



PRESENCE

The voice of Edmund's people in the English Network



"Be leaders of thought, leaders of action, leaders of joy, leaders of hope,
leaders of the construction of a better world."

Pope Francis



I am delighted to be able to present this Summer's edition of Presence magazine.

This, our only hard copy, will be published annually each summer, with our other Autumn and Spring copies being digital; Online Presence - I hope you have been able to access them.

All past copies can be downloaded from our website:

<https://www.edmundriceengland.org/schools/newsletters/>

Make sure you are on our mailing list by contacting me at the office. I know you will enjoy reading about all the events and activities from the office, schools and communities, and about the wonderful people who are so active in living out Blessed Edmund's mission in the world today.

It has been a year of reconnecting with individuals and groups for our office team following the isolation during the pandemic.

I would encourage all students and staff in schools to keep their eyes and hearts open to the new opportunities that being a part of the Edmund Rice Network presents to them. It continues to be a privilege to be able to facilitate such opportunities and to be able to work with students, staff, Brothers, and all connected with the Edmund Rice family.

Ann Nichols

Network Facilitator

Stay upto date by following our socials

Facebook Edmund Rice England

Twitter @edmundrice_eng

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“We are the ones we have been waiting for”

Following two challenging years, with it feeling even more challenging since the full-time return to school, and as we approach the end of this academic year, it is time to reflect on all that we have achieved.

School leaders have been at the forefront, leading with compassion, commitment, integrity, and love, at a time of crisis for so many. Education is an act of love and our leaders and school staff have acted with real love towards their students, their communities and indeed those in need across our country and our world.

It has been humbling to hear and see the response from our schools to all of the challenges. Stepping out of our comfort zone and pushing ourselves to find out more about our strengths, passions and more importantly about how to form connection with those you may never have, has all brought a richness at a time when so much has been uncertain.

Our schools and our wider Network offer up a vision of life that provides opportunities for our young people to be nurtured and developed as those who will change the world for the better.

It was wonderful to be involved in the Sixth Form Servant Leadership day, recently, when all our Senior Prefects from across all our schools came together to be challenged to think about their role in the world and how they are called to be servants of all. At the end they were anointed to mark them out as agents of change; sent out to respond to those in need; to make a difference.

Meeting face-to-face again has meant we have enjoyed visits to many of our schools, leading refresher sessions with staff and witnessing the response from staff has been truly inspiring.

The recent Heads' retreat, “Leaving Safe Harbours” was an amazing experience when we were challenged to reflect by Daire Keogh and reaffirm our commitment to the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice, for a world which is socially just and where no-one is defined by their start in life; where opportunities are open to all and where we strive for excellence in everything we do.

Rosin Maguire

Director of the English Schools Office

Message from Br David Gibson

Dear Colleagues

It gives me great pleasure to send greetings from the new Leadership Team of the European Province to the English Network of Schools.

I am very grateful to the out-going team that offered such positive support to the network over the last eight years, and I wish to assure you that this same support will be in place for the next six years.

Reading through past issues of Presence, I can only express my profound admiration for all the work that is going on in our Edmund Rice schools.

In my recent visit to St Ambrose Prep School and St Ambrose College on the occasion of the funeral of Brother Andrew Rock, I was so impressed with the warm and friendly atmosphere in both educational centers and felt pride that the work begun by the Brothers is now in safe hands.

It was obvious that in both the College and the Prep school there is a real commitment to a holistic approach to education. The words of Pope Francis certainly can be said of our schools in England:

"Education is not about knowing things or taking lessons but about being able to use three lingos: those of the head, the heart, and the hands... learning so that you can think about what you feel and do, can feel what you think and do, and can do what you feel and think. Unity within a person."

May I wish you all a well-earned Summer break and look forward to visiting you in the new term.

David Gibson



**PRAISE BE TO THE GOD AND
FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST, WHO HAS BLESSED US IN
THE HEAVENLY REALMS WITH EVERY
SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN CHRIST.**

- EPHESIANS 1:3 -

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Edmund Rice Schools Office News

Reconnecting with School Staff

The Office Team have been visiting all schools and delivering a workshop for staff which is themed around reawakening and rekindling their connection to Edmund.

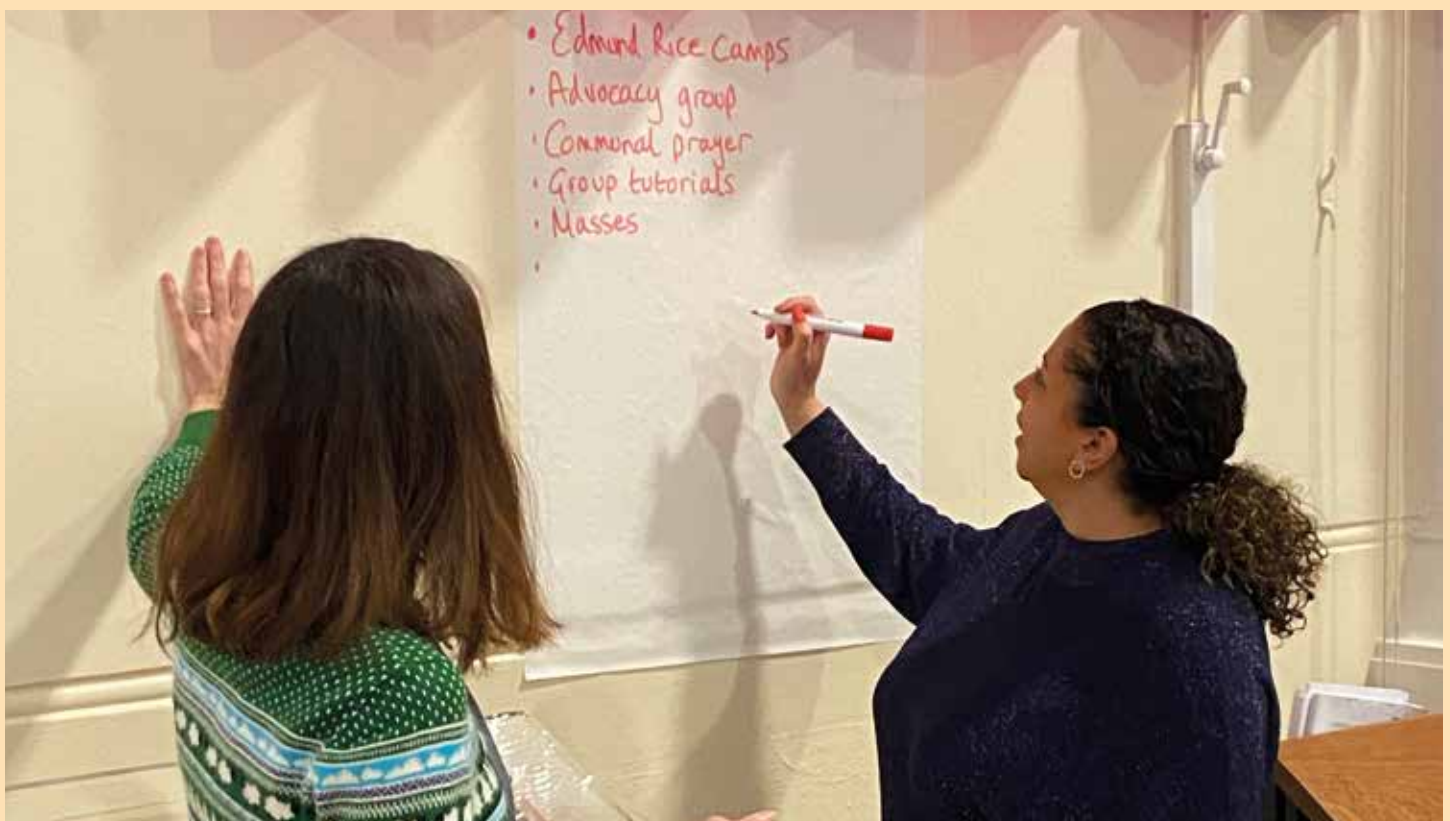
This means how they can connect with one another as a group of schools and with our local network, as well as to the wider global one; we spent time allowing staff a time to breathe and think about their fantastic work as Edmund's people, what it means to be delivering an 'Edmund Rice' education in the current context and a re-examining of what Edmund's story and legacy means in our schools now.

This has been a fabulous opportunity to meet with old friends that we have not been able to see in person due to COVID restrictions, also a way to meet newer staff members for whom Edmund Rice education is new, and to present the wonderful opportunities available to our teachers and support staff.

Our reception in all schools has been very warm and we have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm to want to 'get back to their roots', rediscover the unique charism and vision that working in an Edmund Rice school brings and also by the request to participate in our many programs such as Global Classroom Partners, immersions, ASIST, spiritual conversation groups, EREBB Congresses etc.

Our participating staff have said:

'that's just what we needed - to be reaffirmed that we are doing Edmund's work.' And 'there are things in the Edmund Rice story that I didn't know about and that have great relevance to our school today.' 'We can't wait to work closely with our fellow Edmund Rice schools again, we especially want to rekindle our joint sports fixtures.'



Staff Pilgrimage

‘Walking in The Footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice’



When Roisin and Ann from the Edmund Rice Network visited St Ambrose some months ago, they led an inspirational session on the workings of the Edmund Rice Network and the call to live out our ethos. They invited staff to join them on a pilgrimage to Ireland to experience more on Edmund Rice and his extraordinary life, and Patrick and I jumped at the opportunity.

We both felt a tug, a calling to join the pilgrimage. As RE teachers, we teach our Year Seven the life and legacy of Edmund Rice each year. We are constantly inspired by him, guided and led by his Eight Essentials and his extraordinary vision for education. So, what better way to further this than to experience some of his life and work for ourselves?

On Friday 1st July, we embarked on our journey, unscathed by the stressful and bustling security queue at Manchester airport. We soon met the wonderful pilgrims in our group from other Edmund Rice schools.

These included St Joseph's College from Stoke-on-Trent, St Edward's College and Runnymede St Edwards from Liverpool. We quickly bonded and spoke of our shared vision.

The first stop of our visit was to journey to the house of the Christian Brothers with whom we were staying. The house on Synge Street is beautiful, vast and historical it struck us with awe as we entered. We were welcomed by the Brothers, open arms and big smiles greeted us at the door. The Brother we were met by explained his current role of teaching English at Emmaus House where they have allowed Ukrainian refugees to stay, further highlighting to us the vital and selfless work that the Network is still carrying out across the world.

Whilst there we were treated like family and began to recognise that when you are part of an Edmund Rice school, you are part of something so much bigger.

The next morning, we made the short journey to Edmund Rices House on Richmond Street which was the site of the first Foundation of the Christian Brothers in Dublin. Edmund Rice resided in the building until 1838 and used it as a place of education and care for the most vulnerable.

We were all encouraged to choose an Edmund Rice quote at random, and to read it with the understanding it would mean something deeply personal to us.

The one I chose- **'Have courage, the good seed will grow up in the children's hearts later on'**, stayed on my mind for the remainder of the trip.

Our next stop was the city of Waterford, some two hours away. It was a special place in the heart of Edmund Rice, the city in which he began his mission to help the poor children of Waterford and give them not only an education, but clothes, food, and sense of dignity. The Penal Laws that had crippled Catholic families for some time had left many in need and Edmund recognised his vocation in them. He built a monastery and school in

Waterford, and seeing the school named Mount Sion still standing tall and proud, was a beautiful thing to witness. We had an opportunity to speak with some of the Christian Brothers running the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre, seeing both the room in which he lived and died, and his place of rest in their chapel. It struck us then, just how much one man had changed the lives of so many. It is something we teach our students every day, the power just one person has, through acts of compassion and love, to change the lives of others. It is the very core of education at St Ambrose. Brother Pat Madigan was the most gracious and entertaining tour guide around Waterford, reminding us each moment that 'nothing happens by chance', the fact we taught in Edmund Rice Schools, that we chose to join the pilgrimage, that we were walking in the footsteps of Edmund was indeed the working of the Holy Spirit. **We certainly felt it.**

Our final day was perhaps the most powerful. We journeyed to Callan, the birthplace of Edmund Rice. We had Mass at the Catholic Church of the Assumption, the same place that Edmund Rice had attended mass all those years ago. We were greeted by the congregation and the priest with open arms, and they expressed their delight in our efforts to keep alive the charism of Edmund.

After Mass we made the short trip to the family home of Edmund Rice. Set in beautiful rural countryside, the house still has some of the thatched roof and internal features of the original property. Seeing the rosary beads of his Mother, the well they used for water, the writing box from which Edmund sent letters he became more real to us than he had ever been. It is easy, sometimes, to speak of Edmund as something completely other. A person from so long ago, someone who lived such a different life to us that we forget to remember his humanity, the very real and difficult circumstances of his life. This trip reminded us again of his personhood, and of the Edmund Rice Network that is still the beating heart of his mission.

After an amazing lunch at the Langton Hotel in Kilkenny it was time to return home, school was calling the next day and we felt energised in our understanding and our call to continue with Edmund Rice's mission. We came back both the same and different, ready to ensure that St Ambrose continues to live out its ethos and be a small part in a much bigger, inspiring network that spans across the world.

Sarah McManus





In Spring 2022 YOUNGO (the official youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) recognised the Edmund Rice England office for its work producing the Conference of Youth Climate Change statement which fed into the negotiations at COP 26.

We coordinated the input from young people across our network, including South Africa, North and South America, India, Ireland and England to produce our statement of youth prior to COY16 and COP26. As well as schools who actually had representatives at our series of meetings that went into preparing the report, many more schools from Africa, Australia and other locations supported our statement with over 2000 signatures.

This certificate is welcome recognition for all those young people who are raising their voices in concern for our precious planet, its people and wildlife, as well as their own sustainable futures. The YOUNGO Global Affairs Unit wrote to us:

On behalf of the entire team of COY 16, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to Edmund Rice England for the outstanding contribution made to the Youth Statement. 2021 was indeed a challenging year for all, despite this fact, we appreciate how your organisation took this bold step to forward the policy document and the collective youth signatures. Your efforts have been one of the driving forces of the Global Youth Statement prepared by our team which as of now has 60000+ signatures from youth all around the world.

