

# Edmund Rice Novena

2015

Theme: “**Edmund Rice, Disciple of Christ**”



**Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April – Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Feast Day of Blessed Edmund Rice:**

**Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015**



## Introduction

The first CLT meeting of 2015 took us on pilgrimage/Emmaus journey in the footsteps of Edmund Rice. It was appropriate for us as we began a time of specific discernment and planning as leaders. Our Emmaus journey/Edmund Rice pilgrimage began at Edmund Rice House, North Richmond Street, Dublin. Edmund Rice lived in this house from 1831 – 1838, praying with his brothers, sharing the Charism, discerning and making important decisions.

We stayed at this historic place with the Christian Brothers, prayed in the space where Edmund prayed, sat in his room and reflected on his life and experience. To have our meeting and discussions in this place, for me, gave meaning and significance to our discernment and decisions. This was a special time and experience as I, for the first time, got in touch with this aspect of Edmund's life and history. As the Brothers gave us the tour of the house the history and the significance of Edmund's life and work stood out for me.

The next stage of our pilgrimage took us to Callan, the birth place of Edmund and finally to Mt. Sion. Though familiar places to me, it was a new experience being there with the rest of the team; there was something unique about this time together. It was a time to allow Blessed Edmund to inspire our leadership in an intimate way.

The welcome we received from the three communities of Brothers epitomised the connectedness of the Edmund Rice family, the spirit and Charism that connects us. For me Edmund is experienced and seen in a new way. How is he renewed in your life and experienced in a new way, wherever you are in the world?

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter to all Consecrated people, on the occasion of the year of Consecrated Life, refers to the giftedness of founders:

*“..... So I invite every Christian community to experience this Year above all as a moment of thanksgiving to the Lord and grateful remembrance for all the gifts we continue to receive, thanks to the sanctity of founders and foundresses, and from the fidelity to their charism shown by so many consecrated men and women.”*

We are invited during this time of reflection and prayer to allow the gift and Charism of our founder, Blessed Edmund, to renew and inspire us in our time. So, a question we may ask ourselves to begin our reflection is, “Why do I see the need to keep the Charism of Edmund alive today?”

I share with you an adaptation of an article by Brian Grenier, cfc, on how we might see Edmund Rice in our lives:

The “*curriculum vitae*” of Blessed Edmund Rice is well known to us and calls for little comment. For us the question today is not “What do we remember about him?” but “*Why do we remember him at all?*” or, better still, “*How do we remember him?*” Do we remember him on his Feast Day as a *hero* or as a *saint*?

I suggest that it is the latter. This is not to deny that, from one point of view, Edmund was a hero – for saints are often described as people of heroic virtue and, as the Book

of Revelation (21:8) states, there are no cowards in the Kingdom. But there is a difference, indeed there are several differences, between heroes whose deeds quite rightly invite our admiration and saints whose lives call for our imitation.

### **Three differences**

In the first place, heroes are at the centre of their own stories; but saints, even the greatest among them, are just players in God's story.

Secondly, it is interesting to note that the word 'hero' does not appear in the whole of the New Testament. However, the word 'saint' occurs no fewer than 64 times – and always in the plural. While 'hero' usually points to individual achievement, 'saint' always points to a community.

Thirdly, heroism may be displayed in what John of Gaunt in Shakespeare's *Richard II* calls one "rash, fierce blaze of riot". Sanctity, however, is for the long haul and requires perseverance over a lifetime.

### **Fidelity within a community**

Despite personal failings that are part of the human condition, the saint stands out, or is 'out-standing' for his or her constant fidelity in and to a community. Edmund Rice's community was, in the first instance, the community of Christian faith into which he was born. More narrowly, it was the community that he founded and in which he was faithful until death – the Congregations of Christian and Presentation Brothers.

His fidelity was expressed in three vowed commitments made at baptism, marriage, and religious profession.

Like Edmund we are players in a story, a love story no less, which is ultimately about God. Like Edmund we are called to be faithful in a community of disciples.

