



PRESENCE

The voice of Edmund's people in the English Network



"Without fear, united hand in hand with God and each other
– let us go forward"

Pope Leo XIV

A Year of Hope, Growth and Global Connection

As we draw this remarkable year to a close, it's impossible not to feel a deep sense of gratitude and pride for all that has been achieved across our Network. From extraordinary acts of social justice action to significant milestones in school improvement, 2024–25 has truly been a year to remember.

Across our schools, young people have stepped up as compassionate and courageous leaders, living out our shared values through countless projects that have brought real change to their communities. From supporting local food banks to championing global justice initiatives, their commitment to making the world a better place has been nothing short of inspiring.

We are especially proud of our four academies, each of which has undergone Ofsted inspections this year—and each has emerged with strong, affirming reports. These outcomes are a testament to the dedication and vision of our leadership teams, staff, and students. We extend special congratulations to our new headteachers, who have brought fresh energy and purpose, guiding their schools to new levels of excellence and inclusion.

It has also been a year of connection—both locally and globally.

Ann and I have had the enormous privilege of working alongside incredible individuals across our international Edmund Rice Network, including in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Geneva. These encounters continue to remind us that we are part of something truly special—a family of schools and communities bound by a shared commitment to justice, compassion, faith and liberation. One of the most moving moments of our year was taking part in the Pilgrimage of Hope in Rome, culminating in the deeply humbling experience of paying our respects at Pope Francis' resting place. It was a journey that offered time for reflection, renewal, and a powerful reminder of the hope that lies at the heart of our mission.

Back home, we've also celebrated new beginnings. We are now well settled into our new home—Edmund Rice House in Liverpool—a space that has quickly become a hub of energy and welcome. It has been a joy to open our doors to visitors from our schools, the Archdiocese, the Gaudete Trust, and our global family, including friends from Australia and India.

As we look to the future, we do so with renewed faith and excitement. Thank you to everyone who has played a part in this extraordinary year. You continue to inspire us with your commitment, courage, and compassionate action.

As we now look forward to a well-deserved time of rest and renewal, may the summer be a chance to pause, to reflect, and to reconnect with the people and moments that give us life. Whether you are travelling or staying close to home, may you find peace in the quiet, joy in the small things, and hope in the days ahead.

May these words from two shepherds of hope echo in your heart and accompany you into days of rest:

“Hope is a constant source of joy, whatever our age; and when that hope has been tempered by fire over the course of a long life, it becomes a deep and lasting happiness.” — Pope Leo XIV

Message for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, 10 July 2025

“Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment ... It is bold; it opens us to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile.” — Pope Francis
Fratelli Tutti §55 (2020)

May that bold, joy-filled hope give you peace in quiet moments, refresh your spirit, and inspire you to return renewed—ready to keep building a kinder world together. Wishing you a blessed, restorative summer.

Roisin Maguire
Director of the English Schools Office

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Walking Together in Hope and Action

I'm delighted to share news and highlights from Edmund's people across our English network and beyond.

The commitment shown by our schools to social justice and advocacy has been truly inspiring. Our Primary Awards Programme has been a great success this year, leading to meaningful outreach projects by our Year 6 pupils. Their Celebration Day in June, hosted by Runnymede St Edward's, was a joyful occasion to showcase their efforts and learning, and to celebrate their achievements together.

One of the year's highlights has been moving into our new office at Edmund Rice House. It's a beautiful space set within the school grounds, and we've felt warmly welcomed by the St Edward's community.

This year has also seen a rich variety of events and initiatives: our Youth Ambassadors' visit to Geneva, the Student Leadership Day, the Staff Pilgrimage to Ireland, and ERI workshops with students—which contributed to a powerful student submission to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We continue to grow our global partnerships, and in the coming year we look forward to facilitating staff and school leaver immersion experiences. We're also preparing for the next EREBB Congress, Walking in the Spirit of Francis through Edmund Rice Education Today, which will take place in Argentina next April.

This year has also brought sorrow. We were deeply saddened by the sudden passing of our friend and colleague Hollie Gordon, Head of RE at St Aidan's Catholic Academy. A true Edmund Rice educator, Hollie embraced life fully and gave so much to those around her. She passed away in May at the age of just 34. A heartfelt tribute to her can be found in this edition.

Let us be inspired by Hollie's approach to life: to say “yes” to new opportunities and to commit ourselves to creating lasting, positive change for the young people we serve.

Ann Nichols
Network Facilitator

Congregational Leader’s Greeting

Thank you for this opportunity to send greetings to all of those who receive PRESENCE magazine and who collaborate in Edmund Rice mission in England and around the world.

I happen to be writing this greeting from Lusaka, Zambia, where leaders from across the Christian Brothers Congregation are gathered. It so happens that our meeting today is based around mission and the question “Where to now Edmund?” What does it mean to be faithful to the charism of Edmund in the reality we find ourselves living in? We were reminded of the line from Mary Oliver’s poem The Summer Day: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

Ben Okri’s poem “Gaza” sets our reflections in a context.

I don’t know how many have died
Or how many died before war flared up.
There must be a way to listen to all
The pain that burns in a people
Must be a way to hear all that anguish.
Pain creates pain creates deadness
Of heart. Distance makes all that suffering
Unreal. How else can great powers
Add bombs and missiles to an agony
That’s engulfing the world in fire and rage?
How did we become so deaf to the death
Of innocent children and their mothers?
How did we get to measure the value
Of one death against another, with one
Worth a thousand of the other?
Surely the heart of the world has died.
Surely, we have turned to stone in our veins.
I sit here staring at the sky wondering what
Could change the coldness in the soul
That makes it possible for us to eat our food,
go to work and laugh with our families
When we know that over in Gaza, a brief dream
Away, hundreds of thousands starve,
Their homes destroyed; their lives broken.
There ought to be no religion that lets
Us be indifferent to all that suffering.
Surely something’s wrong with the world.
Something’s twisted in our humanity.
I have friends who weep at the loss
Of their dogs, but whose ears are closed
To the wailing from the flattened houses
Of Gaza. Complexity ought not to stop our
Souls from feeling. For pain creates pain
Creates stones instead of human beings.
There are in truth no distances in the spirit
Of humanity. Any great injustice makes
The sleep of the world howl. We breathe in
The destruction of lives that we don’t see.
In our dreams we die with them. In our sleep
Our souls grieve with them, for their deaths
Are ours, whoever they may be. We grow
Sick with the times. We become twisted with
The wounds. Whether we are silent or not
We are poisoned by the massacres. No
Civilisation can survive on the murder
Of a people. We are watching our demise
In our silence. Peace is not ignorance or lies.

(To be continued)



As well as responding to the situation in Gaza, there is the invitation to reflect on our personal “Gazas” and the pain, violence, deafness and indifference in our ways of being in the world.

How are we each revealing the face of God in our lives? Part of our challenge is not to give in to paralysis or excessive focus on ourselves, nor to be bound by the routines of what we have always done. Can we tap into the courage and creativity that is in each of us, and shared among us, and collaborate for a better world?

Putting flesh on the values that we profess through each one’s compassion, engagement and generosity is our call. By our caring and kindness we can be the “pilgrims of hope” that Pope Francis so often spoke of.

John Casey



New Home for
Edmund Rice England

At Easter we moved from our former base at Woodeaves, Hale Barns to our new office, Edmund Rice House at St Edward’s College, Liverpool.

It was with a heavy heart last May we commemorated the closure of the Brothers’ community at Woodeaves and the Education Office was to seek out a new location after so many years.

The refurbishment of the former caretaker’s cottage St Edward’s College in Sandfield Park, Liverpool took a few months to complete but it has been done to a very high standard, every visitor who has come to the house tells us what a wonderful feeling the cottage has and how welcoming it is.

We officially opened the house with a blessing and reception on July 16th.





**Edmund Rice
House**

Lord God,

We ask that You bless this new office space.
We pray that it will be a place of productivity,
inspiration and cooperation -
where we may help others and spread Your
kingdom.

May Your presence be felt here and may we always
be aware of Your direction and leadership as we
continue our daily work,
We ask this through Christ our Lord,

Amen



Edmund's People

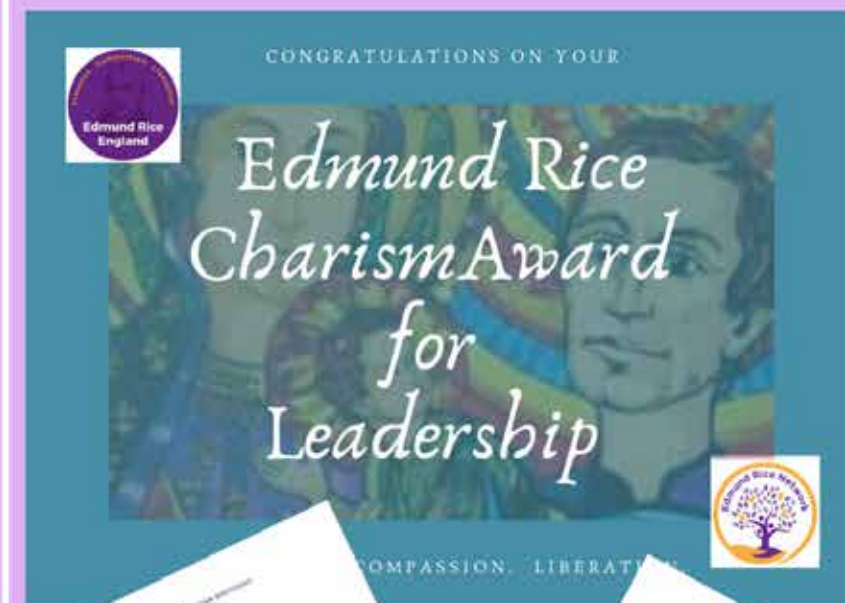
Congratulations!

EDMUND RICE CHARISM AWARDS FOR LEADERSHIP 2025

Each year we recognise adults within our Network who have made & are making an outstanding contribution to the Edmund Rice Mission & who demonstrate true service to their school and /or community.

Congratulations to the more than 30 staff, governors and other adults in ministry that have received the award this summer.

We also thank school leaders for taking the time to nominate award recipients and for writing such wonderful citations for them.



Being a Youth Ambassador for ERI – My Experience at the United Nations in Geneva By Jack Savage, Youth Ambassador, St Mary’s College

Being a Youth Ambassador for Edmund Rice International (ERI) has provided me with many unforgettable moments. However, the opportunity to visit the United Nations in Geneva was a truly exciting adventure—one that deepened my understanding of justice work, the role of NGOs, and the difference they can make, even at an international level. Having already been involved in local projects, it was eye-opening to witness a “big picture” event such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) sessions we attended.

After a lovely and filling breakfast, where all the ambassadors got to know each other, it was time for the main part of our visit. Before attending the first UPR session, we visited the Brothers’ offices in Geneva for an information session to help us better understand the processes we would observe. We had a fascinating discussion about the various UN treaty bodies, how the UN operates, and how ERI lobbies for key human rights issues—making a real impact through advocacy.

We watched videos of ERI representatives speaking at different UN meetings and heard inspiring stories of how advocacy can begin with young people. One standout example was of primary school pupils who collaborated to make a proposal, which ultimately influenced the final submission to the UN—with many of their suggestions being formally raised. This was a triumph of grassroots advocacy and a powerful example of giving a voice to those who are so often unheard at the highest levels.



We also learned how ERI can raise issues on behalf of other organisations or groups who may feel unsafe doing so themselves—for example, in the case of Myanmar. This kind of advocacy is critical to protecting those whose voices are silenced or endangered simply for speaking out.

A powerful analogy that really resonated with us was shared during this session: the idea of ERI’s work being like snowflakes on a branch. One snowflake may not make a difference—but as more and more accumulate, the branch eventually breaks. It’s a metaphor that inspires perseverance and hope. Even if your effort isn’t the final push, it still contributes meaningfully to long-term change.

After a quick lunch in the UN café, we entered the chamber for the UPR hearing of El Salvador. It was fascinating to listen for topics we’d learned about earlier—such as UN treaty bodies being referenced in the form of recommendations from various nations. We noted recurring issues raised by different delegations, which helped us gain a clearer understanding of the human rights landscape in the country. Being a fly on the wall at such an important global event was an incredibly unique and humbling experience. Despite many positive aspects of the experience, we were also exposed to the more frustrating realities of international diplomacy.

During the review, El Salvador received recommendations on several critical issues—such as the ongoing state of emergency, the lack of fair trials, and the ratification of the treaty on protection against enforced disappearances.