The Global Youth Statement is a collective voice of thousands of young people from all over the world who have demanded change from world leaders. Inputs from individuals, environmental organisations, and educational institutions have been put together by the COY16 Team to highlight the most indispensable action points to tackle the ongoing climate crisis under 15 key thematic areas. We thank you once again for your efforts and wish you success in the journey to fight against Climate Change.

Edmund Rice England

Climate Leaders

We, in the Edmund Rice Network, continue to educate about the climate crisis and to encourage positive action towards the behaviour change that is so essential if we are to protect our common home.

We continue to encourage schools to strive to be the change they want to see in the world in terms of their commitment to the environment. This is becoming clear in many actions they are taking and events they take part in and share with their communities.

A good example was throughout February, our schools participating in the Climate Coalition's 'Show the Love' advocacy campaign, creating, displaying, and sharing green hearts to '#show the love' that we have for nature and our common home and to put pressure on our government listen to our voices when we demand that they to make the essential policy changes required in order to tackle the effects of the climate crisis. The global campaign can be viewed on this video ([NEED URL](#))

Schools' growing commitment to Ecojustice has also been seen this term by their actions, including their engagement with global campaigns such as celebrating World Ocean Day, creating biodiverse gardens, using sustainable materials, celebrating their eco-groups and teaching and learning about nature.



St Mary's College introduced their new promotional eco-friendly cotton tote bag



St Aidan's Catholic Academy Community Allotment



St Joseph's Prep Eco-Group create bug hotels

General Comment 26 and the Edmund Rice schools

Working with PRATYEK Sustainable Fridays



Child Rights

Earth Rights

General Comment No. 26

The United Nations are calling on young people aged 17 & under to share their views & experiences on their rights, the environment & climate change.

Their inputs will help shape the first draft of 'General Comment No. 26', official United Nations guidelines on what governments must do to uphold children's rights and to protect our planet.

click on the title or scan the QR code to participate in the questionnaire



1.7 million children lose their lives every year as a result of avoidable environmental impacts. Millions more are being forced to leave their homes, missing out on school and suffering from disease.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child is listening to the calls of children and young people. They are taking a major step to hold governments accountable for ensuring children live in a clean, green, healthy and sustainable world.

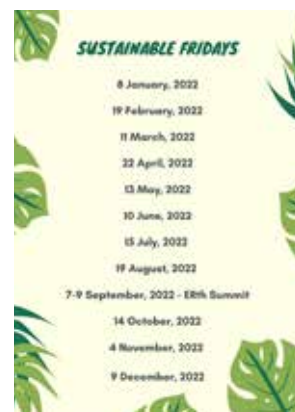
PRATYEK and Edmund Rice International are this year collaborating on an excellent programme of engagement for young people and the climate question.

Young people from across the network and beyond are invited to be a part of SUSTAINABLE FRIDAYS - (was before, Saturdays!) a platform where they aim to gather young voices from different countries to create awareness and discuss concerns on environmental problems.

Themes such as: Child Participation in Climate Action and Environmental Governance have already been explored. Ann was delighted to facilitate the second session this year on Environmental Governance; in an interactive session with many young people, we looked at how the increasingly urgent nature of the climate crisis is demanding ever-more global cooperation through international environmental laws and treaties and how we go about managing the protection of our precious planet and its resources.

If you are interested in this topic, you can find many resources on a Padlet created for this event:
<https://padlet.com/annnicholsero/gadphurg309lf3dw>

We share these sessions with our young people. If you would like the link to the Zooms, please contact Anisha George from PRATYEK: earth@pratyek.org.in



General Comment 26

Many of our students both in the UK and globally have filled in the United Nations consultation of young people on child rights and climate change

It is called General Comment 26 and will become a UN global document that will be shared with all member states with UN recommendations on rights of the Child and Climate Change.

We have been encouraging them all to do this and began this campaign to coincide with our May 5th Feast Day as a way for all the global community to take part.

The current survey closes on June 20th but there will be further opportunities for young people to engage with this important process; we will continue to encourage them to do so. Teaching and learning, policies and infrastructure; some very ambitious plans were outlined, and these were then shared as one document with the whole school community.



SUSTAINABLE SATURDAYS

Date: 19th February, 2022
Time: 5:30 IST (12:00 GMT)
Venue: Zoom





gov'-er-nance, gov'-ern-ment, act of government, body of people

Session 2 : Environmental Governance

Ann Nichols
Edmund Rice Network, England

EDMUND RICE INTERNATIONAL

ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

APRIL 5, 2022

ANN NICHOLS AND KEVIN CAWLEY

Working with ERI

In April we were delighted to collaborate with the program of ERI Enrichment Exploration Sessions designed for participants who had completed the ERI Advocacy course in the past as a refresher.

Ann delivered a session on Care of the Earth with Br. Kevin Cawley (ERI). We discussed the new IPCC report, impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, food security, Laudato Si action plans, Climate COPs, plastics and the SDGs as well as actions that can be taken to alleviate the impact of climate change.

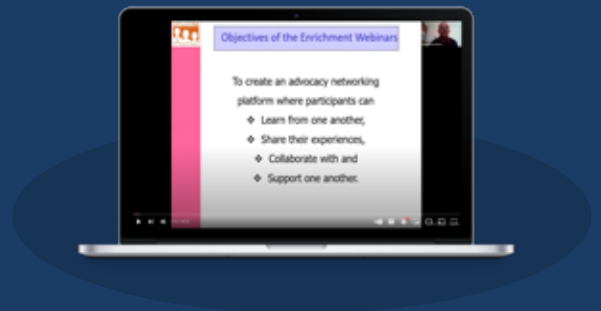
Ann created a Padlet of resources which can be accessed by all participants:

<https://padlet.com/annnicholsero/vzbegfbfjb7ag98>

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love.

Ephesians 3:16-17

DailyVerses.net



Million Minutes Awards Winners



We are delighted that two students from the Edmund Rice network won the Million Minutes Barbara Ward Award which 'recognises young people who have conserved, enhanced or protected creation.'

Tom Jones and Harvey McGrath, both 16 and from St Anselm's College have been working tirelessly over the past 4 years campaigning to raise awareness of environmental issues and to achieve Climate Justice.

Starting with their pledge to the Sustainable Development Goals at our School Council Conference some 4 years ago, Tom and Harvey have become keen climate activists working on a local, national and international scale to improve the care for our common home. Just some of their actions have been to work on zero waste projects in their school, working with the Liverpool World Centre and Interclimate.org on climate debates, being involved with PRATYK and child environmental rights, the British Council Connecting Classrooms project [#ERSchoolsAgainstWaste](#) and representing Edmund Rice students at COP26.

This work was highly praised by the committee at Million Minutes and they were short-listed to a group of three finalists, invited to the Awards ceremony at Westminster on 6th July.

This event was a really special experience, being at the Houses of Parliament and surrounded by important guests such as the Directors of CAFOD and Caritas in the UK, the BBC Head of Religious Affairs and important clergy including His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols – (former pupil of Cristian brothers school St Mary's College in Crosby).

The students got to meet award nominees from this year as well as previous recipients and to discuss the social and climate justice projects they have been involved with. The trustees at Million Minutes informed students of the many opportunities which will come from this award. We at the Edmund Rice Office are extremely proud of this achievement.



Winning the Barbara Ward award



We are incredibly grateful to have won such an amazing award and to have been recognized for the action we have taken against climate change; we would like to tell you a bit about our climate change journey so far.

We in fact started our climate change journey over 3 years ago when we joined the eco-group in our school, since then we have been on many trips, participated in many campaigns and represented our school and the wider English network at various conferences including the PRATYEK ERth summit, the interclimate conference, connecting classrooms project, contributed to the COY16 voices of youth statement, and more recently culminating in representing the Edmund Rice global youth at COP26.

We are so grateful to be involved in the Edmund Rice Network because once you have joined not only have you joined a team of amazing and inspiring leaders you have joined a community where you are given a platform to voice your own opinions. There are over 200,000 young people and around 250 schools globally connected to the Edmund Rice Network and through all these connections we have had the opportunity to spread our message and achieve goals within schools such as:

- **Composting**
- **Zero waste**
- **Raising the profile of sustainability**
- **Removing single-use plastic from schools**

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us achieve our goals along the way.

Firstly, we would like to say thank you to our school for the opportunities they have given us to express our strong beliefs against climate change. We would also like to thank the entire Edmund rice network for helping us to spread our message to a wider audience and more young people across the world and

Of course the amazing Ann Nichols, who nominated us for the Barbara Ward Award, and without whom none of what we have done would have been possible, thank you Ann for the time you have given up and your dedication into helping us achieve our goals. Harvey and I are just two out of the thousands of students and young people across the world dedicating their time to tackling the environmental issues we are facing in today's current climate. We are so lucky to have been given a platform to raise awareness, spread our true beliefs and most importantly to us encourage other young people just like us to try their best to make a difference for future generations. We strongly believe we still have a chance to save our planet if we all work together, so all we are asking from you is to stop, think, smile, and face this climate crisis with all you have.

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children” ~ Chief Seattle

Tom Jones

Heads' Retreat

'Leaving Safe Harbours'

The pandemic meant that we had to think about new ways to offer spiritual support and nourishment to our network of Headteachers and Principals.

We hope that the things we provided, such as wellbeing packs, holding crosses, and prayer resources were appreciated, but the online retreats we offered to go along with them are certainly no substitute for the real thing!

And so it was with great excitement that we were able to return to Wistaston Hall, near Crewe, on 10th June for our annual Heads' Retreat. It was wonderful to see so many friends, colleagues, and familiar faces in the same room for the first time in over two years.

This year's Retreat was reflective of the theme of the Christian Brothers' Congregational Chapter in Dublin; 'Leaving Safe Harbours'. We were privileged to be led by Professor Daire Keogh, President of Dublin City University, author of numerous books on religious history, and expert on the life of Blessed Edmund.

Daire always challenges us to look at Edmund Rice in new ways, and to consider his impact on the way our schools operate today.

We place immense value on the support of the leadership of the Christian Brothers at both Province and Congregational level. Therefore, it was very powerful to receive blessings from our outgoing Province Leader, Br Edmund Garvey, and from Br Hugo Caceres on behalf of the newly elected Congregation Leadership Team.

Following their words of support and encouragement, each Principal was given a framed blessing from the CLT which we hope will inspire them further and remind them of the movement and tradition to which they belong.



With opportunity for group conversation and private reflection, we came away thoroughly refreshed and replenished, especially after enjoying a beautiful meal at Rookery Hall Hotel and Spa in the evening!

The whole day was a reminder that a 'retreat' means many things. On the one hand it is an opportunity for introspection and contemplation.

On the other it's a time to take a breath and leave behind the pressures of everyday life and work. However, as wine and conversation flowed over the dinner table in the evening, we were reminded that it is also about creating the space for those meaningful conversations like-minded people share when conditions are right. That, more than anything, has been missed by us all these last two years.

Here is the message that Br Hugo Caceres of the CLT recorded for our Headteachers on the occasion of their first face-to-face retreat in 3 years:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4HF1me6aA8&t=321s>



The CLT Blessing for our Principals

BLESSING FOR OUR HEADTEACHERS IN ENGLAND

God of women and men gifted with compassionate leadership in service to their fellow companions: Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Deborah, Mary Magdalene and Peter, Lydia and Paul, Francis and Claire, Julianne of Norwich, and all who pointed out the lights at the end of the tunnels of history...

May we accept the blessing of being agents of healing the wounds left by the pandemic.

May we be blessed with the opportunity to walk the roads less travelled for opening new paths to our colleagues and students.

May we be blessed in times of adversity with the light of faith in better days and the ability to find and achieve good amidst obstacles and even in the face of evil.

May we accept the blessing of becoming sacred midwives to help the birth of an inclusive and compassionate education, ready to act in moments of urgency when the new is about to sprout.

May we accept the blessing of interacting with students and colleagues who challenge us with their diverse personalities and their views that are opposed to our own.

May we embrace the blessing of being carriers of innovation, change, and transformation when we evaluate the most critical moments of our leadership.

May we not reject the blessing of filling new wineskins with new wine when it is time to make way for the wine of the future in our school.

May we enrich ourselves each day with the blessing of our spouses and children, and let us recover the gift of playing, having fun, and enjoying ourselves with them.

May we enjoy the blessing of time outside of school to observe “the lilies of the field” and “the birds of the sky” and accept that “each day has enough trouble of its own”.

May we be blessed with the certainty that we are individually loved by God and that God finds pleasure in our persons.

May the blessing of the love of God, Mother and Father, the blessing of being brothers and sisters of Jesus the Wisdom teacher of Nazareth, and the blessing of their Spirit, the Divine Ruah, encourage us with enthusiasm and creativity.

Amen.

from the Christian Brothers Congregational Leadership Team, Rome
June 2022, on the occasion of the Headteachers' Retreat: 'Leaving Safe Harbours'



Sixth Form Leadership Conference: 'Called to Be'



In May we were able to resume our Sixth Form Student Leadership Conference for the newly elected leadership teams in the Colleges.

We were joined by 50 students from St Ambrose College, St Anselm's College, St Edward's College, St Joseph's College and St Mary's College.

It was a great privilege to be able to work with the students for a whole day where we considered what we mean by servant leadership and also explore what leadership means in an Edmund Rice context, both locally and globally. Students had the chance to demonstrate and practise their leadership skills when they presented in mixed school groups, and they also had the chance to learn from the good practice on 'transformational education' in the other schools.