Like Edmund, in a word, we are called to be saints. This is how we remember him today; and this is what his Feast Day celebration should remind us of.

As you engage with these days of Novena prayer, you are invited to share your story, your faith and who you are with each other, treating such sharing as sacred and with respect.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the CLT to wish everyone prayerful best wishes on the Feast of Blessed Edmund Rice, 2015. May he live forever in our hearts and may we be constantly renewed in zeal for our Charism made relevant for today. Happy Feast Day!

With fraternal best wishes,



*Br. Barry Noel*

## *On behalf of the Congregation Leadership Team*

### **Methodology:**

1. **Introductory Prayers:**
  - a. Sign of The Cross
  - b. Prayer of invitation, in the presence of the Holy Spirit (*Come Holy Spirit .....*)
2. **Angelus for Vocations**
3. **Hymn** (*chosen from the CD provided or own appropriate choice*)
4. **Opening Reflection**
5. **Word of God** (*Some of these texts include scripture references that Edmund Rice wrote in the beginning of his Bible. They had particular significance for him*)
6. **Reflection and Meditation**
7. **Lived experience and sharing** (*Personal sharing on what may have strike you during prayer*)
8. **Prayer of Intercession** (*spontaneous prayers of intercession or intention*)
9. **Our Father**
10. **Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer**
11. **Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life**

### **Suggested Symbol/Imagery/Centre Piece:**

- Appropriate coloured cloth(s)
- A Bust of Edmund Rice/ The Icon of Blessed Edmund/ A painting or picture of Edmund Rice/ or a Relic of Blessed Edmund Rice
- An open Bible
- A copy of our Constitutions
- A candle symbolising the light of Christ

These can be used and arranged creatively in the prayer space and visible to the entire group. Feel free to be creative by the use of other appropriate symbols and images that can inspire reflection and prayer.

### **Common Prayers** (*To be used each day during of the Novena prayer*):

#### **Angelus for vocations**

##### **Let us pray...**

**During the Annunciation, Mary is visited by an angel, a messenger from God.**

Let us pray that young people today will be able to hear clearly the voice of God in the midst of the noise and distraction of our time.

**The Angel Gabriel tells Mary to “fear not”.**

We ask the Lord to banish the doubts and fears of those being called to religious life today.

**Mary’s response is “Be it done unto me according to Thy word”.**

Let us pray that those who are being called to religious life today will answer ‘Yes’ and open themselves to God’s will in their lives.

**Mary replies “Behold the handmaid of the Lord”.**

Let us pray that those who answer God’s call today will do so in a spirit of humble service.

Hail Mary .....

*Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer*

O God, we thank you for the life of Blessed Edmund Rice. He opened his heart to Christ present in those oppressed by poverty and injustice. May we follow his example of faith and generosity. Grant us the courage and compassion of Blessed Edmund as we seek to live lives of love and service. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For a special intention:

O God, you inspired Blessed Edmund Rice to follow your Son in a life of consecrated service of the poor and of all in need of a truly Christian education. Grant through his intercession the petition(s) I now make.....

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Blessed Edmund Rice, pray for us.*

*Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life*

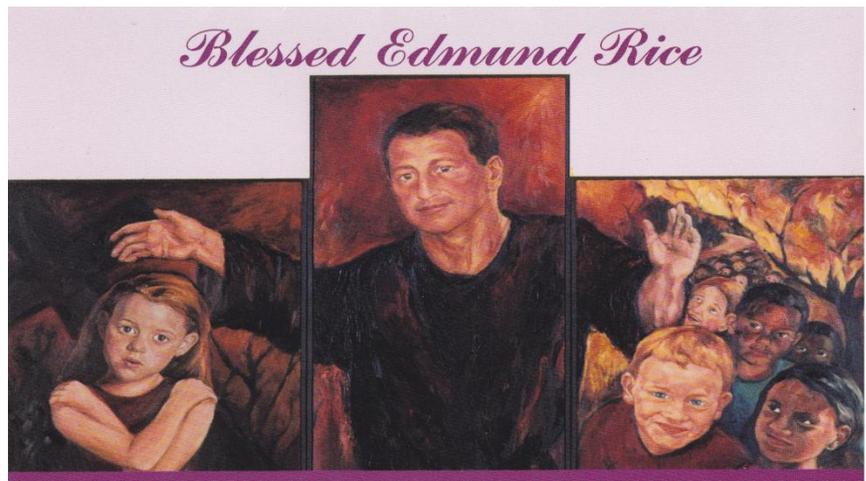
O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to pursue lives of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of Faith and models of inspiration. Their pursuit of holy lives teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you.

Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the pearl of great price, treasure the Kingdom of Heaven above all things.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.



## **Day 1: Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (*See page 3*)

**HYMN** (*Choose a hymn from the Novena CD*)

### **Opening Reflection:**

#### ***Psalm 139:***

Lord, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions.

Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.

Where could I go to escape from you?  
Where could I get away from your presence?  
If I went up to heaven, you would be there;  
if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.  
If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west,  
you would be there to lead me,  
you would be there to help me.

I could ask the darkness to hide me  
or the light around me to turn into night,  
but even darkness is not dark for you,  
and the night is as bright as the day.

Darkness and light are the same to you.

You created every part of me;  
you put me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you because you are to be feared;  
all you do is strange and wonderful.

I know it with all my heart.  
When my bones were being formed,  
carefully put together in my mother's womb,  
when I was growing there in secret,  
you knew that I was there -  
you saw me before I was born.

The days allotted to me had all been recorded  
in your book,  
before any of them ever began.  
O God, how difficult I find your thoughts;  
how many of them there are!  
If I counted them, they would be more than  
the grains of sand.  
When I awake, I am still with you.

Examine me, O God, and know my mind;  
test me, and discover my thoughts.  
Find out if there is any evil in me  
and guide me in the everlasting way.

### **Word of God:**

*Exodus 22: 25-27*

If you lend money to any of my people who are poor, do not act like a moneylender and require him to pay interest. If you take someone's cloak as a pledge that he will pay you, you must give it back to him before the sun sets, because it is the only covering he has to keep him warm. What else can he sleep in? When he cries out to me for help, I will answer him because I am merciful.

## **Reflection and Meditation:**

*Message of Pope Francis for the Opening of the Year of Consecrated Life:*

For founders and foundresses, the Gospel was the absolute rule, whereas every other rule was meant merely to be an expression of the Gospel and a means of living the Gospel to the full. For them, the ideal was Christ; they sought to be interiorly united to him and thus to be able to say with Saint Paul: “For to me to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21). The vows were intended as a concrete expression of this passionate love. The question we have to ask ourselves is if and how we too are open to being challenged by the Gospel; whether the Gospel is truly the “manual” for our daily living and the decisions we are called to make. The Gospel is demanding: it demands to be lived radically and sincerely. It is not enough to read it (even though the reading and study of Scripture is essential), nor is it enough to meditate on it (which we do joyfully each day). Jesus asks us to practice it, to put his words into effect in our lives.

## **Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today’s prayers, Scripture or reflection*

In what ways are the Gospel values being lived and expressed in your life and your community?

## **Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

## **Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** *(See page 4)*

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** *(See page 4)*



## **Day 2: Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** *(See page 3)*

**HYMN** *(Choose a hymn from the Novena CD)*

## **Opening Reflection:**

### ***Canticle of Hope***

At this time, we are called to ignite a new meaning of hope.  
It is a time of expectation and perseverance.

A time of relationship and listening to the wisdom  
that resides in the recesses of our souls.

A time when, through new moments of self-expression, Our imagination erupts, and the divine becomes present in our lives.  
A time when the inward search activates an increased momentum towards meaning and purpose in our lives.

A time of great expectations and yearnings for a future of promise and peace for the whole community of life.

A time to foster a listening heart that rediscovers the divine presence in the poor of every species.

A time to encourage the prophetic voice and support the formation of an ecological consciousness.

A time to face our fears and take whatever risks that are necessary to discover community and experience belonging.

