

**2010: Edmund Rice International Novena**  
**Theme: HEALING AND RECONCILIATION**  
**Monday, 26 April – Tuesday, 4 May**  
**Feast Day of Blessed Edmund Rice: Wednesday, 5 May 2010**

**Introduction:**

We live in a time of recession and gloom. The virtue of hope appears to be at a low ebb, and consequently faith and charity may also be challenged. Leadership seems to be sadly lacking or of very poor quality in many areas of human endeavour. Many of us feel let down by our politicians, our bankers, our business leaders and even by our Church. Even the weather and Mother Nature seem to be out of sympathy with us in recent months!

Those of us who are Brothers feel broken by the actions of a minority of our members who so far forgot their sacred trust that they abused some of society's most vulnerable young people placed in our care. We feel ashamed and dismayed. Our hearts go out to those who were hurt and let down. How could it have happened? But the Good Lord has reminded us: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of time." It is at times like the present that we acknowledge that Christ is "Our Light in the Darkness". It is in this spirit of fragility and humility that we approach this year's Edmund Rice Novena and pray for healing for all concerned. We pray for forgiveness and reconciliation. It is at times like this that we need Edmund's intercession and example more than ever.

We take heart from the fact that our two Congregations, the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers, at their most recent Congregation Chapters chose the following positive themes as the Way Forward, rather than wallowing in doom and gloom:

*"Sing to the Lord a New Song!  
Growing through Fragility.  
Engaging with Diversity.  
Being Brother in Christ."*

[Pres Brothers, Grace Dieu, Waterford, 2005]

*"The time is now! The place is here! You are the People!  
Fly free as Edmund did before you to New Horizons,  
to the unknown, the not-yet-imagined.  
Risk leaping and falling. Trust me.  
Dare to be my Disciples  
In you I am doing something new."*

[Christian Brothers, Munnar, India, 2008]

Blessed Edmund too experienced a time of recession and low morale in the Ireland of his day, at the beginning of the 19th century. After the failed 1798 Rising and its brutal suppression, government was moved from Dublin to Westminster in the fallout from the 1800 Act of Union. It was in such an atmosphere that Edmund became proactive. Instead of moaning about how awful things were in Ireland or waiting for the government or the clergy to do something about it, he set about remedying the plight of poor Catholic youths in Ireland by founding his Brothers in 1802 to provide them with free education, "to raise boys to the dignity of men". Interestingly, he took his lead from a group of women, the Presentation Sisters founded by Nano Nagle in Cork.

\*In the spirit of Edmund, we dedicate this year's Novena to Healing and Reconciliation.

\*The healing miracle in answer to your prayers during this Novena may be the one that will finally be accepted for Blessed Edmund being declared SAINT EDMUND.

\*Each country and each region will have the freedom to choose their own local healing intentions.

\*The Novena Prayers may be said privately or in groups.

\*Some may wish to link the Novena with daily attendance at Mass. Feel free.

\*The Novena target group is much broader than the membership of Edmund's two Brotherhoods:

\*It is open to all who wish to honour Blessed Edmund,

\*to all (young and old) who wish to promote his Canonisation,

\*to all who work in his spirit,

\*to all who have a personal devotion to him,

\*to all who are grateful to him for favours received,

\*to all who wish to pray for a special intention,

\*to all who are associated with the Brothers in their ministries as formal or informal members of the Edmund Rice Network (ERN) around the world.

**The central point of each day's Novena will focus on a few minutes' quiet reflection based on (a) a short Scripture text, (b) a saying of Blessed Edmund, and (c) a short quotation from the Munnar or Grace Dieu Chapters of the Brothers.**

### **Format:**

1. \*Universal Prayer for Blessed Edmund's Canonisation
2. \*Prayer of the Edmund Rice Network
3. Quiet Reflection based on:

- - Scripture
  - Saying of Edmund
  - Quotation from International Chapters of the Brothers

1. Special Prayer for each day of Novena

1. \*Prayer for Special Intention.

