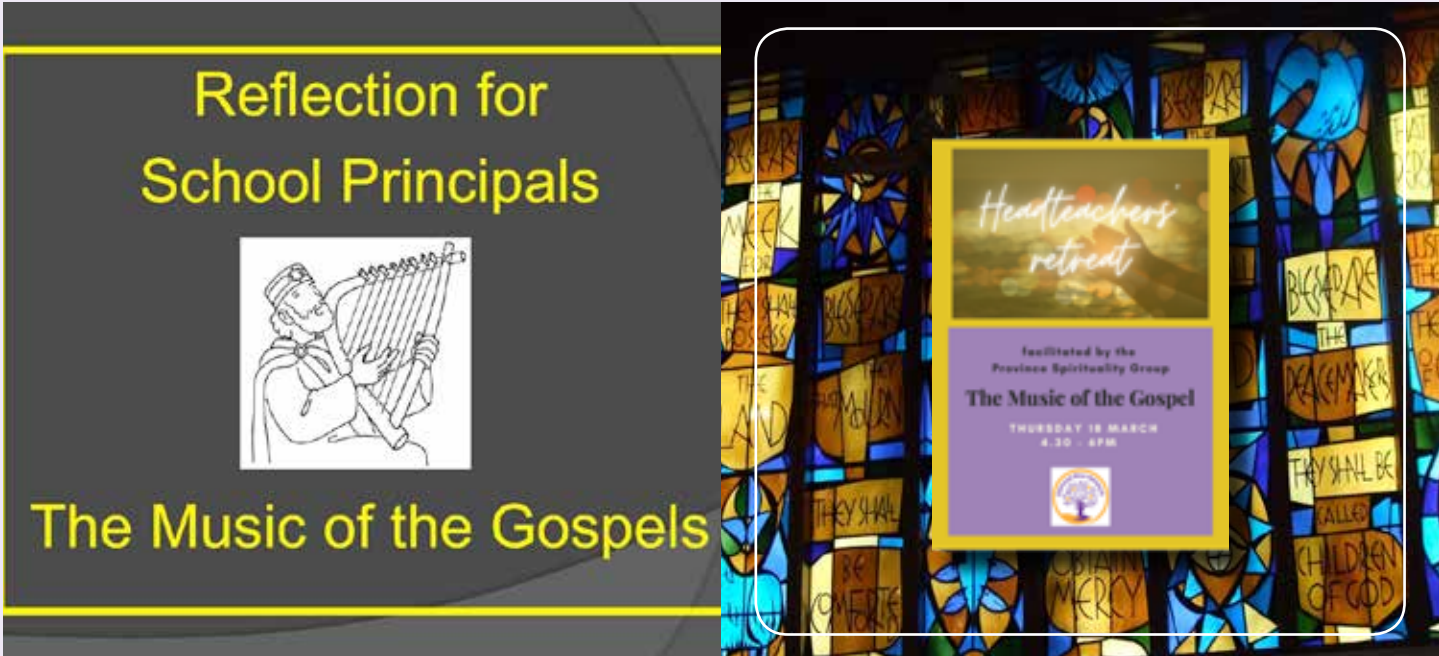


Headteachers’ Retreats

In place of our annual face-to-face retreat, usually held in June each year, we have put on a series of reflections throughout the year to give our Principals spiritual nourishment and a chance to share some time with one another.

Supported by materials delivered prior to each session, which have been gratefully received, each session has been sensitively prepared and shaped to suit to difficult climate our Headteachers have had to work in this year.

In March, the Province Spirituality Group kindly led the retreat. Entitled ‘Music of the Gospels’, participants enjoyed meditation, input, reflection and conversation exploring the theme of the session.



Our June retreat focused on ‘Gratitude’. Joined by Brother Edmund Garvey of the PLT we heard also from staff and pupils about their thankfulness for such calm, compassionate leadership shown by our Principals throughout this chaotic year of the pandemic.

We look forward, with thanks, to a bright future for all in our schools and we give thanks to all the Headteachers in our own schools and in all the Edmund Rice schools for providing the spiritual guidance and gentle leadership they give to their staff, students, and families each day.

A Rowan tree, traditionally the tree of life and protection, has been gifted to each school - we invite all our schools to plant the tree and share the blessing sent out with it as a remembrance of this difficult time and as a symbol of life and growth for our future.



Province Spirituality Group

Here the members of the European Province Spirituality Group share with us their thoughts on what being part of this team means to them



I really enjoy being a member of the Province Spirituality Group. There are only a few of us but we work closely together. Everyone’s viewpoint is respected and after the meetings I always have a sense that I have been able to make a contribution on whatever issue we were dealing with. I look forward to our meetings, to the warmth of the group, and to the projects that we undertake.

In broad terms, our task is to help the Brothers, and the much wider Edmund Rice network, reflect and pray and respond, with joy, generosity, and compassion, to the challenges that life brings to us. To do this we have to be really creative: we have to be aware of the issues of the day and be in tune with the rhythm of the seasons and of the liturgical calendar. We also have to be skilled in working with the technology that is at our disposal so that we can put across our message – which is the message of the Gospel - in an attractive contemporary fashion. So, each one of us has to be prepared to use the gifts that we have, and be ready to discover new gifts within ourselves.

The great thing is that in working with the Province Spirituality Group, I find that I am always growing myself, and deepening my own spiritual life. When we prepare something for Advent, for example, I find my own understanding of Advent is enhanced. When we prepare something for Good Friday, I find my understanding of what the death of Jesus on the cross is about expands. When we look today at the crises and troubles around us, I find I am exploring the meaning of Jesus’ message of love, peace, justice, and compassion. Being part of the Spirituality Group ultimately, is a classic example of setting out to be of service and finding I benefit more by what I receive than others do by what I give.

Br Denis Gleeson

The PSG is an expression of the richness of the Edmund Rice Network. It is an experience of people deeply moved by the charism of Edmund and the person of Jesus in community, deep reflection, prayer, and mission. It is a community that has grown on the basic principles of deep listening to the spirit that moves in and through us, of mutual respect for the experience and wisdom of each other, of recognising the giftedness of each person, of allowing for the expression of creativity among us, and of constantly recognising that we have a gift to share with the wider world – a treasure we hold in earthen vessels. Over the years we have been able to invite people into spaces of contemplation to reflect on the events and experiences of the world in the context of the Jesus story. We have in walking the Emmaus road together sharing our hopes and joys, our disappointments, and our pain, marveled at those many moments when we experienced of the “stranger in our midst” opening the scriptures to us and inviting us to new perspectives. Being a part of the PSG has been a faith journey for me. It has allowed me to reflect deeply, to share intimately, to question without fear of judgement and to learn from the reflected wisdom of the others in the PSG community. Someone once said that imagination and creativity is evidence of the Divine. I know that to be true because I have encountered the Divine in my experience of being on the Province Spirituality Group.

Vivek da Silva

Province Spirituality Group

I joined the PSG earlier this year. I saw it as a privilege to join this creative and prayerful group of Edmund Rice people. Although the group had been together for a number of years, I felt welcomed and free to make my contribution from the start. I soon found that the mix of Edmund Rice people, lay and Brothers, provided a creative energy often not present in Brother-only groups. I liked the way that our focus was not only on how to inspire others to deepen their faith but to deepen our own. At times we had some tricky moments trying to work out the approach which would suit the participants best, but we would always take our time to consider a variety of options until we got the best one. A pervading trust in the Spirit has grown so we can easily challenge, as well as affirm, each other's views. It is indeed a blessing to be part of this group.

Br Francis Hall

The group/team for me is a source of inspiration, hope, and joy. The joy comes from our shared journey as we explore together ways of expressing and ritualising a contemporary understanding of our Christian faith. The Congregation Chapter of the Christian Brothers held in Munnar, India in 2008 called us ‘To reflect on the Jesus story in the light of our evolving understandings of the Cosmos.’ [The Spirit Moving in Our Midst: Be My Disciple]. This reflection on the Jesus story in the light of the New Story of the Universe is at the heart of what we are about as a group.

One of our first ventures was the production of a prayer book, Praying in a New Time in 2015 [available in digital form]. It attempted to situate the traditional way of praying the Scriptures in the light of the insights emerging at that time in the Congregation. The Good Friday ritual celebrated in the Emmaus Retreat Centre [now closed] over a number of years has taken place on Zoom over the past two years. In fact, Zoom has opened up for us a whole new way of providing opportunities for people to experience a new approach to celebrating our Christian faith.

Br Jim Donovan

Being a member of the PSG has been a very inspiring experience for me which took on a whole new life as Covid 19 and lockdown happened.

After Easter I changed the homepage to Covid-19 a “Kairos” moment? using a quotation from Tina Beattie with the hope that the resources on it would give joy, solace, and inspiration. Working as a team we have developed into a wonderful faith-community, listening deeply to each other, discerning what the spirit is saying and calling us to share in our presentations. It is an absolute blessing to be involved in this ministry. On PSG Library you will see links our presentations. The search bar on the bottom of every page is very useful in getting what you are looking for.

Fergus Reilly www.psgedmundrice.com

I am a wife, mother and grandmother who has had a privileged association with the Christian Brothers and wider Edmund Rice Network for 25 years.

An engagement with major religions in Kolkata prior to the Munnar Chapter in 2008 and exposure to different world religions at a conference ‘Mitakuye Oyasin’ – Connecting Spiritually’ in Vancouver 2007, had a profound personal effect on me. The small container of faith which for all my life had been unchanged was unceremoniously blown open. Previous understandings of faith and Church were rattled.

It was never an option for me to struggle with the lived consequences of this new awareness alone. I needed a community of like-minded people. Returning home from Vancouver some of us met to share our experiences and support one another on our ongoing journey of discovery. Our meetings involved a process of praying, reading, researching, and sharing our discoveries. Along the way trust in one another evolved and our friendships deepened. As a result, my spirituality evolved and is now a more vibrant and open expression of the ‘faith of my fathers’.

A desire to include others in the search was formalised in the creation of the Province Spirituality Group. As PSG we look for new ways of praying and new ways of engaging with others in the search for a larger God, in the context of the New Story of the Universe in a time of evolving consciousness. I find that nothing of the old is lost as the PSG group moves together and finds new meaning in the light of the Gospels and a deeply discerning engagement with one another. We are acutely aware of the implications for us all of the destruction of our planet and the loss of biodiversity and we are consequently challenged to make a difference.

I just love being part of PSG and I am extremely grateful and honoured to offer my contribution.

Monica O'Reilly

Edmund Rice
Office Spirituality Work



‘Presence’ Facebook Page & Reflections

Amongst all the challenges posed by the pandemic, one of the things I have drawn energy and enjoyment from has been leading weekly Network Reflections on Zoom every Friday morning. I am grateful for the faithful group of regular attendees, and to those who join when their busy schedules allow.

The process of putting together the Reflections is one I value each week and the 30-minute sessions have been a source of great spiritual nourishment to me. We understand that many people who would like to attend are unable to do so for various reasons, so the PowerPoints (including instructions for how to guide yourself through the Reflection) are available on our dedicated Padlet page for you to access at any time.

We also thought it important to create a space dedicated to the spirituality, faith, and reflection of our Network members and, indeed, anyone else looking for materials or inspiration. As a result, our Edmund Rice England Facebook page now includes an Edmund Rice ‘Presence’ section, in which you will find daily prayers, extracts from the weekly Reflections, news and events, and seasonal prayer cycles. This page also includes a Thought for the Day provided by Sue Hutchinson, retired Headteacher of St Joseph’s Prep, and a great and valued friend of the Network.

We encourage you to have a closer look at both these resources. All are welcome to join the weekly Reflections any time; just email me to be added to the mailing list for the link. Edmund Rice Presence is YOUR space, so please send any prayerful, or reflective, pieces you think would be valuable to the wider Network and we will promote them on this platform.

Spirituality Groups

During the pandemic, we have been mindful of the need to meet the spiritual needs of different parts of our Network as they all face their own unique challenges. As an Edmund Rice Office, we strive to keep faith and spirituality central to all that we do.

In many ways, the pandemic has allowed us more opportunities to engage with people and to offer them dedicated space for prayer and reflection. It has been a privilege to share some of this time and space with groups of teaching staff, chaplains, and students across many different contexts: for example, we marked the Feast of Blessed Edmund on 5th May by holding a Spiritual Conversation for staff from any school connected to the Edmund Rice Network. It was wonderful to be joined by a group of twelve staff from both primary and secondary schools. The Spiritual Conversation was held on Zoom and followed the ‘Breathing Spaces’ model of facilitated conversation, involving opening prayer, shared silence, presentation of stimulus materials around the theme of ‘Connection’, individual reflection time and, finally, the opportunity to share with the other group members. We look forward to the next conversation on Wednesday 7th July, to which all are invited! Contact me to receive a Zoom invitation.



Spiritual Conversation is not limited to staff, though. We recognise that many students in our schools need the opportunity to share their spiritual search and that, often, they are more comfortable doing so with their peers than with adults. To that end, I lead a student-focused version of the ‘Breathing Spaces’ conversation model by Zoom on 22nd April which was attended by eighteen students from England and Ireland. We will continue to hold these sessions for students every Half Term.

Finally, we wanted to recognise the incredible work of our Edmund Rice chaplains, who dedicate so much time to the spiritual welfare of staff and students in their schools. We wanted them to feel that their own needs were catered for, too. So, I have begun facilitating 60-minute reflection and catch-up sessions for them to meet each other, share key dates and events, and take some time to themselves in prayerful reflection. Held every Half Term, these Chaplaincy Gatherings are a valuable way to stay connected and will continue in September. Any chaplain, or staff member with chaplaincy responsibilities, is encouraged to join. Once again, just contact me for details!

Thomas Murray, Youth Development Coordinator

Student Leadership Certificate

It has been a great experience rolling out the EREBB Student Leadership Certificate to some of our schools in England and Ireland over the past few months.

The course was developed collaboratively by Edmund Rice Schools’ Trust Ireland, Edmund Rice Schools’ Trust Northern Ireland, and Edmund Rice England. It is a 12-module training course for students in Edmund Rice schools. Each module lasts approximately 45 minutes and students are encouraged to supplement each of the Themes by engaging in shared conversation with another group participating in the course.

The aim of the course is to offer information for leadership to students, focusing on raising awareness of the global Network to which they belong, the importance of advocacy as a tool for social change, building effective communities, and practical action as a response to social issues.

We are so grateful that groups from St Joseph’s, St Anselm’s and St Edward’s, as well as a collaborative group from ERST, signed up for the pilot, and Ann and myself have really enjoyed guiding them through the course. All the groups have now finished the course and are working towards completing their Community Project before receiving their award.

Zoom has allowed us to ‘meet’ all the groups separately every week and the participants have shown incredible commitment by attending faithfully, often without staff supervision. We hope, of course, that some sessions can be delivered ‘in person’ when we resume in September.

Here’s what some of the students had to say about their involvement:

“The sessions allowed me to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a part of the Edmund Rice community.”

“The sessions are interesting, and I’ve learned things about Edmund Rice and the work of the Christian Brothers which I didn’t know before. I hope to take this knowledge further, allowing me to think more reflectively about some of the social issues that are currently prevalent.”

“The Edmund Rice Network has strengthened my knowledge and understanding of the importance of reflecting on issues of social justice. I hope to develop my leadership skills which I can apply in my role as a Senior Prefect, enabling me to encourage others to follow the ethos of the school.”

“We wanted to complete the course as we had all been elected to the school’s Executive or Senior Prefect Teams and wanted to better ourselves as leaders and representatives of the school, becoming more effective in our roles.”

“The sessions have been very informative and allowed me to discuss Edmund Rice foundations further with my peers. One thing I learned was the global engagement with ERI, and how effective it has been in implementing social change.”



We hope other schools will sign up for the Leadership Certificate in September. Whilst we offer full support and resources for delivery, we encourage staff to take on the facilitation of sessions themselves where possible. To this end we ran a training workshop for staff across the global network on 5th May, and we are happy to make this session available to other schools who would like to run it.

Contact Tom or Ann for details.

Global Student Leadership goes from Strength to Strength

A pilot group of schools from Ireland have also done a shortened version of the certificate course, led by Tom.

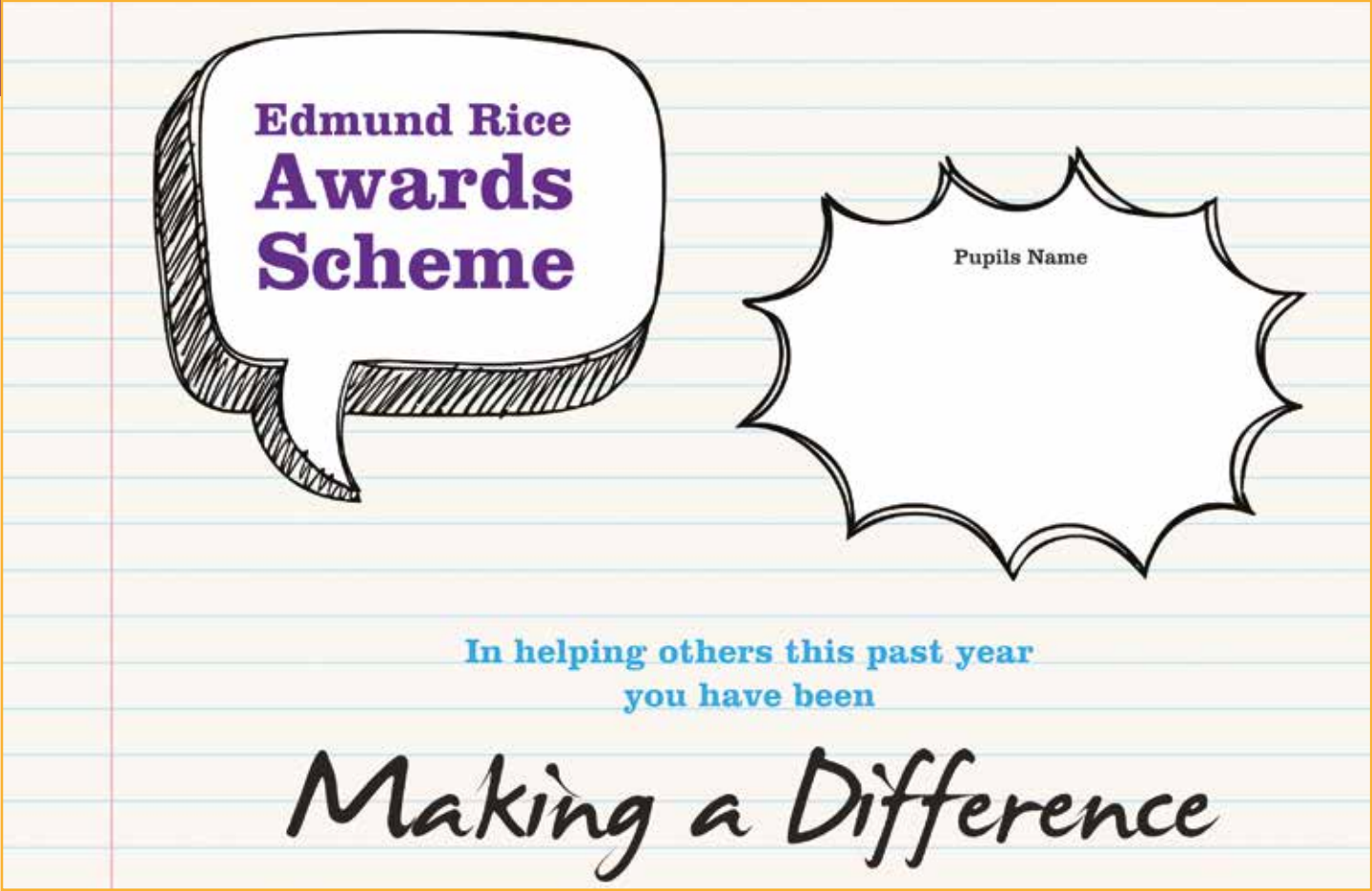
Interest in this certificate from across the globe has been high so we invited any interested staff to participate in an information workshop on May 5th.