A time to realize that “the future is in the living room”, where people gather for theological reflection, dialogue, relationship, hope, information, energised action and support.

A time to risk being on the margins of institutions and at the centre of issues that are critical for this moment.

A time to ponder what the divine is inviting us to create.

### **Word of God:**

*Luke 6: 35-38*

No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back. You will then have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High God; for he is good to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. "Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands - all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you."

### **Reflection and Meditation:**

*Pope Francis on Mercy – Homily announcing the Extraordinary Jubilee dedicated to Divine Mercy:*

The call of Jesus pushes each of us never to stop at the surface of things, especially when we are dealing with a person. We are called to look beyond, to focus on the heart to see how much generosity everyone is capable. No one can be excluded from the mercy of God; everyone knows the way to access it and the Church is *the house that welcomes all and refuses no one*. Its doors remain wide open, so that those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness. The greater the sin, so much the greater must be the love that the Church expresses toward those who convert.

### **Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today's prayers, Scripture or reflection*  
How have you experienced mercy and forgiveness in your life?

### **Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

### **Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (*See page 4*)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (*See page 4*)

**Day 3: Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> April**

**Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (*See page 3*)

**HYMN** (*Choose a hymn from the Novena CD*)

**Opening Reflection:**

*Prayer – (Adapted from Ps. 147-150)*

How good it is to celebrate God's presence and to sing His praises throughout each day. We celebrate what He has done for all people through history: His creation of our world and the sun and the moon and the unnumbered stars that light up our Universe;

His creatures that swim and crawl and walk and fly upon our planet; His children destined to enjoy these great gifts about them.

**We praise Him for dealing with creature man:** through His blessing heaped upon him; His revelations through signs and wonders; His tender love and gentle concern in his caring for us.

**We praise Him for His devoted servants:** who communicated His word; who performed

His miracles; who brought His healing to people's hurts.

**We celebrate His continued blessings to our world:** the flowers that bloom in glorious colour; the rain that freshen the earth; the birds that filled the air with song.

**We give thanks for His perpetual love:** His forgiveness of sin; His pursuit of those who run from Him; His reaching out to heal them and to draw them to Himself.

**We call upon all people to praise the Lord:** those who preach to proclaim His love; those who sing to glorify His name; those who can shout or whistle, or write of paint, or dance or play musical instruments, or pound on drums or ring bells to join in celebrating the magnificence of our great and loving God.

**Word of God:**

*Ezekiel 18: 30-32*

"Now I, the Sovereign Lord, am telling you Israelites that I will judge each of you by what you have done. Turn away from all the evil you are doing, and don't let your sin destroy you. Give up all the evil you have been doing, and get yourselves new minds and hearts. Why do you Israelites want to die? I do not want anyone to die," says the Sovereign Lord. "Turn away from your sins and live."

**Reflection and Meditation:**

*Pope Francis' Homily on how evil works – 'Gossip':*

"We have a temptation that grows: it grows and infects others. For example, let's look at gossip: I'm a bit envious of this or that person and at first I'm just envious inside and I need to share it and go to another person and say: "But have you seen that person?".. and this gossip tries to grow and infects another and another... This is the way gossip works and all of us have been tempted to gossip! Maybe not one of you, if you're a saint, but I too have been tempted to gossip! It's a daily

temptation. And it begins in this way, discreetly, like a trickle of water. It grows by infecting others and in the end it justifies itself.”

Pope Francis urges us to be vigilant and not to give in to that initial temptation and thus allow it to spread to others and justify itself. “We are all tempted because the law of our spiritual life, our Christian life is a struggle: a struggle. That’s because the Prince of this world, Satan, doesn’t want our holiness, he doesn’t want us to follow Christ.

**Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today’s prayers, Scripture or reflection*  
Edmund acknowledged and overcame the darkness in his life. How do you relate to the darkness and evil present in our world?

**Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

**Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (See page 4)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (See page 4)



**Day 4: Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April**

**Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (See page 3)

**HYMN** (Choose a hymn from the Novena CD)

**Opening Reflection:**

**Poem – Invictus**

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

**Word of God:**

*Matthew 5: 42-48*

When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him. "You have heard that it was said, "Love your friends, hate your enemies.' But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and

gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! You must be perfect - just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

**Reflection and Meditation:**

*Br. Martin's Letter to young Brothers – 'Blessed Edmund Rice & Mission Today':*

I wish to invite you to read again the life of Edmund Rice. I ask you to read the founder's life now in the context of the condition of our world and your own **experience** as a young Brother. Our Chapter Vision Statement says this:

*Just as Edmund responded to the cry of those made poor in his day, we have (a) growing awareness of the interconnectedness of the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth today. What is needed is an effective shift in mentality which can lead to the adoption of new lifestyles.*

Where is this happening? Where is the prophetic edge in our Congregation? Pope Francis called on young people at World Youth Day in Rio to make a lot of noise in the Church! Francis says he prefers to see the Church like a 'field hospital' rather than a place where everything is neat and tidy. The young must play a role in leading us to the prophetic edge! I want to hear your dreams, your ideals, your wild ideas! If our formation produces docile people content with routine, then we are lost. We must break out of the comfort zone! American religious speak of some people joining religious life for the false reason of "three hots and a cot" – three good meals a day and a bed! It's a long way from radical gospel living. Daniel O'Leary at our Glencomeragh Conference a few years ago said: "The half-life will kill you". Yet so often we seem prepared to rest with the half-life.

**Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today's prayers, Scripture or reflection*

What does it mean to you to be a Presentation Brother today? How are we being prophetic in the world today?

**Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

**Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (See page 4)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (See page 4)



**Day 5: Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> April**

**Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (*See page 3*)

**HYMN** (*Choose a hymn from the Novena CD*)

**Text for Reflection and Prayer:** (*Br. Walter's Prayer Booklet on Eco-Spirituality*)

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
The whole earth is full of his glory—Isaiah 6:*

**Word of God:**

*Canticle of Daniel*

Let the earth bless the Lord; praise and glorify him forever!

Bless the Lord, mountains and hills, praise and glorify him forever! Bless the Lord, every plant that grows, praise and glorify him forever! Bless the Lord, springs of water, praise and glorify him forever! Bless the Lord, seas and rivers, praise and glorify him forever! Bless the Lord, whales, and everything that moves in the water, praise and glorify him forever! Bless the Lord, every kind of bird, praise and glorify him forever!

*Pause*

**Reflection and Meditation:**

*Scott Hoezee*

Perhaps in God's ears, all this world's sounds really are songs of praise—and what a chorus it is! Some time ago an ornithologist observed a single red-eyed vireo singing its song 22,197 times in a single day! Conservative estimates say that in North America alone there are as many as six billion land birds. So let us be conservative and say that on a given day in the season of spring—the time of year when birds tend to sing the most—each of these birds sings its song about ten thousand times. That would be sixty trillion songs in just one day. “Day after day they pour forth speech.” Indeed they do, and God is listening.

*Pause*

**Prayer:**

May I see today the largeness of your love in even the smallest part of your creation. May I be ravished by traces of your beauty in earth and sky. May I experience the eternity of your grace pulsing within each moment. Amen.

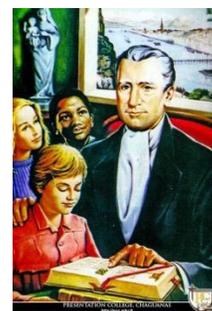
**Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today's prayers, Scripture or reflection*

**Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

**Our Father**



**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (*See page 4*)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (*See page 4*)

**Day 6: Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> May**

**Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (*See page 3*)

**HYMN** (*Choose a hymn from the Novena CD*)

**Opening Reflection:**

*Canticle of St. Francis of Assisi*

Praised be You my Lord with all Your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun,  
Who is the day through whom You give us light.  
And he is beautiful and radiant with great  
splendour,  
Of You Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon  
and the stars,  
In the heavens you have made them bright,  
precious and fair.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers  
Wind and Air,  
And fair and stormy, all weather's moods,  
by which You cherish all that You have made.