Unfortunately, these were rejected by the delegation, highlighting the limitations of the UN in holding nations accountable when recommendations are ignored. It was also disappointing to see the El Salvador delegation refuse recommendations to legalise abortion at any level and to expand support for women’s reproductive rights. Still, there were some encouraging signs.

The delegation expressed partial commitment to certain recommendations, including increasing representation for people of African descent and taking steps to prevent human trafficking. While the process is far from perfect, it remains the most effective avenue we currently have for advocacy groups like ERI to make a real impact.

After such a powerful and thought-provoking day, we looked forward to the next UPR session, this time concerning Bolivia—a country where ERI has an active presence. We were eager to see whether any of the recommendations lobbied for by ERI would be raised and taken seriously on the international stage.



Global Schools Connect

This spring, we hosted our second Global Schools Meet – a vibrant online gathering featuring video contributions and live presentations from over 40 Edmund Rice schools worldwide.

It was a powerful celebration of student-led advocacy and action. Engagement with ERI among our schools continues to grow, thanks to the Schools Partnership Scheme and the dedicated work of our regional advocacy coordinators. These twice-yearly gatherings are building a stronger, more connected network of young people committed to justice.

Looking ahead, we’re excited to launch a global student panel of Edmund Rice Youth Ambassadors. This group will meet more regularly to share their campaigns, discuss global justice issues, and collaborate on meaningful action.

It’s an exciting step in empowering the next generation of leaders in the Edmund Rice tradition.



Edmund Rice International and Edmund Rice England

Ann is delighted to have recently joined the Board of Edmund Rice International (ERI), deepening a connection that began during her teaching years when she led her school’s ERI group. It was this long-standing commitment to justice and advocacy that ultimately brought her into her current role with Edmund Rice England.

The ERI Board, chaired by Phil Glendenning, recently met in Geneva to reflect on the ongoing mission of the organisation.

The work of ERI remains a priority for the Christian Brothers and the wider Edmund Rice global network, as it plays a vital role in amplifying the voices of those facing injustice at the United Nations. ERI also offers high-level training each year to hundreds of people within our network and beyond, building capacity for advocacy and human rights engagement across the globe.

ERI’s contribution to our collective mission is truly invaluable.



www.edmundriceinternational.org



Human Rights and Advocacy Training with Brother Tino D’Abreu

In June, we were delighted to welcome Brother Tino D’Abreu from Edmund Rice International (ERI) in Geneva for in-person training in Human Rights and Advocacy, offered to both students and staff.

Hosted by St Mary’s College, Crosby, the day began with a workshop for middle school students. Participants from St Edward’s College and St Joseph’s College joined the event, where they explored the role of the United Nations, the mission of ERI, and what it truly means to advocate for change. The session encouraged students to think critically about the power of a rights-based approach to injustice, contrasting it with traditional charitable giving.

In the afternoon, students had the opportunity to apply their new knowledge by researching and drafting a submission to the United Nations. The UN had invited children to contribute to a proposed amendment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child—known as an “optional protocol”—focused on ensuring access to free public education at all levels, from preschool to secondary school.

Our students examined the barriers and costs associated with accessing education in the UK and highlighted the importance of preschool education in preparing children for formal learning. Their insights have been submitted to the UN and will be included in the intergovernmental discussions taking place later this year.

We are incredibly proud to support students in making their voices heard on a global platform through the work of Edmund Rice International.

Some of our young participants share their experiences:

Our Day at St Mary’s:

We had an amazing time at St. Mary’s College who gave us such a lovely welcome.

Our day consisted of many interesting and informative activities such as discussing the difference between charity and advocacy. As part of this we looked into different charities and what they do to help and boost advocacy for their cause. We met Brother Tino who works directly for the UN through Edmund Rice International and he spoke to us about his role. We spoke about human rights, and the rights everyone has and specifically the rights of children. We looked into how factors such as poverty affect children being able to access their rights. We finished the day by working alongside peers and other people in our groups to write our submissions to the UN.

Amelie, St Joseph's College

I’m thrilled to share my incredible experience from a recent day trip where I was selected to attend the Edmund Rice Human Rights Conference. It was a day filled with fun, learning, and new connections, and I’m excited to tell you all about it!

The trip was packed with lots of fun and engaging activities. We played a variety of games that kept everyone laughing and energised. From team-building challenges to interactive group activities, there was never a dull moment. These activities and games brought us together and made the day unforgettable.

One of the highlights was the focus on teamwork. The activities were designed to encourage us to work together, solve problems, and support one another. I also had the chance to meet new people and make new friends from different year groups and schools. It was amazing to connect with others who share a passion for making a difference.

During the trip, we learned about what it means to be an Edmund Rice Youth Ambassador. Ann Nichols, one of the organisers, spoke to us about human rights, inspiring us to think about how we can contribute to our communities. We also heard from a sixth-form student from St. Mary’s, who shared their experiences as a Youth Ambassador.

We had the privilege of talking to a Christian Brother, Brother Tino, and asking him questions about the Edmund Rice mission. His insights were inspiring and helped us understand the values of compassion, service, and leadership that guide the Youth Ambassador program.

At the beginning of the day, we all received badges that we can proudly wear to show our involvement in the program. These badges are a symbol of our commitment to the Edmund Rice values.

One of the most exciting parts of the trip was contributing to a document for the United Nations. We worked together to outline reasons why some children around the UK are unable to attend school. It was incredible to know that our input will become part of the official documentation submitted to the UN, making a real impact on a global scale.

This day trip was an amazing opportunity to learn, grow, and connect with others. I’m excited about the possibility of becoming an Edmund Rice Youth Ambassador and continuing to make a difference in our school and beyond. Thank you to everyone who made this experience possible.

Evelyn Jones, St Joseph's College



What a wonderful opportunity to listen to Brother Tino’s experience of working with the UN. Seeing the work that the Brothers are doing is proof that the Christian Brothers Network is very much alive and having a mighty impact on global issues.

It is only right that all of us, staff and students in Edmund Rice schools, are a voice for the voiceless; as Edmund Rice was when he began his mission all those years ago. For our students’ voices to be heard at the UN is really quite a feat and they should be immensely proud of the work they carried out that day.

Chris Banner, Assistant Headteacher, St Joseph's College

In May, we were delighted to welcome Brother Tino D'Abreu from Edmund Rice International to deliver an in-person training session for staff involved in advocacy across the English Edmund Rice schools. Participants came from both primary and secondary schools, bringing with them a range of experience in running justice groups within their contexts.

We began the day by exploring one of the Eight Essentials of an Edmund Rice education – Education for Justice – and how this is being lived out in each school setting. This sparked thoughtful discussions around our shared commitment to long-term, systemic change through justice work, and the importance of helping students understand the root causes of the injustices in their own societies. As the group grew more familiar with one another, we delved deeper into how we might foster the ‘change of hearts and minds’ that authentic justice work requires. Learning about the work of ERI – and, crucially, how our schools can engage directly with the United Nations human rights mechanisms – inspired fresh commitment to the unique opportunities that being part of a network with a linked NGO affords our young people and staff.

Ideas for future development included:

- Sending staff to the UN for the upcoming UPR of Sierra Leone (May 26)
- Expanding the Youth Ambassador scheme throughout schools
- Empowering Youth Ambassadors to lead their school's ERI group
- Increasing justice and outreach work, supported by the Schools' Office
- Committing to events like the three-day adult formation in Geneva
- Supporting student participation in ERI global partner school meetings twice a year



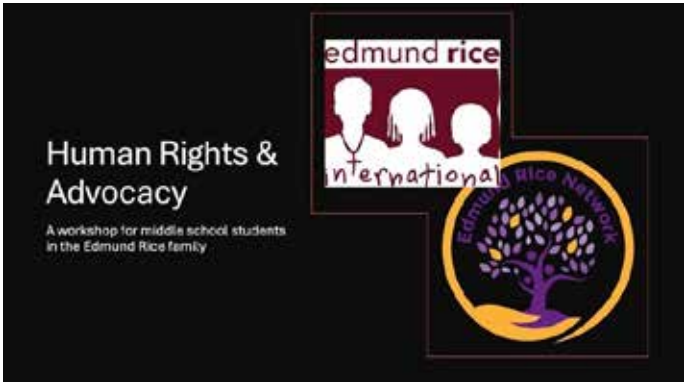
From experience, we know how valuable it is to offer formation days like this one, focused specifically on advocacy. If we are to develop schools that are genuinely committed to justice, we need strong teams of staff and students who are able to ask why a cause matters – not just raise funds for it.

Through this course, along with our student workshops and senior leadership conference, we continue to promote a rights-based approach to justice and encourage schools to move beyond passive charity-giving toward deeper engagement and understanding.

The staff training was both informative and enjoyable. As a mix of primary and secondary practitioners, we were introduced to the concept of advocacy and how it differs from charity.

The day began with reflection and prayer, followed by a sharing of experiences from each school. Ideas ranged from advocacy clubs to student opportunities for training in Geneva. Brother Tino then shared inspiring examples of advocacy from other Edmund Rice schools around the world, including whole-school peaceful protests, writing to local MPs, and finding positive ways to make voices heard.

I gained a great deal from the clarity provided around what advocacy truly means and why it matters: standing alongside and speaking up for those whose voices are not heard and doing what is just and right. This formation helped me see how, through ERI, we are channelling Blessed Edmund Rice's passion for justice beyond our immediate communities. Advocacy, I realised, is faith in action.



As staff in Edmund Rice schools, we have a responsibility to encourage our students to keep asking those challenging questions – why is it that the poor or marginalised need our help? We must also question the systems that allow injustice to persist.

I loved the analogy: charity is like a band-aid, while advocacy asks why the wound exists – seeking the long-term cure.

Teachers left the day inspired by the incredible opportunities our students have through Edmund Rice's links to the United Nations in Geneva and New York – real chances to have a “seat at the table” on the global stage, and to raise issues directly if we are passionate enough to speak up. **Ann-Marie Engelbrecht, Chaplain, St Mary's College**



Brother Tino shares his thoughts on his experiences in England:

I was glad for the opportunity to engage with the staff and students of the Edmund Rice Schools in England and co-host a workshop for them.

I was encouraged by the strong commitment to the values of empathy and advocacy that the participants have for social justice issues ranging from the rights of migrants to homelessness. It was heartening to watch as the students engaged with the UN call to voice their opinions on the proposed optional protocol to the CRC on extending the right to free education to pre primary and secondary students.

I look forward to greater engagement with the staff and students as they plan to bring their ERI Youth Ambassadors to the UN in Geneva and join the 3 day human rights and Advocacy training offered by ERI in January 2026.



Staff Pilgrimage
Walking in the Footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice

Pilgrimage deepens connection to charism and community

In the heart of Ireland, through the streets of Dublin, Waterford and the quiet paths of Callan, a group of dedicated staff from across the Edmund Rice Network gathered for a transformative weekend: Walking in the Footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice.

What unfolded was more than just a pilgrimage — it was a soulful experience of prayer, history, camaraderie, and personal awakening.

A Personal Encounter with Edmund

For many, like Lee, this pilgrimage was a chance to encounter Edmund Rice not as a distant founder, but as a real person.

“He faced deep personal struggles and loss,” Lee reflected, “yet responded with faith and action.” That human connection helped participants see Edmund’s legacy not as history, but as a

living, breathing mission — one they are called to carry forward today. Mike, a returning pilgrim after 15 years, noticed how the experience had evolved but remained deeply authentic.

“Same values, same mission — but this one felt more relaxed, totally genuine. It’s down to us now,” he said, acknowledging the changing role of lay leadership in continuing Edmund’s vision.

A Network of Support and Shared Purpose

The weekend was also a powerful reminder of the strength of the Edmund Rice community.

Ashley described it as “a fantastic opportunity to meet other staff members and reflect on our core purpose.” Whether praying at Edmund’s resting place or dancing a spontaneous Irish jig in Waterford, joy and connection filled the journey. “The charism of Blessed Edmund is like a well we can all draw upon,” Ashley added. “When the day feels long, I’ll remember to have courage, for the good seed will grow.”

Katie was moved by how the pilgrimage revealed the heart of the Eight Essentials. “It deepened my understanding of Edmund’s charism — one rooted in compassion, presence, and liberation,” she said. “Experiencing where he lived and served made his mission come alive.”

Pilgrimage as Formation

There was a strong sense among all participants that this journey should be shared more widely.

As Mike put it, “It’s certainly something to encourage more staff from all schools to undertake.” The impact is personal and professional, as Sara reflected: “This experience will enrich my teaching of Edmund’s legacy to the children.” And for some, it shifted something even deeper.

Holly shared, “This pilgrimage wasn’t just about looking back—it was about finding direction for the future, especially during this Jubilee Year of Hope.”