We outlined the content and purpose of the certificate, discussed its success so far, shared the resources and invited staff to share, in breakout groups, how they envision using the certificate in their own school contexts.

The flexibility of the materials and handbook will allow different groups such as Transition Year students in Leland, Peace and Justice groups, Prefect Leadership Teams, ERI groups etc. to be able to use and adapt the course to their requirements. CBC St John’s in Cape Town have already begun the Leadership Certificate with their Edmund Rice group, and Stella Maris in Uruguay will begin in September with their students.

A key part of this certificate is ensuring that students feel part of the global Edmund Rice Community, so groups will have the opportunity to undertake facilitated online conversations with other schools across the network.





ER Primary Awards

We often feel as though there are fewer opportunities within our Network for students from our primary schools but spending time with Year 6 pupils in all four of the English primaries is a reminder of how much they have to offer.

I have been facilitating ER Awards Reflections for a number of years, but I can honestly say that working with the children from Runnymede, St Joseph's, St Ambrose and The Mount this year has been the most enjoyable annual cycle so far. Using a healthy balance of Zoom and school visits, I have been able to deliver eight reflective workshops in each school, allowing the children to work towards their Edmund Rice Award certificate.

The workshops explore the values of the Eight Essentials in the context of the lives, hopes, fears and beliefs of 10- and 11-year-old pupils. We have looked at 'Making Time to Pray', 'Action for Justice', 'Becoming Well-Rounded People' and 'Finding Our Calling' amongst other topics and the children's input and insight has been both inspirational and joyous.

Every child has their own Awards Journal to work from and they are challenged to engage in some difficult subject matter. However, every week I am amazed at the maturity of their responses and the sensitivity of their conversations.

Congratulations to all the children who have given so much of their time and energy to our sessions!

Thomas Murray
Youth Development Coordinator

01-12 NOV 2021
GLASGOW

have your say!

COP26

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

WORKSHOP
FOR
SCHOOLS

Learn about the Climate Crisis and COP26
how to engage your school and
lobby for change

book a workshop on Zoom with Ann Nichols -
annnichols.ero@gmail.com
can be adapted to any year group / class size

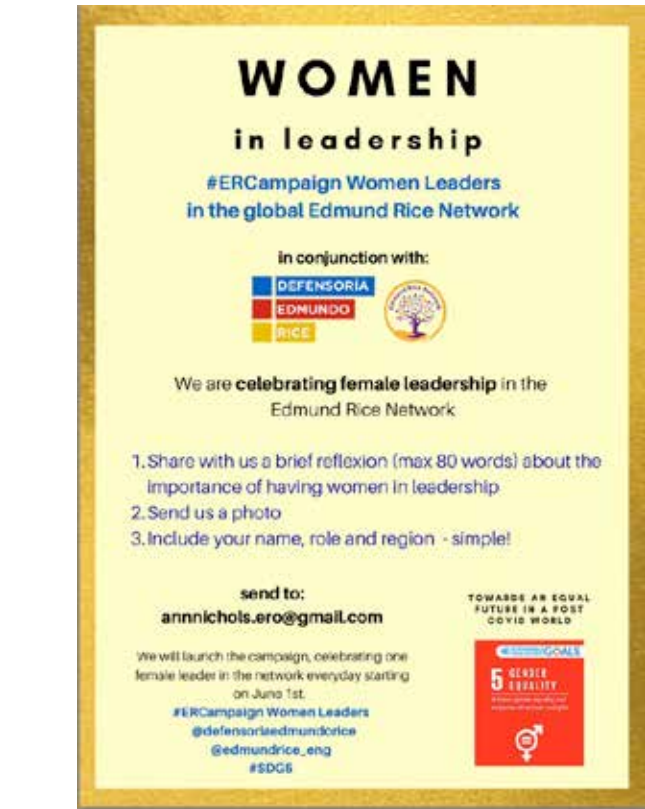
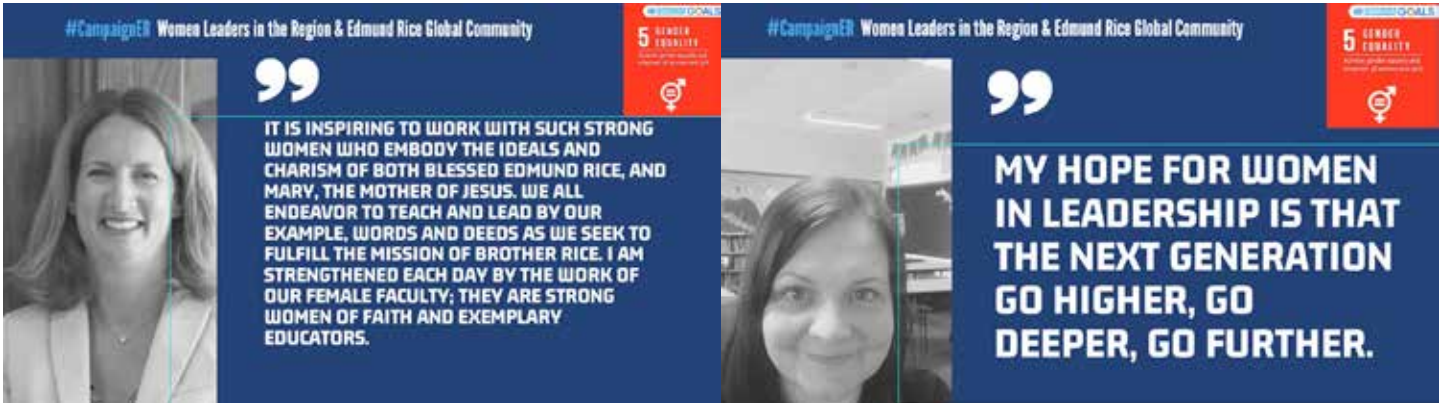
A Global Edmund Rice
Advocacy Campaign

This is a campaign that was originally run at the Edmund Rice justice desk, South America ‘Defensoría Edmundo Rice’ celebrating the women in leadership roles throughout the Edmund Rice Network in South America.

I eagerly followed this campaign, reading with interest the ideas about leadership that different women were sharing in each post and about their roles in schools and around the network. I contacted Paola Miranda, the Coordinator of Defensoría to ask if we could share the campaign and we soon hatched a plan to invite women from across the global Edmund Rice family to join in sharing their ideas about being a woman in leadership. The response has been fantastic, with women from many different parts of the network, having varying roles, enthusiastically communicating with us their thoughts about leading as a woman in the current climate.

As a celebration of the females and the work they do in our international Edmund Rice community and in support of Sustainable Development Goal #5 Gender Equality, we will be launching the campaign from September, once we have gathered all of the contributions. The campaign will run in two languages; Spanish and English in acknowledgement of the cultural diversity within our network and to recognise the origins of this campaign. Edmund Rice England, Defensoría Edmundo rice, advocacy team from Christian Brothers North America and EREBB will be coordinating the social media campaign.

#ER Campaign Women Leaders in the Edmund Rice Global Community



“Women leaders in the
region” campaign

Defensoría Edmundo Rice is the Human Rights Office in Latin America.

Currently, there are 10 of us who are part of the team and we are in charge of carrying out different activities to promote and defend human rights in the four countries where the Congregation is present: Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay. This year, in the framework of the commemoration of International Women’s Day (8th March), we decided to carry out an activity related to the slogan proposed by the United Nations “Women leaders: for an equal future in the world of COVID-19”. In this sense, we organised the Regional Campaign “Women Leaders in the Region”, whose objective was to make visible and highlight the work of the women leaders of the different Educational Institutions that belong to the Edmundo Rice Network in the Latin American Region.

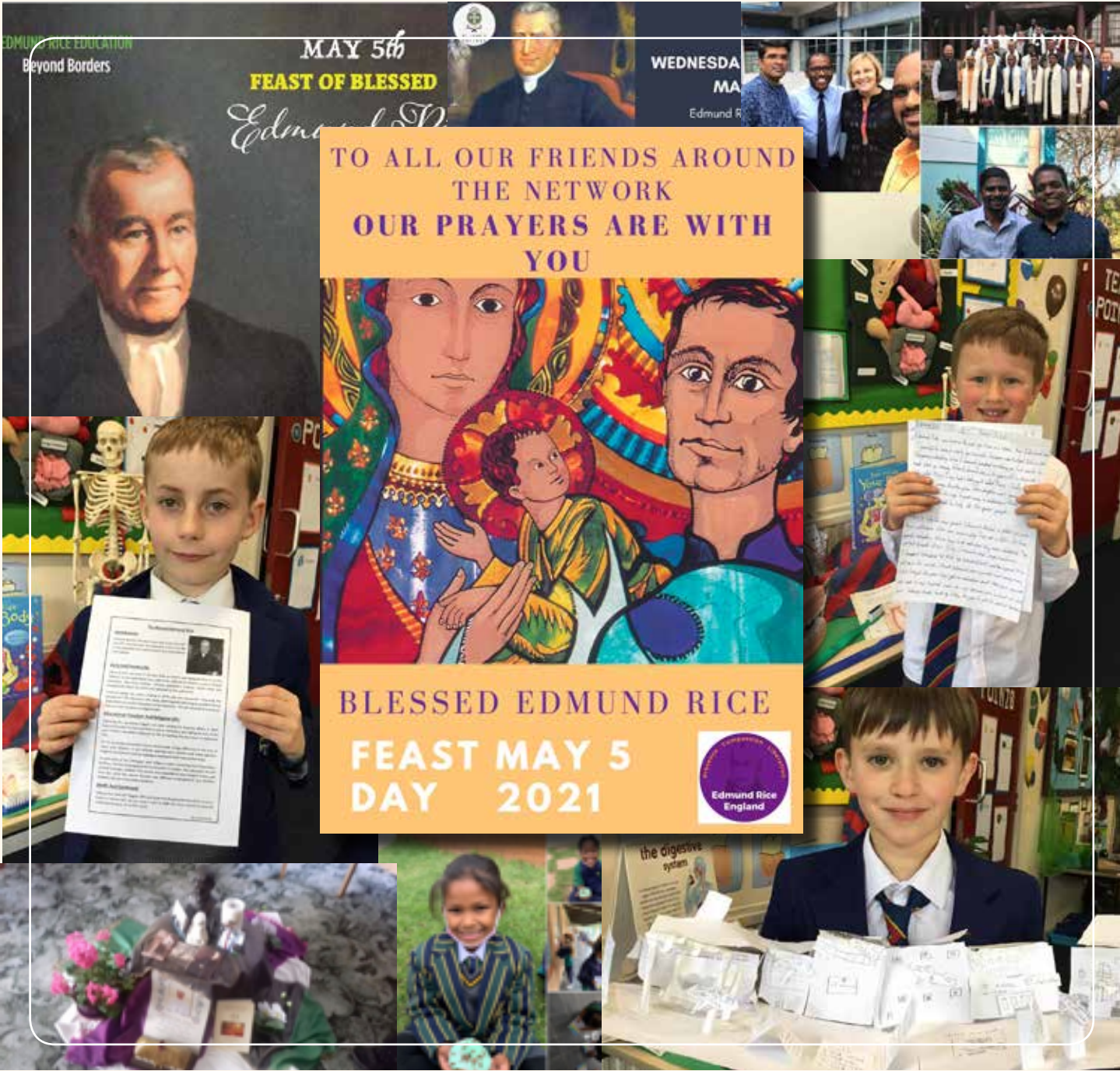
This campaign lasted two weeks, during which thirteen women, including directors and teachers from the Network’s schools, as well as members of our team, were able to share their reflections on the importance of women’s leadership in the educational context and how they organised themselves as a result of the pandemic. Subsequently, we made flyers that were published day after day on our social networks on Facebook and Instagram. Undoubtedly, the campaign was a total success, there were many people who interacted with the publications through their comments and sharing the publications, so we consider that we achieved the initial objective of the campaign and also, we contributed to the fight for an equal world and the achievement of Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to leave no-one behind.

Paola Miranda, Coordinator of Defensoría Edmundo Rice



Global Celebration, Global Connection,
Global Communication

A compilation of photos, reminding us how we marked Blessed Edmund's Feast Day and how we shared our blessings with our whole Edmund Rice community





Laudato Si Care for our Common Home

(Laudato Si)
We are living in interesting times. Not for many decades has a papal encyclical attracted so much attention, and from all sides, as has Pope Francis’s Encyclical “Laudato Si” (Praise be to you). It was published on 24th May 2015 under the sub-title “**Care for our Common Home**”. Pope Francis is making it clear that care for our common home is a priority for the church and for the world. In the text of Laudato Si the pope makes references to many countries scattered across the globe. The need to care for the environment is a concern shared by many many Christians and by people of other faiths and none. The encyclical ends with a call to live graciously with all creation for a new way of life and for an ‘ecological conversion’. We are encouraged to learn courtesy, respect, and reverence for all life on our planet. The issues Francis raises in that encyclical will take many years to address fully.

So, what can we make of the Pope’s words now six years later, not just for the world and Church but for us in the Edmund Rice Network? People will approach Laudato Si from their own interests and concerns. How can we approach it? How do we respond?

The scientist and Franciscan theologian, Sr. Ilia Delio reminds us:

“Today, the desire for a new world order stems from the growing awareness that we cannot sustain our First World footprint far into the future. The costs on the poor are deeply inequitable, and we are running out of resources. The fact that a religious leader such as Pope Francis, would make the environment a top priority is jaw-dropping incredible.

What makes Pope Francis so real is his lack of intellectual jargon; he expresses the virtues of simplicity and compassion and sees the poor as real suffering people. When he casts light on the poor and the environment, it is not a metaphysical light; these are not merely conceptual ideas. He wants to see real change take place in the way we care for one another and the things of the earth. He wants the church to have a living doctrine of creation. He indicates that we must take science seriously; that much of the data is pointing to global warming and the disastrous impacts continuous warming will have up ahead. “

The Challenge

We are at a world moment of crisis with COVID-19 which will lead us to new ways of living and sharing our common home. Our hope is that the world will be a more equitable and just place than it was before 2020.

We are facing a global problem, but global solutions are made up of seemingly tiny actions. The apparently insignificant actions of millions of people can make the difference. Let us set ourselves some targets having reflected on the list below.

1. How is Laudato Si going to change our spirituality and lived experience?
2. How does our experience enhance the global conversation on climate change and action for climate change?
3. Let us seek ways to help curb environment degradation,
4. Let us seek ways to mitigate its impact on the poorest and most vulnerable people.
5. Let us help to restore right relationships among all God’s creation.
6. How do we foster a consciousness of care for God’s creation in our mission in the Edmund Rice Network?


Closing Prayer

Loving Source of Life, we being of earth and blessed with the Spirit living and acting within us, join together to renew our awe and appreciation of our precious planet. May our awe and appreciation result in actions that witness to our concerns for Earth. We ask that your presence within us will empower us to co-create a thriving planet now and into the future. Amen

P.G. Gordon cfc ‘Woodeaves’

Facing our Diminishment Creatively, with Faith

Brothers from the European Province continue to meet via a monthly Zoom meeting. In May we were invited to name the gifts that we see emerging among the Brotherhood. These are what we named in the 13 breakout groups.



Facing Our Diminishment Creatively with Faith
May, 2021

In our diminishment the gift we want to pass on is our need to show that care for ourselves and others and the care of the earth go hand in hand.

We see ourselves as resurrection people with hope uplifted in community.

What we have to offer is the quality of our presence. Through it we have made a difference.

As individuals we desire to grow fully through service to others and by developing a relationship with Jesus.

In the Spirit of Edmund to be compassionate and courageous in our collaboration with Brothers and others.

To recommit to one another by living life to the full.

We must acknowledge our past but not be bound by it. We need to forgive and reconcile into our future.

Surrender - Let go - let God - all is well

Out of a vision of faith, the gift we offer today is love.

Gift to pass on is Contemplation in keeping with Edmund Rice's quotation: In silence and in trust there shall lie your strength. (Isaiah 30:15)

We have time now (ageing, retirement) to share our brotherhood which is born in community, thereby continuing the work of the incarnation - God among his people.

As a group we offer in a practical, positive and caring way, to nourish the Brothers and others in the Community and Province, especially by our presence.

While recognising our ageing and diminishment we rejoice that our charism is alive and active and is being shared by many as we move forward in faith.



St Timothy's Community Br Fergus Reilly

Allowing God to Love Us

In my experience, few Christians have a sense of what it feels like to be loved by God. We might get it intellectually or even sense it in our hearts, but the marriage of the soul and God is experienced on a deeper level when we make ourselves vulnerable to being overtaken by God's overwhelming desire for us. I offer this contemplative reflection from Carmelite nun Ruth Burrows on prayer as an experience of allowing God to love us.