Praised be You my Lord through Sister Water,  
So useful, humble, precious and pure.

Praised be You my Lord through Brother Fire,

through whom You light the night and he is  
beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You my Lord through our Sister,  
Mother Earth  
who sustains and governs us,  
producing varied fruits with coloured flowers  
and herbs.

Praise be You my Lord through those who grant  
pardon for love of You and bear sickness and  
trial.

Blessed are those who endure in peace, By You  
Most High, they will be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord through Sister Death,  
from whom no-one living can escape. Woe to  
those who die in mortal sin! Blessed are they She  
finds doing Your Will.

No second death can do them harm. Praise and  
bless my Lord and give Him thanks,  
And serve Him with great humility.

**Word of God:**

*Romans 8: 19-23*

All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children' for creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his children and set our whole being free.

### **Reflection and Meditation:**

*The “Green Bible” (HarperCollins, 2008):*

Our role in creation’s care may be a new question unique to our place in history, but the Bible turns out to be amazingly relevant. In fact, it is almost as if it were waiting for this moment to speak to us. With over a thousand references to the earth and caring for creation in the Bible, the message is clear: all in God’s creation – nature, animals, humanity – are inextricably linked to one another. As God cares for all of creation, so we cannot love one dimension without caring for the others. We are called to care for all God has made (p. I-15)

### **Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today’s prayers, Scripture or reflection*

How can we find creative ways for the whole planet to move forward together whereby all species, all beings can flourish?

### **Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

### **Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (See page 4)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (See page 4)

## **Day 7: Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May**

### **Introductory Prayers**

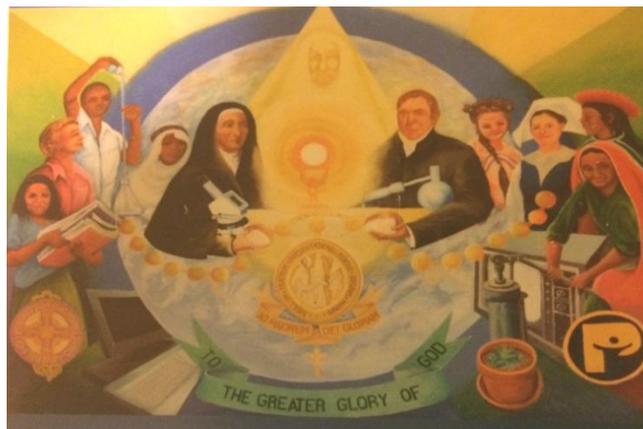
**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (See page 3)

**HYMN** (Choose a hymn from the Novena CD)

### **Image for Reflection:**

*Image – Mr. Dunstan St. Omer’s (St. Lucia, 2010) depiction of the Nagle Rice Story*

*Take some quite time just reflect on this image of the Nagle Rice Story. Recognise how it strikes you and how it speaks to your own story as followers of Edmund Rice.*



**Word of God:**

*John 21: 14-17*

For the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from death. After they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my lambs." A second time Jesus said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" "Yes, Lord," he answered, "you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep." A third time Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter became sad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" and so he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you!" Jesus said to him, "Take care of my sheep.

**Reflection and Meditation:**

*Message of Pope Francis for the Opening of the Year of Consecrated Life:*

Once again, we have to ask ourselves: Is Jesus really our first and only love, as we promised he would be when we professed our vows? Only if he is, will we be empowered to love, in truth and mercy, every person who crosses our path. Our founders and foundresses shared in Jesus' own compassion when he saw the crowds who were like sheep without a shepherd. Like Jesus, who compassionately spoke his gracious word, healed the sick, gave bread to the hungry and offered his own life in sacrifice, so our founders and foundresses sought in different ways to be the service of all those to whom the Spirit sent them. They did so by their prayers of intercession, their preaching of the Gospel, their works of catechesis, education, their service to the poor and the infirm... The creativity of charity is boundless; it is able to find countless new ways of bringing the newness of the Gospel to every culture and every corner of society.

**Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today's prayers, Scripture or reflection*

What is your Image of God? – Who is God for you now?

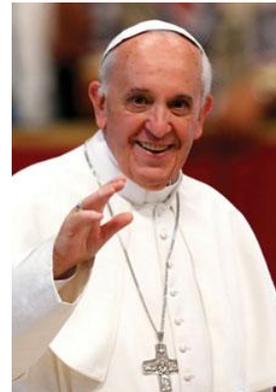
**Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

**Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (See page 4)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (See page 4)



**Day 8: Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

**Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (*See page 3*)

**HYMN** (*Choose a hymn from the Novena CD*)

**Opening Reflection:**

*Sayings of Edmund Rice* (*These sayings are taken from the correspondence of Bl. Edmund Rice*)

"But let us do ever so little for God, we will be sure He will never forget it, nor let it pass unrewarded."

carry it."

"Give to the poor in handfals."

"Were we to know the merit and value of only going from one street to another to serve a neighbour for the love of God, we should prize it more than silver and gold."

"The world and everything in it is continually changing which proves to us that there is nothing permanent under the sun, and that perfect happiness is not to be expected but in another world."

"Have courage; the good seed will grow up in the children's hearts later on."

"If you only acquire this virtue (humility), it will always guide you safely let your paths be ever so cross or difficult."

"Be intent on prayer and whatever may happen will turn to our good."

"Never allow vain notions of your own sense, abilities, or other natural or acquired qualifications to take root in your mind, but always beseech God to make known to you, your sins and imperfections."

"Cast all your cares into the arms of divine Providence."

"Above all, beg of him to give you the virtue of humility which is so necessary for religious in every station, but particularly for those who have the care and direction of others. If you only acquire this virtue, it will always guide you safely; let your paths be ever so cross or difficult."

"You being yet very young in religion and placed over a senior Brother will require great watchfulness over yourself to perform well the task which is assigned to you, and you should beg frequently of God light and grace to effect it. Above all beg him to give you the virtue of humility which is so necessary for religious in every station, but particularly for those who have the care or direction of others."

"Each Brother is an open letter from Christ-- a message written not with ink but in the Spirit of the living God, with a faithful human heart to

**Word of God:**

***The Disciples' Encounter with Jesus on the Road to Emmaus***

*Luke 24: 13-35*

(Read the Emmaus Story from your own copy of the Scriptures, leaving a short time for personal reflection before moving onto lived experience and sharing).

**Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today's prayers, Scripture or reflection*

Share a time of Grace in your life – A time when you really became aware and experienced the Grace of God present in your life.

**Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*



**Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (*See page 4*)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (*See page 4*)

**Day 9: Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> May**

**Introductory Prayers**

**ANGELUS FOR VOCATIONS** (*See page 3*)

**HYMN** (*Choose a hymn from the Novena CD*)

**Opening Reflection:**

*We are Bearers – Archbishop Oscar Romero*

**Leader:** It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view. The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We speak now the words of The Most Reverend Oscar Romero, the late Archbishop of San Salvador in El Salvador, to inspire our prayer:

**Side 1:** We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

**Side 2:** No statement says all that should be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church’s mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

**Side 1:** This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

**Side 2:** We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.

**Side 1:** We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

**Side 2:** We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future that is not our own.

**ALL:** Lord, open the eyes of our hearts.

**Word of God:**

*Romans 8: 19-23*

You are like salt for the whole human race. But if salt loses its saltiness, there is no way to make it salty again. It has become worthless, so it is thrown out and people trample on it. You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; instead it is put on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.

**Reflection and Meditation:**

*Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis – Evangelii Gaudium:*

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: “Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace”. How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another “seventy times seven” (*Mt 18:22*) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!

**Lived Experience and Sharing:**

*Take some time to share what strikes you from today's prayers, Scripture or reflection*

What is your hope or ‘dream’ for Religious Brotherhood today and for our Congregation?

**Prayer of Intercession:**

*Spontaneous prayers of intercession and petition may be shared*

**Our Father**

**Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer** (*See page 4*)

**Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life** (*See page 4*)