Having walked where Edmund walked, seen what he saw, and learned how he responded with love and courage, she returned determined to do the same: “I may not open schools, but I can choose every day to be kind and help others.”

Keep an eye out for the major changes to Mount Sion and to the Heritage Centre at Callan as Brothers and lay partners plan new practical and experiential alterations for the future.

A Journey Worth Sharing

As the pilgrimage came to a close, there was a clear sense of gratitude — for the hospitality of the Trust, the guidance of the organisers, and the quiet inspiration of the Christian Brothers, a presence that continues to echo.

“Great to see the Brothers still there,” said Mike. “But fewer now. It’s up to us.”

In walking Edmund’s path, these pilgrims discovered their own. With renewed hearts, stronger connections, and a deepened sense of mission, they return to their school communities ready to plant seeds of hope, justice, and compassion.

Look out for opportunities to Walk in the Footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice for both staff and students in 2025-26.



Edmund Rice Schools – Courageous Leadership
Student Conference June 2025

In June, the Edmund Rice Schools’ Office hosted its annual Student Leadership Conference, welcoming newly elected senior prefects from our network of secondary schools.

This year’s theme, Courageous Leadership, has been a guiding focus throughout our gatherings in 2025. The title is inspired by a course developed by the Tutu Foundation in South Africa, in collaboration with our global organisation, Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders. This inspiring programme has been made available to young people across our international network.

It is always a joy to welcome such passionate, articulate, and committed young leaders—co-creators of today and a better tomorrow. Students embraced the opportunity to connect with peers from other schools and work collaboratively throughout the day. The conference provided a space to explore leadership within the Edmund Rice tradition, reflect on the qualities of effective leadership, consider how to serve and guide a community, and discover how to follow one’s own ‘north star’.

A highlight of the day was the whole-group ‘big questions’ debate activity, where students engaged in thoughtful discussion around themes such as justice, advocacy, education, and global equity.

Our guest speaker this year was Br Ger O’Connell from the Salford Community, and manager of Salford Edmund Rice Volunteers —a centre of welcome and support for people seeking asylum and refugees. Br Ger, very much an ‘unexpected leader’, deeply impressed the students with his humility, energy, and heartfelt commitment to the most vulnerable.

We concluded the day with a commissioning service, during which all students were blessed by the adults present, sending them forth into their year of leadership as Edmund Rice student leaders. We were also pleased to welcome Helen and Andrew from The Gaudete Trust, who joined us for the day.

Some of the key take aways from the day, according to the students themselves were

- It is imperative that we do all we can do be great leaders
- Be courageous in leadership
- Strive for change and work with other schools locally
- Be yourself and never say no
- Making friends and discussing types of leadership
- Confidence is key, working as a community can benefit you massively
- Learning how to be a confident and strong leader
- It provided me with motivation

In response to their request, we will continue to offer leadership support to student prefect teams throughout the year.



A St Joseph’s leader shares with us her reflection on the day:

In early June, as we returned from half term, the newly appointed Student Leadership team at St. Joseph’s College made the short journey up the M6 to Bromborough on the Wirral for the annual Edmund Rice Schools Student Leadership Conference.

The day was thoughtfully designed to inspire meaningful discussion and reflection on what it means to be a courageous leader - from the opportunity to connect with fellow student leaders from other Edmund Rice schools to the dynamic and respectful debates on key polarising questions, inviting a range of diverse and thought-provoking viewpoints.

A highlight of the day was hearing the powerful story of Brother Ger, described as an ‘unexpected leader’. His personal journey, insights, and advice provided a fitting and reflective conclusion to a day well spent.

The experience has laid a strong foundation for our Student Leadership team as they embark on their own leadership journey throughout the coming year at St. Joseph’s College and beyond.



One Heart:

A concert for commUNITY

One Heart: A Concert for CommUNITY Brings Liverpool Together in Celebration and Solidarity

On the evening of June 19th, the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral was filled with music, joy, and unity as communities came together for One Heart: A Concert for CommUNITY.

The event marked the culmination of Refugee Week, offering a vibrant celebration of diversity, resilience, and hope.

Sparked by the unsettling unrest following last summer’s tragic Southport murders and the far-right’s attempts to sow division, the concert stood in direct opposition to hate and fear. It served as a powerful reminder that Liverpool’s heart beats strongest when its communities stand together.

Hosted by acclaimed writer **Frank Cottrell-Boyce**, the concert featured moving performances from the **Asylum Link Choir**, **The Choir with No Name**, and **St Edward’s College Choir**. These choirs, composed of asylum seekers, refugees, and individuals impacted by homelessness, filled the cathedral with songs from across the globe — a true reflection of Liverpool’s multicultural soul.



The Asylum Link Choir brought their signature “explosion of joy,” blending languages and musical traditions from across ten nationalities. Their music isn’t just about performance — it’s about belonging. As one member shared, it’s a space where people “weave their past into a new present.”

The Choir with No Name Liverpool, made up of people affected by homelessness, captivated the audience with their infectious energy and uplifting harmonies. For many, the choir has been a lifeline — a place of warmth, friendship, and renewed self-worth.

A highlight of the evening was a powerful poem titled Hope for Real People, written and performed by **Ekene Udeaja from St Ambrose College**, based on interviews with refugees and asylum seekers. His words challenged stereotypes and reminded the audience that behind every headline are real people — with real dreams and the same desire for safety, dignity, and peace.

The event was made possible through the support of Liverpool City Council, the Edmund Rice Schools Network, and the Cathedral itself. It wasn’t just a concert — it was a declaration: that Liverpool’s strength lies in its compassion, creativity, and community spirit. As one organiser reflected,

“Despite the background — homelessness, persecution, or even the far-right spectre — joy radiated from the stage. Turns out, we’re a jolly bunch after all.”

Weeks on, the echoes of One Heart still resonate — a reminder that music, unity, and hope can light even the darkest times.

Ekene’s Poem for the St Ambrose college play: Real People



Video footage of the start of our musical pilgrimage up Hope Street





Walking in Hope: Ann and Roisin's
Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome

As part of the Jubilee Year of Hope, Ann and Roisin from Edmund Rice England recently undertook a powerful pilgrimage to Rome, walking the final stages of the ancient route to the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica.

Their journey was one of deep reflection, prayer, and solidarity with the wider Edmund Rice Network.

In a moving moment of connection, Ann and Roisin joined the Congregation Leadership Team of the Christian Brothers for a special dinner, sharing stories, hopes, and encouragement for the journey ahead.

Just days after the solemn internment of our beloved Pope Francis, they also visited the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore – one of the major pilgrimage churches – paying their respects and praying for the Church in this new moment of transition and hope.

This pilgrimage is not the end but the beginning of something even more special. In November, we look forward to returning to Rome with our Edmund Rice Camps coordinators from across England. They too will walk the pilgrimage route, pass through the Holy Door, and spend time in prayer and community with the Christian Brothers.

In this Jubilee Year, we move forward together in faith, hope, and a shared mission of justice and compassion.



A Visit from Global Ambassador,
Dr Wayne Tinsey

It has been a joy and a privilege to spend time with our Edmund Rice schools in England once again.

I want to express my deep gratitude for the warmth, generosity and humbling hospitality with which I was received. The genuine welcome I experienced in each community reminded me that we are not simply colleagues in a shared mission, but a global family bound by common values and a shared story.

I was especially moved by the passionate commitment of staff and leaders who give so much of themselves to form young hearts and minds. In every classroom and conversation, I saw evidence of an education that is more than just curriculum —it is formation for life, shaped by Gospel values, lived out with courage, compassion, and a clear sense of justice. Your work with young people continues to be a source of deep hope and inspiration.

As you look to the future, know that your efforts are valued, and celebrated across our Edmund Rice network. May you continue to be bold in your vision, faithful in your mission, and sustained by the knowledge that you are making a lasting difference in the lives of young people. I carry your stories and spirit with me, and I look forward to all that we will continue to learn and build together. With deepest gratitude and admiration.

Dr Wayne Tinsey

Each year, Year 6 pupils across our three Edmund Rice primary schools take part in the Junior Edmund Rice Awards – a unique programme led by Ann Nichols that nurtures a deep sense of justice, compassion, and responsibility.



With the support of dedicated staff, pupils learn about the Edmund Rice Network today and what it means to live as “People of Edmund.”

They explore key themes including human rights, advocacy, and caring for the Earth, while learning about the life and mission of Blessed Edmund Rice and the Christian Brothers.

Throughout the programme, students are inspired by guest speakers from organisations such as Asylum Link and SERV, who help bring real-life stories of justice and service into the classroom. They also reflect on their personal role in caring for creation and standing in solidarity with those most in need.

This year’s awards culminated in a joyful celebration hosted by Runnymede St Edward’s on a warm summer day. Pupils gathered to share their powerful advocacy projects focused on refugees, the environment, and child health. It was a day filled with hope, pride, and a clear sense that the spirit of Edmund is alive and growing in our youngest changemakers.



Watch the St Mary’s Prep project video here
‘Advocating for our local environment’



Watch the St Ambrose Prep project video here – **‘Understanding and advocating for the refugee’**



Inspired by the Symposium held in South Africa this Easter, Andrew Kirkpatrick— a participant from the Flexi Schools in Australia —penned a moving poem that beautifully captures the spirit and significance of our global conferences and encounters as an Edmund Rice community

Global Hearts Gathered

Global hearts gathered, united as one,
In humanity’s cradle, beneath the Stellenbosch sun.
At South Africa’s heart, where resilience runs deep,
Edmund’s dream lives on—in the stories we keep.
Thirty-two leaders, each with passion to share,
Rooted in purpose, and hope as their prayer.
From many nations, a shared aspiration,
Leading with strength and deep concentration.
With guidance and wisdom, the path was made clear,
The program unfolded with little to fear.
Nsamu, Terry, Mike, Sharon, Ray and Brian,
Led with a fire that kept spirits flying.
Knowledge of history, context unclear,
Unearthed through ritual, sacred and sincere.
South Africa’s struggles, heavy with pain,
Yet resilience shone through, and hope bloomed again.
Sawubona – Welcome / We See You – a Precious divine,
Bold truths emerge from the basement, our context, our crime.
Ubuntu is human – raw, rooted, gritty, and steep,
With prophetic voices like these, our young ones will leap.
Welcomed with love, where true hearts did glow,
At St Monica’s Church, our respect did grow.
Harmony reigned, with goosebumps to spare,
Xhosa voices rising, magic in the air.
Reminders of leadership, faith-filled and clear,
Scriptures that guide us, draw our purpose near.
Spontaneity and joy, vital as we grow old,
Remember the fun — mango juice, crispy cold.
We savoured an evening, tasty wine in its glory,
Had the privilege to hear one remarkable story.
A son of the soil – breaking moulds, changing rules,
Now to unearth a young Denzel in our own very schools.
With anticipation and excitement, delegates moved on,
To communities near Jo’burg, Kimberley, and Bloem.
A privilege and a learning — to engage, immerse, and see,
How Edmund’s mission lives on in South African CBCs.
In each of the schools, sounds of joy filled the air,
Young people danced, sang, and culture was shared.
Special experiences that will stay with us through time,
Historic landmarks, game farms, and traditional braai.

Andrew Kirkpatrick
EREA Flexible Schools
(EREBS Leadership
Symposium 2025)

While experiences varied from the cities and towns,
The similarities shone through - shared values, common ground.
Our spirits were nourished as we gathered once more,
With fresh visions of leadership, we couldn’t ignore.
Caring for Country, this Earth that we share,
Br Terry’s wisdom — with passion and prayer.
Global citizens, upholding our rights and our role,
Sustainability’s future — ERI’s vital goal.
Rembrandt’s work was dissected – getting down in the dirt,
A fire for justice was certainly stirred.
“Disrupt the darkness” — a bold call to action,
From Fr Peter-John Pearson, with heartfelt conviction.
Smiles and laughter, with singing and drums,
Amazink in Kayamandi, where community hums.
South Africa’s story, told with passion and pride,
Beat in our veins — nowhere to hide.
Advocating for justice, reconciliation and truth,
Stories from Desmond to pass on to our youth.
To fight the good fight, with composure and heart,
Is the challenge for leaders, a good place to start.
So instrumental in this nation’s story,
Was the fight for justice, not for glory.
Tutu and Madiba fearlessly lit the way,
May their courage and passion inspire us every day.
Br Nsamu, refreshing to hear,
Your presence, your energy, your message was clear.
What is emerging invites us to pause,
To reflect, to re-centre, and realign with our cause.
Presence, liberation, compassion—gifts we’ve been shown,
But they’re more than just words, we must make them our own.
God is in others, this love we must embrace,
To water our garden and be Edmund’s face.
Our vision for leadership continues to grow,
Through learnings, inner awakenings and seeds that we sow.
Parables inspire, are sources of hope,
Collaboration and process give us more scope.
Now the challenge is to take this all home,
Not just plant the seed, but make sure it grows.
In the hearts of our young ones, as Edmund would dream,
We must not grow complacent, nor lose sight of the theme.
Though we’ve loved her, the story’s complex from the start,
A reminder to lead not with head, but with heart.
So, embrace these new learnings, these opportunities,
And be like giraffes, looking over the trees.