What do we mean by prayer? What does the word mean in the Christian context? Almost always when we talk about prayer, we are thinking of something we do and, from that standpoint, questions, problems, confusion, discouragement, illusions multiply. For me, it is of fundamental importance to correct this view.



Our Christian knowledge assures us that prayer is essentially what God does, how God addresses us, looks at us. It is not primarily something we are doing to God, something we are giving to God but what God is doing for us. And what God is doing for us is giving us the divine Self in love...

What is the core, the central message of the revelation of Jesus? Surely it is of the unconditional love of God for us, for each one of us: God, the unutterable, incomprehensible Mystery, the Reality of all reality, the Life of all life. And this means that divine Love desires to communicate Its Holy Self to us. Nothing less! This is God's irrevocable will and purpose; it is the reason why everything that is, is, and why each of us exists. We are here to receive this ineffable, all-transforming, all beatifying Love... We must realise [therefore,] that what we have to do is allow ourselves to be loved, to be there for Love to love us... True prayer means wanting GOD not ego. The great thing is to lay down this ego-drive. This is the 'life' we must lose, this the 'self' we must abandon if we are to have true life and become that self that God wants us to be, which only God can know and ultimately only God can bring into being...

The essential thing we have to do is believe in the enfolding, nurturing, transforming Love of God which is the Reality: the Reality that is absolutely, totally there, whether we aver to it or not. Prayer, from our side, is a deliberate decision to avert to It, to respond to It in the fullest way we can. To do this we must set time aside to devote exclusively to the 'Yes' of faith...

If we are convinced that this is the heart of prayer, this basic decision to remain open to the inflowing of divine love, then we shall understand that we can choose any method we like to help us maintain this basic desire and intention.

Experience a version of this practice through video and sound. www.tinyurl.com/3923975y
Adapted from Richard Rohr www.cac.org/mystical-marriage-weekly-summary-2021-05-15/



A Recipe Shared by Br Dominic Sassi

Tortellini in Brodo di Pollo

Ingredients (for 4 servings)

- Olive oil
- Sea salt
- 2 medium onions
- 2 medium carrots
- 2 celery sticks
- 5 tablespoons of Passata or tomato puree
- 8 chicken drumsticks
- 2 pints of cold water
- 1 chicken stock cube
- 250 grams of tortellini
- Grated Parmesan to serve



Directions

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat and add the onions, carrots, celery and passata. Place the drumsticks in the saucepan, add the water, cover with a lid and bring to boil. Remove the lid, add the stock cube and season with salt. Reduce heat and allow to simmer uncovered for 45 to 60 minutes, until the broth reduces slightly.

Meanwhile, bring salted water to boil and cook the pasta until al dente. Drain and set aside. Strain the broth into a large bowl and keep the chicken and vegetables to eat after the broth and pasta.

Share the tortellini into separate bowls and ladle the hot chicken broth over it. Sprinkle with Parmesan, serve and enjoy!

Since arriving in St Timothy's Liverpool, I soon realised that I would have to recover my culinary skills as the Community does not employ a cook. Because of my Anglo-Italian roots, my favourite food is Italian. How would my Irish confrères take to it? To my pleasant surprise, I found that, once they got used to not seeing potatoes on the menu, they not only ate the pasta but looked for seconds! Celtic-Anglo-Italian harmony reigns supreme.

Brothers' Communities

St Sebastian's Community

The Community here in Salford consists of three brothers, Ger O'Connell, Tony Twomey, and Jim Catterson.

We run a centre called SERV (Salford Edmund Rice Volunteers) helping asylum seekers and refugees. This work mainly involves helping with Home Office business and with all the forms and applications attached to accommodation, health, Universal Credit, and many other aspects of daily living. We also run English classes.

Sadly, our activities have been curtailed by COVID-19 and the regulations regarding groups of people coming together. We still do essential work but with all the precautions necessary for our safety and that of our clients. Lockdown restrictions are gradually being eased in England and we are delighted that our English classes are opening again. We hope we can soon re-open our Monday drop-in service as well.

It would be a mistake to think that we do all the work involved in the running of the centre. Our volunteers are an indispensable part of our work, contributing skills that we do not possess, and we look forward to re-connecting with them, as well as our network volunteers and our supporters in St Joseph's College, Stoke-on-Trent and St Ambrose College, Hale Barns.



It might be of interest to introduce some of our volunteers:

- Dr Wilf Hammond, who has worked with the brothers for many years in our schools and is a qualified Home Office Immigration advisor. He helped us to set up SERV and to establish the Community here in Salford.
- His wife, Anne, who is from Alsace in eastern France. Her language skills in French and English are a valuable tool in our work. She is relentless when it comes to fighting for the rights of refugees and all those in need.
- May Bassanino comes from Baghdad in Iraq and has lived in Manchester for many years. She has essential language skills, speaking fluent Arabic and English. She came to us after her daughter had had a good experience helping with our Salford camps for deprived children.
- Sue Brown, a retired physiotherapist, does Home Office work on the refugees' behalf.
- Suzannah Redmond is our qualified English tutor for speakers of other languages. She is in charge of the English classes.
- Our newest volunteer is retired GP Dr Richard Samson. He is an old boy of St Ambrose College, Altrincham, and is at present, a governor at the school. He will begin work here just as soon as the centre is allowed to open again.

One of the satisfying aspects of our work is to see people settled down happily in the UK. While most refugees move on after using the centre, some have become our friends.

Before the pandemic struck, we also ran an annual camp for disadvantaged primary children in the area each year. This involves a week of activities organised by young people from our schools. They give up a week of their holiday to provide joy to a large group of primary children. The brothers are around to keep everyone safe, but the camp is the work of the young people themselves. I think the young people get as much out of the experience as the children. Another aspect is that the volunteers live a community life during the camp and meet, pray, and recreate together.

Brothers' Communities

Parr Street Community

Michael celebrated his birthday on 30th April, and we enjoyed a bottle of wine donated by his brother, Stephen.

Michael has developed his culinary skills to such an extent that he is deemed a 'cordon bleu chef' after his distinguished predecessor, our dearly lamented Br Eamonn Doyle. Dear Eamonn's ashes will be brought to Graiguenamanagh when COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed for international travel. Chris is very active as House Manager, with all its demanding tasks: cleaning, shopping, maintenance etc. = besides doing jobs for friends and family.

We are trying to conform to COVID-19 restrictions but there seems to be a huge burst of activity in Liverpool since the graduated relaxation of April 12th. People seem to have leaped ahead to May 17th!

Edward has many Zooms to occupy him – Scottish Laity Network, Jesuits' Spirituality Centre Edinburgh, Universal Basic Income Conversations, Brothers' Zooms, and campaigns against the draconian measures being introduced to reduce foreign aid, reduce immigrants' rights and hoard anti-COVID-19 vaccines at the expense of the poor majority of world people who are dying in their millions. A justice and peace and integrity of creation is being established in St Vincent De Paul's Parish by the Missionaries of Africa. They feel deeply about the scars of Tigray in Ethiopia, caused by water shortage and political-militarist outrages. Besides many other issues in the UK and world, such as racism and climate change. Brothers and Edmund Rice Network Associates are urged to protest against the Johnson government's policies and advocate for the poor and exploited of the world. Why should posh décor in Downing Street come before life and death issues in the world of Tutti Fratelli and Sorelle? Is it the dead cat subterfuge - designed to deflect attention from the serious issues?

At Ince Blundell, Br Andrew Rock has improved in health and looks forward to his 90th birthday on 5th May. Tom Kelly has been cleared of an infection and endured his ten days' isolation and is back to weeding his allotment.



Brother Eamonn Doyle obituary

My friend Eamonn Doyle, who has died aged 78, was a teacher and mentor to refugees.

Read his obituary here
www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/10/brother-eamonn-doyle-obituary



A life in Mission

Brothers' stories

Br Edward Egan

One anecdote showing me in action was in 1998 when I joined a demonstration of thousands in Birmingham to persuade Tony Blair and the G8 to promise to drop the debt of poor countries.

My dad, Ted, was a cabinetmaker whose father had left his wife and six children in 1917 after being invalided out of the British Army. Ted was in Thingwall Hall, an orphanage run by the Brothers of Charity. He was a quiet gentleman, a teetotaller and dutiful husband and father to me and my brother David. He died after a kidney operation in 1955 aged 46 during my novitiate.

My mother, Eileen, was the daughter of Matthew Kelly, a turf accountant. Her mother died when she was nine and she and her younger sisters, Rita and Monica, were put in Nazareth House until Matthew re-married. I am the son of parents who were 'temporary' orphans but then many people were orphaned or damaged after the two World Wars. War does not only kill the soldiers but damages their dependants and descendants. Her older sister, Vera, stayed at home with Matt, her brother.

He was to fly over Germany 25 times in Lancaster bombers, receiving a Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) at the end of the war but dying of leukaemia in 1962. Eileen was a more out-going, loving person. My parents were very conscientious and brought us up well – maybe too closeted from the more streetwise boys of war-time Britain. I guess I learnt lessons of dutifulness and probity from them. I was quiet and shy – I used to wet the bed, bite my fingernails, and blush a lot. One of my gifts was art.

I was reared as an ordinary English boy but after two years in St Mary's Grammar School, Crosby, run by the Christian Brothers, I felt a call to become a Brother - at the age of 13 I think this was a genuine call of the Holy Spirit, although I probably would have failed a psychology test if they had them at that time in 1952! I had an inferiority complex and strove fiercely to be the best in all that I did. I used to be first or second in the top class, not from genius but from conscientious hard work.

I became a voracious reader all my life – religion, politics, history, biographies, art, etc – little fiction. I was not very good at team games, but I liked running and fielding at cricket.

My biggest obstacles in life were my perceived inferiority and sociability. I strove in an inhuman way to compensate for these defects by trying to be the best in physical, academic, religious, and cultural areas. I have learned late in life that 'more is not better'. These defects made me unsuited to Community life and ineffectual in relating to pupils. This affected my teaching style and I blossomed more in care work and social justice work. My greatest weakness is this intense striving to prove myself. This makes me unsociable and over-idealistic. I still search to embrace Richard Rohr's 'Falling Upwood'. I am not a 'community man' or a team player.

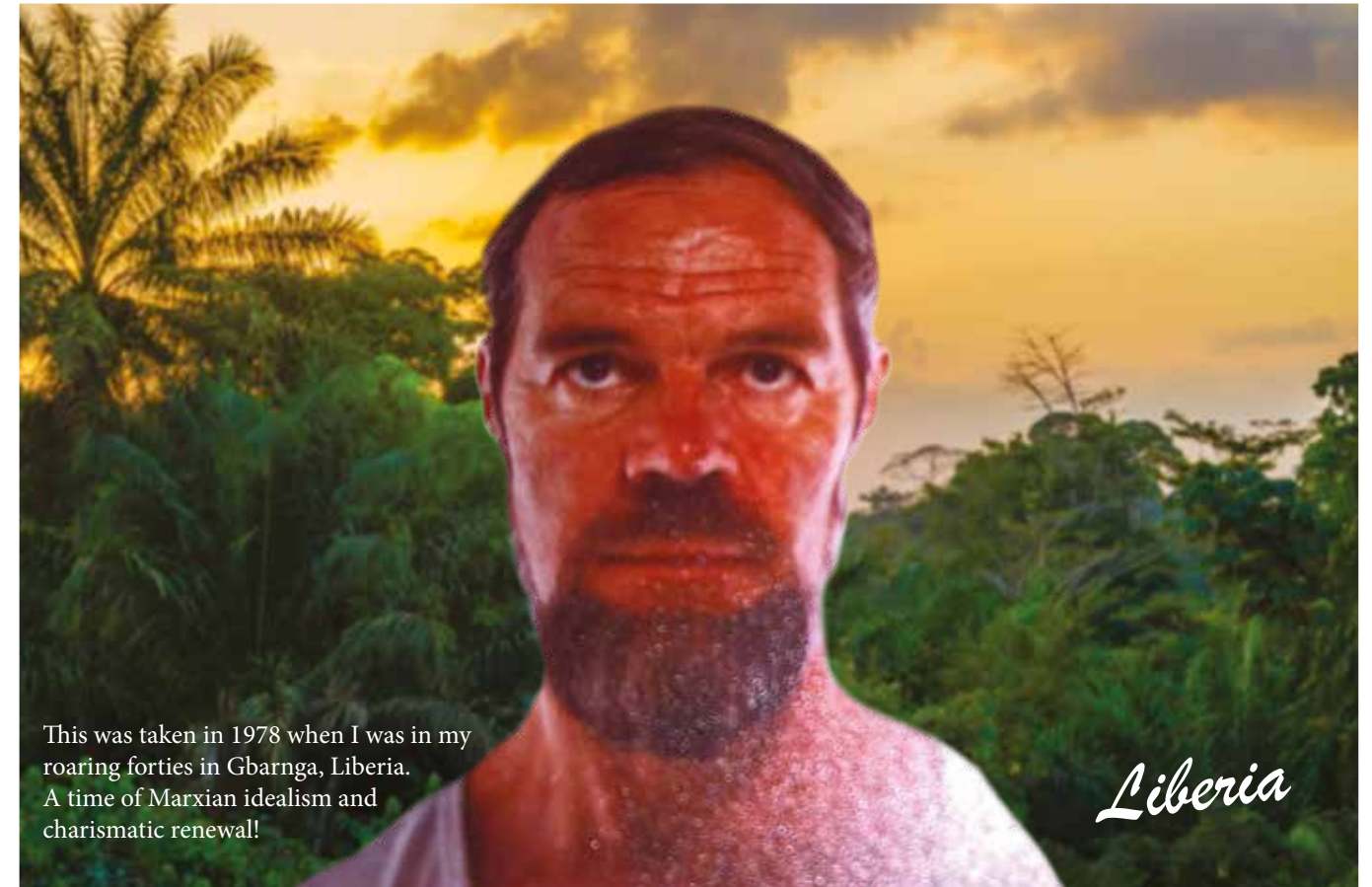
My life philosophy is based on my experiences. Because I felt inferior, I was always on the side of the 'underdog'. I empathised with 'the starving children of Europe' in post-war Europe. I was very influenced by the social teaching of the Church. I was sympathetic towards Communism and Socialism and critical of Capitalism and neo-liberal economics. I saw my father, my mother and brother exploited by the economic and social system even in modern Britain. I am disillusioned with the 21st Century where injustice, wars and climate degradation seem to find little challenge - although Pope Francis and President Joe Biden are a refreshing counterforce.

I had life-defining moments:

i.) When I was 14, I was labelled 'a freak' by boys at a swimming-pool. This made me feel inferior and caused me to strive to be as 'good as you'. I only found relief from this complex after a year's residential therapy in 1987 and my embrace of Quest, the organisation for LGBTQ+ Catholics in the late 1990s and hereafter. Quest tries to reconcile gay Catholics with Church teaching as it evolves.

ii.) I was swept away by the traditional piety of the 1950s – hence in adopting my religious name 'De Montfort' as he was a 'slave of Mary' and 1954, my Novitiate year, was the Marian Year, the centenary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and Lourdes. I became disillusioned in 1968 with the Legion of Mary as too 'spiritualised' and became part of the Christian Life Movement, the Jesuit sodality, which focussed at that time on the war against world poverty. I was in the World Poverty Campaign which later became the Global Justice Campaign.

iii.) My experience in Liberia confirmed my ideas about social justice. The Americo-Liberian oligarchic elite exploited the 95% aboriginal people politically, economically, and socially. I was there in 1980 when there was a bloody coup d'état. Unfortunately, like many revolutions it was later 'to eat its children'. The Vatican Council brought great hope, but its implementation was inhibited by Popes fearful of losing control. Many changes in the world saw justice and peace movements gaining ground during the 1960s and 1970's against colonialism and racism but the 1980s saw a backlash in a neo-liberal order with transnational companies exploiting the poor (like imperial nations did in the 19th century). Some contemporary populist leaders are semi-fascist. And the climate is 'on fire'! I enjoyed my 13 years in Manchester when I took part in protests in Birmingham, Cologne, Prague, Nice, Genoa, Geneva, Mumbai, (and London at various times) plus support for the European Social Forum in Florence and London, and for the World Social Forum in Mumbai and Athens. I used holiday money to fund these travels.



This was taken in 1978 when I was in my roaring forties in Gbarnga, Liberia. A time of Marxian idealism and charismatic renewal!

Edmund Rice strove to bring the poor out of poverty by working within the system - educating them sufficiently to make them hold a job and livelihood to be good Christian citizens.

Unfortunately, 'we Christian Brothers made the sons of dockers into doctors' – that is: a middle-class elite with little sense of social justice. Today, the State has taken over health and education from the churches. The Church has seen a decline in vocations to big military-like orders. Maybe, we need a small minority group of Religious alongside the laity to continue the basic charism of the Founder – but adapted to modern, changed realities of a progressive world and Church. Today, thank goodness, our Brothers are more focussed on solidarity and advocacy with the poor, having bequeathed our schools to able lay people, hopefully retaining the best of Blessed Edmund's charism.

I am inspired by Walter Wink's insights in 'The Powers That Be' (ISBN= 978-0-385-48752-8). He sees that all God made is good but fallen. God upholds necessary political and economic systems, condemns them for not being fully human and presses for their transformation into a more humane order.

Conservatives stress the first, revolutionaries stress the second and reformers the third. The Christian is expected to hold together all three.

My favourite role within the congregation has been in the realm of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Also, the two years in Emmaus, 1994-1996, tending to the needs of young pupils from schools from diverse parts of Ireland, with a mixed community of priests, Brothers and Sisters was nourishing also. I love writing the lives of deceased Brothers and tending to their graves.

I would say that any candidate for entering the congregation should carefully spend time on discernment and solid spirituality before deciding if the Religious way of life is meant for him – especially celibate living.

Br Edward

Edmund Rice, an Icon

Br Denis Gleeson

Br Denis recently unveiled his new icon of Blessed Edmund and here shares his thoughts on the significance and relevance of this image.

Symbolism in the Edmund Rice Icon

The faces of Edmund and his daughter, Mary, reveal the soul of the icon and speak individually to whoever gazes upon them.