Ann had a video made of many other global student leaders who sent greetings and insights into leadership in their own schools. You can watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFuOvSFpD4>



We were so fortunate to have had a range of presenters at our conference including former students Joseph Lynam, who spoke to current students about how he has benefitted greatly from being involved in opportunities through the Network ranging from local and overseas immersions to Camps to the Oceania internship – 'Project Carrick' and Shannon Oates, just finishing her PhD, who led a workshop on inspirational leaders and team work to Dr Sylvia Likambi who is the CEO of Voice of Nations – who spoke to the students about the vision of leadership.

We concluded the conference with a joint reflection that the students all contributed to, and they received an anointing and blessing from Br Fergus Reilly. We enjoyed a celebratory dinner together before our departure.

We have had excellent feedback from both staff and students alike.

Some of the 'take aways' students gained from the event:

- Having a vision to lead people through the spirit of Edmund Rice How I can be a leader effectively and encourage others to be as well leadership is extremely diverse; I really enjoyed the day. I feel like Sylvia's talk was extremely effective and her presence was truly amazing and inspiring
- Once you have your calling and purpose in life, nothing can stop you. Being a leader is serving and being selfless, doing things that not only benefit yourself but also those around you on a larger scale
- How to lead by service, confidence but humility taking opportunities because we can make a difference
- Ideas from other schools such as a guardianship between Year 7 and 12, that we exist to represent the student body and amplify their voice, and the importance of communication within leadership
- God has a plan for you



St Mary's student, Xavier Cottrell-Boyce, gives his account of the Student Leadership Day:

Getting up at 6.30 to take a bus to the Wirral did not put the Edmund Rice Student Leadership Day in a positive light before our arrival. However, the dynamic and immediately engaging atmosphere of the day rapidly proved me wrong.

The element about the day, which I enjoyed most, was how, as student leaders we were constantly challenged to think, further and more deeply about issues, which will, in not too long, be ours to resolve.

As young people we are too often told to be more engaged with current affairs and branded as too introspective as a generation, however young people are rarely challenged to use their abilities, and this is what the Edmund Rice leadership day did so well. Being thrown into groups with students from different schools might've seemed a challenge, however it honed us all to the tasks at hand and demonstrated rapidly how impactful young people working together can be, over a range of workshops.

The Zoom lecture with Dr Patrick Kirwan was very inspiring as it demonstrated to us that change does not start with governments and it is foolish to wait for it, rather, change starts when you want it to start, and if, as Dr Sylvia Likambi showed us, it is combined with a deep sense of vision, then nothing is beyond achieving, as St Theresa of Avila said, "God has no hands on earth but ours", displaying that we must be the change we want to see, and as young people we have the potential to achieve it. Equally inspiring was Joseph Lynam.

Since he was also young person who not long before had been in our exact place it was amazing to see how the Edmund Rice network had taken and helped him realise his potential as a leader, in his work with project Carrick, and certainly gave us food for thought in our next steps as leaders in the footsteps of Edmund Rice.

In the modern era it is often hard for the message of Edmund Rice and the work of the ERI network to percolate through the noise of society and social media, however the Edmund Rice Leadership Day really cut through everything else, focusing me in a very deep way on the role of the youth as leaders, and I am sure I speak for all the students who attended, when I say I left rejuvenated in my desire to fulfil the message of Edmund Rice and use my abilities for communal good.

Xavier Cottrell- Boyce

The EREBB online Congress ‘educating with hope in our Hearts and in our Hands’ took place for staff all over the globe in May.

With four fantastic, world-renowned keynote speakers and a varied time schedule, it was accessible and enjoyed by many hundreds of teachers in our Edmund Rice schools in each region.

A long-standing colleague and friend of Ann Nichols, an experienced educator in the Jesuit tradition, **Señor Pepe Menéndez** - @PepeMe agreed to be one of the four main speakers over the two-day congress. Pepe used Pope Francis’s words of ‘create a disturbance/mess but organise it well!’ ‘Hagan lío pero organícenlo bien’ as the inspiration for his talk. He referred to the new UNSECO report on how education can and should repair injustice.

We thought it was important that Pepe give his talk in his native Spanish as it would be more inclusive of the large proportion of Spanish speakers from the Latin American region. In fact, Pepe is known to some of the staff in Edmund Rice schools there as he has worked widely across South America on ethos and educational transformation as well as with the Fe and Alegria network. ‘El mundo es un pañuelo’ = what a small world!

The other speakers were **Dr Fernando Reimers**, Harvard University Professor of Practice in International Education.

His inspiring words spoke of a need in the current climate for transformational education, he addressed the UNESCO report about where the world is heading and how schools should open their doors and windows to this world in order to understand its challenges. His ideas practical ideas on reform ‘from the bottom up’ and on ‘stirring the pot’, ‘being brave and not complacent’ and ‘being the change we want to see in the world starting today’ were really energising and motivational.

Read the Futures of Education UNESCO report here.

<https://www.erebb.org/2022-erebb-global-congress-educating-with-hope-in-our-heartshands/>



The second day we were joined by **Sr Helen Prejean**, author of *Dead Man Walking*, who shared powerfully about Education and the Gospel: *Waking up the World*. She took the delegates on a journey of her faith and how it has been the bedrock to her ministry.

Young South African humanitarian, **Candice Mama** talked about her own story of trauma and forgiveness, following the murder of her father by an apartheid assassin. She shared about The Power of Resilience as we move through the Pandemic.

Watch the recordings of our keynote speakers here: <https://www.erea.edu.au/edmund-rice-global-gathering-of-catholic-educators-to-rebuild-and-reimagine-education>

The posters are for the EREBB Global Congress 9-11 May, 2022, with the theme 'Educating with Hope in Our Hearts and Hands'. Each poster features a keynote speaker and the Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders logo.

- Pepe Menéndez** (Spain): Global Advisor on Educational Transformation and Author of *Worthwhile Schools*.
- Fernando M. Reimers** (USA): Harvard University Professor of Practice in International Education, UNESCO Commission on the Futures of Education.
- Candice Mama** (South Africa): Author of *Forgiveness Redefined* and UN Top 20 Women of Africa.
- Sister Helen Prejean** (USA): Global faith-based justice advocate, Author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller *Dead Man Walking*.



Global Classroom Partners

– EREBB



Building on the success of our pilot scheme to connect classrooms across the global Edmund Rice community, Edmund Rice England and Edmund Rice Education Australia launched Phase Two of Global Classroom Partners in April.

Following a re-launch online event run by Brian Garrone and Ann Nichols, we have had a further 55 schools register to participate in this phase, including many of our English schools.

All partnerships have been assigned and Ann is in the process of running Educator Zooms where the staff in the partner schools plan, with her, the content and timeframe of their connection.

We are delighted with the success of our first phase, feedback has been very positive, from both staff and of course from students who have gained knowledge of other Edmund Rice schools and their communities.

Although the programme is simple and quite short to carry out, the partners are very much encouraged to build on their initial contact and forge deep, sustainable links wherever they can.

<https://www.erea.edu.au/global-classrooms-partners/>



Exodus 18:21-22

King James Version Bible

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of ...

An update on the Gaudete Trust and the Laetare MAT



Following the launch of ROE in 2019, a working party was established to explore the formation of a Collaborative Trust. Its aim is to provide a service for those religious congregations that wish to transfer their responsibilities of educational trusteeship.

The Collaborative Trust will exercise, fully or in part, according to need, those legal, financial, and inspirational responsibilities of educational trusteeship that were formerly carried out by these individual congregations. The plan is to create a new community of schools and colleges and so secure the future of an education infused with the spirit of the founders.

The mission of the Collaborative Trust is to secure the future of Religious Order schools and colleges within the Catholic education system of England and Wales by bringing together a number of these establishments under a common trusteeship. It will establish a new community of schools and colleges that will share a vision rooted in the values of the gospel and animated by the distinctive charisms of the Founding Religious Congregations.

The name Gaudete was chosen for the Collaborative Trust, as it is a name that makes people stop and think about its meaning. It is a name that tells us to rejoice!

- **We rejoice in the Good News of the Gospel.**
- **We rejoice in the Holy Spirit who is enabling us to create something new and is teaching us what true collaboration means.**
- **We rejoice in the rich heritage of Religious Orders in education.**

Most of all we rejoice in our young people for whom this Trust was built, and we want them to be able to rejoice in the person they are and so achieve the fullness of life of which Jesus spoke.

The guiding principles of the Gaudete Trust are:

It rejoices in the different perspectives on gospel values brought to the Trust by the religious congregations and will work to make this rich heritage available to the whole community of schools. It will also support individual establishments in continuing to develop an education that is in harmony with the distinctive spirit of the founding congregation.

- **It will adopt a collaborative and inclusive way of working.**
- **It is an organic and dynamic organisation, and it will respond creatively to the differing needs of its members over time.**
- **It is an outward looking venture and will work with key Catholic national and international organisations for the common good in Catholic education.**
- **It places great importance on the formation of its Trustees, and all who work with them, and will allocate sufficient time and resources to their training and development.**

The Bishops' Conference formally approved the establishment of the Gaudete Trust in Spring 2022 and approved the appointment of the first Foundation charity Trustees at the end of May. Membership is open to any Religious Order but is expected there will be five founding congregations:

- **Christian Brothers**
- **The Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle**
- **De La Mennais Brothers**
- **The Faithful Companions of Jesus**
- **La Sainte Union**

As members of the Gaudete Trust, these Religious Orders will be able to remain engaged and involved with their schools.

The Gaudete Trust Vision and Guiding Principles for Education are available at

<https://roe-uk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Our-Philosophy-of-Education.pdf>

Multi-Academy Trust & ROE Charism Group

Research regarding the formation of a Multi-Academy Trust was undertaken by ROE in order to respond to the proposals of local dioceses and the March 2022 Schools White Paper 'Opportunity for All'. A steering group was established in 2021 to develop the MAT proposal and includes representatives from Religious Orders, Governing Boards and Headteachers /Principals.

The steering group is developing proposals based on the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity and is seeking to consult with schools so that the MAT is formed 'by schools and for schools'. It was originally anticipated that this would be named the Gaudete MAT to demonstrate the link with the Gaudete Trust, but this has caused some initial confusion and it is now proposed to call it the Laetare MAT.

The name Laetare was chosen from Laetare Sunday being the fourth Sunday in the season of Lent, and traditionally is a day of celebration. This Sunday gets its name from the first few words of the traditional Latin entrance for the Mass of the day, "Laetare Jerusalem" meaning "Rejoice, O Jerusalem" from Isaiah 66:10.

Schools are invited to join the Laetare MAT from any Religious Orders that are members of ROE. Although there will be close links with the Gaudete Trust, there is no expectation that schools must be part of this group to join the MAT.

The steering group is developing the MAT proposal based on the following principles:

- **The Laetare MAT will be designed with the full involvement of schools and colleges following the principle of subsidiarity.** Each Religious Order considering this as an option for their schools has provided a Head or Chair as representation on the steering group to shape the proposals from an early stage.
- **The Laetare MAT will honour and promote the distinctive charism of its members.**
- **The Laetare MAT will be inclusive and be open to schools that need support.**
- **The easiest way to establish a Laetare MAT is for the initial phase to include schools that are already Single Academy Trusts, followed by a second phase for schools that are Voluntary Aided and wish to convert to academy status. The Voluntary Aided schools will be included in the initial planning to facilitate them joining as soon as possible after the MAT is established.**
- **In the future, membership would be open to schools belonging to other Religious Orders who wish to adopt the vision of education alongside their own**

Please contact Roisin Maguire for more information
director.ero@gmail.com

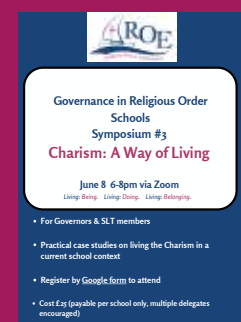
ROE Charism Group

ROE Charism group is a group of religious and lay volunteers who collaborate on the development and celebration of the Charisms in our religious order schools.

Our focus this year has been on delivering a series of three symposia specifically on Governance in Religious order Schools. These happened in November, March and in June. These have been very well-received and have been supportive as well as practical sessions on how our Gospel values and the school's Charism and vision should be the guide and compass of governors' decisions. Some participants' feedback can be viewed below.

As for the Charism group, we continue to support one another and to share how we work on ethos development in many ways with our own orders and school networks. It is a great way to share good practice. Should you wish to access the materials from these symposia, just follow the link to our Padlet resource page: <https://padlet.com/annnicholsero/8x5igjx8np9umz9v>

- **A reminder that Gospel values must permeate all we do as Governors. Also interesting to examine and consider further the Gospel story which most resonates with me and how that might impact on my role as a Governor.**
- **Be clear about core values and point to them in the detailed decision making in the governing body**
- **It was very useful to hear the views, ideas, and experiences of Governors' at other schools.**





These are very turbulent times for Asylum Seekers. The new Immigration Act has cast doubt on whether people coming to the UK will be able to claim Asylum here, or whether they will be deported to Rwanda to have their case heard and determined there.

Rules around accommodation are changing and the government is trying to use large scale closed-site schemes like Linton Barracks in Yorkshire to house thousands of asylum seekers in one place. We think this is a dreadful idea, isolating people from support and instead of welcoming them, makes them feel cut off and shut out of a community where they expected to be safe. There are currently 109,000 people waiting for a decision on their request to remain in safety in the UK.