Edmund Rice Camps 2025

We’ve had a busy year preparing for our four summer Edmund Rice Camps.

Ann has worked closely with the Camps team in Ireland to ensure continuity in both practice and ethos.

Our camps in Wirral, Liverpool, Manchester, and Stoke-on-Trent are now ready to offer primary school participants a fantastic week filled with fun, outings, music, and friendship.

We continue to be inspired by the dedication of our Coordinators and Mentors, who generously give their time and energy —not only during the summer camp itself but throughout the entire year.

Their commitment ensures that our camps are well-organised, fully staffed, and remain a vital expression of the service dimension of our Edmund Rice mission.



Maria, our Coordinator at the Manchester Camp says about preparations this year:

2025 is set to be our biggest Manchester Edmund Rice Camp yet!

This is my 3rd year coordinating the camp, and I am looking forward to so many different aspects of it: helping 4 of our experienced leaders develop as they train up for the coordinator role; seeing leaders grow in confidence and get stuck in to camps; and particularly, seeing several of our returning leaders bring along their younger siblings as leaders for the first time.

Over the past few weeks, I’ve been liaising with staff from our partner primary

schools. It’s been great to hear how children that attended last year speak so fondly about camp, and to hear that some of them are returning as well.

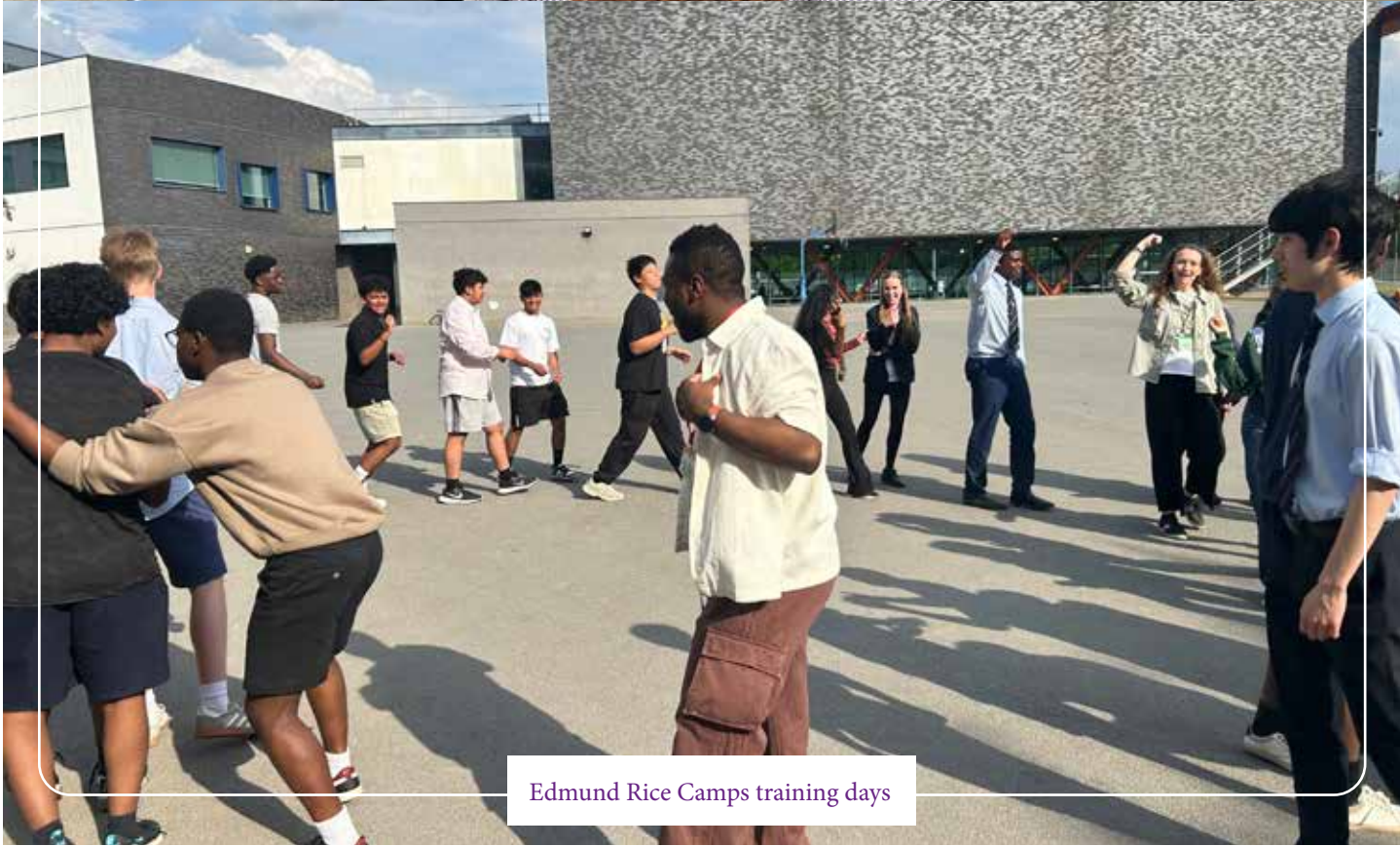
At our Leader Training session last weekend, it was wonderful to see the leaders’ enthusiasm for camp and to see them reignite their friendships from last year’s camp, as well as integrating our new leaders and helping them to learn all about camp. When people ask me about ERC, I always say that camp changes people. The countless emails and hours of preparation that go into getting everyone in the right place at the right time are all made worthwhile, when everyone comes together to love and serve, and to bring joy to the children.

And Andy Porter from Wirral Camp adds:

Prepping for camp is one of the most important times of the year.

It’s that time where we discuss different activities that the children would enjoy and hold onto the memories they create forever. This year on camp I’m looking forward to creating many memories and giving the children another week of Eddy Rice fun.

The smile on the faces of the children when they first come in and rekindle their friendships with past leaders and new is one of the most heart-warming moments that makes camp what it is.



Edmund Rice Camps training days

Edmund Rice Feast Day
How our schools celebrated





St Timothy's Community
West Derby, Liverpool

In the space of 6 months our community has dropped from five members to three.

Fergus Reilly left us before Christmas and is now residing in North Richmond St. Dublin. Christy Turner, our elderly statesman in his 95th year, has left us recently to join a nursing home in Dalkey, outside Dublin. Both of them were here for over 16 years and were part of the original community. Their presence is greatly missed. We wish them every happiness and blessing in their new surroundings. Many thanks to all those who came to say goodbye to Christy recently. He truly treasured his time here.

The new headmaster in St Edward's College, Mr Lee Fabia, has invited the community for a tour of the college followed by a meal in the College dining room in July. The Brothers are really looking forward to meeting him and staff and enjoy a chat and hospitality. We will be present also for the grand opening of the new Edmund Rice Centre in July.

Our lawns look really abandoned.

The 'No mow May' suggestion was heeded and then our lawnmower broke down. Anyway, it's great for the insects, birds and the bees. We need to take care of them too. The Bishops of Japan made a thought - provoking observation in a message 'To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope'.

No mow
May

A little reflection on
growing old in freedom

'A burden of these years is to allow
all the stereotypes of old age to hold
me back, to hold me down, to stop
the flow of life in me.

A blessing of these years is that they
give me the chance to break the
bounds of a past life and to create
for myself a life more suited to what
I now want to be.'

Joan Chittister

Pax Christi and Remembering
Populorum Progressio

I attended the Pax Christi AGM via Zoom on June 7.

The keynote speaker, Oliver Tierney, spoke of his lifelong commitment to justice and peace. He reflected on how post-WWII peace conventions have shifted and quoted a Palestinian doctor in Gaza: "The world has lost its humanity and wisdom."

After the horrors of WWII, principles of peace and reconciliation were established and later affirmed by Pope Paul VI in his 1967 encyclical Populorum Progressio. Oliver recalled how many, including himself and various parishes, were inspired by its call for full human development—moral, social, cultural, and spiritual—against systems that perpetuate injustice and conflict. If Pope Paul were alive today, he would surely include care for creation in that vision.

We will mark the 60th anniversary of Populorum Progressio in 2027. Yet the world today looks very different. Since its publication, there have been over 160 wars. The past 25 years have brought a technological shift that hides the brutality of war, while still causing immense destruction.

The war in Gaza highlights the moral crisis we face. AI-powered weapons used by Israel raise serious ethical concerns, alongside the violence of Hamas. Both challenge international law and human conscience.

Western governments speak of "impartiality" but often remain silent in the face of grave injustices. Many politicians hesitate to condemn Israel's actions, fearing accusations of antisemitism—but this silence must be questioned.

Events in Ukraine and Gaza suggest the so-called "rules-based world order" is crumbling. Rising militarisation and new technologies increase the risk of global conflict. Now more than ever, people of faith—especially Pax Christi—must champion the vision of Populorum Progressio: that peace comes through justice and integral human development.

We must stand against selfish interests, weak leadership, and the rise of authoritarianism.

Jesus taught us values of compassion, sharing, and simplicity—these remain the path to a just and peaceful world.

Br Edward Egan, St Timothy's Community

Salford Edmund Rice Volunteers /
St Sebastian's Community

The work of SERV continues with a steady flow of asylum seekers and refugees seeking advice and support.

The work is being done in an increasingly hostile environment in relation to asylum seekers and refugees. Frequent images of asylum seekers loaded up on boats adds to the fear of the country being 'invaded' and the issue of asylum seekers becomes conflated with issues and concerns related to immigration generally. Yet the reality is, based on the Governments own statistics, to the year ending March 2025, boat crossings only accounted for 4% of total immigration. It strikes me that the questions around asylum seekers and refugees is framed around the 'how' rather than the 'why'.

The focus is on how we can stop the boats – a few years ago it was how can we stop the lorry crossings. We need to ask the 'why' question. Why do asylum seekers and refugees risk their lives in undertaking these journeys? The obvious conclusion must be that, as perilous as the journeys are, the alternative must have been a lot worse. We need to listen to their stories to understand what needs to be done to prevent the whole process in the first place and then as a global community try to help solve these fundamental issues.

The key is communication. When we communicate, we begin to understand. When we understand, we can start to empathise. When we empathise, borders become less important and our shared humanity becomes more important. Once this is recognised, then a world where the dignity of each human being is key, a more positive future lies ahead.

Linking this back to Edmund Rice, through ERI our young people attending Edmund Rice Schools have a ready-made global network to develop these relationships across borders. The schools are producing highly talented individuals some of whom will end up in places of influence. With empathy and courage, they can be the change makers who can make the world a better place for all humanity.

Richard Simpson, volunteer.

This year Richard wrote a statement for the United Nations Human Rights Council about refugees and their poor health, he presented his statement via video through Edmund Rice International.

You can view his
statement here





Woolton Community, Formed 2024

In the early 2020s, several of the Brothers’ communities in England were forced to close because of the diminishment of numbers of Brothers and the gradual process of ageing. The community in Parr Street, in inner city Liverpool, closed in 2023 following the death of Brs Eamonn Doyle and Chris Brown.

In 2023, the community in Woodeaves, Hale Barns was also marked for closure, following the death of Br Ignatius Chincotta. Br Malachy Gillen moved to Belfast, Br George Gordon moved to St Sebastian’s, Salford, and Br Dominic Sassi moved into a newly rented apartment with Br Michael Halligan in Woolton, Liverpool 25.

The keys to our apartment were obtained on 20th April. Assistance from the Province Centre, Marino, and the facilitation of PLT member Br Philip Ryan, provided the initial funding and rent for the apartment. As the apartment was empty, much of the heavy furniture from Woodeaves and Lentworth Close was transferred, thanks to the hard work of the Woodeaves staff.

Michael and Dominic moved in on 5th May. There were plenty of “snags” that needed fixing in the apartment and truth to tell, the agency working on behalf of the landlord was slow to fix them. However, we settled in gradually and soon we felt at home. The neighbours were most welcoming, and we were recognised as members of the parish of St Mary’s, administered by the Redemptorists of Bishop Eton.

Since moving in, we have had several visitors and all are most welcome. Michael and Dominic are now both retired and apart from a few commitments and forays for shopping and exercise, we are usually at home.