Mary’s name is included in red on Edmund’s sleeve. She is believed to have been a person with special needs.

The pink dress Mary wears was a style popular in America at the end of the 18th Century. It was called a ‘Molly Malone’, so it is likely to have had an Irish connection.

Edmund’s green jacket is symbolic of the earth: of Ireland, and of life. The ball of fire in Edmund’s hand is symbolic of the Holy Spirit who challenged, guided, and encouraged him all through his tumultuous life. Now the same Spirit challenges us.

The city is the new Jerusalem, the city of God, the Kingdom Jesus was always talking about. It is everything that God wishes for humanity but needs our help to bring about. The tower in the city is Reginald’s Tower that stands at the quayside in Waterford. It is a symbol of the city where Edmund lived and worked and spent himself in service.

The ship facing out to sea represents the spiritual voyage and ministry without horizons. Edmund’s fortune was made supplying such tall ships. The sea represents humanity’s unconscious and the need for growth in consciousness.

Finally, the dry-stone wall behind Edmund’s shoulders, can be seen as the horizontal beam of the Celtic stone cross, representing his Celtic spiritual heritage and his many setbacks and sufferings.

Gazing at an Icon

The glance of a loved one makes the heart soar and gifts us a memory for life. We remember such glances. We recall them frequently and they nourish us when our spirit is weak.

They sustain us when our strength is ebbing. When we doubt ourselves, they reassure us. We cherish them in idle moments as they lift our hearts.



There is so much that can be communicated in a glance. A glance is momentary, whereas a gaze transcends all measurement of time. A gaze gently holds the eyes of the beloved one and in their eyes a glimpse of the soul is caught.

So too when we take our time to gaze upon an icon. We first take in the detail and then gently we let our eyes rest. As the eyes rest, the apparent divide between the physical and spiritual realities dissolves. Effortlessly, we ford the waters separating presence from Presence.

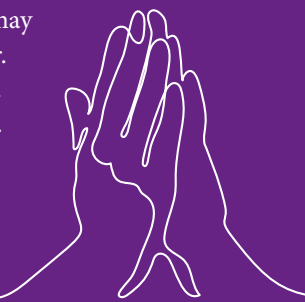
We invite transformation within, as our gaze is returned. We who gaze find ourselves gazed upon. And as our conscious gaze meets the bestowed gaze, we open ourselves to be changed.

If we are patient and are able to sit, we will eventually close our eyes and our gaze is turned within. We realise that Presence is an indwelling Presence. This is a moment of centring, a moment of contemplation. Time evaporates and becomes irrelevant. The ego is silenced and is, for a time, at rest. We experience Reality.

Prayer Before the Icon of Blessed Edmund

Come Holy Spirit, you led Edmund Rice through many sufferings and trials to be the servant of all who were poor, condemned, oppressed, or rejected. Through you, he responded to the great needs of his time and offered hope to those who had lost hope and dignity to those who were afforded none. He wept with those who were weeping. He held nothing back. He gave to those in need in handfuls. He put his trust only in the God who provides. Holy Spirit may our hearts burn with the same flame you ignited in Edmund’s heart. May we also spend ourselves in compassion and in the cause of peace, of justice and of reconciliation. May our generosity too know no bounds and may our trust in the Source of All Being never falter. We ask this through the intercession of Blessed Edmund and of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

Amen.



The 'New Plan for Immigration' what does it mean for us as human beings and as Christians?

Our government has made a series of proposals about who is able to come to our country and under what circumstances. As we leave the European Union, the rules around coming to Britain are becoming stricter, increasingly overlaid with bureaucracy and financial burdens. In her most recent document, the Home Secretary has said refugees will no longer be welcome unless they arrive through a relocation programme. Refugees who make it to the UK independently, will be housed in detention centres, possibly offshore, and will never be given indefinite leave to remain.

In the 'New Plan for Immigration' the government has told us that the generosity of the British People is being taken advantage of, that there is a Crisis in the numbers of people arriving and that we cannot cope. However, Britain takes fewer Asylum Seekers than Germany, France, Spain, Greece, and Italy - and in 2020 the number of asylum claims went down, not up. The Crisis, if there is one, is in the Home Office's inability to deal with people's claims, the appalling conditions in which many are housed, and the grinding poverty they are expected to endure. It is a Crisis of our own making, not that of the Asylum Seekers coming here.

Yet the Government lays the blame for all these ills at the feet of people who have fled conflict, crossed continents, and struggled for survival. Worse still, it seeks to demonise refugees, making them synonymous with People Traffickers and Modern-Day Slavers. The cost of using a trafficker can range from £2000 to £10,000. The cost of an airline ticket substantially less, but it is because there are no legal routes to claim asylum that people are forced into difficult and dangerous situations.

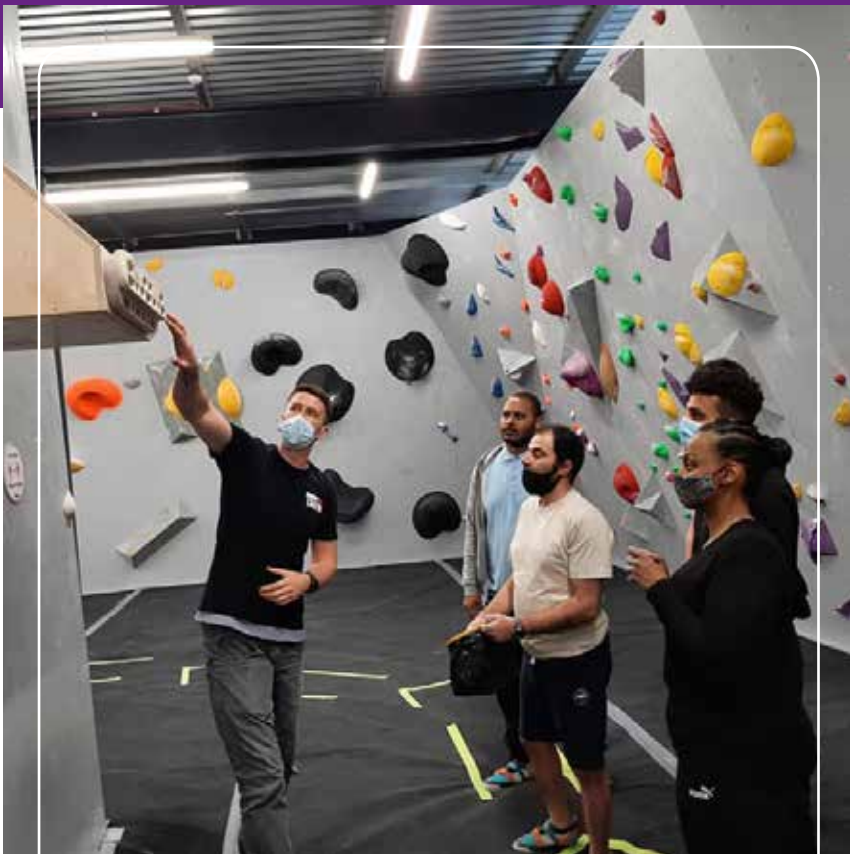
In the 1930s when the Nazis came to power in Germany, Einstein left. He did not sign up to a resettlement programme, he simply got on a boat and headed for Britain. How odd to think of Albert Einstein coming across the English Channel in search of safety. This is what he had to say:

"I could not believe that it was possible that such spontaneous affection could be extended to one who is a wanderer on the face of the Earth. The kindness of your people has touched my heart so deeply that I cannot find words to express in English what I feel. I shall leave England for America at the end of the week, but no matter how long I live, I shall never forget the kindness which I have received from the people of England."

Contrast this with the welcome afforded to Refugees today. Perhaps it explains our nostalgia for the past, an altogether nicer way to welcome the stranger. No-one is illegal.

www.time.com/5684504/einstein-england/

Ewan Roberts, Asylum Link Merseyside



Action Asylum

Despite the Home Office's best efforts, we're managing to push ahead with our work around integration and cohesion, centred around the Action Asylum project.

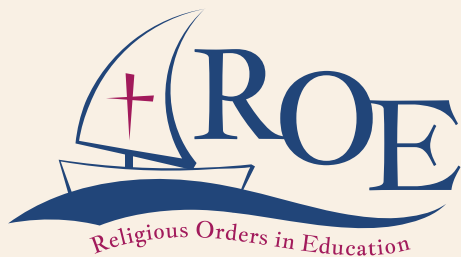
We had another great tree planting session in March, again with 'Treesponsibility', this time in Ripponden with a couple of hill walks thrown in.

The Bike Club and the Allotment projects continued through the Spring, with new starters alongside the regulars. And we've recently had a fantastic session Beach Cleaning in Crosby and our first rock climbing stint at the Liverpool Climbing Hanger. By allowing people to get together and share activities in this way, it develops understanding and empathy. Asylum Seekers cease to be the shadowy figures climbing over fences portrayed in the media, and instead become people you have fun sharing an afternoon with, helping to make our world a better place. This is now being replicated in Sheffield, Southampton/Portsmouth, Bristol, and Middlesbrough/Stockton.

Ewan Roberts, Centre Manager, Asylum Link

www.asylumlink.org.uk
[@asylumlinkmerseyside](https://twitter.com/asylumlinkmerseyside)





A Common Commitment to Education

Br Father David O'Malley, SDB

This article explores the background to a new grouping of religious orders in England and Wales based around their common commitment to education. It is crossing boundaries new and old and responding to some pressing needs in school. It is also trying to live out the interdependent and listening style of evangelising that Pope Francis is encouraging across the church. Let's start by visiting the history of the vowed religious who re-established education in England and Wales.

Catholic education in the 1800s in England and Wales

In November 1830 Marie Madeleine d'Houët and Sr Julie Guillemet arrived in St Aloysius Parish in Somers Town in London. Within months they were running a school for the poor with 260 pupils and offered 76 free places in the first year. This was the beginning of the work of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) in England and they were not alone. In 1834 the Presentation Sisters set up schools in Manchester and were joined by the Loreto Sisters in 1851 and the Xaverian brothers in 1855. At the same time the De La Salle brothers opened a school in Clapham. In 1846 The Holy Child Sisters arrived and by 1864 were educating 19,479 destitute children. The Salesians arrived in London as a newer religious order in 1887, the last foundation made by St John Bosco before his death the following year.

They were all responding to a huge need for Catholic education that Pope Pius IX identified, particularly in London where there were 50,000 Catholics who could not get to mass and 20,000 Catholic children who had no schooling at all. They achieved all this work amidst an atmosphere of bigotry and often with little or no funding from the local authorities. In time these early missionaries won hearts and minds in areas of influence.

The Marshall report in 1850 was placed before parliament, commenting on the role of catholic religious in education said:

There are communities of men and women who have bound themselves by voluntary compact to the special work of mercy to which their life should be consecrated, the education of the children of the poor. Wherever ignorance prevails they offer themselves as pioneers of science and truth, wherever knowledge begins to be valued they are at hand to stimulate its pursuit.

It was the heroic self-sacrificing work of religious orders in England and Wales that formed the foundation of today's Catholic education. They were able to raise money in Europe to support new developments in teacher training, for example with the Notre Dame Sisters building a college at Mount Pleasant in Liverpool. They established strong collaborative working relationships with the Bishops, especially when the hierarchy was restored in 1850. So, by 1944 when a new education act was implemented and most Catholic Schools were integrated into a new state system as 'voluntary aided' schools.

Today, Catholic schools make up about 10% of the state system. The voluntary aided status has recently been challenged by the creation of academies funded by central government and run by trusts, but Catholic education continues to be a major aspect of church life.

New Challenges

Now the main challenge to this fine tradition comes from the huge decline in vowed religious in education. In 2018 only five people made their perpetual profession in religious life in England and Wales. In 1987 that figure was about sixty. Such huge decline in religious teachers, steeped in a charism and tradition of education, is a major challenge to Catholic education in England and Wales. The ability to transmit the charism through a lay school community becomes crucial. Many schools founded by religious do not have any sisters or brothers involved and even fewer working in the classroom.

How can such schools preserve, develop, and extend their charisms into a new phase of Catholic Education in England and Wales?

That is the question that called many religious congregations together to form a new association of Religious Orders in Education.

(ROE) Sr Brenda Wallace FCJ, a member of the executive committee said,

"Our vision is to see 21st Century Catholic education enhanced by the distinctive charisms of religious orders continuing to animate and enrich the schools and colleges of which they are founders or trustees."

There are many concerns about the future of religious charisms in education:

- Falling numbers of vowed religious in education.
- The development of academy trusts.
- The need to pass on a living charism to lay teachers in Catholic schools.
- The legal issues around trusteeship and land ownership.
- Recruitment of leadership, governors and trustees formed in the charism of their school.
- Maintaining a preference for the poor in living the charisms

Two strands

ROE has developed two strands to its work of supporting charism in religious schools. The first is a legal dimension, which will explore the ways in which schools founded by religious orders can secure their distinctive character. That will include maintaining trustee numbers and supporting schools through the transition to other structures where members of the religious congregation are no longer able to do so. Recent developments with the DfE on a single model for Catholic schools will be a significant focus for this aspect of ROE's work. The second strand of work is concerned with developing awareness of charism across schools and especially with Senior Leadership. To that end, ROE has run three symposia on charism this year, with a great response from the network of lay staff around the country. These are the men and women who have inherited the spirit of their founders and will carry it forward into a new stage of growth.

Both these strands are based on a fundamental commitment to a collaborative style of working. Maureen Mee talked about new bridges that need to be built that will take patience to cross. Speaking about the inter-congregational dimension of the work Hilary Thompson said that, "we can learn so much from each other and share more widely what we have to offer." This move to inter-congregational working is not only a response to a need in education but also a response to a more collaborative approach to ministry across the church.

Working Together

So, as a Catholic Church in England and Wales we have 47,546 teachers working in the ministry of educating our children. That is a huge collaborative network of full-time vocational work that needs to resist the harsh secularism of the current educational environment. Those teachers need encouragement in their spiritual resolve to educate with the self-lessness of the first religious who arrived in this country in 1800s. They need to know that they are part of a tradition rooted in the Gospel. They need to recognise that they share a journey that links them to a world-wide network of education, part of a movement of the Holy Spirit that will never end.

These forty-seven thousand teachers are already a new generation of charism-based workers. They will carry the spirit of Edmund Rice, St Julie Billiart, Don Bosco and many other founders into new places and will develop new ways of being faithful to their charism. But they need help to grow into understanding and into awareness of their inheritance and its vocational importance. Charisms feed the soul, build resilience, bond us to community, and sustain a depth of meaning in life. The fewer religious still have a role to play in handing on the charisms since they are steeped in their tradition. But it is a collaborative role: working alongside lay colleagues, supporting their formation, and linking them to a wider network.



Modelling a new way of being Church

The collaborative theme is also obvious in the way that religious congregations are working together. At one stage, religious congregations were quite self-contained and often centralised in their planning and decision making. Now, lead mainly by the women's congregations, there is so much more partnership working. One of the effects of sharing of events, projects, buildings, and retreats is a deeper awareness of where charisms overlap and where they are distinctive. Working together has not diminished but enhanced the identity of each religious charism.

Such collaborative working with so many schools, parents, and staff can model a new way of being Church for us all. Pope Francis has been encouraging this shared way of working by developing synodality. It's not a pretty word but it literally means walking together. Being on a journey and facing the same way, in touch with the Spirit and discerning choices together. It is this approach that Pope Francis believes can renew the whole church and it is at the heart of ROE as it seeks to re-shape charism-based support in our schools.

The key verb in this collaborative process is listening. We need schools that listen as well as teach, young people who can be heard in school and at home. We will find the way ahead as ROE by listening to schools with the Gospel and our charisms in

mind. We will carry the rich and hard-won heritage of those early pioneers safely into a new future by walking with them into a collaborative church. During the last year, we have shared so much via Zoom with school leaders across the country. We have placed the Heads at the centre and given them a voice through "Talking Heads" videos. We have felt their hunger for an integrated spirituality and been overwhelmed by their commitment to their task and to the Gospel. At times that dedication verges on the heroic and often goes unrecognised. In our first year, we have touched the presence of a sleeping giant in our Church in the faith, joy, and love of so many educators in Catholic education. We have started the long process of networking and resourcing these wonderful people with the tools they need to sustain their work, and to sustain themselves in their vocation.

ROE will continue to develop its support structures in the legal and charism dimensions of school life, since education is a key part of Catholic evangelisation. Religious orders will continue to be present in education, they will not go away. Their role will, however, adapt as numbers change and lay leadership becomes ever more proficient in living the charism more deeply. You could say that the religious orders have broken open their treasures for a newly emerging lay church. Or you could just say that the Spirit is still at work in unexpected ways.

David.OMalley@salesians.org.uk

Our School Leaders say...

It's important that everyone in our school community knows they can be a spiritual leader.