Asylum Link is slowly opening up after the Pandemic, with restrictions remaining only on the clothes store and access to caseworkers, as we are short of volunteer numbers in both those areas. We are gearing-up for Refugee Week and the annual trip out to Wirral and the Big BBQ. This year the choir will be at the Museum of Liverpool as Amal, the Refugee Puppet who walked all the way from Syria, visits the Albert Dock on the 21st June. www.walkwithamal.org

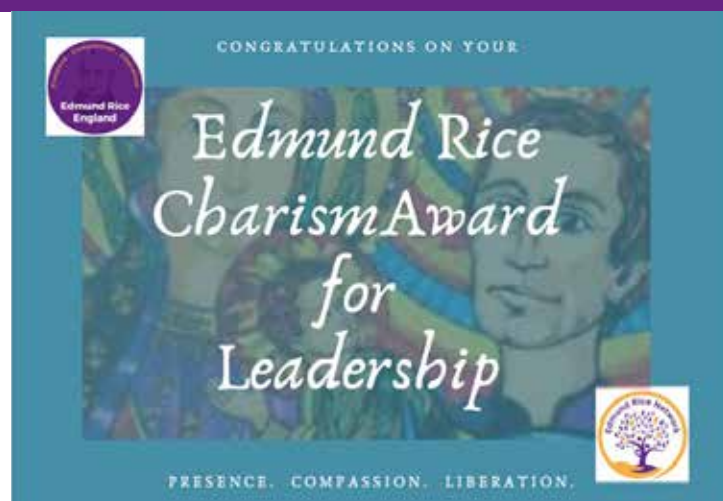
Other projects are running well with the Allotments and Bike club proving as popular as ever. Fresh from their work on Offa's Dyke last year, in April another team went through to Mold in North Wales, planting a thousand trees on the banks of the River Alyn. Working with organisations like the North Wales Wildlife Trust and the Marine conservation Society, we are able to place Asylum Seekers into the mainstream. Through the contact Refugees have with local people, many of the myths and assumptions made about Asylum Seekers are dispelled and people find they have more in common than they might have at first thought.

In May the Refugee Rocks Climbing Club celebrated its first birthday and with the help of the Climbing Hangar who host the club, other groups are springing up all over the UK. So, while there is a lot to be despondent about with current Government policies, here on the ground, we are working hard to ensure that there will always be a safe place for people seeking sanctuary in our communities.

Watch the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICIKtbnNxZk>



Edmund Rice Charism Awards for Leadership



Our warmest congratulations to this year's recipients of the Edmund Rice Charism Award for Leadership.

Each year we recognise adults within the network who have made and are making an outstanding contribution to the Edmund Rice Mission and who demonstrate true service to their school and / or community. Awardees and their families are invited to celebrate with us at our annual Garden Party.



The list of recipients is below.

From St Ambrose Prep school:

- Laura Ellis
- Sinead Aldridge

From Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary:

- Angela Farmer

From St Ambrose College:

- Sue Whittle
- Andy Chapman
- Nigel Hand
- Tom Moran
- Martin Toal
- Rob Wilcock

From St Anselm's College:

- Alan Wood

From St Edward's College:

- Paul Hardy
- Toni Malone
- Pat Burns
- Elaine Heron

From St Joseph's College:

- Craig Gilligan
- Mary Parker
- Steve Flather

We thank them all for their outstanding service, selflessness, and passion in their roles. Their communities and the Network are indebted to them.

Photo shows Mary Parker and her family who joined us for the Network Summer Garden Party.

Network Summer Garden Party





Network Gathering



'Tip of the Iceberg'

HOSTED BY ROSEMARY BROADBENT

at Woodeaves

RSVP Ann Nichols 07889565915

annnichols.ero@gmail.com

WEDS. 14

SEPT.

5.30 - 7.30PM

There are a few musical works which are instantly recognisable, but we may know nothing at all about their composers and their background. Who were they? Did they write anything else? Rosemary Broadbent will start with some very familiar pieces and then invite us to explore further into the life and works of their composers. Time for a little adventurous listening!

Top 10 Scripture Quotes – Brother Ignatius Chincotta

Followers of Blessed Edmund Rice who happened to be members of the Congregation of Christian Brothers selected these 10 quotes as outstanding guides to help them fulfil the vision of Edmund.

You will find these as images scattered through the pages of Presence.

- Eph. 1:3-4:13
- Lk. 4:18-19
- 2 Cor. 3:17-18
- Mk. 10:43-45
- Co. 3:15-16
- Phil. 2:5-7
- Eph. 3:20
- Eph. 3:16-17
- Ex. 18:21-22
- Lk. 6:35

Now over to YOU!

Brother Ignatius invites you to get involved!

Choose the three quotations you like the best, send your selection to annnichols.ero@gmail.com and in the next edition of Presence we will announce the top three quotes as selected by our readers.



We attended the funeral of Br. Denis Andrew Rock on the 19th of May. Andrew was a wellknown and admired Brother.

Andrew's clothes were donated to our local ecumenical Micah food bank and his many books to Oxfam. Andrew's memory and good example are a lasting treasure to all who knew him - like the old image of a Christian Brother 'a saint, a scholar and a gentleman'. Andrew's much-loved project to set out the Gospels in speech patterns was not fulfilled in his lifetime but an Anglican vicar has shown great interest in promoting it. Any tributes for his life story are welcome -edwardegan263@gmail.com

Edward attended the Links AGM and Conference near London. The main speaker was Dr Anna Rowlands who gave 'tour de force' talks based on her recent must-read book on Catholic Social Teaching 'Towards a Politics of Communion'. Former Brother Michael Thornhill and his wife Helen were gracious hosts who would have liked to attend Andrew's funeral, but Michael's health precluded this. Edward was able to visit his second cousin, Linda, in leafy Guilford after a lapse of two years owing to Covid restrictions. Edward did his weekly visit to his cousin's widow on her 89th birthday. He also visits Sr Margaret SND, former director of Justice and Peace in Liverpool Archdiocese who has Multiple Sclerosis and dementia. He also meets Br Tom Kelly at The Scotch Piper, the oldest pub in Lancashire (1320) where Tom recalls old times in his inimitable way over a cup of tea. Sheila Simson welcomes visitors as she spends time aged 90 in Salford Royal Hospital suffering from dementia. Sheila is a keen member of Pax Christi and loved the poem events from Br Brian Monaghan pre-Covid.

Michael continues to provide 'cordon bleu' meals such as Paella and Spaghetti Bolognese. He has volunteered for a day a week return to teaching during the Covid-induced absences of teachers at his old school Chris continues to visit Br Matt Fogarty almost daily as Matt has on-going health challenges.



Brother Denis Andrew Rock

1932– 2022

Brother Andrew died just before his 90th birthday at the end of April.

He will be greatly missed by his fellow Brothers and by his family.

Here we share part of the eulogy given by Brother George Gordon at Andrew's funeral. "Our lives have been touched by God through this gentle kind friendly and generous man Denis Rock – known in the Christian Brothers as Brother Andrew. Denis Andrew was born on the 5th of May 1932 in South Shields the son of Edward and Aileen Rock, Andrew had a sister, Audrey who survives him.

After some years in South Shields, the family moved to Kendal where Denis gained a county scholarship and from there he was enrolled as a boarder at St Joseph's College in Blackpool run by the Christian Brothers. Denis was very gifted academically and made excellent progress in school. He took a deep interest in the Science subjects - particularly Chemistry. While a boarder in Blackpool he was attracted to the life of the Christian Brothers Community. He would visit the college Chapel to pray and often saw the Brothers gathered there. So, when the Brothers Vocations Director visited, Denis made an appointment with him.

From school he entered the Congregation and made his Novitiate at Toddington Manor in Gloucestershire. After his initial religious formation, he was assigned to the Brothers' student community at Cambridge, where he studied for a degree in Chemistry. His first teaching appointment was at St Brendan's College, Bristol where he was assigned to teach Physics despite his Chemistry degree! So, Andrew set about developing his skills in Physics.

In 1959 he was one of four Brothers from England who joined with some Brothers from Ireland to prepare for their Perpetual Profession which was completed with a 30 day Retreat in Dublin. Andrew pronounced his final vows on August 15th of that year, 1959. Among other teaching appointments were: Prior Park Prep School, Cricklade in Berkshire, St Edward's College, Liverpool and St Mary's College, Crosby.

In 1966 he was appointed as the Christian Brothers English Province Bursar. He accepted this role with energy and proved himself as a great success. Next, Andrew became the Vocations Director for the Christian Brothers English Province. He put his skills in physics to good use in this appointment. At vocation exhibitions he would setup a world map to illustrate where the Brothers were in mission. Boys were invited to select a town or city from a panel - press a button and a light would illustrate the location on the Map!



Next, he himself became one of the Brothers in foreign mission, travelling to both Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa.

On his return to England, he accepted the post as Librarian at St. Aidan's Comprehensive school in Sunderland and around this time he was appointed Religious Superior of the Brothers Community in Sunderland.

Retiring from the school in Sunderland he joined the Christian Brothers' community in Twickenham, West London. When the property in Twickenham was sold, he moved north again – this time to "Woodeaves" Hale Barns.

As a member of a Religious Community, he was always kind, gentle and ever ready to help if you had any need or wanted anything repaired. Making and mending was one of his hobbies. One never heard him criticise or complain. Brother Andrew was proud of his calling as a Christian Brother and indeed we were very proud of him. He was ever a keen student and versed himself in a variety of subjects and disciplines. He was fond of Shakespeare and performances of Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas. He would have been an excellent "phone a friend" if you were a contestant on Who Wants to be a Millionaire!

Brother Andrew was a keen student of the scriptures and particularly the gospels. He made sure to nurture his spiritual life and his relationship with Jesus through personal prayer, the sacraments, and the Eucharist. He made yearly Ignatian retreats and made spiritual direction a regular part of his life. When his health began to fail and he needed 24-hour care, he moved from "Woodeaves" to Ince Blundell Nursing Home Liverpool and then more recently to Lady of the Vale Bowdon.

He was looking forward - and indeed so were all the Brothers - to celebrating his 90th birthday on May 5th the Feast of Blessed Edmund Rice. However, God called him home to a new life a week before that planned celebration in this life."

**May perpetual light shine upon him, rest in peace
Brother Andrew. Live Jesus in our hearts forever.**

A life in mission

Brother Dominic Sassi

I was born in Sunderland into a family of 5. I never knew my mother, who died of pneumonia when I was one year old. One of my aunts, herself a widow, came to Sunderland to look after the family and she became our surrogate mother who instructed us in faith and culture during those early years.

The Sassi family was of Italian origin. My grandparents came from Parma in Northern Italy and came to Britain at the turn of the 20th Century, settling in Wales and eventually in Hampstead, London. My father owned a fish shop and he also worked as a marble and mosaic designer.

During the war years, Sunderland suffered its fair share of bombing - the family fish shop once having its windows blown out by a bomb dropped on the town centre. This was my earliest recollection of the war, but I can also remember the flying bombs dropped on London when I was there visiting my grandparents. (Other children were evacuated from London; but no, I was brought to London!)

The Sassi family was traditionally Catholic. I was an altar server in St Cecilia's parish from age of five and attended daily Mass up until my early teens. I was very influenced by the parish priest, Fr Hugh O'Connor, who was a legend in the parish for his work with young people. He used to often ask the youth of the parish to give sermons during Mass - "Out of the mouth of babes...." - and I shared in this task. The poor congregation!

After attending St Aidan's Grammar School run by the Christian Brothers, I had intended going to St Mary's College in Twickenham to train as a teacher. A friend suggested that I first contact the Christian Brothers who were both teachers and Religious. How strangely God works! Very soon my mind was set on joining the Brothers and within a few months I had handed in my notice to British Rail where I was working as a clerk and entered the novitiate in Toddington Manor in Gloucester, receiving the name Brother Dominic.



Toddington Manor lay in the heart of the Cotswolds and was sheer heaven for this novice from a shipbuilding and mining town in the northeast of England. The contrast of rural surroundings with its peace and apparent grace was immense, greatly enhanced by the facility of daily walks, sport, and working on the farm.

Under the careful guidance of our novice-master, Br Dominic thoroughly enjoyed the twelve months of spiritual formation and introduction into the Religious Life. The next two years were spent in the scholasticate during which time the spiritual training continued, and university preparation began.

My first assignment as a teaching brother was to Gibraltar. This was a most exciting experience of "firsts": living in community as a professed Brother; teaching class; and living and working abroad. The Brothers had been living on the Rock of Gibraltar, a tiny outpost of British colonialism on the southernmost tip of Spain, since 1835. At that time, the Brothers administered three schools there. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there and almost regretted the holidays when there was no school. But life outside of class was also enjoyable - daily walks or bike rides across the border into Spain, hikes with the boys up the Rock, daily swims in the Mediterranean, and annual holidays in northern Spain. There was also an excellent community spirit shared by fifteen members. The local people, clergy and Sisters were very friendly, and a truly family atmosphere prevailed.

After making my perpetual vows I was asked by the Provincial to go to Rome to study theology at the Lateran Pontifical University. This was a three-year course, leading to a licence in religious science. Living in Rome for three years was much to my liking. It struck a chord with my Italian blood, and I enjoyed the people, their customs, food, wine, culture and language. It also brought me close to the centre of the Church, an experience that later I often cited to explain a tinge of (healthy) anti-clericalism!

On completing my theology degree, I was appointed Head of the RE department in StAnselm's College Birkenhead. I did in fact do two jobs at this time because I was asked to live in Ledsham, Cheshire with the Sixth Form postulants and travel with them every day to St Anselm's where they studied for A levels. Both St Anselm's and Ledsham were good experiences for me.

I taught RE, French and Spanish in Birkenhead and gave spiritual guidance to the postulants in Ledsham. I have to admit that if I had had to choose, I would have preferred teaching in St Anselm's. I found the postulancy an unhealthy experience for 17-year-olds cut off from friends and family. I found it difficult to act as spiritual mentor, big brother, daddy, friend... Thank God that system no longer exists.

In 1974, I was asked to go to Maynooth, Ireland where the second-year novices spent a year studying theology. There was a very healthy mixing with students and local neighbours, and we shared an excellent community spirit. I was in Maynooth for three years, during which time I took the opportunity of completing a BA honours degree. Then I went to Oxford to do a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. Living and studying among the dreaming spires of Oxford was again much to my liking. Unfortunately, it was too short an experience.