Living “uninstitutionally” is becoming more common for the Brothers. Gone are the days when we had housekeepers, cooks and cleaners to look after us. So, we do our own cooking and cleaning. Fortunately, Michael is an excellent cook and both of us are conscious of keeping the apartment clean. However, we do get help now and again from Michaelle and Paul Cropper who do all kinds of odd jobs in the house. Also, aware that a “woman’s touch” is so necessary in a house, we get cleaning help now and again from Estelle from St Timothy’s.

Do come and visit us some time!



Obituary: Brother Leo Augustine Anthony (1930–2025)

Devoted Christian Brother, Teacher, Musician, and Spiritual Companion

Brother Leo Augustine Anthony, known affectionately to many as Brother Augustine, passed away peacefully in 2025 at the age of 95. A member of the Congregation of Christian Brothers for over seven decades, his life was one of unwavering faith, quiet resilience, and deep service to education, music, and spiritual formation.

Born Leo William Stephen Anthony on 31 January 1930 in Devonport, Plymouth, he grew up in the shadow of global conflict, experiencing firsthand the devastation of the Blitz and the wartime evacuation of Plymouth.

His early education, shaped by the Sisters of St Paul and later by the Christian Brothers at St Boniface’s College, sparked in him a strong sense of vocation and commitment to spiritual life.

In 1947, he entered the Christian Brothers’ postulancy at St Joseph’s College, Ledsham, receiving the religious name Augustine. Despite early struggles, including serious mental and physical health challenges, he persevered, making his First Profession in 1949 and Perpetual Vows in 1955.

Brother Augustine went on to teach in numerous Christian Brother schools across England, including Blackpool, Bath, and Crosby. A gifted musician and organist, he shared his love for sacred music with generations of students and parish communities. His deep knowledge of liturgy and Church history made him a valuable contributor to post-Vatican II renewal efforts, particularly in preparing liturgical texts and promoting the legacy of Blessed Edmund Rice.

In his later years, he supported the Province through secretarial work, pastoral care, and community life, especially at Ledsham and The Priory, Bath.

Throughout a life marked by humility and quiet wisdom, Brother Augustine remained a steadfast presence and spiritual companion to all who knew him.

He will be remembered for his gentleness, dedication, and enduring faith. May he rest in peace.

A life in mission

Brothers' stories

Brother Steven Abu Kargbo

I was born into a devout Muslim family in Konta Wallah, a small town in Northern Sierra Leone. However, I spent most of my childhood in Lungi, where I lived until I joined the Christian Brothers in 2010.

My father, a hardworking farmer, was a deeply religious man who placed immense value on Islamic education. My mother, a dedicated housewife, quietly embodied the spirit of service, ensuring our home was filled with warmth, discipline and spiritual devotion. Together, they raised us in the Islamic faith with great love and purpose. I am one of fifteen children in a large extended family, with five siblings from my mother and ten others from my father's additional wives, in keeping with Islamic tradition.

Growing up, our lives were structured around prayer, school and Arabic lessons. My father was insistent that we never miss our Quranic studies, firmly believing that knowledge of Allah brought light and direction to one's life. It was a disciplined upbringing, yet deeply rooted in values that have remained with me to this day: faith, discipline and generosity.

In 2000, when I had just entered Junior Secondary School One, my father passed away. His death was a turning point. My mother, left without any source of income, had to carry the burden of raising us alone. Despite the hardship, she never gave up. Her quiet resilience became my first and most enduring example of selfless strength.

From 2000 to 2006, I attended a Catholic secondary school run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. It was during this period that my life was profoundly shaped by the generosity of Br. Tom Higgs, an American Salesian Brother. We met by chance at a basketball court in Lungi on the day of his arrival to Lungi on mission from USA. Br. Tom had come to watch a basketball game and I was returning from evening studies. During our conversation, he offered to help if I ever needed educational support. At the time, I was on the brink of dropping out of school, as my late father had only paid for the first two terms, and I had no means to continue. Br. Tom paid my fees for the third term, an unexpected and deeply appreciated gesture. From that day forward, he supported me throughout secondary school, not only financially but also spiritually.



His Gospel-centered service inspired me greatly. Though he invited me to consider joining the Salesians after high school, I felt a strong duty to support my mother and siblings first. At that time, my ambition was simply to become a teacher or work at the airport—practical goals given our circumstances as a family.

I embraced the Catholic faith in late 2000. I was still living in Lungi with the family of one of my stepmothers, who, like my own mother, upheld our Muslim traditions. My decision to convert was not the result of pressure, but a personal conviction, encouraged gently by friends who invited me to attend Sunday Masses. They spoke of the unity and support found within the Catholic community, especially among the youth. As I began attending Mass, I felt welcomed and embraced. I became an active member of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and worked closely with two peers who would later become Christian Brothers themselves, Br. Jojo Karimu (Current West Africa Area Administrator) and Br. Dominic Konkoro Kargbo.



Br. Jojo and I shared a close bond; we studied together and even shared a bed during our student days. We were only separated academically when he chose the science stream in Senior Secondary School, while I pursued the arts.

His family's presence in Lungi offered me further support during those formative years.

After secondary school, I was admitted to the Port Loko Teachers College (now Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology) to pursue a Higher Teachers Certificate (HTC).

University education was beyond my means, and my elder sister could only afford to help with HTC fees. It was during my time at college that another pivotal moment occurred—this time at the chapel, during morning Mass. Late Mr. Abu Malayka Koroma, Head of the Religious Studies Department then and a man of deep faith, approached me one morning and said he had dreamt of me becoming a Christian Brother.

Mr. Koroma was the direct link between the Christian Brothers Vocation Director and young men wishing to join the Brothers from Port Loko Teachers College. He told me I would thrive in this vocation and, even if he might not live to see it, he would be proud to have played a part in my discernment. His words struck me deeply. After weeks of prayer and reflection, I made the decision to say “yes” to the call. That decision brought with it a peace I had never known before, an inner certainty that I was stepping into God's purpose for my life.

In 2012, I entered the novitiate in Lusaka, Zambia, a sacred period that profoundly deepened my understanding of community, spirituality and mission. Following my first vows in 2013, I returned to Sierra Leone and was assigned to my first mission in Njala Mokonde in 2014. It was there that I encountered the remote village of Foya, home to around 600 people. The village had a thatch-roofed school with only two teachers, no furniture and no learning materials. Classes could only be held during the dry season due to the poor infrastructure.

Rather than feel despair, I felt a deep sense of determination. I organized local meetings, taught in the school, and reached out to Brenda Walker, an American missionary I had connected with online through Titus Kallon, a former Christian Brother. Through her support and the collaboration of the local community, we built four new classrooms with proper roofing within two months. The transformation was incredible, the teachers became more confident, the children more eager to learn. That moment, standing in a fully constructed classroom, hearing the hum of learning remains one of the most profound expressions of Gospel service I have ever experienced.

My journey as a Brother has been filled with both blessings and struggles. One of my greatest personal challenges has been self-doubt, wondering if I was truly worthy of this calling. At times, this doubt gave way to impatience, especially when others did not share my urgency or idealism. I expected change to happen swiftly and found it difficult when it didn't. But over time, I have come to learn the value of patience, walking with others at their pace and accepting people as they are, not as I wish them to be. This slow transformation of the heart is ongoing and continues to shape my approach to ministry and community life.

Over the years, I have served in various capacities as a teacher, community leader and bursar, Pastoral Community Support Team (PCST) Coordinator for Brothers in the West Africa Area, Member of the Fraternal Circle, an area specific leadership structure that represents the Province Leadership Team at area level, Coordinator of the CATHOLIC Youth Organization at Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, Juba, Freetown, Secretary to the Archdiocesan Synodal Committee, Member of the Congregation History Focus Group and currently as West Africa Area Mission Coordinator. This role as Area Mission Coordinator has brought deep fulfillment, allowing me to journey with communities and vulnerable groups, helping them assess their needs and build resilience from within.

From Mabureh, Bo to Blama, I have walked alongside some of the most inspiring individuals—adolescent girls becoming a voice in a male chauvinistic society, women farmers breaking cycles of poverty and youth daring to dream despite adversity through livelihood skills. Their courage strengthens my hope. Their resilience keeps me grounded in the mission.

One of the most painful experiences I have encountered in recent times took place in Blama, where countless adolescent girls are in desperate need of support but are unable to access it due to limited funding.

Watching parents plead with me, asking that I appeal to philanthropists to expand the number of girls benefiting from the Misan Cara and Edmund Rice Development funded Adolescent Girls Empowerment Initiative project in Blama beyond the targeted 150 girls remains a wound that continues to ache in my heart. This experience has taught me a sobering lesson: that the cry for educational opportunity is loudest among the most voiceless. It reminds me that behind every statistic lies a child with dreams, and a family hoping for a future different from their own. It has strengthened my resolve to continue advocating, not only for increased funding, but for a more compassionate response to the educational needs of vulnerable children especially young girls in underserved communities.

As I look to the future, my heart is filled with hope.

I envision a mission rooted in deep prayer, courageous action and compassionate presence, a mission that remains faithful to the Gospel and to the poor and marginalized. I believe that we, Brothers and partners alike, are called to adapt boldly to the changing needs of our world while remaining anchored in the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice.

To anyone discerning this path, I would say: listen to the quiet stirring in your soul. The call may not be loud, but it will be persistent. And if you choose to respond, know this, it will not be an easy journey, but it will be one of purpose, transformation and grace. You will not only help change the lives of others; you will be changed in ways you never imagined.



Spreading the Spirit of Blessed Edmund in East Africa

A New Dawn for the Edmund Rice Network in East Africa
The Edmund Rice Network (ERN) East Africa Movement is a dynamic and emerging community-based network that seeks to embody and spread the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice; the founder of the Christian Brothers. Grounded in the Catholic tradition, the Network's mission is to promote holistic development through education, advocacy and community engagement.

The vision of the ERN East Africa Movement is:

"Empowered communities fostering a transformed, Just and inclusive society.

Mission of ERN East Africa:

To promote holistic development and liberation of people through education and advocacy, inspired by the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice.

Since its inception, the Network has rapidly gained momentum, already establishing three active chapters: Nairobi (37members), Eldoret (40 members), and Arusha (35 members). Despite facing significant resource limitations, the ERN East Africa Movement continues to build a foundation rooted in faith, service, leadership, and community engagement.

Humble beginnings and major milestones

The journey began with the first official meeting on 6th March 2024, where passionate individuals came together to explore the possibility of anchoring the ERN within the East African region. This significant step set the tone for what would become a movement built on purpose and unity.

The Network honoured its roots by commemorating the death anniversary of the Late Brother Peter Cole on 12th April, deepening its spiritual grounding. The same day the first executive team was elected to the office by members present.

Additionally, the ERN East Africa Movement has already achieved critical foundational milestones, including the documentation of its mission and vision statements, development of its constitution, core values, leadership structures, bio data registration forms, and meticulous minutes of all conducted meetings.



Shortly thereafter, the Nairobi Chapter held its first Formation Day, creating an initial sense of belonging and shared mission among the early members. This energy was carried forward with the official launch of the ERN in Nairobi, a momentous event that marked the beginning of a new chapter in the legacy of Edmund Rice in East Africa as the members celebrated Edmund Rice Feast Day on 5th May 2024.



The spirit of expansion remained strong through the year, culminating in the formation and launch of chapters in Eldoret and Arusha in May 2025. Each of these communities brings unique energy and commitment to the overall mission of the Network.

ERN members have also engaged meaningfully in events such as the Final Vows of the Christian Brothers, community planting of trees, and the celebration of the Edmund Rice Feast Day on May 5th, celebrated simultaneously across the three chapters. These shared experiences have strengthened the bonds of community and mission.



Main areas of focus for ERN:

- Engaging in total advocacy by empowering children on their human rights and responsibilities through Edmund Rice camps for children with emphasis on social justice for all.
- Promoting the well-being of vulnerable youth through mentorship and other life skill programs.
- Improving the living standards of vulnerable adults and empowering different communities through skill programs and other empowerment initiatives.
- Ensure unity and collaboration among Edmund Rice ministries within East Africa.