- *The prayers marked by an asterisk (\*) will be the same each day of the Novena; The reflection (No.3) and special prayer (No.4) will change each day.*

## **Day 1: Monday, 26 April**

### **1. Universal Prayer for Blessed Edmund's Canonisation**

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. Grant that soon Blessed Edmund will be declared a saint of your Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **1. Prayer of the Edmund Rice Network [ERN]**

Inspired by the spirit of Blessed Edmund so alive today, we as colleagues in the Edmund Rice Network dedicate ourselves to work together in our continuing mission, to tell the story of Blessed Edmund, to share his vision, and to nurture a response in those who are moved by his example. Blessed Edmund, in whose steps we follow, we entrust our lives to you. Shelter us from ignorance, selfishness and oppression. Teach us to live in peace, to educate ourselves for justice and peace. Inspire us to act justly, and to revere all of God's creation. Plant peace firmly in our hearts and in our world. Amen.

#### **1. Reflection:**

- - Scripture:

“As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it to me.”

- - Saying of Edmund:

“One thing you may be sure of, that while you work for God, whether you succeed or not, he will amply reward you.”

- - Quotation from Munnar Chapter, 2008:

“Let us open our hearts to the cry of the poor and the earth and be moved to prophetic action through advocacy and works for justice.” (Munnar, 2008)

### **1. Special Prayer for Day One: Litany of Blessed Edmund (Part One)**

Blessed Edmund, Model of strength, Be our guide.  
Blessed Edmund, Model of risk, Be our guide.  
Blessed Edmund, Model of gentleness, Be our guide.

Blessed Edmund, Model of trust, Be our guide.  
Blessed Edmund, Model of courage, Be our guide.  
Blessed Edmund, Model of patience, Be our guide.  
Blessed Edmund, Model of openness, Be our guide.  
Blessed Edmund, Model of perseverance, Be our guide.

### 1. Prayer for 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.....  
and so hasten the day when he will be publicly honoured as a saint. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Blessed Edmund Rice, Presentation Brother and Christian Brother, pray for us.*

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### **Day 2: Tuesday, 27 April:**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

#### 3. Reflection:

(a) Scripture:

“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.”

(b) Saying of Edmund:

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

(c) Quotation from Grace Dieu Chapter, 2005:

“Our experience of death and dying as well as growth and new life...calls for a spirituality through which we become ever more deeply immersed in the mystery of his Cross so that we may proclaim the power of his hope-filled resurrection.”

#### 4. Special Prayer for Day 2: Litany of Blessed Edmund [Part Two]:

Blessed Edmund, Liberator of the oppressed, Lead us to life.  
Blessed Edmund, Comforter of the afflicted, Lead us to life.  
Blessed Edmund, Breaker of bondage, Lead us to life.  
Blessed Edmund, Sharer in Christ’s ministry, Lead us to life.  
Blessed Edmund, Participant in Christ’s Passion, Lead us to life.  
Blessed Edmund, Seeker of God’s will, Lead us to life.

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### **Day 3: Wednesday, 28 April:**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below.*

### **3. Reflection:**

#### **(a) Scripture:**

“They that instruct many unto justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.”

#### **(b) Saying of Edmund:**

“Have courage; the good seed will grow up in the children’s hearts later on.”

#### **(c) Quotation from Munnar Chapter, 2008:**

“Each community shall walk with young people and accompany them in their spiritual search as they engage in outreach with people at the margins.”

### **1. Special Prayer for Day 3: Litany of Blessed Edmund [Part 3]:**

Blessed Edmund, Brother of mercy, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother of faith, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother of contemplation, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother of vision, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother of wisdom + understanding, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother of grace and truth, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother filled with hope, Empower us.

Blessed Edmund, Brother centred in God, Empower us.

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### **Day 4: Thursday, 29 April:**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

#### **1. Reflection:**

- - Scripture

“After this the Lord chose another seventy-two and sent them out two by two, to go ahead of him to every town and place where he himself was about to go.”