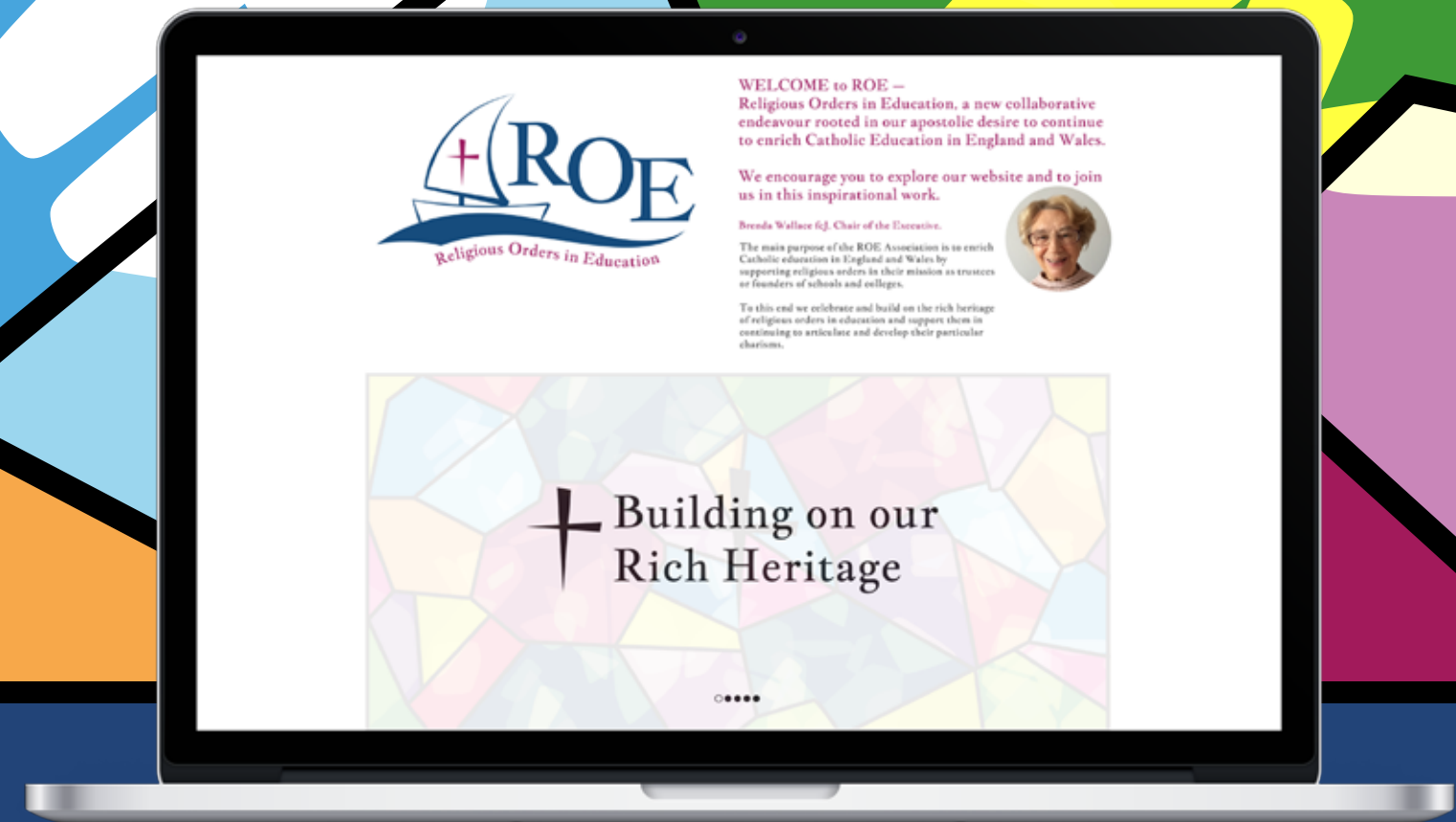
Discovering that being Head also involved being a spiritual leader has been transformational for my faith and I am now passionate about sharing it.

In these days of fewer religious vocations, it is even more necessary for us laity to help in the handing on of the Charism. Now it is the laity that will drive the Charism.

We need to encourage people (even Catholics) to ask questions. We need to find ways and time to deepen our own and others' faith in school.

To me, charism feels like coming home to one another and to oneself, a sense of being called to be present to others.

Let's not forget that teaching is a church ministry and not just another job.



Website Coming Soon

+ www.roe-uk.co.uk



A Word from the Governor



Peter Riley Governor at St Ambrose College, Hale Barns

I joined the Board of Governors at St Ambrose College in November 2018.

My association with the school however started a long time before that - in 1970 when I came to the school as a pupil. My parents were keen for me to continue my secondary education in a Catholic school and as none of the grammar schools in Warrington where I lived could not provide that St Ambrose became my educational home for the next eight years.

The school gave me everything I could have wanted from an education and sporting point of view, and I have remained close friends with others I met over 50 years ago, and I have been an active member of the Old Boys Association Committee for 20 plus years, hosting the Annual Dinners. In many ways it was a logical next step to become a Governor, but I was still honoured and delighted to be asked to join the Board nearly three years ago.

Putting something back into an organisation that has given me so much pleasure over many years was a temptation I could not resist and helping to run several sporting organisations and my background in industry over the years gave me a solid base for the skills and knowledge I have needed to develop in my Governor's role.

I am fortunate to be part of an active and dedicated team at St Ambrose, under strong leadership, and the encouraging nature in which we go about our business means that the support and guidance given to the school is second to none. This has been particularly important over the last 18 months during the pandemic and the flexibility and durability of the Board Members has meant that in the most difficult of times, the school has still been able to thrive.

My work as a Governor is very rewarding. The blend of Board Members means there are a variety of work and social backgrounds within the group and learning from others about how they approach situations and circumstances that need to be resolved has made me think differently at times and given me a wider base of knowledge as a result.

Balancing the needs of the school itself and the welfare and education of the pupils is an ongoing challenge. Back in the 1970s the school seemed to be run with just a Headmaster and Secretary and my eyes have been opened to the amount of work needed to operate a school to ensure the best education for the students, their safety and wellbeing, and also that the teachers and support staff are given the strongest support they need to deliver this.

The sub committees I sit on within the Board help to breakdown the needs of the school and the ability to meet regularly – or rather Zoom at the moment – results in a focussed approach that is of great benefit to the school, the students, and the Governing Board itself.

We will continue to face ongoing challenges over the coming months as the end of the current pandemic is in sight. As our schools and workplaces return to some kind of normality, it will be increasingly important that the Board of Governors remain committed to lead, support, and manage the needs of the school for the benefit of all – the priorities and issues the school will face may change but the committed and dedicated role of the Board will remain in place to ensure that the school is best placed as always to deliver its goals – as the old adage in sport and business goes – you need to keep improving everyday just to stay still, never has that been more true for the days ahead.

Guest school

Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, Northern Ireland



This year we have been honoured to work closely with several staff from Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, Northern Ireland.

You cannot fail to be impressed by the excellent work of this school that, in its commitment to a transformational education for all its students, is truly an Edmund Rice school in both name and nature. We are delighted they have agreed to feature as our guest school in this issue of 'Presence'.

Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, County Antrim, Ireland

When the Christian Brothers arrived in Belfast in the late 19th Century, they recognised the need to provide education for the Catholic children of the city. The demand for places in their schools was so great that establishments quickly sprang up across Belfast. When Harding Street opened in 1903, its main focus was to equip the boys with skills which would help them obtain jobs in a much-industrialised city.

The Most Reverend Dr Henry, Bishop of Down and Connor in a speech at this time linked to the school's opening, summed up the school's purpose perfectly when he stated: "I trust that parents who at present allow their boys to remain at school preparing for the Intermediate examinations, will see the advantage of putting their boys to the study of the trade preparatory course, so as to fit them to become skilled artisans, master tradesmen, and managers of great industrial and commercial concerns."

Such a course, as offered by the Brothers, was obviously a major attraction to many Catholic parents throughout Belfast at this time. By 1905, within two years of the school opening, the number of boys attending the school had risen to 150.



In the years that followed the school's reputation grew. The curriculum was enhanced to include subjects such as Art, Physics, and Chemistry to compliment what was already in place.

The following extract from a letter received by the Principal from the Managing Director of Harland and Wolff Shipyard, Belfast shows the importance held by a major industrial figure in relation to what was being taught at this time.

'The Christian Brothers deserve the thanks of the community for having attacked with no little success, that important educational problem which is involved in a general primary education, followed by a training in Science, of a character suited to boys whose parents could not otherwise well afford to give them a higher education, whilst at the same time, the Brotherhood, as might be expected, fully realise the ethical value of Christian influence. I hope that time may prove your school to have been one of those bright beacons whose rays have illuminated a much-needed revival in Irish education.'

His hopes were certainly realised. Over the coming years, the school went from strength to strength. The biggest problem for the Brothers was accommodating the massive numbers applying each year for the limited places available.

Parents from all areas of Belfast and further afield applied for places. The work of the Brothers and their lay teachers was renowned far and wide and deservedly so. Not only did young Catholic boys receive a high level of education but just as important, strong Christian values were instilled. By the 1960s, the Brothers realised that for many reasons, practical and otherwise, a move to a bigger location was required.

With the onset of the 'troubles' this move was accelerated. In Easter of 1972, for the safety of staff and students, the school moved to the old Park Lodge House at the foot of the Cavehill, and the doors of the present school were opened in September 1977 and called Hightown Road CBS (Gort Mhuire). The school was rededicated on January 20th, 1995 and called Edmund Rice College.

Guest school

Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, Northern Ireland



Mr Kevin Gough, Head of Mathematics, took over as the school's first lay Principal in the early part of the new millennium and continued the strong community ethos that had been built by the Christian Brothers. During this time, the number of houses and developments in the local Glengormley and Newtownabbey area expanded and the school had to make even more room for a continuous demand for places.

Upon Mr Gough's retirement in 2013, Derry native, Mr Peter Friel, took over as the College's Principal. On top of glowing Inspectorate reports and hitting an all-time high for examination results, the biggest noticeable change under Mr Friel's watch was the school going co-educational.

For the first time in the Newtownabbey area, Edmund Rice College was able to provide post primary education to girls, who otherwise would have had to travel to Belfast schools. This was a massive step as the school was opening its doors to both boys and girls and the results were overwhelmingly positive. Fast forward a few short years later, the school is almost 50/50 boys and girls. A remarkable achievement.

Mr Friel would return to his native Derry to take up another Principal's role in 2018 and Mr Paul Berne would take over the reigns as acting Principal. Like most schools across the world the huge challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic saw schools having a very different role in young people's lives and the demand on teaching and learning was to be very different.

Through the excellent leadership of Mr Berne, the school was able to provide online learning and more importantly focus on the mental health and wellbeing of pupils. With so much work being done and carried out with such good effect, the school has been shortlisted for the prestigious Pearson Award for 2021.

A small recognition of the hard work and dedication of the staff and the wonderful community spirit that exists between school, home, and the community.

In 2019 Edmund Rice College launched its Community Hub based on the school site. The aims of the hub are adapted from the "ERC" ethos: Engage all, Reach out, and Care for Community.

Guest school

Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, Northern Ireland



The Hub provides a support network for the local community and offer a range of services to meet the community needs. In the beginning, the Hub offered a series of night classes and training sessions for the community, ranging from Dyslexia and ASD awareness sessions, to training on the use of assistive technology, and also set up a very successful ASD youth club.

Furthermore, the school's Community Hub has organised a number of social events in collaboration with our PTA such as a Halloween disco, Christmas Fair, and a Summer BBQ. Unfortunately, with everything put on hold in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and as Lockdowns and restrictions continued, the decision was made to move to an online support platform.

The overarching need for support at the time was surrounding Mental Health. To that end, Edmund Rice College decided to put together a range of support resources and programmes and launched on Friday 5th February 2021 to mark the final day of a very uplifting Children's Mental Health week.

The Online Hub raises awareness on a wide variety of community matters ranging from Health & Wellbeing, Careers, eSafety, Additional needs and much more. The Online Hub offers a range of online learning skills programmes, adult GCSE classes, a book club, language classes, cookery classes and meet as many of the community's needs as possible.

With the move to an online platform the College aims to Engage and Reach a wider audience and provide a Digital Toolbox of support and care for the community. While unable to meet face to face, the school continued to offer people support and care remotely from the comfort of their own home, at a time when a sense of community, connection and togetherness was needed more than ever before.

The current college as we know it today owes everything to the contribution of the Christian Brothers over the past century. It is and always will be a Christian Brothers School. Their special ethos is kept alive in every aspect of school life. As a school community we can be proud of our past and look forward to a future based on the foundation laid by so many excellent educators.

Alumni News

What are they up to now?



Aidan Watson

former pupil of St Aidan’s Catholic Academy

My name is Aidan Watson and I attended St Aidan’s Catholic Academy in Sunderland, an Edmund Rice School in the Northeast of England. The opportunities and experiences that I was able to enjoy through the global Edmund Rice network have, without doubt, changed my life.

A long and happy Edmund Rice journey started for me during Year 12 when I took a chance and signed up for the first ever Edmund Rice Summer Camp to be held in Sunderland.

It was somewhat of a risk, since I had never worked with young children before, and I was not sure it would really be my thing. The camps had been running in other UK network schools for some years and we had the support of a great team of leaders from the Wirral and Stoke.

Little did I know that five years later I would not only still be taking part, but I would be leading the camp as mentor!

The experiences I had, the good friends I made, and more than anything else, the impact the camps had on everyone involved: children and leaders alike, are something I can look back on forever and will never forget.

As well as my involvement in the camps, I also had the incredible privilege of travelling to New Delhi, India, and working with the Christian Brothers and their charitable organisations on the ground there. Going as a Year 13 student had such an impact upon me - I was inspired to lead the group when we returned the following year, during which time I worked as part of the school Chaplaincy Team during a Gap Year. I found the place amazing and the work that the Brothers do equally so, which makes it a place I am desperate to return to as soon as I can.

I was also part of the first ever group of Edmund Rice International Ambassadors, selected from each school. As part of this project, we worked to promote social justice in each of our localities, as well as exploring the global human rights advocacy done by ERI. This culminated in a visit to the ERI office in Geneva, where we attended a session at the United Nations Human Rights Council – a truly once in a lifetime chance.

Although I no longer play an active role on camps, I still consider myself very much a part of the network. Upon leaving the camps a few years ago, I remarked that leading the Sunderland Camp for the three years is the thing I am most proud of, and that is still true today as I am about to graduate from Medical School (where there are no less than four alumni from other Edmund Rice schools in my year!).

The experiences I had not only deepened by faith but also empowered me to know what a difference we as individuals are able to make in both charity and advocacy. I am forever grateful to the network, specifically the individuals who supported me and continue to support other students across the UK schools and beyond.

Alumni News

What are they up to now?



I’m James, the founder of ‘Laughter Africa’. We’re a UK Charity but now I live full-time in Sierra Leone... or Salone as the locals call it.

I was inspired to move to Sierra Leone after hearing about the amazing sacrifice of Br Kerrigan when I attended St Anselm’s College, Birkenhead (1996 -2003). For those who don’t know Br Kerrigan was shot and killed during the Sierra Leone Civil war. When I first travelled to Sierra Leone in 2005 with the Edmund Rice Youth Network, I visited Br Kerrigan’s grave.

I remember reading some of Brother Kerrigan’s diary. The first line in the whole diary was “My faith isn’t that strong.” Yet while other NGO workers fled Sierra Leone during the war, he didn’t abandon the country, he stayed, despite knowing the dangers associated with that choice.

Although I never met him, his legacy still inspires me. I hope that one day I can be as brave as him.



‘Laughter Africa’ has been operating in Sierra Leone for six years and in that time has helped around 2,500 street children. We’re not here just to provide handouts, we support the children to fulfil their aspirations and bring about positive change in their lives.

How do we do this? We start with our Outreach Program, where our local Social Workers meet the children living on the streets. It’s a chance for them to get to know us and for us to deal with any immediate needs they have such as medical treatment, food, water, and to provide counselling. Our aim is to encourage children to leave the streets behind, but without forcing them; it has to be their choice.

When a child decides they want to leave the streets, they stay at our Interim Care Centre (ICC) whilst our Social Workers track down their family and ensure it is a safe environment for the child to return to. We provide counselling to the family and child, in the hope that the original issues that led to them turning to the streets are resolved.

Once the child has returned to their family, or to an alternative safe place to live, we continue to check-in on them and pay for their schooling or vocational training. We also offer other support such as medical treatment, home essentials, support to start a business, whatever is needed to keep the child at home and off the streets. We also advocate and campaign for appropriate Government policy for street children.

I am truly grateful to St Anselm’s College who first placed Sierra Leone in my heart. As we say in Salone...Tenkie, Tenkie!

We would love to hear from other alumni and feature you in our magazine, Get in touch and let us know what you are doing now.

A portrait of Michael Kennedy, a middle-aged man with short grey hair, smiling. He is wearing a grey suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red and white striped tie. A small school crest is pinned to his jacket. The background is a blurred interior with warm lighting.

HeadSpace

Michael Kennedy
Principal, St Mary's College,
Liverpool

How many of us can truthfully claim to have charted our destiny at sixteen and then gone on to complete it exactly as planned?

Certainly not the case for me: I didn't think I wanted to teach until one morning, just before a Biochemistry lecture at Liverpool University, we were addressed by someone from the School of Education saying, "today there are classes of children not far from here without a chemistry teacher. Could that person be you?" And the rest, as they say... I like to think that this enables me to empathise with our pupils when they are equally undecided about their own future.

My progression through the education system was relatively unremarkable at first: Maricourt High School, Maghull for O-Levels (yes, it was that long ago!) and A-levels; Liverpool University for a combined degree in Macromolecular Chemistry with Industrial Studies and then onto a PGCE at Christ's College (now Liverpool Hope University). Yet, my greatest sense of achievement at that time was running the University Open Air Club (walking and mountaineering in the Lakes, Snowdonia, and Scotland) with the challenge of the organisation of such ventures nearly every weekend. It turned out to be something that made me think that education was about far more than just passing exams; interesting to speculate how much that also charted my destiny.

My first teaching post was at St. Thomas More's in Stoke-on-Trent: a good place to learn and some great colleagues to work with. One of them persuaded me to help with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and this showed pupils in a different light, with dimensions to their character that were never going to be seen in school: truly an eye-opener for appreciating a genuinely holistic education. At that stage, the extent of my ambition was to become a Head of Chemistry.

A significant change in direction came with a move to Stonyhurst: Jesuit, boarding, weekends, all-consuming yet immensely satisfying. Adaptability came to the fore: Fr Michael Bossy SJ (a great name for a Headmaster) mentioned in my letter of appointment, 'I am sure you will enjoy learning how to coach Rugby' (hitherto I had never played the game at all).

Once again, it was my colleagues from whom I learnt the most (and appreciated, with hindsight, their subtle guidance and management of me into an alien system). As one of them put it, 'I am not a teacher, I am a schoolmaster': the important difference being everything that went on beyond the classroom to develop the many facets of an individual's character.

My main legacy to Stonyhurst was to introduce the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which helped fill many a boring weekend for the boarders but also challenged them to achieve something special personally.

After reaching the position of House Master - they call it 'Playroom Master' at Stonyhurst, which sounds as if I was in charge of emptying the Pool Table and replacing the Table-tennis balls - I took the opportunity to join St Anselm's in 1994 as Head of Science: it was independent then but had plans to 'opt-in' to the maintained system, which came to fruition a year later; St Edward's, St Ambrose, and St Joseph's joined this move in the subsequent years; ironic that St Mary's College remained independent, the odd one out due to hostility from the Archdiocese after the terms of the St Edward's conversion caused dispute.