Achievements with limited resources

Despite operating with minimal funding, the ERN East Africa Movement has showcased incredible resilience and commitment. Activities carried out across the chapters include:

- Regular leadership and general chapter meeting
- Participation in significant religious events, promoting faith and connection
- Collaborative discussions around structural formation and sustainability
- Workshops on environmental care, servant leadership and group dynamics
- Community engagements that have begun shaping a culture of outreach and service

Looking ahead: building a stronger, impactful network
The future of the ERN East Africa Movement is filled with promise. Among the key upcoming plans are:

- Leadership and member empowerment trainings to equip individuals with knowledge and confidence to lead effectively.
- Safeguarding training and signing of consent forms to ensure safety and ethical integrity across all operations.
- Launch of the Arusha Chapter, solidifying the Network's regional presence.
- Establishment of Edmund Rice Advocacy groups for children across all Christian Brothers ministries.
- Outreach and community service programs that respond to real needs within vulnerable communities.
- Pursuit of a well-equipped office space to serve as a hub for coordination and support.
- Strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations for mutual support.
- Official registration of the Network as a national entity to enhance legitimacy and access to opportunities.

Challenges and a Call for Support

While the passion among members is evident, the ERN East Africa Movement is not without its struggles. The most pressing challenges include:

- Limited funding, which hinders the implementation of key activities.
- Low levels of partnership, which reduce opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing.
- Minimal participation from Brothers, a gap that weakens spiritual mentorship and identity.
- Inconsistent member commitment, affecting momentum and sustainability.

These challenges, however, have not dimmed the resolve of those involved. Instead, they serve as a clarion call to all who share the spirit of Edmund Rice to rise, engage, and support this vital movement.

Join the movement

The Edmund Rice Network East Africa Movement invites more individuals especially alumni, Christian Brothers, educators, social workers, and community advocates to join hands in shaping a just and compassionate society rooted in faith, education, and service. Together, we can continue to walk in the footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice empowering lives, transforming communities, and igniting hope across East Africa.

Ayslum Link Merseyside News

At the time of writing, Refugee Week is almost upon us and this year has special significance primarily because of all the trouble last year.

The theme of the festival is the Community as a Superpower. It's something we often take for granted, when we look around the place we live and usually see people living and working together for the benefit of everyone who lives there. But unless we look after and nurture that positive environment, it can go wrong very quickly as we have seen happen in Kirby in 2023 and Liverpool in 2024. What causes incidents like these to take place?

The trouble starts when communities feel left out, ignored or marginalised. Many of the areas that saw disturbances last year, lacked investment in healthcare, education or infrastructure generally and so it was relatively easy to find fault and grievance. The targeting of migrants and asylum seekers occurred when far right elements laid the blame for all the ills of the community at their doorstep and people were too ready to believe them. The online forums for this are poisonous and lack any form of balance or perspective. This is what drives the current narrative, that migrants are bad for the country, when actually they have helped drive prosperity.

If we do not put the mechanisms in place that provide opportunities for people to meet and get used to one another, then we leave the door open to mistrust and misinformation. All our experience tells us that contact, working together and sharing, brings us closer and makes our community spaces better for everyone.

With the Action Asylum project coordinated from Liverpool, we can see and measure the effects of working together as a community and in this recent evaluation



Some of the headline figures suggest we are doing just that:

Planting
18,500 trees



Providing
63,300 hours
of volunteering
with a social value
equal to £868,000

Working
with people with
over 100 different
nationalities.

But it is the stories people have that shine through.

One person said 'In the hotel, all we think of is the future or the past and never laugh but today we have been laughing a lot as we enjoyed the food, games and company.'

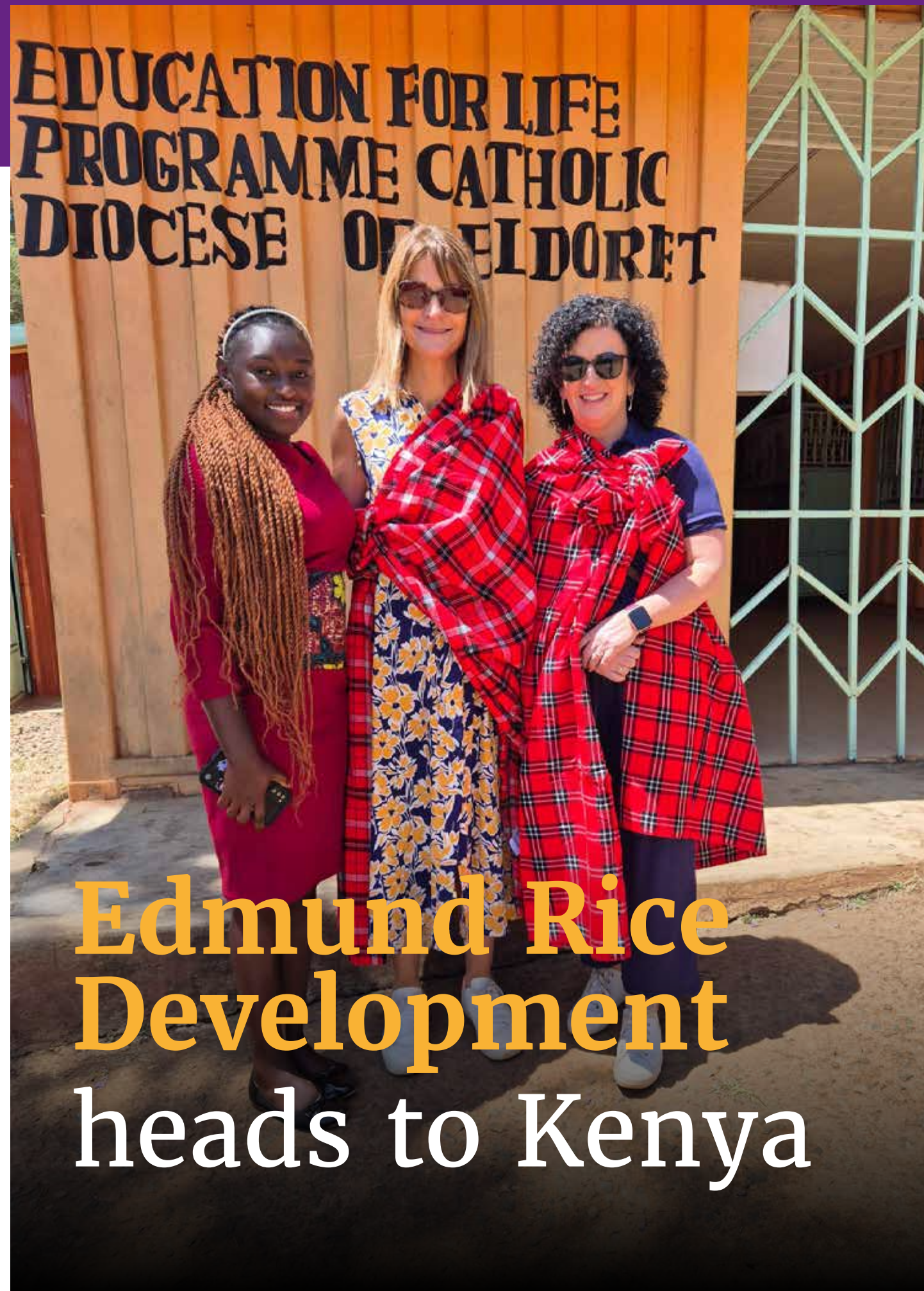
Another said "I'm an asylum seeker running away from persecution in my home country. I left everything behind. It's hard to settle down in an entirely different part of the world but going to Asylum Link was an important start."

And that is what we are here for, to provide that start, the English classes, the access to bikes and gardening and the Choir, which brings joy wherever it goes.

We've had some great performances this year with a recent one at a Community event in Earle Road where we sang our hearts out. And a fabulous flying visit to St Mary's in Crosby.

Thank you again for all the support from the Edmund Rice Family because it makes such a difference





In February, Edmund Rice Development (ERD) Chief Executive Fiona Dowling and ERD Board Member Aoife Denton travelled to Kenya for a whirlwind week of partner visits and meetings. As this was Aoife's first time to Kenya and Fiona's first visit in a couple of years, the itinerary was packed with visits to projects in Nairobi and Eldoret to maximise their time there.

The week started with a visit to the Ruben Centre where Fiona and Aoife received a tour of the facilities and met with the management team and health centre staff.

ERD has long supported the Ruben Health clinic, so it was impactful to see the strides made in maternal and child health since the project began.

Fiona and Aoife then headed to Kibera to visit Edmund Rice Centre Nairobi. The centre provides educational support to children and adults living with disabilities in the community. ERD currently funds the Empower Her project at the centre, which supports caregivers through economic empowerment. Fiona and Aoife visited some of the beneficiaries at their homes in Kibera and heard about the impact the centre has had on their families.

They then headed over to Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre (ERCEC) to meet with the school and project teams before flying to Eldoret.

In Eldoret, Fiona and Aoife visited Education for Life (EFL) and Edmund Rice Eldoret Empowerment Programme (EREPP). The EFL members welcomed the visitors with open arms, singing and dancing!

At EREPP, they met with the project team members, and had the privileged of participating in a meeting with an inspiring group of teen and young mums from Langas.

Fiona and Aoife met with the Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Cooperation at the Irish Embassy. Many of the ERD-funded projects in Kenya receive Irish Aid funding through Mísean Cara, so it was a great opportunity to connect the Embassy with the projects they support in Kenya so they can see the impact of their funding.

While the week was busy, Fiona and Aoife returned to Ireland energised and full of awe for all the wonderful project work they saw in Kenya.



To learn more about how ERD supports the work of Edmund Rice development projects around the world, please visit: www.edmundricedevelopment.org

A Word from the Governor!



Tim Alderman

**Chair of Governors,
St Edward's College (OE 1973 – 1984)**

‘Cast all your cares into the hands of Divine Providence.’

I don't think many people consider, at school or university, the idea of becoming a governor. I think it is something that crosses your path when you least expect it. Or possibly, you work in a school and are exposed to governance more than most and at some point decide that you can contribute your skills in some way.

My school days started with the Loretto Sisters in Altrincham aged 4, before joining Runnymede at the age of 7, then St Edward's College. I didn't think it unusual seeing and interacting with the Brothers (Br Chincotta, Br O'Grady, Br Hawkins, Br Foley, Br Upton, Br Dee, Br Gillespie and Br Sassi) around school, teaching, leading or providing careers advice and, in many ways, it was very reassuring. Having been brought up in a catholic family, it just seemed normal, as did joining the Metropolitan Cathedral choir.

Fast forward 10 years from my school days and I was sitting around a table at the wedding of a good friend, daughter of my old Chemistry teacher. As the guests, more of my old teachers, talked about how much they enjoyed teaching and how rewarding it was, I listened in awe and it made me realise that this is the path I wanted to follow. If I could replicate in some small way what they had done and achieved, then I would very happily serve the young people before me, hopefully inspiring them as my old teachers had done before me.

My first teaching post was with the Salesian Sisters at St John Bosco in Liverpool and my last was with the Sisters of Notre Dame at St Julie's Catholic High School, as Headteacher for 13 years. I am not sure if I was set on a path to be associated with four different religious orders but what I do know is that the men and women in these orders are truly remarkable people. This is not surprising as their founders and foundresses are inspirational, then and now.

They were forward thinking pioneers, highly driven yet very humble followers of Jesus.

At the heart of all that they did and continue to do, was a belief in the power and necessity of education for children, especially the poor and disadvantaged.

What a wonderful thing it is then, that so many of these religious orders have worked together to form the Gaudate Trust and the Laetare Multi Academy Trust, to secure their respective charisms for generations to come, as well as the distinctive ethos of each member school.



These experiences, alongside those working with some fantastic educators and leaders over the years, have facilitated many rewarding opportunities as governor at Carleton House Preparatory school, governor at St Julie's Catholic High School, foundation governor representing the Sisters of Nore Dame at Liverpool Hope University, chair of governors at St Mary's Catholic Primary School Isle of Man and, in the last year, governor and subsequently chair of governors at St Edward's College.

So, what have I learned?

Firstly, we join in. I believe that being a governor is about recognising that there is something positive going on somewhere and so we decide to give up time to help and support that cause, for the benefit of children. Since September we have recruited 5 new governors and I am pleased to say that Sarah, Mike, Martin, Terence and Dominic have joined in whole-heartedly.

Secondly, we are a team. We are a disparate group of people, coming from all walks of life. We have a variety of previous life experiences. We know there are others around us that we can rely on for advice and support, with different knowledge and skills. We join together and get to know each other. We listen to each other's ideas and points of view. Having outstanding chairs of committees like Stephen, Keith and Paul, as well as very supportive vice-chairs of governors like Angela and John ensures that the team works well together and the workload is shared out equitably

Thirdly, we collaborate. It is a self-less task because we attend meetings and speak to staff and other governors, understand the issues, ask probing questions, then agree on a way forward. At this point, governors speak with one voice. We set aside our own thoughts and feelings and support the decision that has collectively been made. This year we have collaborated on joining Laetare MAT, new staffing structures, supporting the Principal in changing the culture in the school, developing a new mission statement and school prayer, plus the AFIs from our recent OFSTED inspection.