After that period of study, I was ready for school again and was appointed Deputy Head in St Joseph's College, Stoke on Trent. At the time, Stoke was in the process of reorganising its schools, including those in the Catholic sector. St Joseph's was a flourishing direct-grant grammar school and so the parents and staff were astounded when they heard that the school was listed to close, there being too many schools in the area. As the Congregation were the Trustees, it was decided that St Joseph's continue as a much smaller independent school, and I was appointed its first Headmaster. It was an exciting time for the young and dedicated staff, including eight Brothers.

The school grew slowly but confidently and when I left in 1984 it was already attracting government grants. Leaving St Joseph's, I was appointed Head of St Edward's College, Liverpool. I was sad to leave Stoke but looked forward to the challenge of leading a much bigger school in Liverpool.

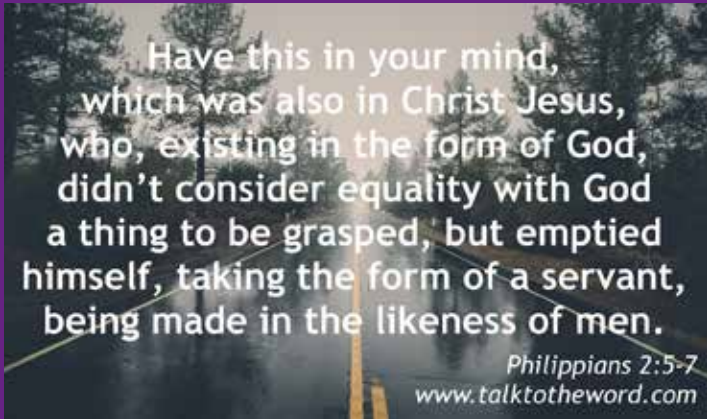
Compared to St Joseph's, St Edward's College was a well-oiled first-class machine. It had been founded in 1900 and had flourished to become one of the top grammar schools in the northwest of England, with outstanding resources. Its many Old Boys were prominent in church, state, business, academia, and sport. Traditionally an all-boys school, St Edward's admitted girls into the Sixth Form for the first time in 1982, and I completed the process by introducing girls into the lower school in 1990.

In 1991 I was appointed Provincial and had to retire as Headmaster of St Edward's. As the number of Brothers was in steep decline, the decision was taken to begin the process of appointing lay Heads in all our schools. So, I was the last Brother to act as Head of St Edward's. I left with great sadness and missed school greatly at first. I missed the interaction of pupils, staff, and parents, as well as daily contact in the classroom. I did not enjoy as much the pastoral and administrative role of Provincial. I did however enjoy meeting with other church leaders at home and abroad, including international meetings of Brothers.

In 1996 there was a General Chapter in Johannesburg, and I was elected on to the Congregation Leadership Team. I would describe this experience as one of the most formative periods of my life. Not only did it bring me in contact with all parts of the Congregation, but I found it to be the best experience of community. The CLT was an international team and so brought different styles of spirituality and prayer life. There was a strong scriptural influence where daily reflection on the Word of God replaced an overemphasis on the daily Office. And there was a serious and constant search for the type of spirituality best suited to being a Christian Brother. This search subsequently resulted in the adoption of heart-centred spirituality at the 2002 General Chapter. One of my portfolios while on the CLT was the promotion of the Brothers' vocation. While rejoicing in the growth of vocations in the developing world Provinces, I often lamented the decline in the Provinces of the first world. I could never accept the attitude that the Brothers' vocation was finished in those parts of the world and felt that not enough had been done there to promote our vocation.

I loved living in Rome. I also loved travelling and so the fact that the CLT spent more time outside of Rome did not bother me. I was enlivened and challenged by contact with Brothers' lives and ministries in different parts of the world, especially in India and Latin America. Life on the CLT was not for anyone who did not like travel or who was shy and retiring. I did not fall into this category and had no difficulty in feeling at home and getting involved in groups of brothers or lay people in Mumbai, Melbourne, Moyobamba, or Manchester. But I always enjoyed returning to Rome and loved to be there at Christmas time, experiencing the festivities in St Peter's square and piazza Navona. During my time on the CLT I also availed myself of the opportunity of two outstanding spiritual experiences. The first was a one-hundred-day retreat at the Sangre de Cristo centre in New Mexico, where God's personal love for me was reinforced. The second was a 30-day retreat on the Ignatian model in Campion retreat centre in Melbourne. Both of these experiences helped to draw me closer to God.

In 2008, having completed twelve years on the CLT, I returned to England after the General Chapter in India. I looked forward to returning to my roots and was asked to be community leader in "Woodeaves" Hale Barns. This was a community of retired brothers, and I had the task of gently leading them to new forms of prayer in keeping with the vision of the Congregation. I found the brethren very amenable to my promptings, whether it be faithsharing or breaking the Word of God during a Eucharistic sharing. I also worked with the Edmund Rice Schools Team based in "Woodeaves" who worked with school staff and governors.



Have this in your mind,
which was also in Christ Jesus,
who, existing in the form of God,
didn't consider equality with God
a thing to be grasped, but emptied
himself, taking the form of a servant,
being made in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7
www.talktotheword.com

In 2010 I became aware of the need in Africa for formation personnel. There were soon to be four novitiates there but there was a lack of trained African Formators, hence the need for people who could help from other Provinces. Having thought and prayed about it and feeling that my health and energy levels were sound, I decided to accept the invitation to join this group of international formators. I was assigned to the novitiate in Green Point, Cape Town, South Africa. What a beautiful setting! However, what I often experienced while living there was a feeling of great sadness on seeing such great poverty amongst the Black population, exaggerated in the Cape Town area where there was also great wealth – shanty towns next to opulent villas. So eventually, it was decided to move the novitiate to Lusaka in Zambia. This proved to be a better base for an African novitiate. I much enjoyed my three years as a novitiate formator.

In 2013 I left Zambia and fully expecting to retire in England I was surprised when, following the Congregation Chapter in Nairobi, I was appointed to the Province Leadership Team of the European Province. The headquarters of the Province was located in Dublin and all five members of the Province Leadership Team lived and worked in the Province Centre in Marino. Even though it meant living away from “home”, I enjoyed being part of the administration of the Province, especially visiting communities and dealing pastorally with the Brothers. I was also a trustee of the ER schools in England for which I had to make frequent visits to England.

In 2020 my term of office came to an end and after nearly 40 years in various leadership roles, I eventually retired and took up residence in St Timothy’s community in Liverpool. But before leaving Ireland, as I had been living there for six years, I was able to apply to become an Irish citizen. So, in spite of the tragedy of Brexit, I am now the proud holder of two passports!

Before finishing, I would like to tell you why I am always keen to promote the vocation of the Christian Brother. I believe that discipleship is incomplete until we share our belief. This axiom can apply to all forms of discipleship. To take a banal example: as a Sunderland fan, I want to let people know how much I support my team - even to the extent that I will try and convince Newcastle supporters to change sides! But to move from the banal, as a disciple of Jesus in the Edmund Rice mould, I want to convince others of the value of the Religious Life, and especially of the vocation of a brother, and from my experience of the vocation of a Christian Brother.

I write with both conviction and passion. Conviction: the vocation of a brother makes sense and is worthwhile. It is a way of seeing reality and my life in relation to what is real; a way of seeing God, our relationship to God and the way of transformation. Passion: to communicate this way of understanding life and to share my vocation with others who are open to God’s working in their lives.

So, to those who are reading this edition of Presence who may still be wondering what to do with their lives, I say: why not consider a religious vocation?



Could your gifts and talents be most effectively developed through following a religious vocation? And to our lay partners of the ERN, I invite you to help us by inviting young men who have the necessary qualities to consider making our way of life theirs too.

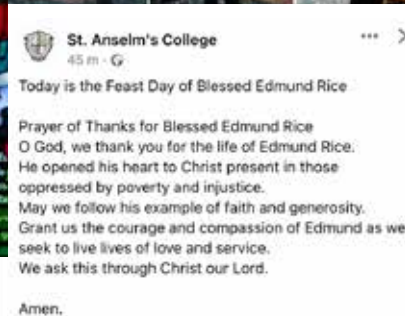
Thank you and God bless.

Brother Dominic Sassi
July, 2022

May 5th – Edmund Rice Feast Day 2022

Marking the Feast Day as a Global Community





A Word from the Governor!

By Steve Flather, Governor at St Joseph's College, Stoke-on-Trent

I was somewhat taken aback when I was asked if I wished to be a governor at St Joseph's College by Roisin Maguire, back in 2015. At the time, our daughter was in Year 11 at St Joseph's and I had gone into school for a meeting with Roisin. At the end of the meeting, Roisin asked if I would like to be governor. Being a school governor never was, and never had been, on my mind.

At the time, I was running a busy Human Resource and pay consulting business, alongside a couple of small online businesses. It is not hard to imagine that my diary and life were pretty full. I remember being reticent, but Roisin is very persuasive and within short order, I was co-opted onto the governing board. I grasped the opportunity to contribute to the school enthusiastically and my diary became even fuller.

St Joseph's is an Ofsted Outstanding school. It is oversubscribed and our Headteacher, Melissa Roberts, her SLT, and teaching and support staff, together with our governing board, all work exceptionally hard with drive and determination not only to maintain our ethos and mission but also to develop every aspect of the school with the objective of retaining our Outstanding status for our students when we are re-inspected in the future.

Although I have spent all my working life in business, either in direct or supporting roles to HR in large and small organisations, ultimately part-owning, chairing, and managing a substantial consulting business before "going solo" running my own business, it must be said that in some respects, I did not find it an easy transition to being a school governor.

Being a parent of a student gives you a bit of an understanding of curriculum requirements and exam results but for the most part you are oblivious to the finer intricacies of "Progress 8" and "ALPS" which always form part of our board discussions on curriculum and student progress.

Whilst I had been a company director for many years, and had knowledge of director responsibilities and company law, I had not appreciated that, in addition to such requirements, being a school governor required knowledge of significant amounts of Statutory Guidance in all aspects of the running of the school that had to be read and understood. (The expression "Statutory Guidance" is fascinating - it is almost an oxymoron!)

On reflection, it becomes obvious that such regulation is required, especially for such matters as finance and safeguarding and protection of the students, so I guess I was just naïve. But being

required to be familiar with such Statutory Guidance does bring it home that being a school governor is no ride in the park; it is a significant and onerous responsibility, requiring considerable commitment, time, and dedication.

It has certainly proved quite a challenge to remain "strategic" as a governor at all times. Having been responsible for business operations for many years, I have found it difficult to avoid being "operational" but am very grateful to Sarah Scott, our chair, for gently guiding me back to the straight and narrow when I stray.

I was initially appointed to the Resources Committee, responsible for finance, personnel, and estates matters. At least I felt a bit more at home here, all matters of which I had some basic knowledge from my business background but even so, understanding terms like "GAGs" and "PANs" took a bit of getting used to. Then, you know how it works ... the call comes in "please can you cover from someone on Pupil Disciplinary to make it quorate" and hey presto, you are on the Pupil Disciplinary Committee and then the same happens on the Admissions Committee!



So now I sit on Resources and Admissions Committees and chair Pupil Disciplinary. Fortunately, the Disciplinary Committee does not need to meet very often; I am pleased to say that the excellent staff at St Joseph's have such matters very much under control on the principle that if you haven't got discipline you can't teach and the ethos of St Joseph's, like all Christian Brothers' schools, is one of mutual respect and excellent manners.

Some years ago, I became the Careers Link governor, a role I thoroughly enjoy and, as an ex-HR manager and trainer, have espoused with some enthusiasm. It is a sheer pleasure to work with the excellent Careers Team at St Joseph's who are driving hard not just to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks but also to explore so many new ways to support our talented students and introduce them to the world of work, helping them to find out about jobs and opportunities, both academic and in apprenticeships, that will help them to achieve their dreams and aspirations.

There is never enough time in the curriculum for all the core and optional subjects and all too often, careers is left in the slow lane. Not so at St Joseph's. It's part of the curriculum for all students from Year 7 to Year 13 and the team is always organising for students to see different jobs, talk to employers and listen to and question external speakers. I am proud to be the Careers Link governor and find it very fulfilling.

In my business role, we had one or more non-executive directors on our boards. They perform an essential service to a company in not only keeping the directors' feet to the fire on achieving targets and objectives and also being an excellent and highly qualified resource for advice. I see the role of a governor from that perspective and believe that all governors should be willing to share their personal and professional knowledge and skills freely for the school to help the Headteacher, SLT and staff to achieve their objectives. I am very pleased to say that my colleague governors at St Joseph's see their role in a similar way.

It is a pleasure to support Melissa Roberts and her team in maintaining and growing our school for the benefit of our students and community. Of course, we challenge but we also bring our respective wide-ranging experience, skills, and knowledge to our meetings to support the school. The collegiate and supportive environment of the governors and excellent relationship with Melissa and the SLT and staff makes it a pleasure to be a governor at St Joseph's. I know it sounds cheesy, but it is true.



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE



*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

- Luke 4:18-19

Raymond Lee, former pupil of and now teacher at St Mary's College, Crosby tells us about his Edmund Rice journey.

This September marks twenty years since I started my first year at St Mary's College in Crosby. I was expecting to be nervous, to hopefully make some new friends and try to make the best possible start in my new school. However, one thing that I was not expecting was to be given a warm welcome into a new family that was larger than just my school. That was Edmund Rice family.

Tom Murray delivered a talk about the Christian Brothers. Whilst this was my first time learning about them, I somehow knew that this was going to change the direction of my life.

In my seven years at St Mary's, I can honestly say that I loved school life. Of course, there was always stress of exams, homework deadlines and the rainy days that would make you dread Games lessons but looking back that was all part of the fun too. I couldn't have asked for a better school, staff, and friends. People are surprised when I tell them that all my very close friends are the same ones from secondary school and this is something that is not just unique to my year, all my brothers and sisters are in the same fortunate situation.

'Community' and 'Family' are overused phrases in the school sense, but I can't find better language to articulate life at St Mary's. There is just something in the air there and I am convinced it is because of the nature in which the school was founded, a big emphasis on helping and supporting others.