It was in those early years at St Anselm's that, during one frustrating day of the conversion process, Chris Cleugh remarked, 'Mike, you will be a Head long before I get this place sorted out'. It was a throwaway comment but stopped me in my tracks: the first time that Headship might be a possibility for me. Never under-estimate the power of an encouraging remark to empower someone else. In a relatively rapid sequence, I became Senior Teacher then Deputy Head, yet the important dimension remained the wider education: Edmund Rice gatherings, joint INSET days, Duke of Edinburgh, sport, music.

After spending two years as Head at Oakhill College (a small Catholic school in Lancashire) I returned to the ER fold in 2008 as Principal at St Mary's. Coinciding with the 'credit crunch', the first few years were very challenging financially, but I am privileged to have such a committed and dedicated staff, fantastic pupils, and tremendously supportive parents, who nearly all 'get' what an Edmund Rice education is about: the ER essential elements of the Christian Mission, developing young people holistically and exhorting them to achieve excellence in all they can. Lucky me.

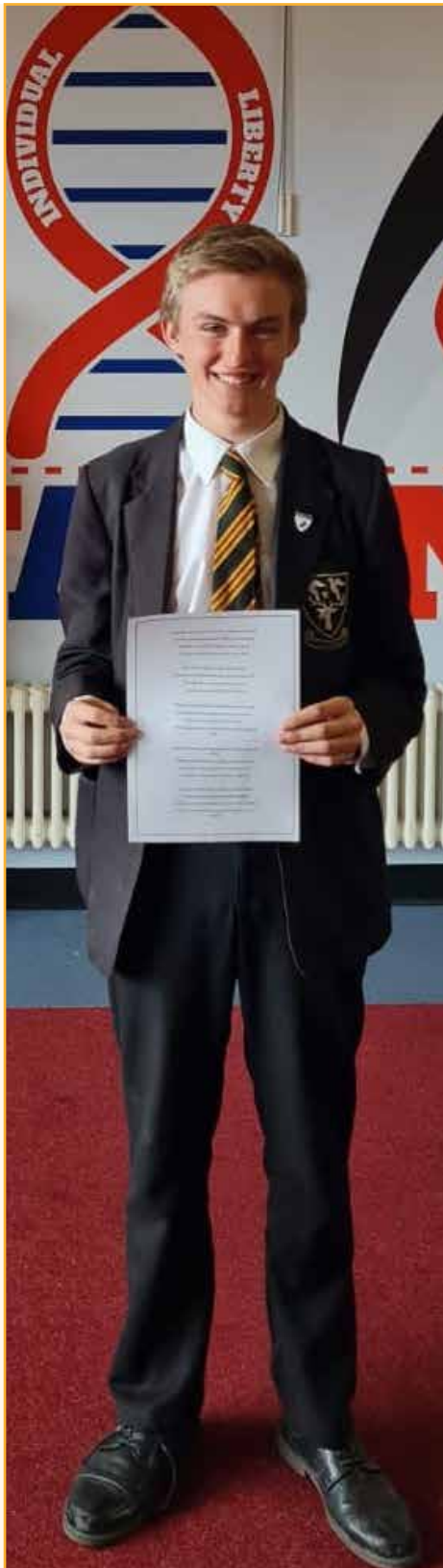
As part of our Academy initiative to promote the wellbeing of our staff, students, and local community, we have been working on a variety of projects linked to mental health, physical wellbeing, and environmental issues.

Our strong community spirit, the core values of hard work, trust, and fairness, as well as the many inspiring Gospel messages have helped us to overcome the challenges we faced and continue to face throughout the pandemic.

Upon our return to school, we all felt a strong sense of joy to be united once again as a school community. When reflecting on our journey, we felt grateful to have been able to serve one another and we also considered how we have been served and continue to be served by our local community over the past year.

Because of the overwhelming acts of sacrifice and the inspiring perseverance that all our local key workers continue to demonstrate despite their own personal challenges brought by the pandemic, as an academy we wanted to show our appreciation for their hard work.

We have decided to do this with a message from all of us at St Aidan's, which we passed on to all our wonderful local businesses that serve our students and have helped us all to maintain some normality. It includes a poem created by one of our Year 11 students, who gave his time to put into words how we all feel. Key Workers, we value you, we admire you and we thank you.



This is a short quotation from Adam, the author of the poem.

“During the first lockdown my mam worked in a hospital as a key worker for the NHS and this experience allowed me to notice the key workers working their hardest for people other than themselves. I really appreciate the role that they played in keeping us all safe and providing for us in their own ways in such an unfamiliar time.”

Keep the rules, control the virus, reduce the spread,
It's all over the news and it's filling us with dread,
Always in my hoodie, hair too long to quiff,
The fear of having Covid every time I sniff,
The world around us almost stood still,
Except for the keyworkers who have a strong will,
Their familiar sounds helping us cope,
Keeping us going and giving us hope,
The bins being collected, deliveries on the street,
The teachers online giving us chances to meet
Sirens and flashes of blue and red,
The neighbours' cars starting whilst we're lying in bed,
Men and women working together to find a miracle cure,
Communities combining, giving aid to the poor,
The smell of takeaways on a lockdown run,
Community challenges keeping things fun,
The taste of food from a freshly stocked shelf,
So many helping with our mental health,
Let's Rise up and thank them and give them support,
To all the unsung heroes proudly together we've fought.

We recently appointed our Student Leadership Team for September 2021:

Head Boy: Michael Nwaiwu, and Deputy Head Boys: Tom Wildman, Ronan McAuliffe, and Peter Barnard, along with Assistant Head Boys, Senior Prefects, and House Captains.

Our young people of today are tomorrow's leaders.

The mark of a future leader is a student who takes responsibility for himself and others, who works collaboratively and who acts with integrity as a reliable, trustworthy ambassador and role-model.

We are fortunate that almost forty young men in our Year 12 applied for positions within the Student Leadership Team, demonstrating the commitment, ambition and service expected of students at this level.

From the Head Boy to Senior Prefects, specific duties have been assigned, reflecting the key concerns of our student body: outreach and communication; spirituality; ERI/advocacy; mental health; environment; charity; societies; house activities; mentoring/transition; student council; sport; arts and careers. Our current team will work together, strengthening links both within and outside our community and further develop the work commenced by last year's leaders. We feel quite sure that our new team will bear St Augustine's words in mind as they embark upon their new duties: 'Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.'

Each applicant is to be congratulated and every young man who applied should be applauded for making his desire known to become involved in student leadership. However, following a rigorous application process and interview, a team of just twenty-one students has been appointed. Mr Rainey, as ever, was 'humbled and proud' to interview for key positions and found the task of choosing the right balance for this year's team 'a challenge - albeit a very pleasant one!' There were evident strengths demonstrated by all applicants who displayed remarkable enthusiasm, dedication, and clarity in their presentations. The experience of being interviewed is a worthwhile one which will stand each applicant in good stead for the future.



Naturally, there will be disappointment for those who have not secured a position of responsibility. St Aquinas teaches us that 'Grace builds on nature.' It is our human nature to feel anger, sadness, hurt, and other painful emotions when life confronts us with disappointment. It is our human nature to avoid being vulnerable. But, when life puts us in a vulnerable place, God's grace gives us a solution: do what Jesus did. Express your feelings, turn with trust to the Father, and choose to keep on loving and serving; there will be ample opportunity for all students to use their initiative and assist those on the Student Leadership Team going forward.

Any student who has a burning desire to make a positive impact on the school or his wider environment - whether through fundraising or mentoring - will certainly have the opportunity to become involved. One of the applicants who interviewed for the position as House Captain reminded us of St John Henry Newman's words: 'He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.'

Message from our new Student Leadership Team:

The week beginning 10th May saw the appointment of the new Student Leadership Team for St Ambrose College, with the Head Boy and three Deputies looking forward to working together with the Assistant Head Boys and Senior Prefects in getting the school back to normal after a tumultuous year of lockdown and restrictions. Deputy Head Boy, Ronan McAuliffe, and Senior Prefect, Archie Kington, began the leadership campaign by producing a presentation on the theme of mental health, in the light of mental health week, to be shown to the whole school in our virtual assemblies. This topic is especially important coming out of the last year of lockdown where many adolescents have felt the psychological effects of isolation. In his endeavour to get the school running as usual again, Deputy Head Boy, Peter Barnard, will be working towards providing more outside-of-lesson opportunities for students around the school.

He commented “in my vision as Deputy Head Boy, I believe that the next school year will be an opportunity to build a stronger sense of community spirit, which will be essential as we move out of lockdown. Due to me being part of the Student Leadership Team corresponding with ‘The Arts’, we are hoping to build on these subjects, offering new extra-curricular ideas which we are excited to plan and create. I hope that everyone will be able to strive for excellence through this community in both academics and otherwise, allowing us to be inspired and take advantage of everything St Ambrose College has to offer to all students next year”.

Similarly, Thomas Wildman, Deputy Head Boy, begins to work towards more diverse opportunities for boys after their time at the college. He aims to show that taking the ‘standard’ route and going to university is not the only option and will give more of an insight into other exciting careers many may not have thought about. These may be achieved through pathways such as degree apprenticeships. The Edmund Rice International team began brainstorming ideas to raise awareness around the human rights of no discrimination and that everyone has the right to marriage and family, they hope to achieve this by advocating against homophobia and bullying. The team are also due to meet with Brother Ger O’Connell, who will talk to us about his life and his current mission, supporting asylum seekers at SERV in Salford. We also hope to be able to start visiting SERV on a regular basis to support Br Ger in this mission. The Eco-Committee with Head Boy, Michael Nwaiwu, and Assistant Head Boy, Oliver Rose, have launched plans for the year ahead and set a goal to reduce the amount of plastic St Ambrose contributes to the environment. We are committed to eventually reach our ‘plastic-free’ goal in the canteen system. Initial steps are being taken and a meeting with B & M Waste Disposal contractors is in the schedule. All of this is also part of our plan to recycle more plastic as a school and do our part as stewards of God’s creation.

We have been looking at Sacramental Imagination in RE with Year 7 and Samuel R submitted this poem that he had written in response:

Sacramental Imagination

A black-spined book that spirits you away,
A calm bouquet of flowers,
A blue pen, a calming headphone, a wooden mat
A ticking clock, a comforting tea, a bright candle,
A radio that talks quietly, a light that shines
Each sacramental thing remains itself and means He
who is brimming with eternal knowledge,
created a world of undeniable beauty,
gave us creativity, gave us consideration, gave us strength
created time, created warmth, let there be light,
allows for communication, allows for seeing
gives us infinite beginnings, middles and ends.



Lent fundraising

Throughout the year, but especially during Lent, forms work together to raise money for charities.

Year 7 chose to support St Ambrose Academy. St Ambrose College is twinned with St Ambrose Academy in Sierra Leone.

We regularly raise money to support the Academy. In the past, funds have been raised for a new borehole, books, and equipment. St Ambrose Academy caters for the educational and social welfare of all students from the very poorest of backgrounds. Most years students from the College are able to visit Sierra Leone on an immersion experience, which is a truly special experience for all students and staff in both schools.

During Lent Year 7 held various events to raise money. From sponsored runs and bike rides to online Minecraft and Fortnite tournaments, the boys came up with some excellent ideas.



I was very surprised no one was keen on my idea to give up screens for a weekend! The Year 7 team effort raised over £650 and lots of fun was had by all.

Year 8 were very keen to support NHS staff and Cancer Research, as they are all in awe of the effort and the courage displayed by medical staff during the pandemic. After much negotiation, we decided to support Cancer Research as some Year 8s have been personally affected by the condition. Amazingly, very few Year 8 took up the Sponsored silence challenge, which no doubt would have been very popular with staff and families.

The Guessing Jar challenge proved to be very popular and one very lucky Year 8 won over 150 delicious sweets and made a lot of people envious. Thanks to the PE staff and a few volunteers amongst teachers, it was also possible to organise a penalty shoot-out competition, that participants and spectators very much enjoyed, and it raised over £100 on the day.



International Women’s Day

We marked International Women’s Day on Monday 8th March. During PHSE lessons the students discussed the achievements of women, the growth of women’s rights but also how women still do not always have equality:

The murder of Sarah Everard has been a shocking realisation for us all of the difficulties women face; even in something as simple as walking home. Following this event, the country was hit with a shocking statistic that 97% of women had been sexually harassed. A number of conversations have taken place following a recent school assembly on this issue. It hurt me to think that this could have affected my own sister or my own mother. But what is such a shame is that on social media following the incident, hostility between people rose up; some defending men from allegations, and some calling for revenge.

It is so important that we work together to make the world a safer and more accepting environment for women and, as Ambrosians, we can be advocates for change. As an all-boys’ school, it is easy to become isolated from women and start developing incorrect assumptions about what is and isn’t an appropriate way to behave around women, or even talk about women.

We should aim to educate ourselves about what is respectful and what can be classed as harassment, so that we can prevent future events, such as the Sarah Everard case, from ever happening again.

James Allen, Year 11



St Anselm’s College CHARITY RACE OFF!!

The stage was set. The hype and tension were spreading throughout the College’s one way system. Friday 16th April was no ordinary day in the calendar for St Anselm’s College.

Yes, it was the last day of term, but this is not what caused the electric buzz filling the classrooms. A pay-per-view event was to take place at 13:20 live via Teams. All the forms had raised money to subscribe to the event. All money raised was distributed across the College Lenten charities. Over £750 was raised before the race, in just a few days, for this once in a lifetime spectacle.

Mr Hyde, a maths teacher, and HOY = weighing in at just shy of 15 stone, was to take on Joshua Hale, a Sixth Form, Team GB Athlete, in a 5km race along the promenade in New Brighton. With a personal best of 25 minutes 10 seconds, Mr Hyde was awarded a 9 minute 30 second head start. Commentary came back to the College from a variety of staff who all fancy themselves as armchair experts. Joshua set off at some pace. He had to run a personal best himself to win the race. With 400 meters to go a galloping Hale flew past Hyde at a speed of 20km/h. This was actually the speed he averaged as he ran an extraordinary time of 15 minutes and 3 seconds (yes, that’s 3 minutes per km!!). Mr Hyde’s personal best was smashed by 40 seconds, but this was still not enough to be victorious.

At the end of the day, over £1000 had been raised. A truly inspiring event which reflects the spirit and charitable mind set of our College community.

Mr Hyde

Mr Hyde



Diocesan mini DASH

Oli, Anthony, Josh, and Alfie from Year 7 joined today’s Diocesan Youth Meeting which focussed on Pope Francis and his invitation to us all to treat everybody around us well and to support those that need our help.

Pope Francis encourages us to live lives of love and service and to ‘dream big’. His message is inspiring, and the boys greatly enjoyed their morning and worked hard. They presented their findings to Diocesan Headteachers (including Mr Duggan) at the end.

Louise Baines



New Chapel pictures

Fr Bernard Forshaw, old Anselmian and Parish Priest of St Anne’s and St John’s parishes, visited the College this term to bless our new Chapel pictures.

These were generously donated by Mr James Featherstone, old Anselmian and former Chair of Governors, and his wife Moira.



Connecting Classrooms,
Caring for our Earth

St Anselm’s College are connecting with other Edmund Rice schools both locally and globally. As a College, we are involved in numerous activities to help the community and reduce food waste.

In January 2020, just before the pandemic, 15 pupils across all Key Stages visited the B&M recycling plant. (B&M is the College’s Waste Management Company.) The pupils were involved in workshops, where they were educated on the responsible disposal of waste and were shown how waste is sorted at the plant. The workshops were also used to give us ideas about how we can reduce waste in the College. After the visit to the plant, the pupils involved brought the information back to College and promoted the ideas by speaking in assemblies. This was used as a means to raise awareness and help reduce waste.

In recent years, we have reduced the use of single-use plastics by replacing plastic bottles with aluminium cans in vending machines and in the canteen. More water fountains have been installed in order to promote the use of reusable bottles and to encourage students to refill their own water bottles.

Our College has been a long-time supporter of the Wirral food bank - the Junior SVP organise the collection of tinned food for the foodbank harvest regularly throughout the year. The Charles Thompson Mission is another charity St Anselm’s helps. This is a local charity, which provides food, shelter, clothing, and kindness to anyone who is struggling with life.

It helps homeless people in our local area in particular. Students often visit the Charles Thompson Mission to deliver donated food the College have been collecting and to see how the Mission works. St Anselm’s College has also supported this charity by producing and selling the Bandemic Album: an album comprising songs by student and staff bands.

Helping the local community is at the core of our spiritual and moral education at St Anselm’s and this is extended to helping Asylum Seekers through the charity, Asylum Link. In supporting the people at Asylum Link, staff, pupils, and their families, recycle clothes, furniture, and essential household items by donating them to those who are trying to create a temporary home for their families, while escaping conflict in their own countries.



The College’s Eco-Group have done a terrific job in promoting environmental issues. We have an annual Earth Hour, where all technology is switched off. The group have also grown vegetables in the garden. The produce has been used to make cakes for Nazareth House, a nursing home near the College and has also been used in DT cooking lessons.

St Anselm’s College has formed a strong, long-standing relationship with Wirral Eco-Schools, and we have been active participants in various waste-related projects. One of these projects involved creating an educational, promotional video with other Wirral schools. The video focused on reducing food waste and is called ‘The Last Straw’. We engage in regular litter picking around local nature reserves and beaches. All staff and students also participated in the global Edmund Rice volunteering day, which focused on similar initiatives. We are already planning how we will continue to reduce waste among staff, students, and the wider community. We will, of course, always support the charities The Charles Thompson Mission, Wirral Foodbank and Asylum Link. We also endeavour to continue to promote what we have learned from the B&M Waste Management plant. We will speak to pupils at assemblies and advertise the ideas with posters and on the College’s social media.

We are currently working alongside pupils from CBC St John’s in Capetown and other partner schools, in order to reduce the amount of food waste in our schools and communities on different parts of the world.

Firstly, we are sharing traditional recipe ideas with each other. Here in England, we will attempt to make a traditional South African dish and will share photos and videos showing our cooking skills and what we have produced. Hopefully we will do our partners proud!