- - Saying of Edmund:

“Were we to know the merit of 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 gold or silver.”

- - Quotation from Grace Dieu Chapter 2005:

“Those present will never forget the moment when the Congregation Leaders of the Presentation Brothers and Christian Brothers knelt before the Blessed Sacrament in Mount Sion as Edmund did in his time.”

### **1. Special Prayer for Day 4: Creed of Edmund’s People [Part 1]:**

**We believe** the God-fire burning in our hearts can transform both ourselves and our world.  
**We believe** we are called by God to a deep personal relationship with Jesus, the lover of all creation.

**We believe** we are called to be Good News people.

**We believe** we are called to keep our hearts and minds open and attentive to God's will.

**We believe** we are called to witness by prophetic action to our option for the poor, the oppressed, and people at the margins.

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### **Day 5: Friday, 30 April:**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

#### **3. Reflection:**

(a) Scripture

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

(b) Saying of Edmund:

“The will of God be done in this and everything we undertake.”

- Quotation from Munnar Chapter, 2008:

“Fly free as Edmund did before you to new horizons, to the unknown, the not-yet-imagined.”

#### **4. Special Prayer for Day 5: Creed of Edmund's People [Part 2]:**

**We believe** we are called to immerse ourselves in the culture in which we live and work.

**We believe** in a community that is prayerful, inclusive and welcoming.

**We believe** our internationality is a witness to a search for global unity.

**We believe** it is in facing our fragility that we can accompany others in theirs.

**We believe** that in sharing Eucharist and Reconciliation we are drawn beyond ourselves to the mystery of God.

**We believe** others share the charism of Edmund, and are one with us in living it out.

**We believe** the call to live justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God. Amen.

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### **Day 6: Saturday, 1 May:**

*“Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

#### **3. Reflection:**

(a) Scripture:

“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”

(b) Saying of Edmund:

“It (a law case) is a painful anxiety, but to some of us it is not as much as one may imagine. ‘The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, so blessed be his name for ever and ever.’ This should be all our motto.”

(c) Quotation from the Grace Dieu Chapter, 2005:

“Our spirituality is informed by the reality of God’s presence in all of creation. We seek to be more responsible for the care of the earth by implementing best ecological practice in our everyday living.”

#### **4. Special Prayer for Day 6: Blessed Edmund’s ‘Our Father’[Part 1]:**

**Our Father** ... who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, those that must sneak off to the ‘hedge schools’ of our day, hiding their lamps under bushel baskets.

**Who art in heaven** ... where everything will be reversed; where the first will be last and the last will be first; where Mary, Edmund’s wife, and his daughter and all our beloved dead will greet us and welcome us home, where grieving will be no more.

**Hallowed be thy name** ... for you are a God who desires intimacy with us, who calls each of us by name and calls each of us “my beloved son” and “my beloved daughter”, who called Edmund to pray and mourn and steep himself in Holy Scripture and the spirituality of a God who has many “interior castles” for each of us.

**Thy Kingdom come** ... a kingdom where we wake up to our destinies in you; where we find Edmund and the early Brothers struggling to teach young people just as we struggle “to do and to teach”.

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#### **Day 7: Sunday, 2 May**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

#### **3. Reflection:**

(a) Scripture:

“He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.”

(b) Saying of Edmund:

“Above all, beg of him to give you the virtue of humility which is so necessary for religious of every station, but particular for those who have the care and direction of others.”

(c) Quotation from the Munnar Chapter, 2008:

“The Beloved sometimes wants to do us a great favour:  
Hold us upside down and shake all the nonsense out.” (The mystic poet Hafiz)

#### **4. Special Prayer for Day 7: Blessed Edmund’s ‘Our Father’ [Part 2]:**

**Thy will be done** ... Open our freedom, to let you in, so that the complete love that flows through Edmund and the early Brothers will help us listen to your will in times of great struggle. Help us also to listen with constancy and great sensitivity.