Whilst I was in school, I became immersed in various initiatives and outreach programmes that the school offered through Edmund Rice. Not only did I really enjoy taking part in these with my friends, but I genuinely felt that I was making a difference in my local community. Aside from all the positive and humbling lessons this work gave me it also provided me with a massive confidence boost and helped me think independently as well as working well within teams and allowed me to be creative in my ideas. By the time I was ready to leave school and go onto university I knew that I wanted to return to the Edmund Rice network in some form, I just wasn't sure what form that would take at the time!

Fast forward to 2015 and I was invited to partake in a school trip to Rome by Pat Duffy to help out. I had an amazing experience and as if by magic it was at that point I knew I wanted to pursue a career in teaching. I was fortunate enough to secure one of my PGCE placements at St Mary's and it was here that I became involved with the amazing work that Ann Nichols was undertaking in partnership with Asylum Link Merseyside. They had organised a Christmas concert and lunch in the school, and I saw the power of what we can do as schools to make a positive difference in people's lives. I will never forget that day as it inspired me to try and replicate this proactive outlook in whichever school I was lucky enough to get a job with.

In 2018 I began teaching at St Edward's College and it confirmed my suspicion that there is something really distinct about Edmund Rice schools. I felt the same sense of family spirit there as I had at St Mary's albeit on a much bigger scale! Fast forward to 2020 and I have 'come home' teaching History at St Mary's and I could not be happier. I feel so very lucky to have actually been given the opportunity I wanted whilst I was still a pupil in the school. As I arrived amidst the pandemic the school's ERI group was a result not up and running to the levels it had been. Over the past two years we have re-established Youth Ambassadors and built a strong 20 pupil ERI group of Sixth Formers, middle and lower school pupils. Some of the highlights have been a food bank drive for Asylum Link, charity rugby match for CAFOD and huge donation drive for Ukraine. So far, we have raised over £2500 for CAFOD.



I feel we are really just getting started and after a recent leadership conference hosted by the ER office, I am very excited for the forthcoming projects we will be getting involved with. I am very privileged to be surrounded by such enthusiastic students and watch their own spiritual development grow as mine did when I was in their position. It is an honour to be a part of the Edmund Rice family and I am looking to widen my links within the network.

For now, teaching is my passion, but I would definitely be open to exploring more of what the network can offer in the future, as that's what ER is all about for me: a truly lifelong community that encourages the growth of its members and those it is trying to help. It has certainly changed my life for the better and I am just one of many. Therefore, I would like to say a huge thank you to Ann, Tom and Roisin for their incredible work in keeping the spirit of Edmund Rice alive.

Zak Gainey, former pupil of St Anselm's College, currently an intern at Edmund Rice International, Geneva.

My name is Zak Gainey, and I am currently in the second week of a six-week internship with Edmund Rice International in Geneva, Switzerland. My relationship with the Edmund Rice Network, however, began in 2018 as a student at St Anselm's Catholic College, in Birkenhead. While at St Anselm's I was involved in a number of different advocacy and social justice projects and events.

My first major involvement with the ERI was as part of a trip to Belfast to learn about the issue of homelessness in Northern Ireland and the combative measures being employed by individuals, groups, and the government. While there I went to a panel discussion about the topic, its causes and measures that could be adopted that would not only remedy the issue but prevent it in the future. When the government representative that was meant to talk at the panel pulled out at the last moment, I began to realise the difficulties that existed between advocates on the ground and government officials and policy makers who controlled the tide of change. It was this realisation that would become a motivating factor behind why I wanted to become an intern for ERI. I wanted to be part of an organisation translating the hard work of advocates and individuals across the globe, that I had seen firsthand, into policy suggestions and lobbying attempts.

This desire to become an intern, which had begun in Belfast, was further cemented by my visit to Sierra Leone with St Anselm's annual excursion to projects and sister schools in Freetown and Makeni. It was the fantastic and hardworking people we met at these projects and schools that made me realise the imbalance between Europe and the rest of the world in terms of socio-economic opportunities and access to resources. I was hit with the realisation that the privileges the west have become so accustomed to, are responsibilities as much as they are luxuries, we in the west must use the resources available to us to improve the lives of people across the globe not just ourselves. Rather than recognise the inherent divide between our two continents, my visit to Africa made me aware of how similar both continents were. The internship, I thought, would enable me to understand how I could positively use my privileges to reduce the divide between the West and the rest of the world and give me the opportunity to apply everything I have experienced and learned at the UN.

I have also been fortunate enough to take part in advocacy events close to home such as a refugee training and awareness week in Liverpool and as a leader at one of Edmund Rice's Summer camps. These experiences were equally edifying and thought provoking and opened my eyes to human rights issues within my own country. It is easy, especially as a young person to ignore the failings of the place you call home but being introduced to Britain's Human Rights failings made me conscious of the fact that tackling Human Rights violations was a global issue, no one nation was better than the other, everyone could do better.

Over the past two weeks I have observed the day-to-day operations of ERI and the Human Rights Council and have been fortunate enough to be involved with the roll out of our annual ERI UN training programme. The programme invites members of the ERI network from across the globe to come to Geneva where they can see the link between the advocacy that they carry out at home and ERI's work within the UN. They also receive assistance in drawing up an action plan which they will deploy in the years to come and will be built on what they have learned about global advocacy and human rights policy while here at the UN.

Moreover, I have had the opportunity to spend a considerable amount of time in the UN observing a variety of discussions and debates about a multitude of topics ranging from, but not limited to, the dire humanitarian situation in Mariupol, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity rights and discrimination against women. All of which have been enriching and have further enhanced my understanding of the global political landscape.

Next week I am lucky enough to be speaking on behalf of ERI next Thursday at the 50th session of the Human Rights Council. I will be delivering an oral update on the UPR outcomes of Haiti. I am very excited about this opportunity, and I am already beginning to think of ways in which I would like to employ the lessons I have learned as part of the ERI network and as an intern in future advocacy I am involved in.

I would like to thank Edmund Rice International for giving me the chance to visit Geneva and take part in the internship programme, Tom and Ann for introducing me to the idea of social justice and advocacy and supporting my intern application and the St Anselm's faculty for welcoming me into the Edmund Rice family and for the education which has facilitated my journey to this point.



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.

Are There Any Eco-Schools Out There?

This piece was kindly contributed by Dr Patrick Kirwan, a staff member at Ardscoil na Mara, an Edmund Rice school in Tramore, Ireland. Dr Kirwan recently spoke passionately about education and the climate emergency at the EREBB gathering for our feast day and also kindly led an online session on Ecojustice and leadership with our English schools Sixth Form student prefect teams at their leadership conference.

In response to the recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Mary Robinson, chair of The Elders, has said “anybody under 70 in our world today is going to suffer some kind of catastrophe as we go above 1.5 degrees. Anybody under 30 will live through, if they are able to survive, a catastrophic world.”

The public at large are deeply unaware of the scale and magnitude of the climate and ecological emergency and the urgent need for action. It doesn't feel like an emergency, and we are not treating it as one. Last November world leaders came together for the UN Climate Change Conference. We watched in the hope that we would secure a liveable future. A survey in early October, a month before this pivotal meeting, showed that only 14% of Irish School Children had heard of COP26. A dismal indictment of our education system. We have created a culture of apathy and acceptance and now we need to rapidly create a culture of agency and empowerment.

Having taught in London for a decade, I returned home to Ireland in August 2020. The new Junior Cycle curriculum in Ireland is fantastic and sustainability is embedded within many subject areas. Nevertheless, the message about the climate and nature crises hasn't landed with staff or students. Students can't articulate the link between fossil fuels, carbon dioxide, global warming, and electricity use. Many staff lack confidence here too. Climate and nature education is largely left to individual champions, and this can be a lonely space in which to work.

I started the Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) in March 2021 to provide a forum for teachers and students to work in partnership to accelerate climate action, address the loss of nature, and prioritise sustainability in the Irish Education System. Teachers and students from all over Ireland meet online once a month sharing resources, ideas and we work together on joint projects.

In my school, the Senior Management Team knows that we don't have a mindset of sustainability. We don't yet have a culture where climate and nature education is woven into the fabric of school life. They have the integrity and courage to admit that, and they are determined and excited to reshape what we are doing in order to meet the changing needs of our students and community.

As educators we constantly ask our students to reflect on their own learning. We also need to model this as adults. We need to reflect with honesty on where we currently sit and by doing that, we can make progress and move away from tokenism to something meaningful. Schools cannot be part of greenwashing.

What does an eco-school look like?

A school where most of the staff and students deeply understand the importance of environmental education. Staff and students are climate and ecologically literate, they are aware of the contributions each of us can make to address the crisis, they realise our own agency and changes in attitudes and practices ensue. An ecoschool is one where students don't reference the ozone when talking about global warming.

Recycling isn't the first word that one utters when we talk about solutions. We know better. They talk about the abandonment of fossil fuels, systems change, and a circular economy. Students and staff are engaged with and value the natural world. They see it as something that has inherent value not something as a resource to be exploited.

An ecoschool is one where all understand the impact that our lifestyles are having on people around the world. Ardscoil na Mara is not an eco-school and we are not an outlier. Most of the teachers I speak to recognise that although there is some great work going on in many schools, schools with true eco-school values are few and far between.

If there are any ecoschools out there, stand up, get loud and shout about what you are doing so we can learn from you.

This year the students in the ISSN came up with the 'Plant a Planet Campaign'.

The aim was to get 10% of the students and staff in our schools planting native trees at home in their own gardens. We wanted them to reimagine their own garden spaces and have climate and nature conversations at home.

Five schools in the network, including ours, took part. Numerous platforms were used to raise awareness of the importance of planting trees from stemming biodiversity loss, to capturing carbon, to using trees as tools for climate adaptation. In excess of 1200 trees were planted. The most important outcome was a lesson that whilst we may feel that individual actions are not significant, they do count; collectively these actions mount up and they can make a big difference. With every project the students get involved in they are developing their leadership skills, personal character, resilience, agency, and they understand that there are no quick wins. In the face of overwhelming odds, positive change takes grit and hard work and the small gains we make are incredibly rewarding. However, we know that one campaign doesn't make us an eco-school.

We are at the very beginning of our journey, and we have lots of exciting plans to help us get to where we need to be.

Education is a powerful tool, and we are not using it as a tool to address a crisis that threatens our very existence. We are in a privileged position of power to effect change. Climate and nature education should be the backbone of our curriculum from primary right through to secondary just as Physical Education is.

We need to reset the culture and ethos in our schools. That starts with the Principals and Deputy Principals, the leaders of our education system.



"BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU. BUT WHOEVER WOULD BE GREAT AMONG YOU MUST BE YOUR SERVANT, AND WHOEVER WOULD BE FIRST AMONG YOU MUST BE SLAVE OF ALL. FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY."

Mark 10:43-45

St Ambrose Preparatory School

St Ambrose Prep celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee!

To celebrate the Queen's 70-year reign, St Ambrose Prep spent the day enjoying a wide-range of themed activities. We all dressed up as a British icon, enjoyed a whole school street party with special guests from Halecroft Senior Living, watched some wonderful performances at a talent show and even had an ice cream van come to say hello! We also ran a whole school art competition, with a winner picked from each year group. Chinani in Prep 4's portrait of the Queen was particularly beautiful. It was a patriotic, fun occasion that we're sure the children enjoyed, and will enjoy the memories of for years to come.



St Joseph's Preparatory School

The summer term at St Joseph's Prep is full of activities, which have included a large number of sporting fixtures. This has also included our annual Sport Day.

Just before the Easter Break, Prep 5 and Prep 6 were able to experience a week-long residential at Culmington Manor, where they took part in a range of activities. The experiences the children had will never leave them and I hope it will encourage more activities like this in the future for them.

On Friday 27th May, we held our very own Platinum Jubilee Street party. The weather held out and allowed the whole school to sit outside with the tables in lines just as if it was in a street. This opportunity allowed us to invite parents, grandparents, and carers to join us for this party. We had well over eighty parents who joined staff and children for this event. It culminated in a parents' verses children's rounders match, with the children coming out as the eventual winners. I must say that we do have a large number of competitive parents!

To welcome everyone back after such a long time, not only showed the amazing support from parents we have, but the atmosphere we have here at St Joseph's.

As I write this piece, we only have a few weeks of this term left and it continues to be full of events. I previously said that we have a number of sporting fixtures coming up, but we also have our annual Prize Giving and concert. Currently we are busy rehearsing, alongside lessons, on the production of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat. I am sure it will be a huge success.



We look forward to our summer holidays, which will prepare us for September and the challenges this will bring. We also pray for those who are moving onto pastures new, whether high school for Prep 6 or those of the staff who are leaving us. All will be greatly missed.

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Wishing you all a wonderful and restful summer.

Miss Kent and all at St Joseph's Prep.



St Mary's Preparatory School

RSPCA

Some Year 5 pupils used their own initiative to raise money for the RSPCA, which included a cake sale and sale of animal treats at breaktime. Brett Witchalls, from the animal charity came to school to talk to the whole school about the valuable work the charity undertakes before being presented with a cheque for £170.



Whole School Sleepover

130 children spend the night in school to raise money for BSL lessons in school to support a deaf pupil. Arriving in the PJs, the children were treated to an ice cream, games on the playground and activities inside before settling down to sleep.

All the classrooms are turned into bedrooms! It was quite an early start next morning as sunlight streamed through the classroom windows. Breakfast was served and the children were collected by parents ...and the staff went home to sleep. Over £2, 600 was raised.



Commemorative Tea-Towels

The Parents Association raised almost £1,000 for BSL support in school with the sale of Platinum Jubilee tea towels. Each child drew themselves wearing a crown, with Year 6 sketching all the staff at the Prep to produce a wonderful keepsake of the historical event.



Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Our pupils enjoyed a special day of celebrations in the lead up to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, as they prepared for the half-term holidays. The events saw the whole school take part in a multitude of fun activities in honour of the Queen's 70-year reign. Children from Reception through to Year 6 attended school dressed in an array of red, white and blue; and took part in a variety of Jubilee-themed activities. As well as a specially themed 'street tea party', with bunting, flags, afternoon tea and cakes, there was a special visit from the Queen, one of her corgis and a member of the Coldstream Guards! The afternoon saw all pupils taking part in a musical showpiece, this included staff and their rendition of 'Staying Alive'!! A fantastic day was had by all, and every child was also presented with a commemorative mug to take home.

Undefeated!

Runnymede St Edward's under 11 football team have had a fantastic season this year. Starting in September with a squad of 16 players from Years 4, 5 and 6, they have played 28 games and been undefeated all year, drawing just 4 of those games and winning the rest. Remarkably, they have won both the Liverpool Schools FA Leagues, they are Liverpool Schools Sports Partnership City Champions and also triumphed in the KMC Education League; conquering the league with a perfect record.

It really has been an outstanding effort from the team, especially considering some of the amazing talent that we have had to compete against. We are a small school with one-form entry, playing against some of the largest schools in the city, some of whom are four times the size of our school. A terrific effort from the team, our school family of support and the team coach, Mr Quilty.

HeadSpace

Melissa Roberts

Headteacher at St Joseph's College, Stoke-on-Trent

Single Threads – One Tapestry

Each September at St Joseph's College, we have a strapline which frames our thinking throughout the school year. We weave it into assemblies, delve into it in liturgies and reflections and we explore the myriad ideas sparked off by a simple, short phrase.

From last September, we committed to spend the year celebrating the diversity of our community - we wanted to say to the 50% of our students of global majority heritage, our LGBTQ+ students and staff, those with disabilities and neurodiversity that we are here to ignite opportunity for all of you – you, as you are bring your unique beauty to St Joseph's College. So, our strapline for the year has been “Single Threads – One Tapestry”

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value...” Maya Angelou

But in the last year, I have had occasion to think deeply about this strapline more than once. Post-Covid, some students have found the return to school difficult and have very fragile mental health. We have had to find new ways to help students feel that their uniqueness is powerful, that by bringing their authentic selves to school they still enrich our community.

We want them to hear “Be yourself. We like it that way”. St Joseph's College celebrates our 90th birthday in September, so we have been thinking how to involve former pupils of the school in some aspect of the celebration. Everybody who has ever worked here, trained here, or studied here has been a stitch in the St Joseph's College tapestry. To represent this idea, we constructed a cross and wove in a strand of fabric for every person in the school. We are all different, our experiences and views diverge but being a thread in this tapestry is something we all share.

“We have more in common than that which divides us.”
Jo Cox

In my personal life I have also had reason to reflect on how we are all part of a bigger picture. We recently welcomed a family from Ukraine into our house. Iryna, her partner, her two daughters and their two cats all arrived at the end of April. We are all learning to share the limited space, to eat one another's cooking, to use the Google Translate app, to adapt to cultural differences and I'm listening to the news with a completely different ear. But they will be indelible threads in our family's tapestry.



In September Iryna is due to give birth to her baby - created in a spirit of confidence in Kherson, in utero at a time of anxiety in Krakow and now - God willing - born with hope in Chester.

He will be in the UK, from Ukraine, and representing the way huge swathes of the world have stood together. He will be a very precious thread in tapestries old and new.



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

Our Mountain Journey - By Mr Glenn Sanderson, Headteacher at St Aidan's Catholic Academy,

We believe strongly in a collective and collegiate approach to what we do. For several years now, we have spoken to the boys and communicated with parents about the need for our young men to 'climb their mountain.' The analogy of 'climbing' is central to our mission as we believe that in every individual's formation there is a mountain to summit composed of daily challenges or difficulties to overcome. No child is expected to climb that mountain alone, we are aware of the obstacles that our pupils face in their day to day lives; we work tirelessly at St Aidan's to provide the necessary support and a wealth of opportunities to ensure every child can summit successfully and ultimately become confident and independent young men.

Our desire is for our pupils to become individuals with a strong sense of moral purpose, personal responsibility, integrity, honesty and respect for others, individuals who stand up for injustice and the marginalised and make a difference in their local communities, qualities which enable each of our young men to reach the top of their mountain, fulfilling their potential and ultimately having doors opened to them at the end of their journey with us.

The 'mountain climb' starts the moment pupils and staff become part of our community. We instil in the boys the fact that they stand now facing a series of challenges which need surmounting, and that once one is summited, the next exhilarating challenge is embarked upon. The reality is that life throws down the gauntlet many times and resilience, teamed with a high degree of determination, will be required for all within our community to overcome them.

The message of the personal mountain climb is one we revisit on a regular basis through collective worship as well as within lessons. But this mantra has no meaning if we all don't experience it first-hand. Therefore, each year group experiences climbing a literal mountain; this is an important touchstone for our pupils to reflect on and take comfort in ('I can do it!') during their St Aidan's journey. So far this year both Year 7 and Year 8 have summited several peaks in the Lake District, and in the final few weeks Year 9 students will achieve the ultimate, and summit England's highest peak, Scafell Pike.



As a staff body, it would be wrong if we promoted an ideology to our young men but failed to engage with it ourselves. Therefore, we set time aside twice a year for our staff to face the beckoning peak, climb the mountain and achieve something remarkable. As recently as last weekend, leaders across the Academy dedicated their energies to climbing the highest peak in Wales, Yr Wyddfa. Snowdon.

The beneficial team dynamics and sense of community gained from such an experience vastly outweigh even 50 mph gusts and sheer cliffs. The small seeds sown on such an adventure provide growth for us over the year in staff well-being, our sense of togetherness and our community cohesion as leaders. Staff literally walk the walk, live, and breathe our ethos, thus ensuring and reinforcing our commitment to our intent: to take all pupils to the top of their respective mountains.



We have been extremely busy during this half term. The education for the pupils continues at high speed, exams are finally coming to an end and extra-curricular activities have also begun.

Our pupils are very fortunate to have opportunities to take advantage of so many clubs and trips.

Many younger peers joined Easter Camp at school and had most amazing time. Our pupils had lots fun but being passionate about their community delivered Easter gifts to local Residential Home.

Year 7 pupils went on the pilgrimage on the 26th of April. They went to St Peter's church following the footstep of St Bede, to St Mary's church to learn about their local parish church and finally to Roker beach. They followed the path alongside the river where they read out prayers and reflections and also used information about Northern Saints and Blessed Edmund Rice.

Duke of Edinburgh expeditions went ahead with full speed. Our pupils are not put off by anything and always persevere even in the toughest of circumstances.

We spent a lot of time setting up the Community Allotment on school grounds. We have been very fortunate to have had support from local businesses and hands-on help from residents occupying a nearby residential home. We have also been awarded Educational Business Award in the category of Environmental Practice Award. Mrs Armstrong and Mrs Whitten will travel to London on the 16th of June to collect the award.

Many pupils enjoyed cooking this half term and inspired us to think about healthy and nutritious diet.

We always use the mountain analogy when talking with our pupils. We remind them how important it is to climb their own mountain. This may be just a one-day challenge or longer, secondary school, GCSEs and many more. The achievement after a hard climb is always rewarding and top of one mountain is always a beginning of another climb. We also climb having in mind our school values of hard work, trust, and fairness. We all live and breathe our school ethos and the proof of that is in the Snowdon climb some of our staff have just accomplished. It was a team effort, very hard at times as the weather conditions were difficult, but we were able to enjoy the beauty of God's creation when the fog had lifted.



'the good seed will grow'

save
the
date!

RECONNECTING &
NURTURING
THE EDMUND RICE NETWORK

SATURDAY 12TH NOVEMBER
2022

@ MARINO INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION, DUBLIN,
09.30 - 16.00





Key Stage 3 Awards Evening

This term we celebrated the individual achievement of 174 key Stage 3 students.

It was an immensely enjoyable evening with outstanding musical performances led by Miss Yates and Mr Vaughton.

Amongst our awards recipients from each subject area, a number of students from each Year Group were rewarded for their commitment to nurturing the charism and ethos of Blessed Edmund Rice and to maintaining the Catholic life of our school. Well done to everyone who received an award.

Year 13 Leavers Celebrations

This term we said a very fond farewell to our wonderful cohort of Year 13 Leavers. They have been an exemplary Year Group who have demonstrated compassionate leadership and selfless peer support.



Global Classroom Partnership

Taking inspiration from the Edmund Rice Student Leadership Conference in May, we can't wait for our new Y12 Leadership team to begin our partnership with St Laurence High School in Chicago, USA.

Over the summer and into the autumn, Mr Murray and Miss Gonzalez will deliver orientation lessons before our students meet their counterparts in a series of Zoom conversations around leadership and social justice.



On 12th May all departing students enjoyed a celebratory morning including a communal breakfast, Leavers' Assembly complete with student-curated awards, and emotional speeches from members of staff and Head Boy Michael Nwaiwu.

Then it was over to Holy Angels for Mass celebrated by Msgr David Charters. With parents in attendance, Mr Murray offered a blessing to all the students before Mr Rainey dismissed the congregation with some beautiful words of hope and encouragement for the future.

There was plenty of emotion bubbling to the surface as the parents spontaneously stood to applaud their children out of church.

Once exams were completed on 24th June, staff joined the students for a BBQ in the sunshine at the Bull's Head in Hale Barns!



Eco Committee Gardening Club

Special thanks and our best wishes go to Adam Steadman-Byrne and Dominic Martin-Parker for their gardening knowledge and unfailing support of the St Ambrose College Eco-committee and Gardening Club!

Come rain or shine Adam and Dominic have been leading the lower school students in the renovation and replanting of the garden plots, sourcing new plants and shrubs and maintaining unfailing enthusiasm and encouragement!

We wish them the very best in their approaching A level examinations and at their prospective universities.



Young Enterprise Group

Under the expert leadership of Mathew and Brian in Year 12, SAC Young Enterprise company (Pontis) have been developing an App that connects local students seeking work experience with those employers offering it.

On Monday 25th April, Mathew, Brian and Connor represented the College at the Greater Manchester finals, held at the Business School of Manchester Metropolitan University. The afternoon / evening involved a series of interviews and showcasing their product. Late in the evening, the event culminated in a presentation to a panel of judges and a packed lecture theatre at the University. The outcomes could not have been much better, with Pontis not only winning through to the North-West finals, but the team also won the award for the best presentation on the evening Brian even won an individual award as Greater Manchester Young Enterprise student of the year!

The next stage of the competition is the North-West final. The team are now at a crucial stage of getting the App officially launched in the Apple Store. It has now been uploaded to TestFlight, which allows the app to be distributed to 10,000 users to try it out. In terms of app development, testing is a crucial stage before mass rollout on the App Store and whilst the current version of the App is not yet in its intended finished state, testing and gained user feedback will reflect positively on the company.

If the company does prove to be the lucky team that advances to the National Final, they would only be one win away from the European Final which this year is being hosted by the City of Tallinn, Estonia!

Congratulations to the whole of the Young Enterprise Company on their achievements to date.



Our Year 12 and Year 13 students organised a fantastic Inclusivity Week in an attempt to enhance understanding of some important issues in our school community.

Coordinated by Harry Leaver in Y13, a committed group of around 25 students met regularly to plan activities for the week, reach out to external speakers, and organise charity campaigns.

One of the most popular Inclusivity Week activities actually began a month before the week itself! Mohammed Ayub and Ben Garvey organised a FIFA tournament which was open to all students. Attracting over 100 entrants, it was brilliant to see Year 7 pupils mixing it in matches against 6th Formers! Following the daily excitement of the knockout phases, the competition culminated in a tense final in front of a packed Lecture Theatre more akin to the Stretford End than St Ambrose! Mohammed and Ben's hard work raised an incredible £600 which will be donated to the anti-racism in football charity Kick It Out and the refugee support agency Salford Edmund Rice Volunteers.

During the week itself, students showed incredible courage in presenting to all year groups about the inclusivity issues which have affected them directly. It was incredibly powerful to witness our young men speaking about racism, homophobia and Islamophobia and referencing the support they have received from friends and teachers. All of this was, of course, framed in a Christian context: **"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."** (Galatians 3:28)

As well as student-led presentations throughout the week, we enjoyed lectures from Mohammed Ullah (the Muslim Chaplain of Manchester University and MMU) and Augustine Ihm (the charismatic Reverend of St James' Church in Manchester). Abdul Kafagi in Y13 spoke wonderfully about Islamophobia in wider society. Michael Nwaiwu, the Head Boy, organised a screening of 'A Class Divided'.

There were numerous 'opt-in' opportunities for students and staff, such as Mr Cook's Student Voice workshop on Inclusivity, a photographic exhibition on homelessness, a refugee workshop from Caritas, and an Interfaith Meeting for our non-Christian students. The theme of Inclusivity was even reflected in prayer and liturgy each day thanks to Miss McManus, Mr Murray and those 6th Form students who delivered Thursday Thought to other year groups. It is brilliant that our students have such passion for inclusivity that they will take a lead on such things. All those involved deserve huge credit, but a special mention must go to Harry Leaver, Abdul Kafagi, Joe Kelly, Rory Roderick, Callum Timmons, Noah Hayes, Smawar Waraich, Thomas McFarlane, Rodney Rodrigues and Harvey Richardson for their role in the presentations and to Ben and Mohammed for their organisation of the FIFA Tournament.

Students in St Anselm's Senior SVP organised a collection of Easter Eggs earlier this year.

Staff and students in the College donated over 100 eggs and Easter themed gifts. These were then taken to the SVP centre in Birkenhead to be distributed to local families in need.



Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the
Lord is, there is freedom.
And we all, who with
unveiled faces contemplate
the Lord's glory, are being
transformed into his image
with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the Lord,
who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NIV

The athletes of St Anselm's College maintained a proud tradition by qualifying for the finals of the English Schools Cup recently, dispelling fears that their athletics programme might have been undermined by the effects of pandemic and lockdown.