The next stage of our project will be to encourage pupils in both countries to monitor their food usage at home. They will record how much food is thrown out after each meal and how much is thrown out before it is even used. This will be monitored through an online survey after a week of recording results at home. All pupils in both schools will be encouraged to take part. Following the results, pupils at St Anselm’s and CBC St John’s will share and compare results. They will come up with recipe suggestions for how these unused foods can be transformed into a meal and this will be shared with the wider school community online and with posters created in College.

We are excited to, not only be working with pupils from other Edmund Rice schools around the world, but also to be helping to promote a better way of living for our generation and for future generations.

We hope, by working together, we can create a healthier, brighter future for all.

Thomas Jones and Harvey McGrath Year 10

Have times changed?

The Year 7 students of St Anselm’s College have been very pleased to be involved in a project with Four Seasons (Grove House Care Home Wirral).

‘Swapsies’ requires students to write about school life in 2021 and, in return, learn about the school life of days-gone-by by reading accounts written by residents of Grove House.

Lessons may have changed; playground antics may have changed but school children are still school children...

The project promises to be an interesting and insightful experience for all involved...the young and not quite so young!

Mr Luxemburg, Teacher of English, Year 7 Form Tutor





Edmund Rice Advocacy Group

The January lockdown saw a great expansion in the Edmund Rice Advocacy group at St Edward’s largely due to many Sixth Formers wanting a greater community feel and reflection at home.

William Morris and Kate Watkins, Edmund Rice Youth Ambassadors 2020/21, though not able to travel to Geneva as previous years did, led the group in many ways. Some examples include organising and planning an event for next term, in memory of Mr Mourani involving a Mass, music, dance, poetry and refreshments; a Bag 2 School collaborative project, alongside 10 other Liverpool schools, to which every pupil would bring a bag of clothes into the College to be recycled accumulating one tonne with proceeds being sent to Caritas Lebanon; a T-Shirt design competition, linking re-cycling and over-consumption of fast fashion; and ZOOM calls with co-ordinators of the Liverpool World Centre and Faiths 4 change, in collaboration with the Textiles and Geography Departments, who provided us with great knowledge of Fast Fashion as a whole, and ways of reducing our own carbon footprint.

Meanwhile, the KS3 Faith in Action extra-curricular groups have been keeping busy, meeting regularly in Year Group bubbles.

The Year 7 cohort help set up for the candles for weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and have been designing and colouring Easter Cards, which were sent to Churches in the Holy Land.

Designing and producing posters to publicise Masses, prayer services and Chaplaincy events has also been part of their remit.

Year 8 have enjoyed playing the board game “Gospel story” by Redemption publications, learning about the four Gospels.

They have also assisted with the Food bank collection, as have Year 9. All groups have taken part in Reflection Points produced by Animate on ‘Loving thy neighbour’, ‘Loving God’, ‘Loving Thy Neighbour’ and “Servant Leadership.”



Mr Mourani’s Memorial of Light

In November 2020, St Edwards College lost a beloved member of our community, the one and only Maroun Mourani. Mr Mourani was a bright light, not only in school but throughout his life, and therefore, on the 16th of December pupils and staff participated in a Memorial of Light to honour him.

Mr Mourani, played a huge part in Hope House, his competitive edge always leading us to victory in any house competitions! He adored every member of Hope and valued every person for their individual talents. He pushed everyone in Hope House to the best of their ability, and we adored him too. Miss Pimblett, our Head of House, along with Miss Hughes, a Form Teacher in Hope and Head of the English Faculty, were determined to give the pupils in Hope an opportunity to celebrate his life and honour the memory of their dear colleague, friend and teacher, Mr Mourani and to raise money for CAFOD in Lebanon.



Year 11 pupils, in Miss Hughes’ form spent time researching the best way we could do this. We came to the conclusion that, lumieres with battery- powered candles placed inside to illuminate them were the perfect answer. Each student in the House of Hope was provided with a lantern. During Form time, we composed messages and decorated each one, individually and personally. In the morning, our DT department and Chaplaincy team arranged flowers, cards, candles, and a picture of Mr Mourani, beautifully decorated and displayed in one of our main corridors, making the memorial accessible for everybody. They also provided the inspiration to have some lumieres hanging from



the ceiling, creating a magical look. Before lunch, each Hope Form group from Year 7-11 visited, to exhibit their lumieres and were led in a prayer of remembrance by a member of their form. This meant that all students of St Edwards could walk past the memorial throughout the day, and even on a rainy Wednesday afternoon, be reminded of the shining spirit within the halls of our school.

The memorial not only honoured the wonderful Mr Mourani, but it also gave us an opportunity to raise funds for Lebanon, which is Mr Mourani’s country of birth. Raising money and supporting Lebanon was something very important for Mr Mourani and was just one of the many acts of selflessness and charity he displayed throughout his life.

The Civil War started in 1975 and continued for 15 years and ever since this, the country has struggled to rebuild. Additionally, as many of you know, this year a huge explosion happened in Beirut, Lebanon’s capital. Passionate to help, the school opened a donations page on PayPal allowing pupils and parents to donate. The reaction we received was incredible; hundreds of pounds were received in a matter of hours, clearly demonstrating how loved Mr Mourani was. Parents, pupils, teachers, and ex-pupils generously donated, and we raised over £850 for CAFOD there. He gave so much to us, and it was a privilege to be able to give back to a cause so close to his heart.

The memorial allowed our school to mourn and remember an incredible man, but more than this we all came together to do so. At a sad time, we remembered to do good, in the dark we created light and no matter how cruel and unfair the world felt, by standing together, love and faith grew strong.

Faith in Action Group

St Edward's College since 2020 have been busy working after school in their Year Group Bubbles on their 'Faith in Action' Awards.

Reflecting on what it means to "Love Thy Neighbour" and "Love God", they have made and sent Easter cards to the Holy Land Catholic parishes, as well as collecting socks for the homeless.

They have continued to work on Food Bank Collections, with the Edmund Rice Advocacy Group, who are becoming involved in a large Textile Re-cycling project called The Ten Tonne Challenge, involving nine other schools, the Liverpool World Centre and Faiths4change.

This will be a fundraiser for Caritas Lebanon and will take place on one day in June - Tuesday 29th, when everyone will bring in a bag of textiles to be weighed and donated. A busy term all round.

Friday 19th March
St Joseph's Feast Day

Each year our school celebrates our feast day with a whole school Mass. Unfortunately, this year we weren't able to do that so instead the RE department and some students organised a liturgy over Zoom for us all.

Every single pupil and staff member across our community logged in at the same time, we could see one another's forms on the screen, and it really felt like we were all together.



We were encouraged to think about the Year of St Joseph and in particular Pope Francis' favorite image of the sleeping St Joseph. We were all asked to reflect on the past year, its strengths and challenges, and write down some of our worries and concerns, we then sent a representative from each form to the chapel, and we could watch everyone's representatives enter via a live feed. We watched the representatives from Year 7 - Year 13 post their form groups' worries and concerns in a postbox under the statue of the sleeping St Joseph. We prayed that St Joseph would take those worries and help us to process them, just as Pope Francis had said he does at the end of his day. Our representative was given a sunflower seed and a pot in return, we have been encouraged to plant our seeds, to nurture them, and as Edmund Rice did, we have nurtured and 'watched the good seed grow' there is a bit of healthy competition between forms to see whose is the biggest, we look forward to planting these flowers in the Remembrance Garden in the Summer term. We ended our celebration with chocolate for everyone. It was so nice to feel part of something so special, and even though we are separate bubbles, we felt united on this important day.

Zara, Year 7 Student



Looking after our mental wellbeing has never been more important. As a school community, we have set mental health high on our agenda and fully recognise the importance of promoting good mental health and supporting those whose mental health is affected

As part of our ongoing commitment to advocating positive mental wellbeing, St. Joseph's College took part in the #HelloYellow campaign in October 2020 as part of World Mental Health Day.

Students and staff were encouraged to wear something yellow and share mental health messages to spread the word that, whatever they are going through, they can talk to someone if they are struggling to cope. This was incredibly well received by the students, and it was uplifting to see so many positive messages of support for their peers!

The school nurse also delivered a special mental health assembly to Year 7 students and outlined a vast range of support networks available to pupils should they need to access them. In addition, form tutors across all key stages disseminated key information about World Mental Health Day, highlighting the importance of showing solidarity with others and to reinforce the notion that students are not alone when it comes to mental health issues.

We were so grateful to every single one of the students who showed support by wearing a yellow accessory. These ranged from socks, ties and scarves to headwear, face paint and nail varnish. One teacher set the bar really high by donning a full-sized banana suit!





Year 7 Poem
I Come From...

I come from... a place of wonder, strife, and beauty:
a place of hope.
I come from... a family that glorifies culture and religion.
I come from... England where it rains all day and there are
never-ending seagulls coming your way
I come from...my place of imagination and childhood
adventures, my TV
I come from... my favourite food chicken goujons.
I come from... my favourite sport mountain biking.
I come from... Sloppy Joes and shepherd’s pie.
I come from... a home who will let me in even if I am
covered in mud after doing sport.
I come from... the town of pots, oatcakes for every meal, I
come from Stoke.
I come from... a fantastic family, mixed with spice and
savoury, all wonderful and phenomenal.
I come from... a past of intense problems and colossal
solutions
I come from... India: a place where the sun never goes by
without passing.
I come from... a culture that grows every time I get
together with my family.
I come from... an American dad and an English mum
I come from... an Indian culture and a beautiful nature.
I come from... 7ES.

I grow with a smile on my face.

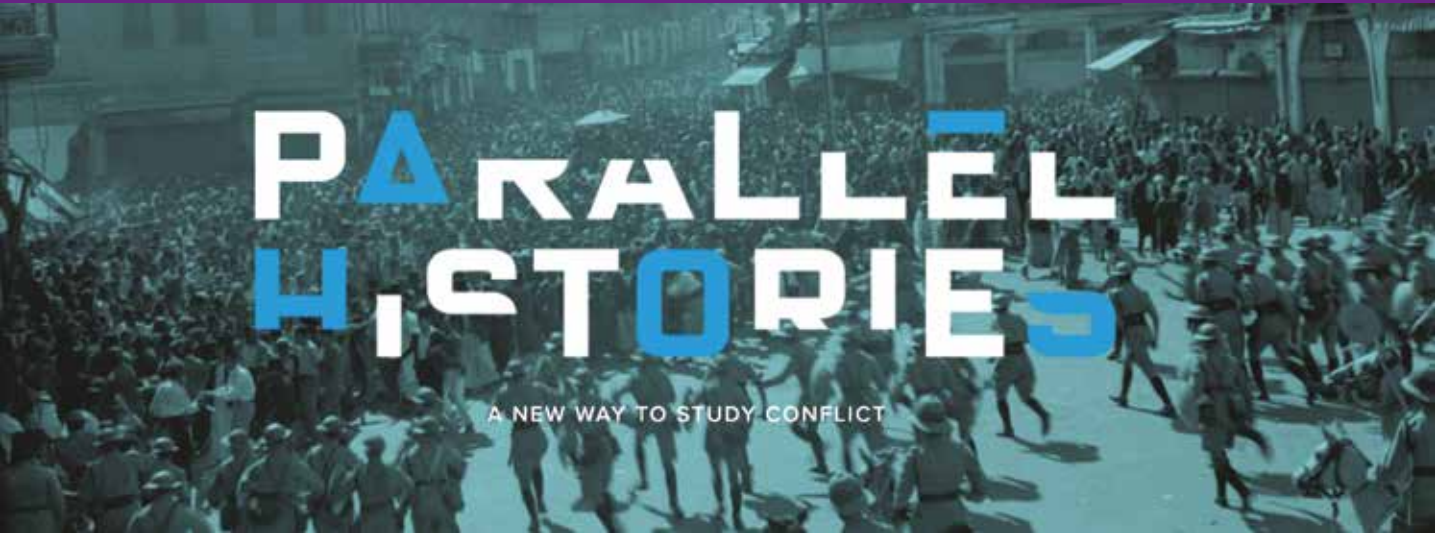
St Joseph’s College
– Lockdown ‘House’
creativity challenge

During the second Lockdown St Joseph’s pupils were asked to take part in a series of creative challenges.

On a weekly basis, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 were set an activity that they spent an hour a day on creating. This was a chance for them to be away from their computer screens, relieve some of the pressure of working from home, to express themselves through Art and to reconnect with their faith.

The House Team was astounded by the standard of work submitted; the students really embraced the challenge. The submissions were shortlisted, and the pupils took part in an online vote for who they thought should be rewarded for their impressive work. Amazon voucher prizes were awarded to the top three winners in each year group.

You can see some of the fabulous entries for each challenge on the next pages:



Parallel Histories

Parallel Histories is an initiative set up to encourage the study of competing narratives of history through independent research, source analysis and debate.

Being part of this programme has been an absolute privilege for each of us. It has allowed us to consider pivotal conflicts in history from different perspectives and to explore topics beyond simply the school curriculum. Furthermore, it has allowed us to not only engage with history among our own peers, but also with students from around the world.

My favourite debate so far has been on the Union of Scotland, and we were lucky enough to debate with a school in France, an opportunity made possible through the online nature of Parallel Histories. Previous debates have centred around the Israel-Palestine conflict and it has been wonderful to see each of us engage so passionately with an infamous issue and consider the story from both sides.

Taking part in Parallel Histories debates has given me the opportunity to research different topics I may have never thought or had an opinion about before. The debates themselves focus on controversial yet relevant issues, and also broaden our knowledge on other countries and problems taking place around the world. Within the team, my role is to create a clear argument and represent a specific point in the debate by researching into the event, find facts and structuring an argument in preparation of presenting it to other schools.

Parallel Histories has helped me to gain confidence in debating with other people, enabled me to hone my researching skills and to create clear, powerful arguments as well as strengthening my ability to work within a team. It has also developed my interest in history by allowing me to actively appreciate a wide range of issues.

Aside from taking part in our own debates, we also had an amazing opportunity to run a mentoring workshop for a younger year group at a local school. We were involved in a training session for Birches Head High School, informing the students on how debates work and how to structure an argument. We all found it greatly beneficial as it helped consolidate our own knowledge on the debating process and how to approach arguments. It was a great opportunity to showcase what we had learned about debating and historical research, but also to help another group do their best in their own debates. I particularly found that Parallel Histories has helped with my own confidence and presentation skills, which was useful when talking to the younger pupils.

We look forward to getting involved in more debates in the future, and some of our members are also about to start a project mentoring and debating with ex-servicewomen, an opportunity we know we will be incredibly rewarding.

Wajeeha Manal, Georgia Willett, Georgina Hull, Priya Eardley

#1 Typography Art

Make a poster/placard containing a statement which reflects your current feelings or something you feel passionate about



#2 – Life through a lens

Create a photo display that reflects your life during lockdown



#3 – Window Art

Create window art that communicates messages of love hope and kindness

#4 – Colour Curation

To thoughtfully arrange and place collected objects into a display which you can photograph



The designs produced and the audio recordings from the pupil panel will be used by Google in-house to develop changes for students all around the world. They are combining their research from St Joseph’s College with the views from a group of students from New York.

Google will also be presenting their research findings with the ICO (Information Commissioner’s Office), hopefully our student voice will steer changes nationally and globally for children. Year 7 student Tom Simpson said, “Changes are really needed to improve online safety for future generations. Hopefully our ideas will help children be more informed about website security.”

Year 7 student Luise Punitharaja said, “I enjoyed the experience of sharing my opinions; it really made us consider whether would know how to spot a secure website and know how to avoid dangers online.”

Pictured: (left to right) Conor McGrath, Luise Punitharaja, Tom Simpson

Ms Jade Banks, House Leader, St Joseph’s College

St Joseph’s College students voice their thoughts on Internet Safety

St Joseph’s College students in Key Stage 3 recently worked with a childhood research expert who were gathering research on behalf of global search engine company Google.

St Joseph’s College students in Key Stage 3 recently worked with a childhood research expert who were gathering research on behalf of global search engine company Google. Google wanted to research the views of children on the topic of ‘Digital Data Privacy’ with a view to improving their software globally for children on all of their platforms (Google search engines, Google classroom, YouTube) They are aiming to build a ‘Global framework for their policy on data privacy’.

Students across the year groups completed a mind-map and character design activity, which was sent to the research company for analysis and then the four students from Year 7 took part in a live pupil panel on Teams with the research agency. The pupil panel spoke about their experiences of the digital world.



St Joseph’s College Year 7 Poetry – The World I Dream Of...

Oh Such a World I Dream of

by Morta Kulyte

I dream of no discrimination,
No rights to be taken away,
For education to be a need,
Pollution to be no good.

I dream of no litter,
No rubbish to be dropped,
Our community to be just clean,
Everything to be a dream.

I dream of kindness to be present,
No bullying to be shown,
Everyman to be free,
Whatever race they may be,
Oh such a world I dream of,
Oh such a world I need.

Change

by Kaelynn Da Trindade

I dream of a world with no abuse, to animals or people.
I dream of a world with no litter.
I dream of a world with no crime.
A world where all beliefs are ok to have: Muslim, Christian, Catholic, Buddhist.
A world with free education, free food, free hospital trips.
I wish there was no bullying, so that it didn’t have to drive people to become depressed.

I dream of a world where people are not mean to others.
A world with no favouritism.
I dream of a world where people listen.
A world with no virus so people can be happy.
A world where we take care of the animals, the planet, ourselves.
I dream of a world where children can dream without being trapped.
Of a world, where women have rights.
A world with peace.

I dream of a world with no trapped animals.
Of a world with love and happiness,
A world with confidence in others and yourself.
I dream of a world where children can have heroes without being judged.
Of a world where you don’t feel insecure.
A world where you don’t have to be afraid of what people think of you.
Where everyone feels loved and not let down.
Where everyone gets a chance to live.
Where you don’t dump babies, children, and animals on the road.

I dream of a world where you are accepted for who you are.
Of a world where you can share ideas and not be judged.
A world where you can be with whom you want.
A world, with changes.

The World I have Dreamt of

by Lily-Grace Clarke

I dream that man and woman shall be the same,
No woman shall be silenced.
A world where you can walk without keys between your fingers,
A world where you don’t have to be scared of the public.

I dream of a community that works together,
Neighbours who have each other’s backs.
A community where you don’t need to worry,
A community that is like a family.

I dream that peers are seen as equal,
Nobody is judged for being different.
A school where you can talk your mind,
A school where you can be yourself.