**On earth as in heaven** ... May the work of our hands, the schools and temples and structure we build in this world, reflect the values of heaven which are joy, graciousness, tenderness and justice. Make us all truly brothers and sisters.

**Give us this day** ... Not tomorrow. Do not let us put off being whole and holy, being your face to our students and the world, being, like Edmund, men and women who seek out the prisoner, the disenfranchised, the bullied in our midst.

**Our daily bread** ... which you have become in us, in all, in Eucharist and in the bread of hospitality which Edmund showed and lived whether in the shoe shop, the bakery, the business office or the classroom.

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### **Day 8: Monday, 3 May:**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

#### **3. Reflection:**

(a) Scripture:

“Were not our hearts burning while he spoke to us on the way?”

(b) Saying of Edmund:

“O God, did we even now rightly begin to serve you, your loving heart would take us all to its final embrace.”

(c) Quotation from Grace Dieu Chapter, 2005:

“Why can’t vocations find us? It’s because we are whispering! For the sake of the Reign of God, and the future generations of God’s People – let’s stop the whispering and start shouting from the housetops that Religious Life really *is* good news – for us and for the world.”(Sister Joan Chittister OSB)

#### **4. Special Prayer for Day 8: Blessed Edmund’s ‘Our Father’ [Part 3]:**

**Forgive us our trespasses** ... Forgive us our blindness toward one another. Help us really see the person in front of us as your face and not just as a burden. Forgive our racism, our sexism, our incurable propensity to fret about tomorrow, and help us in Edmund’s own words to know deeply that “Providence is our Inheritance.”

**As we forgive those who trespass against us** ... God forbid us to grow bitter in spirit or despairing and even when we are maligned by our own as Edmund was, help us to forgive, to bless and not curse. Why? Because that is exactly what you did, Jesus!

**And lead us not into temptation**... for none of us is without sin.

**But deliver us from evil** ... That is, from the blindness that lets us not see ourselves, one another, and our wounded world as brothers and sisters, saints in training, lovers in the Holy Trinity, sons and daughters of Mother Mary, disciples of a God who called Edmund and all of us to a reality that we can only imagine.

**Amen** ... I believe , Yes Lord, Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus, live in our hearts forever.



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## **Day 9: Tuesday, 4 May**

*Same as Day 1 except Nos. 3 and 4 below:*

### **3. Reflection:**

(a) Scripture:

“Lord, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

(b) Saying of Edmund:

“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.”

(c) Quotation from Munnar Chapter, 2008:

“[The Edmund Rice Network] challenged us with their conviction that we need to walk together into the future as followers of Edmund... As one of the invitees said. ‘Imagine your future with us rather than without us’.”

### **4. Special Prayer for Day 9: Prayer on Edmund’s Virtues:**

**Spirit of God**, grant us the LOVE which filled the heart of Blessed Edmund, inspiring him to give all for you.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the JOY of Blessed Edmund who found his happiness in seeing and serving you in the poor.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the PEACE of Blessed Edmund who trusted in you and your providence through countless difficulties.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the PATIENCE of Blessed Edmund who held to being a man of faith even when misunderstood and opposed.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the KINDNESS of Blessed Edmund who always had time for the smallest and weakest.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the GOODNESS of Blessed Edmund whose broad vision saw ways all around him to spread the goodness of the Kingdom.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the GENTLENESS of Blessed Edmund who brought the gentleness of Christ to all his relationships.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the FAITHFULNESS of Blessed Edmund who did not give in to discouragement.

**Spirit of God**, grant us the SELF-CONTROL of Blessed Edmund who prayed constantly that your will be done in him.

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**Buona Festa!**

**Wednesday, 5 May: Feast Day of Blessed Edmund:** Happy Feast Day, Edmund! Happy Feast Day to all who have journeyed with us for the past nine days of this Novena. May God bless you and yours; may Mary mother every one of you; and may Blessed Edmund guide us all into a blessed future.

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