Both Intermediate and Junior Teams won their Northwest regional finals at Longford Park in Manchester and now look forward to the finals in Oxford on 2nd July.

14 students became County Champions at the Merseyside Championships. 64 College teams have had several podia finishes but none have ever been crowned English Schools champions, so perhaps this could be the year!

Congratulations to the Junior and Intermediate Track and Field Teams who have both won the Northwest Regional Final of the English Schools Athletics Cup. This follows on from individual success in the Merseyside County Championships where St Anselm's College students became County Champions in 14 events. Both teams have now qualified to compete at the National Final in Oxford.

Adam Hale

Results:

Junior Boys

Posn	Points	School
1	476	St Anselm's College, Prenton
2	386	Broughton High School, Preston
3	370	Sandbach School, Sandbach
4	369	Canon Slade CofE School, Bolton
5	368	Stockport Grammar School, Stockport
6 3	65	St Margaret's Church of England Academy, Liverpool
7	363	St Ambrose College, Altrincham
8	361	West Hill School, Stalybridge
9	358	Kirkham Grammar School, Preston
10 3	34	Weaverham High School, Northwich

Inter Boys

Posn	Points	School
1	494	St Anselm's College, Prenton
2	453	Sedbergh School, Sedbergh
3	428	Sandbach School, Sandbach
4	406	Kirkham Grammar School, Preston
5	389	Hutton Church of England Grammar School, Preston
6	385	West Hill School, Stalybridge
6	385	Rainhill High School, Prescot
8	384	Stockport Grammar School, Stockport
9	378	Canon Slade CofE School, Bolton
10	377	The County High School Leftwich, Northwich
11	375	Saint Aidan's Cof E High School, Poulton-le-Fylde
12	290	Trinity School, Carlisle



Sleep-out for the homeless

On Friday 8 April, a group of St Edward's College pupils accompanied by Mr Murphy and Mr Moroney, completed a sleep-out at the Liverpool Cathedral to raise money for the Whitechapel Centre, a local homeless charity.

The group arrived at 7.30pm and chose the perfect spot to settle down to spend the night on the tiled floor of the majestic Cathedral, setting up their sleeping bags and getting to know their neighbours for the evening. Mr Murphy brought along some board games to help pass the time for the group while a range of fun

activities such as face-painting and storytelling was on offer - perfect for the younger children who were taking part.

The next morning, the group woke at 6.00am to the calming sound of the organ and packed up to head home after such an amazing yet challenging experience; most importantly, it allowed them to appreciate having the privilege of a warm bed to sleep in.



Bags for Ukraine Fundraiser

In May, members of St Edward's College's Edmund Rice Advocacy and Faith in Action groups held a 'Bag2School' fundraiser to help those in need in Ukraine.

Bag2School is a company that specialises in good quality second hand clothing that can be re-used so for every bag that was filled, the company paid the school for the total weight.

The team worked tirelessly in publicising the campaign and sorting donations from generous pupils and their families and were pleased to hand over the 104 bags donated, weighing 485kg with the proceeds going to the Archdiocese of Liverpool, Help Ukraine campaign.



Global Classroom Partnership

St Joseph's Catholic College is extremely pleased to be able to take part in the EREBB Global Classroom Partnership.

Our link has been made, with support from the EREBB office, with St Vincent's High and Technical School in Asansol, India.

Our initial meeting will take place on 4th July with further meetings planned in the new academic year. This is a really exciting opportunity for our students, and we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership.

Mr Anthony Edmondson
MFL Teacher and Global Classroom lead teacher.
St Joseph's Catholic College, Trent Vale,
Stoke-on-Trent, UK.



Creative Cohesion within St Joseph's College Community

This has been a truly exciting time at St Joseph's as so many students participated in after school classes. Collaboratively supporting their school community, local community, and Global Community. All of this was achieved while embracing an Eco-Friendly approach whilst encouraging awareness of caring for Our World.

At the outset, a group of Sixth Formers were invited to engage in stage set design for the school's fantastic musical production of 'The Power of Love' - St Joseph's take on 'Back to the Future'.

Initially, this opportunity was offered to enrichment students, however other students wanted to join in from other year groups. They were not turned away. Most materials used were recycled.

One of the most fulfilling experiences of the production was when music, dance, drama, design and technology and art united. The buzz was amazing as the event pulled together. The celebration of talent was particularly poignant as Mr Gilligan, a long-standing music teacher of 30 years, is about to retire, so it was lovely to be a part of.

Furthermore, a small group of students have recently completed a decoupage session during after school classes. This too was an Eco-Friendly project. The aim was to upcycle some tired furniture in the library by utilizing recycled materials. As the furniture was to be placed back into the library, we decided to keep the theme relevant. The images and text were quotes from famous authors, text from books, book illustrators' images etc. This was a six-week course. The results were thrilling. Students even went on to develop individual decoupage pieces.

Money raised from contributions was raised for the 'Catch the Dream' charity supporting 'Lungi Village'. Therefore, we were able to contribute and help our Global Community.



https://www.catch-thedream.co.uk/about_us

Art for Action

On the 24th February 2022, we woke to the distressing news that Russian forces had invaded its neighbouring country, Ukraine.

As the scenes of women and children fleeing the country, leaving behind fathers, brothers, and sons to defend their homes began to flood our TV screens, questions and concerns among our students at St Joseph's College were being asked; "Why is this happening? Are we in danger? What can we do to help?"

Whilst we are only small cogs in a greater machine, at St Joseph's we always strive to make our students feel that their voices and actions can make a difference. After all, we are all 'single threads' in 'one tapestry', and every small action we take has a greater reaction.

During this time of devastation, students and staff rallied together as one community, gathering donations of food, clothing, and money to help support the refugees fleeing the country. While many departments throughout the school looked at different ways they could give support, the Art Department focused on giving the students a platform to express their thoughts and emotions using art as the tool.

With the Sunflower being the national flower of Ukraine, students created their own unique version of the flower using clay. These were then put on sale for £5 each, with donations offered being given as aid. This allowed a safe space for our students to ask questions and to reflect on their thoughts and emotions, whilst feeling they were making a difference.



COVID stopped all travel for two years, but as soon as we were able, St Joseph's College was keen to get back to Lourdes and we managed to join the first UK pilgrimage back during May Half Term.

In the past, over 1000 pilgrims from the Birmingham Diocese go each year as a group but this year the Diocesan pilgrimage was much smaller than normal, but equally special and rewarding. Amidst glorious sunshine, our group helped to look after the sick, visited the Baths for the service of water, enjoyed a day trip to the mountain village of Gavarnie and prayed at the Blessed Grotto. When we returned, I asked my students to share their Lourdes moments in a time of reflection, and I thought you might like to read a few snippets:

'Taking a pilgrim to the baths, where we prayed together at the service of water, was incredibly special. To wash in the holy waters was spiritually uplifting and moving'

'Processing with Our Lady, together with new friends, singing Ave Maria as we raised our candles ... doing what Our Lady called us to do'



Learning from sick pilgrims I spent a lot of time with a lady who was profoundly deaf due to meningitis 5 years ago. She talked about her experience and her difficulties. I communicated with her by writing on a board .. She's learning lip reading but still finding it hard. The lady talked about how she had come to believe that her healing was now in the hands of Our Lady and The Lord. She was so peaceful, but explained that part of healing involves many tears and heartache. We cried together ... she taught me that this was okay.



I played with two young boys with autism ... it made a real impact on me to see the difference we could make to their pilgrimage experience.

Where else would I get to dance in a hotel lobby with 3 ladies with learning difficulties? They dressed as princesses and they sang with us. Speechless. Humbled. Honoured.

And a memory from our only male student

'My time in Lourdes is the best experience I've had in my life and probably will in the future. I will never forget the amazing people I met while there. Some of the pilgrims were so wonderful and I'm lucky to have met them. Having the privilege of carrying the statue of Our Lady and carrying the candle during the Blessed Sacrament procession will always be remembered as some of the best moments. The opportunities that I got during the pilgrimage were incredible and it still doesn't feel like it really happened. I was so lucky to meet the people I did and do the things I did.'

Going to Lourdes enables young people to experience the wonders of Our Lady, to spiritually deepen their faith, and helped to give them the courage to do the things that they would never believe they were capable of.

Lindsay Cooke
St Joseph's College Group Leader

What an exciting time for St Joseph's College Library this year!

The library has a complete new look, and we are currently looking forward to an end of term celebration breakfast with over 20 Library ambassadors to celebrate the wonderful school year the library has had. This year we successfully launched the Renaissance Learn Accelerated Reader programme, with fortnightly library lessons for years 7 and 8, and introducing the millionaire word reading initiative to inspire pupils to read widely and frequently. Library lessons are creative multi-tasking sessions with set objectives to achieve each lesson, which promote independent research. The non-fiction books facilitate the literacy 'search, find and use' skills along with use of laptops, helping to support student's development in ICT. We are also very much looking forward to September, as Mrs Livesey is introducing Book Buzz to the new incoming Year 7s.

The library is accessed by students from Year 7 to Year 13 alike, as well as by so many members of staff. It is lovely to see Sixth Formers using the library for independent research in their A levels, as well as the stunning Careers Corner for University and Apprenticeship applications, promoting aspiration and opportunities for every child in school.

World Book Day in March has been a particular highlight this year, reaching students across the whole school with literacy activities in the library and book tokens flying out of the library, to support enthusiastic pupils who might not otherwise access a book shop. Mr Moran, Subject Leader for English, commented "The Library at St Joseph's is a truly inspirational place which is instrumental in promoting the value and joy of reading to the whole school community". Students have also loved other diarised library events such as the Christmas book tree, and February's 'blind date with a book'.

Mrs Hall and the Eco, Upcycling and Upholstery club have completely revitalised the furniture in the library, making a warm, welcoming and comforting haven whilst also raising money for Lungi Village catch the dream Sierra Leone project.





Students really feel at home in the library, and find it a hub of diversity and inclusion, celebrating different cultures, as well as our themed LGBTQ+ reads. It has also provided a fantastic opportunity to support our Duke of Edinburgh students with their volunteering commitments, and we have relished their contributions to library life.

The Carnegie reading group has met regularly throughout the year, achieving the incredible feat of collectively reading all of the books nominated for this year's Carnegie Book Awards, and were excited to be able to watch the awards ceremony itself, although a hot debate was to be had about the merits of the winning book and other contenders!

We have been delighted to open up our library as well to visitors from outside St Josephs, including parents who were invited in for the Scholastic Book Fair, as well as a very special visit from Ros Harding, Head Librarian at The Kings School, Chester and recipient of the School Librarian of the Year 2019! Students relished the opportunity to chat with Ros about the School Book Awards, her career pathway, and to grill her on her views on this year's Carnegie book award nominees and their own recent reading.

The aim of the school library has to develop a love of reading, fostering a safe space, understanding that students come with a variety of interests, needs and backgrounds. Whilst always continually striving to improve, we are proud of the real buzz that exists in and around the library, with books requested being ordered in, motivated members of reading clubs, so many students who are absolutely passionate about reading, and not forgetting the usual suspects we see every lunchtime.

We hope that the library will continue to grow and thrive over the next year as it is in so many different ways the heart of the school.



St. Mary's community welcomes Uliana, Solomiia and Stefaniia

We were pleased to welcome three new pupils from Ukraine to the St Mary's community last May.

Sisters Solomiia (aged 9) and Stefaniia (aged 4), and their cousin Uliana (aged 12) fled the war in Ukraine with their mothers, sisters Olha and Yuliia Protsenko, in March.

Following a five-and-a-half-week journey through Poland, Georgia and Hungary, the girls arrived safely in Crosby, where they are staying with Dr Colette McElroy, a former St. Mary's parent and governor, who welcomed the two families into her home as part of the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Dr McElroy got in touch with us regarding the girls' education and we were honoured and delighted to be able to help, offering Uliana a place in Year 8 at St. Mary's College, Solomiia a place in Year 5 at St. Mary's Prep, and Stefaniia a place in Kindergarten at Bright Sparks.

The girls have settled in well at St. Mary's and loved meeting Theodore, the Prep dog, when we got them together for photographs this week. Uliana said: "Everyone has been very kind and I have made new friends. My dog Senia is still in Kyiv with my dad, and I miss them both very much. It was nice to play with Theodore and my cousins really like him too."

Dr McElroy said:

"The girls' mums said they are so happy with St. Mary's. The children have made lots of new friends and everyone has been really kind. They have noticed a lift in the children's mood, and they can see a great improvement in their English. They are proud to be part of the family of St. Mary's. It's very important for the children to be in a safe caring environment with the support that the school staff and pupils have offered."

INDUCTION

for

NEW STAFF & GOVERNORS

AT THE EDMUND RICE OFFICE,
WOODEAVES
MON SEPT 19 2022 9AM-3PM

- Understand the Edmund Rice Heritage, Mission & Network
- It's about Support, Inspiration & Opportunity
- Meet other ER Staff, Brothers & Alumni



Contact Ann Nichols for details and to register
annnichols.ero@gmail.com



EDMUND RICE NETWORK: EVENTS CALENDAR FOR SCHOOLS 2022

Useful dates

What	When	Where
Edmund Rice Office Year 7 Induction with St Joseph's College	September 22 nd	St Joseph's College
Edmund Rice Office Year 7 Induction Sessions with other schools	September various dates	In school or online
Network Gathering	September 14 th 5.30pm	Woodeaves
New Staff & Governor Induction Day	September 19 th	Woodeaves
Edmund Rice Schools' Conference	October 6-7 th	Hayes Centre, Derbyshire
The Good Seed Will Grow' Network Board planning gathering	Sat 12 th Nov, 9.30am-16.00pm	Marino, Dublin
EREBB Global Congress for Staff	May 2023	Dublin

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

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