The Climate Crisis

I was fortunate enough to participate in a three-session course on Climate Action and Laudato Si earlier this month, run by Edmund Rice International.

It really deepened my understanding of the Climate Crisis we face globally, and above all it brought home both the sense of urgency of how we need to act, and the fact we are all responsible for our planet – we cannot simply ignore the problem in the hope it will go away. The course was not pessimistic but rather, on the contrary, it instilled in me a sense of optimism about the impact collective action can have.

With this in mind, I decided to use the theme of climate change as my assembly to mark the occasion of Edmund Rice Day with Lower School pupils. My form and I planned the assembly to focus on the upcoming COP26 in Glasgow. My form highlighted to their peers what COP26 was about and how we as a school can help facilitate change through campaigning and lobbying. As part of this initiative, we have decided to start a weekly lunchtime Lower School advocacy group to compliment the Sixth Form ERI work around lobbying. The sessions will begin after half term and focus on campaigns that the pupils want to promote - beginning with Climate Change. We are very much looking forward to getting underway and making some real changes about how we as individuals and collectively think about our impact on our planet.

Mr Ray Lee, History Teacher, St Mary's College

Young Writers' Poetry Competition success for our Year 7 poets

I was fortunate enough to participate in a three-session course on Climate Action and Laudato Si earlier this month, run by Edmund Rice International.

Congratulations to Year 7 pupils Maddie, Daniel, Luke, Anna, Erin and Daisy, who have all achieved success in the Young Writers Poetry Competition 'Imagination'.

Our six young poets entered the competition and all of them have been selected to be published in the Young Writers' Poetry Anthology. They wrote a range of imaginative and creative poems, showing real skill in their use of language and imagery.

The poems were a real delight to read, and the students are to be congratulated for their achievement. We are certainly very proud of them!

Maddie, Daniel, Luke, Anna, Erin and Daisy were presented with their winner's certificates in an assembly.



Ruth Mwandumba has National Diversity Award in her sights

We are incredibly proud of former St Mary's pupil and CCF cadet, Ruth Mwandumba, who has been nominated for the Positive Role Model Award in the National Diversity Awards 2021.

Ruth is the first black, female athlete to represent England and become English Champion in the sport of target shooting. She is a fantastic role model and a perfect example of a pupil who made the most of all the different activities on offer at St Mary's; she got involved with music, drama, sport and especially the Combined Cadet Force, where she discovered and developed her talent for shooting.

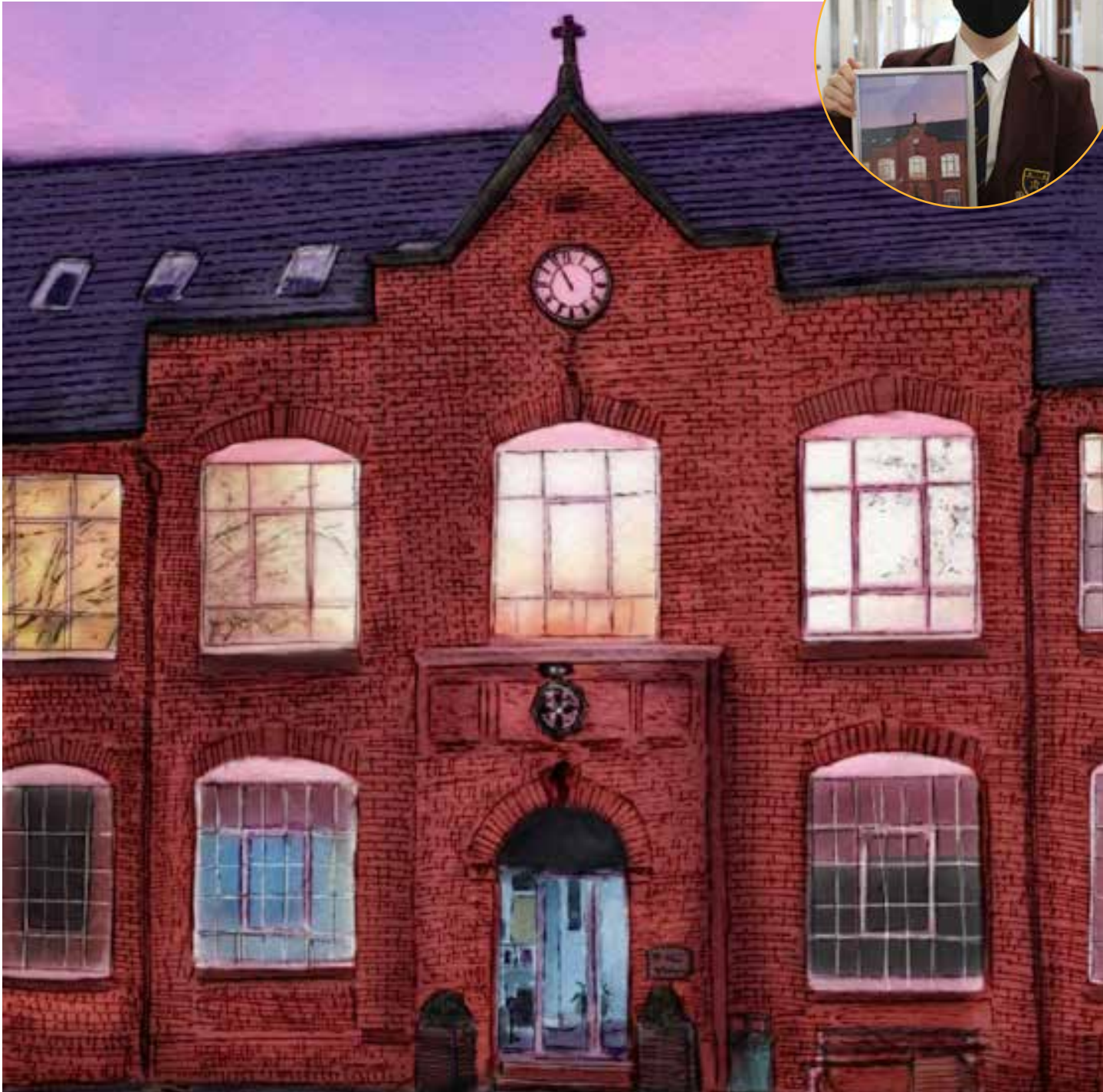
Please get behind Ruth by voting for her via the following link:

www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/nominate/32921/

It's not a photograph... it's a painting!

Check out this beautiful ink and watercolour painting of St Mary's by talented Year 11 pupil Jamie, who painted it for the Year 11 Yearbook.

Jamie has kindly given permission for us to display his original painting in the main reception area.



World Book Day

We celebrated World Book Day this year with much enthusiasm. The children dressed as their favourite characters and whilst we were not able to celebrate with a parade as usual, we enjoyed getting to see what the children dressed as - either in school or at home.



St Ambrose Prep welcomes girls!

This year, St Ambrose Prep announced it would be welcoming girls.

We have a number of girls joining us in the Autumn Term, and look forward to expanding our school as coeducational.

Mr Driscoll, the headmaster, said "We're delighted to offer families of both girls and boys an opportunity to be part of our wonderful, caring community. By extending our rich and diverse education we will be able to provide a family-based school which can serve daughters and sons together."



Stations of the Cross

During Holy Week in March, all year groups devoted some time to visiting the Stations of the Cross, as we reflected on what Jesus did for us when he died on the cross.

At each station, the children learned about each part of Jesus’ walk through the Holy Week and said prayers for others. They wrote reflections on their desires in the hope that God may hear them.



This school year has gone so fast, though we haven't always been in school. When we came back to school in January, we weren't prepared for things to change after just one day. The staff and pupils here at St Joseph's Prep School rose to that challenge without hesitation. Online teaching wasn't easy to start with and there were a number of small hitches to overcome, but we got there in the end.

Seeing everyone online and having those keyworker children in school was great, but I think everyone, including parents, were overjoyed when we were all able to be back together, in bubbles, at school. Prep 6 have been able, with the help of Teams, to have time with Tom and work on their Edmund Rice Awards this term. I know that these have been enjoyed and have stimulated discussions within the class. Due to teaching bubbles, I haven't been able to be as involved as I would normally be, but, when possible, I have joined in via Teams to hear what they are discussing. Thank you, Tom and Mrs Salt, Prep 6 teacher, for carrying this on in such unusual times.

Though we have been limited to what we have been able to do within our school, we have continued as best as we can to run some of our Lenten Activities. Each class was asked to come up with a way to raise money through being sponsored. In Prep 3 and 4 it was how many catches can be made within a minute. In Prep 5 and 6 they held a sponsored quiz. The EYFS and Pre-Prep 1 and 2 were still able to have their Easter Bonnet Parade. The weather was wonderful which allowed us to all sit outside, in our teaching bubbles to watch them parade around the playground.

As we move into the summer term, we are preparing for end of year concert and Prize Giving. Although this will not be like in previous years, I am sure that this will still be a memorable one for all those involved. Our concert this time is 'Bugsy' and rehearsals are well underway. Prep 5 and 6 have been able to take part in a day retreat at Alton Castle as they were unable to have a residential. They were able to experience different activities, such as: crate building, which using the spiral stacking design Mr Ferris and Lucas were able to nearly reach the top of the wall. The children also experienced the night line, which is when they are blind-folded and use a guidewire to find their way around an outdoor course, and allowing some time for reflection. We were also able to have our May Day assembly, though due to the inclement weather we had to change how we did this, fortunately we were still able to have our May Queen, Eliza, Crowning Mary.

Though this academic year has continued to throw up challenges in all aspects of our lives, whether family, friendships, or work - we hold close to us that we are moving forward in a positive way, to hopefully resuming a more normal way of life, in whatever way God chooses to take us. Give us strength through faith to take the next step whatever this may be. 'I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.' Philippians 4:13

Miss Kent, Edmund Rice Coordinator, St Joseph's Preparatory School



India Fundraising

Thanks to the generosity of our families, we raised £1,150 to help vulnerable communities in India cope with the second surge of COVID-19.

Our pupils were given a night off from homework and asked to bring in a small donation for this privilege.

The funds were sent to DEC to ensure those in need received basic medical treatment quickly.



Radio City Cash for Kids

Our pupils wore Silly Head Wear for a day and raised £300 for local children and young adults living in poverty. Radio City 'Cash for Kids' encourages local businesses and schools to help raise much needed funds to support those in need on our own doorstep.



Theodore, the School Dog

Medical science and research has shown there are many advantages to having a school dog, both to children and adults.

Pets are widely accepted as a powerful aid to stimulation and communication and studies have shown that the presence of a dog in school can improve the wellbeing of the children and lower the rate of anxiety, simply by making the environment happier and more enjoyable.

Other benefits include; -

- Lower people's blood pressure and stress levels.
- Increase levels of dopamine and serotonin.
- Improve physical well-being.
- Dramatically increase positive mood.
- Ease social isolation and help children learn social skills.
- Help young readers gain confidence

Our school dog is Theodore, a 5 year-old Bichon/Poodle cross, who is owned by Teaching Assistant, Miss Benson.

Theodore comes into school every day and is based in the Year 1 classroom but can often be found walking around the school, or out on the playground with the children. He even has his own uniform!

He is a wonderful addition to our school family.



Reception pupils at St Mary's Prep are filmed during their phonics lesson to create 'best practice' training materials for student teachers at Edge Hill University

St Mary's Prep Pupils Prepare Next Generation of Teachers

Pupils at St Mary's College Preparatory School had an exciting time in their phonics sessions recently as they were filmed during lessons as part of a collaboration with Edge Hill University to create training material for current and future student teachers.

St Mary's has a long-standing relationship with Edge Hill University, training several student teachers each year and collaborating on research projects. A number of the current staff are alumni of the university and completed part of their initial teacher education and training with the school.

One of those alumni is Headmaster, Mr Jonathan Webster, who said, "It was lovely to be asked to provide training material for Edge Hill University. It has been a great experience for our teachers, who have seen this as an opportunity to reflect on their phonics teaching, and for our children who can feel that

what they do in class is 'important' enough to be filmed. We firmly believe that phonics is the key tool that enables children to make rapid progress with their reading and writing and we are continually working to ensure our delivery is of the highest standard."

Reading is the keystone of the curriculum at St Mary's College Preparatory School, with the children having access to individual reading sessions four times a week, reading each night, a library and an outdoor library that can be used when they desire.

Assistant Head of Primary Education at Edge Hill University, Nichola Grimshaw, said

"I have worked closely with St Mary's for many years and the priority that the school places on every child learning to read and developing as a life-long reader is apparent as soon as you walk through the door. Our student teachers often comment on the amount of time dedicated to reading and the focus on reading for pleasure. I'm thrilled to now be able to use video of such high-quality exemplar phonics lessons that showcase our own past students to support the professional development of our current and future students."

Earth Day

‘As the world returns to normal, we cannot go back to business-as-usual.’

Our planet is an amazing place, but it needs our help to thrive! On April 22nd our children celebrated Earth Day when we looked at ways we can protect the planet from things like pollution and deforestation. The children spent time looking at recycling and ways to protect our planet in line with the Pope’s Laudato Si message.

The Pope’s Laudato Si message discusses the damage being inflicted on the Earth by humans and calls on ‘every person living on this planet’ to make urgent changes to our lifestyles and how we consume energy in order to protect the planet. It deals with many environmental issues including pollution; climate change; water; loss of biodiversity and decline in the quality of human life.

Students took part in a variety of activities to mark Earth Day. All the children engaged really well in discussions and came up with some excellent ideas that we can all put into practice to help look after our precious Planet Earth.

Mr Quilty said that Year 4 were brilliant and got really involved in discussions:

Emily said, “We really need to remember to turn the lights off!”. Noah said, “it’s everyone’s job to look after our planet.” Sophie said, “We should always choose bottles made of recycled plastic.”

Here are some of the things the children across the school pledged to do:

- Recycle as much as possible
- Walk to school more often
- Turn off electrical items and lights when not in use
- Turn the tap off when brushing our teeth
- Ride our bikes and scooters more,
- Try not to use single use plastics.

Here’s a lovely quote from Yasmin in Reception,
“Pick up rubbish because creatures might get hurt!”



Meaningful May

The month of May’s theme was all about reflecting on what gives our life meaning.

Being a part of something bigger than ourselves and focusing on things that we value is key to our wellbeing.

In May we took time to reflect on what we care about most and kept these things at the front of our minds as our society begins to open up again.

May Is the Month of Mary

May is a very special month in the Catholic calendar as it marks the month of Mary.

This is a time when we should take time to think about Mary and reflect on how she is the Mother of Jesus and Mother to us all.

We looked back through time at the traditional May Procession.

NSPCC Number Day 2021

We supported the NSPCC by taking part in Number Day on Friday 7 May 2021.

Number Day is a great way to make maths fun and bring about a positive, ‘can-do’ attitude towards it. Children solved exciting maths puzzles in our class bubbles, against the clock with Buddy, the ‘Speak out, Stay safe’ mascot.

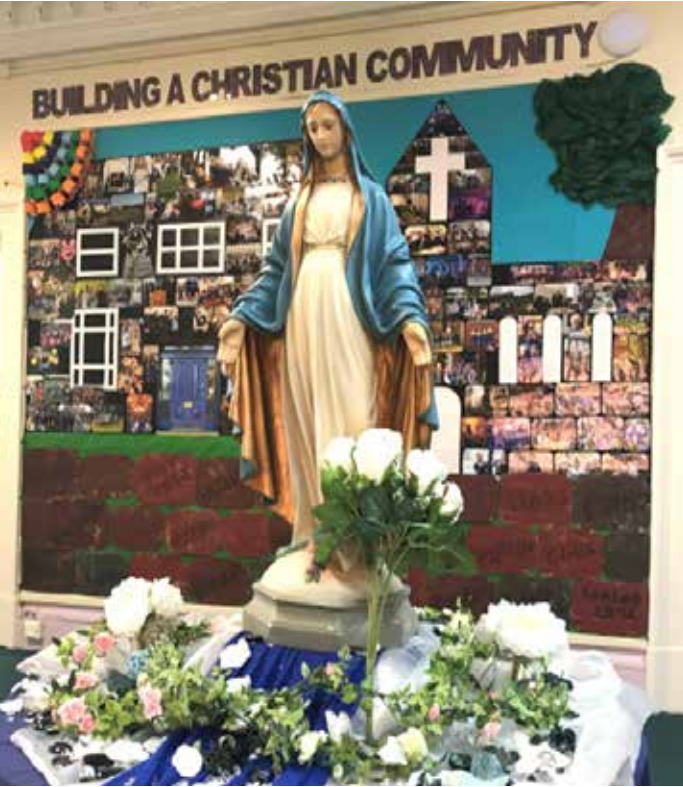
We had a fun day of maths activities, and we took part in in Dress up for Digits. Pupils wore a t-shirt over their uniform with a number on it, an equation or showed their mathematical thinking with a part-part-whole model!

A donation of £356.23 was raised for the NSPCC that day.

The Blessed Edmund Rice Feast Day

On Wednesday 5th May we celebrated the Feast Day of the Blessed Edmund Rice.

Edmund Rice was extremely passionate about education, and his vision for education and young people gave rise to the 8 Essentials of Edmund Rice Education. The children are always looking at how we can all follow in his footsteps at Runnymede.





EDMUND RICE NETWORK: EVENTS CALENDAR FOR SCHOOLS 2021

Useful dates

What	When & Where	
Staff / Governors Induction	23rd September 28th September	3.30-5.30 (Virtual session) 9.00-12.00 (In person, at 'Woodeaves')
ERI Ambassadors Induction	14th October	1.30-3.30
ERI Staff Advocacy Workshop	5th November	1.30-3.30 (Virtual) 2nd Dec. 1.30-4.30 (Live)
ASIST Training	26th /27th November	Live, 'Woodeaves'
Reflections For Heads	29th September 9th December	4.30-6.30 (Virtual) 4.30-6.30 (Virtual)
Chairs / Heads Meeting	6th October	3.30-5.00 (Virtual)
Chaplains Meeting	4th October 10th December	1.30-3.30 (Virtual) 1.30-3.30 (Virtual)
Camp Leaders Gathering	6th November	(Live) Venue TBC
Debating Competition	7th December	(Virtual)

Stay up to date with the latest network news and events on our website

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