Finally, we believe. We recognise and reflect on the importance of the decisions we make, as they usually impact children directly, so we aim to ensure they are decisions rooted in Gospel values. In making decisions it is important to understand the charism of the religious order we represent and why these religious gave up their lives to provide schools and an education for young people. We are inspired by the work of those that have gone before us and trust 'The will of God be done in this and everything we undertake.'

If you were to ask me what was the highlight of the last year, it would be the recruitment of the current Principal, Lee Fabia, to take us forward into the Laetare MAT and the next chapter of St Edward's College development. He has done a fantastic job in a very short space of time, so the future looks very bright indeed!

What began as a conversation and a hope several years ago has now become a reality.

The Laetare Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT) is no longer just a concept—it is a flourishing and faith-filled structure for Religious Order schools, built on commitment, collaboration, and a shared mission.

We are proud to announce that two of our schools, St Anselm's and St Ambrose are now part of the Laetare CMAT, joining De La Salle, St Helens. Even more exciting, our remaining two academies, St Edward's and St Joseph's will be joining in the new academic year, marking a significant step forward in our journey.

This development hasn't happened overnight. It has taken considerable time, energy, and dedication to move from the early discussions with the Department for Education to today's tangible and promising future. The leadership of our interim Chief Executive Officer, Andy Bridson, has been instrumental. His stewardship has shaped a strong and sustainable CMAT, and we are incredibly grateful for his vision and hard work.

We are now delighted to welcome Jonathan Jones as our newly appointed CEO. With his capable leadership and deep commitment to Catholic education, we look forward with hope and confidence to the future of the Laetare CMAT—one that we believe will continue to grow, thrive, and serve the young people in our schools for many years to come.



The Gaudete Trust:
Strengthening Catholic Education

The Gaudete Trust holds responsibility for the governance of our schools and plays a vital role in shaping their strategic direction and Catholic identity.

Over the past year, the Trust's central team has worked with dedication and clarity of purpose, laying strong foundations for the future.

Although still in its early stages, the team has already made significant strides in building a distinct and unified identity for the Trust—one that reflects our mission, values, and commitment to excellence in Catholic education. Their work is helping to strengthen our schools and provide a clear framework for growth, support, and accountability.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence and hope, knowing that the Gaudete Trust will continue to develop and flourish, guided by faith and focused on serving the needs of our communities.

Religious Orders in Education (ROE):
A National Voice

Religious Orders in Education (ROE) has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape for Religious Order schools across the country. As a growing national voice, ROE has been instrumental in ensuring that the unique charisms, traditions, and contributions of Religious Order schools are recognised and valued at every level of the education system.

Most notably, ROE has significantly influenced the guidance for Catholic School Inspection (CSI), helping to ensure that the particular character and mission of Religious Order schools are reflected in the inspection framework. This work has provided a stronger platform for Religious Order communities to engage with and shape the future of Catholic education in England and Wales.

We are proud to be part of this movement and grateful for the leadership and advocacy ROE continues to provide. Their efforts are helping to ensure that Religious Order schools not only have a seat at the table, but a clear and respected voice in shaping policy, practice, and future direction.



Jonathan Jones CEO Laetare Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

Jonathan takes on the role of CEO at Laetare CMAT with a rich background in Catholic education, local authorities, and the civil service, all dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people—academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

His career began in Catholic schools, where he held senior leadership. He has worked with the Department for Education, shaping education policies. At Ofsted, as an HMI and specialist advisor, he advised Ofsted on SEND and worked on the development of the Education Inspection Framework.

Within local government, Jonathan has served as Director of Education and Director of Children's Services in building capacity for strong outcomes through leadership and community engagement, moving away from traditional structures.

His work spans leadership, policy development, school improvement, and community-focused initiatives. Informed by both Catholic and secular contexts, Jonathan's experience equips him to support organisations in balancing change with their core missions.

New to Edmund Rice schools, Jonathan's extensive background aligns with our values of holistic education, social justice, inclusion, and community empowerment. His career equips him to support Laetare CMAT's schools in remaining faithful to their Edmund Rice charism while growing as faith-filled communities that prioritise comprehensive outcomes for all children and young people.



A Year of Growth and Connection: Gaudete Trust's First Year

Our inaugural year as the Gaudete Trust has been one of discovery, delight, and deepening relationships. Stepping into this new role, we have taken the time to understand the distinct identities, charisms, and communities within our schools.

From inner-city mixed comprehensives to rural, selective, single-sex, and independent schools—primary and secondary alike—we have witnessed a beautiful diversity all united by the Gaudete Trust Educational Vision.

Among the many highlights of the year were the Governors and Headteachers Conference in the autumn term and the successful pilgrimages held simultaneously in Liverpool and London at the end of the academic year. These events showcased the shared spirit and commitment across our network.

We've also engaged closely with the wider Religious Orders in Education group and have begun a collaborative relationship with the newly formed Laetare Multi Academy Trust.

While distinct in structure—Laetare operates as a MAT, and Gaudete functions in lieu of trustees where appropriate—both organisations share the Gaudete Trust's educational vision rooted in faith and charism.

A particular joy has been the warm welcome extended by all schools across the network. We've participated in events at St Edward's and Runnymede St Edward's, attended the ERN Sixth Form Leadership Conference, and taken part in the ERN staff formation day. The ERN's generosity in sharing advocacy resources with other schools in particular has been especially welcome, and we hope more schools will take advantage of these opportunities in shaping our communities in the coming years.

Our end-of-year pilgrimage brought to light a growing sense of a wider Gaudete community. Though schools often connect within their own religious orders, this year we began to see schools initiate relationships and share best practices across the network—something we hope to see flourish further in the coming academic year.

We will continue to support our schools by introducing regular online meetings with headteachers, chaplains, and Catholic Life leads, alongside half termly virtual gatherings for prayer and reflection.

In-person meetings are also scheduled for headteachers in June and chaplaincy/heads of catholic life leads later in the year.

By establishing Gaudete, the religious orders have truly “widened their circle of love,” creating a supportive, spiritually rich network that reflects the founding charisms of our schools. As we move into our second year, we do so with hope, commitment and with joy and ask for your prayers as we continue our journey together.



Gaudete Trust confirmed dates for diaries for next academic year - all online unless specified	
3 rd September 4pm	Gaudete Trust prayer
24 th September	GT Education Network Meeting (headteachers) and GT Charism Network Meeting (chaplains)
5 th November 4pm	Gaudete Trust prayer
4 th December 10.30am	ROE Plenary meeting
7 th January 4pm	Gaudete Trust prayer
14 th January	GT Education Network Meeting (headteachers) and GT Charism Network Meeting (chaplains)
24 th February 4pm	Gaudete Trust prayer
15 th April 4pm	Gaudete Trust prayer
22 nd April	GT Education Network Meeting (headteachers) and GT Charism Network Meeting (chaplains)
3 rd June 4pm	Gaudete Trust prayer
26 th June	Headteachers meeting (in person)



One of our Eight Essentials

A Reflection by Mrs Georgina Ostick, St Ambrose Preparatory School

I never really considered teaching as a career path. When I was a young child, I thought I would become a doctor as the medical world held some fascination for me.

As a result, when I was 16 and wanting some medical experience prior to sixth form college, I travelled to Aror in Kenya to gain medical experience with a catholic missionary group, the Medical Missionaries of Mary and to carry out voluntary work. This involved helping to transport aid to remote medical centres, having first-hand experience of observing medical professionals treating patients in challenging conditions and participating in education workshops, informing people about the spread of disease.

I remember attending a mother and baby clinic in the Rift Valley and being truly inspired by the teaching, guidance, support and care the medical missionaries gave to any person who arrived unannounced, regardless of their situation, history or presentation.

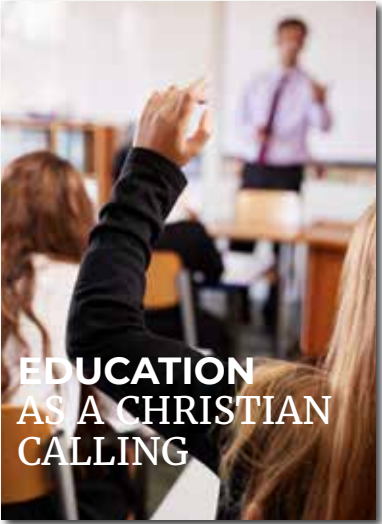
It was this experience which sparked my interest in education rather than medicine. It developed within me a passion for teaching and an understanding of teaching as meeting others where they are and not where we want them to be. These first-hand experiences helped me to consider the type of teacher I wanted to be, one who could recognise the individuality and promise of each person regardless of their ability and background and one who could encourage others to be agents of change in the world.

For me, education is not just a profession. It was and remains still, after twenty-six years, a Christian calling. In the lessons I plan, in my interactions with the children and staff and each moment I spend in the classroom is part of something bigger – the chance to transform the hearts and minds of the children to act with sincerity and to feel God's loving presence in their lives.

I believe Edmund Rice's vision for education was not one based entirely on academic excellence but rather on transforming each person to be the best they can be for God's glory. His emphasis on community really encourages me as a teacher to nurture a school and class community of belonging where we pray and learn together and celebrate each other.

Teaching in the spirit of Edmund Rice is not always easy because it demands patience, perseverance and no small measure of courage. Like Edmund, I think that teaching and education are one of the most powerful ways to serve God and to try to transform a small part of the world myself.

Georgina Ostick St Ambrose Preparatory School



Thomas Newman,
former student of St Anselm’s College

Growing up on the Wirral and having attending Christ the King in Bromborough, there was always a great sense of achievement for boys who passed the 11+ and the St Anselm’s College entrance examination.

When I received the news that I had secured a place at St Anselm’s College my feelings were mixed given that my brother was already at another school. However, it was grandparents who convinced me to take up the place and how wise they were - I attended the school from 2000-2007. Not a day passes when I do not give thanks for the wonderful education I received through the Christian Brothers and the long academic tradition at St Anselm’s College.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful teachers who taught me under the leadership of Mr Duggan and Mr Cleugh before him.

At a recent event, I was asked to name teachers who had made an impact on my life. I was saddened that some other people present were unable to list any whereas I was able to recite a joyful litany including some who taught me right up until A Level; Mr Jones and Mrs Rawsthorne spring to mind by there were many others who transferred their passion for their subject and love of teaching to me.

I also had the great honour of being Deputy Head Boy at the college and benefiting from the extracurricular life of the school especially the SVP, gymnastics and the lunchtime clubs.

The greatest gift of all received from St Anselm’s was my faith, which moved from ambivalence to great fondness and understanding in the spirit of faith seeking understanding the school’s moto “Fides Quaerens Intellectum”.



The outgoing and incoming Head Girl Teams



Since leaving the college, I studied to Masters level at the University of Birmingham with a BA in Geography and Theology and MA in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. I returned to the northwest to complete my PGCE at Liverpool Hope and trained at St Marys in Wallasey and Upton Hall School before securing my first teaching job in London.

I had a decade of teaching in the capital, firstly in two of the leading Catholic independent day schools and finally at the largest all girls Catholic comprehensive school, with over 1500 students. I finished my career in London as Director of Sixth Form with 320 students in my care. Following the pandemic and the call of home and family, I was blessed to be called for, and appointed to, the role of Assistant Headteacher with sixth form responsibility at Loreto Grammar School in Altrincham. It is through this connection, and the Edmund Rice Camps, which is done in conjunction with St Ambrose College in Hale that I began to reflect more on the Edmund Rice education I have received. I am delighted that students in my sixth form now benefit from the good work of the Edmund Rice Camps and I am pleased to be working in partnership with the sixth form at St Ambrose where we connect the student leadership teams and complete what is known as the ‘Ambreto Project’ each year. This project aims to give students the chance to discuss and reflect on issues relevant to them and our settings in single sex religious order schools.

As for the future, I am keen to see how I can continue to serve Catholic education.

I have completed my CCRS, NPQSL and NPQH and one day, God willing, I would like to lead my own school as a headteacher. For now, I am especially pleased to be part of the Loreto community and I am delighted that the school has recently been awarded the Sunday Times School of the Year 2025 and our academic outcomes placed us 19th in the country.

For the small part that I play in the success of the school, I am assured that many of the skills and qualities which I utilise were discovered, nurtured and celebrated in me by the good work at St Anselm’s College. Once again, I would like to thank the school for how it has supported me.

In the past it aimed to turn the sons of ‘dockers into doctors’ and I believe it continues to fulfil that mission having enabled me to live a fruitful and joyful life with many wonderful experiences.

Mr Thomas Newman
Director of Sixth Form
Loreto Grammar School, Altrincham
Assistant Headteacher

Head Space

Charlotte Slattery

Headteacher

St Joseph's College, Stoke-on-Trent

Having been part of the St Joseph's family for 14 years, when the prospect of becoming headteacher arose, for some it felt obvious I would transition into this role. It was not so obvious to me.

I relished my roles as deputy headteacher and SENCO before that. However, I remember distinctly my parish priest telling me 'we are not called to fail'. The rest, I suppose is history. However, I am so glad I put on my big girl undies and took the plunge!

As I look back at the first year of my headship, I wonder how we have done all we have done. There have been plenty of challenges, ones I'd never imagined, but also far more positives that outweigh those challenges tenfold. I do know, really, how we have done it all - how we have thrived and continued to move forwards: it is the staff, the students, the governors, the parents, all pulling together and supporting each other, wanting the very best for our young people.

Essentially, it is being part of the Edmund Rice family where the power of everyone working together is harnessed and community is everything to us. It makes me exceptionally proud to lead a school where people matter and always come first - whether it is people in our immediate community or our brothers and sisters across the globe.

There has been comfort in being a 'newbie' this year, alongside our other new headteachers (as well as the more seasoned amongst us) in the network - I hope we all continue to be a huge source of support to each other as we navigate the unbroken ground of the Laetare CMAT.

At St Joseph's, we are very much looking forward to forging new relationships with schools within and outside of the Edmund Rice Network. We have much to learn from each other and we are stronger together: it is hugely exciting to be part of this unique family of schools.

But, in reality, it is the day-to-day interactions at St Joseph's College that captivated me, on the benches outside of the Brothers' House, 14 years ago, and still does today.

There is no greater sense of a calling fulfilled than seeing our students come out of an exam saying, 'that was ok actually, I knew what I was doing' or telling me 'Culture Kitchen is my favourite day of the year'. I am inspired by our young people every day: the way they embrace every opportunity given to them, how they have the integrity to stand up for what is right and have the resilience to tackle whatever life throws at them.

I am equally as excited for year 2 of being a headteacher, where our social advocacy and sustainability group prepare for huge changes to our site and dining room, where our new student leadership programme will continue to go from strength to strength and where Wig Wednesday (see our social media posts!) will see a spectacular return!

There is always joy to be seen at St Joseph's College and as Ofsted told us at the end of April this year, 'St Joseph's College is a special place'. They were not wrong!

If you are passing through Stoke-on-Trent, pop in for a brew and an oatcake!



PERU

ADULT IMMERSION, JULY 2026

LIMA 8 DAYS - 8-15 JULY
BUILD A HOUSE FOR VULNERABLE
FAMILY
WITH NORTH AMERICAN EDMUND
RICE STAFF
DORM. ACCOMMODATION
COSTS: £600 + FLIGHTS

OPTIONAL EXTRA: CUSCO &
MACCU PICHU
3 DAYS
£1,200 + FLIGHTS

EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
Beyond Borders



Christian Brothers North American
Immersion Program





Upper School students at the conclusion of a Kairos retreat, where they have spent time reflecting on faith and friendship with their Iona Prep brothers.

“Brothers, Scholars and Servants”:
Iona Preparatory School’s Living Legacy
of Blessed Edmund Rice

Nestled just north of New York City in the leafy suburb of New Rochelle, Iona Preparatory School stands as a beacon of Blessed Edmund Rice’s vision in the North American Province Founded in 1916 as the third Congregation of Christian Brothers school in the United States, Iona Prep has spent over a century forming young men not only for success in college but for lives of integrity,



Earlier this year, Iona Prep students made their annual MissionPeru service immersion trip to Lima; for the first time this summer, a team of moms and sons will complement the annual Father-Son immersion trip.

What began with a modest 37 students in Grades 1-to-9 at a rented novitiate house has blossomed into a thriving PK–12 community of more than 1,000 boys and young men hailing over 80 different local school districts and a half dozen counties.

Present day Iona Prep consists of a Lower School (Grades PK–4–8) and an Upper School (Grades 9–12). Its motto, “Estote Firmi” (“Be strong”), challenges students to build strength of character, purpose, and heart in a world that sorely needs all three.

The school is proudly led by Brother Thomas R. Leto, Ed.D., a 2021 Westchester Business Council C-Suite honoree who first came to then-Iona Grammar as a postulate in the late 1970s. In a time when the presence of vowed religious in school leadership is increasingly rare, Brother Leto stands as a remarkable exception: he is the only Christian Brother in the North American Province currently serving as the head of a school. From the classroom—where he still teaches calculus to eighth graders at the Lower School—to the boardroom, his leadership is both a legacy and a witness, grounded in tradition, energized by faith, and deeply committed to forming young men of conscience and compassion.

Brothers Past and Present

Although fewer Brothers walk the halls today, their legacy is palpable. From the chapel at the heart of the school and the many past and present photos lining the halls, to the daily prayer opportunities and weekly service trips, the school honors its roots while leaning confidently into the future. Each year, the Christian Brothers on campus renew their vows during a “Founders’ Day” Mass with the entire student body giving witness.



Faculty and staff model Blessed Edmund Rice by going out into the surrounding communities at least once a year, visiting the same service locations the students do as part of a “Faculty Day of Service.”

Today’s faculty, steeped in that same charism of Blessed Edmund, continue to form “brothers and scholars” who are intellectually curious, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible.

A School on Mission

At Iona Prep, education is more than academics, it’s formation. Inspired by the Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education, the school integrates faith, inclusivity, and justice into every aspect of school life. Students engage in retreats, service projects, and social justice initiatives that bring the Gospel to life, particularly for those on the margins.

Each year, young men travel to places like Peru, and Brownsville, Texas, for immersion experiences that echo Edmund’s bold choice to walk among the poor. Locally, the campus ministry team leads efforts to support shelters, food pantries, and some 75 different community partners. Service is not extracurricular here, it’s identity, as more than 40,000 hours of Christian community service are logged annually.

Student Advocacy in Action

Moreover, Iona Prep students are taking leadership roles today for a better tomorrow. Case in point, the ACTION Advocacy Ambassadors from Iona Preparatory School, Mateo Del Rio Lanse, Maximus Connolly and Nigel Presume, mentored by Science Chair Mrs. Christine Chana, led an initiative to measure Iona Prep’s overall carbon footprint, engaging the entire school community in the process.

Their advocacy didn’t stop at data collection; they pushed for real, tangible changes aimed at sustainability. Their leadership resulted in the sunsetting of two oil furnaces and a lowering of its footprint by 222 tons, thereby earning the school recognition from Westchester Green County USA, a Net Zero Award and a \$250 grant to support further climate-conscious initiatives. This project is a shining example of student-led, Catholic social teaching in action, where science, service and stewardship walk hand-in-hand. In the words of one ambassador,

“We don’t just want to learn about change; we want to be the change.”

A Global Family

What makes Iona Prep’s story even more compelling is its sense of belonging to a global family.

The school actively participates in the Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders (EREBB) initiative and has welcomed students and staff from other network schools for shared learning experiences.

Last year, Iona students took part in a virtual advocacy campaign with peers from India, South Africa, and Ireland, proof that Edmund’s vision knows no borders. Most recently, Iona Prep students staged a 15-hour “Solidarity Sleepout,” where they learned from local advocates about homelessness and its root causes, made over 200 ham-and-cheese sandwiches to be donated to a nearby soup kitchen, and then cooked and portioned out soup to mimic the experience for perspective. Then, following a video conference with Brother Rice High School in Michigan, created their own “Cardboard City” in front of the school where they would spend a damp, rainy evening in sleeping bags and cardboard boxes.

The complete experience was part of a #Hear2Humanize campaign meant to remind students that God’s children are everywhere, and that those in straits not only need our help, but to be treated with dignity.



Iona Prep’s ACTION Ambassadors receive the Net Zero Award for helping to offset the school’s carbon footprint.

Looking Ahead

With over 775 Upper School students, 220 Lower Schoolers and a robust alumni network spanning the globe, Iona Preparatory School remains faithful to its founding mission: to develop young men into moral and ethical leaders who are dedicated to Christian service and who strive for spiritual, intellectual and physical excellence.

In a world desperate for hope and leadership rooted in love, Iona Prep stands as a proud witness to what Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition can achieve.

As one student recently put it:

“Iona [Prep] didn’t just prepare me for college, it prepared me to both lead and serve others.”



Lower School boys sorting donations for the Don Bosco Community Center in Port Chester, N.Y.



Members of Iona Prep’s ACTION Leadership team provide background on homelessness in preparation for the school’s “Solidarity Sleepout.”



Justice Society has truly shone this term, demonstrating an inspiring spirit of kindness and creativity.

They’ve been busy making sandwiches for the homeless charity, Don’t Walk Past, which is a fantastic way to show they care about those in our community.

On top of that, Justice Society has taken their creative talents to the next level by producing comics that they plan to sell, with all the proceeds going towards buying sleeping bags and essentials for those sleeping rough.



A poem about Blessed Edmund Rice

Akaal, a year 6 pupil at St Ambrose Prep who has completed his Edmund Rice Award wrote this wonderful verse about our founder.

In Waterford’s town a light did gleam...



Students with the EREBB Global Map



We are thrilled to share that St. Mary's Prep has officially achieved the CAFOD Live Simply Award!

This is a wonderful achievement for our school community and a true reflection of the care, compassion and commitment shown by our children, families, and staff.

Over the past year, we have embraced the challenge to live simply, in solidarity and sustainably, working together to meet our global, local and school goals. From our joyful Big Lent Walk, which brought the whole school together to raise vital funds for CAFOD, to our heartfelt Grandparents' Mass celebrating those who care for us so generously, the journey has been filled with meaningful moments. The children have particularly enjoyed planting onions and lettuce in our school garden on World Food Day, knowing their produce could help feed others, including ourselves in our school kitchen. Our Christmas Jumper Swap Shop was a popular way to reuse and reduce waste and we were especially proud to see our beach clean efforts featured on Blue Peter!

Last week, a group of our children spoke with our CAFOD assessor online, sharing stories about the work we've been doing and how we've embraced the Live Simply message. They spoke confidently and with pride about their actions and the impact they've seen. Our pupils have also reached out into the local community—singing in Merrilocks park, donating socks for 'Socktober' and delivering generous donations to food banks and refugee centres. These activities have helped our children see that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference.

We are so proud of this award, but even more so of the spirit behind it. At St. Mary's Prep, we will continue to live out the values of love, justice and care for creation—supporting those in need, near or far and always walking together in faith.



The academic year of 2024-25 has been a year filled with excitement, success and joy for Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School.

We are proud to remain the most oversubscribed Catholic Primary School in the city and to have guided our Young Edwardians to academic success as we, yet again, achieved significantly above national in our Key Stage 2 SATS in Maths, Reading, Writing and GPS! We are eagerly looking forward to opening our new Nursery in September and to see our school continue its expansion.



Autumn Term

Our Young Edwardians were delighted to return to school and to enjoy their new Prayer Garden and Wellness Garden which was completed with the help of their relentless fundraising and the generosity of our parents and stakeholders. We were also delighted to open our brand-new classrooms and play area for Year 1 and respective intervention rooms.

We were pleased to commence our morning interventions with Key Stage 2 and were encouraged to see so many of our pupils participate in such initiatives before the school day even starts! As a Cathedral Choir school we were delighted to be selected to record the official Jubilee Year song and this was shared with all schools across the Diocese to enjoy! Congratulations to all those who were involved in this beautiful recording.

Our local foodbanks and local charities such as Nugent Care were overjoyed to receive an abundance of donations from our pupils as they collected non-perishable food items to show their concern for others throughout the Autumn Term.

Spring Term

The highlight of this term was our annual participation in the Liverpool Primary Ski Association Ski trip to Bormio, Italy. We were delighted to be invited to this wonderful learning opportunity and children from our current Year 5 and 6 had an amazing week conquering the slopes and sampling the culture in the Italian Alps. All the Young Edwardians who participated in the week-long trip were an asset to the school and truly embodied the 8 Essentials of Edmund Rice Education as they demonstrated concern for others and tried their best to learn a new skill! It truly was the most unforgettable trip! Sport continues to flourish at Runnymede and we were pleased with our success in Cross Country, Football and Flag Football to name a few.



Summer Term

To say we were busy was an understatement! Summer Term was a time to celebrate the unwavering efforts of our children as they continue to excel in their academic achievements such as their SAT examinations and in their musical ability. Our collaboration with St Edward's College and the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra in the Discovery Concert at the Philharmonic Hall Liverpool was a sheer delight and proved to be the most inspiring and uplifting concert to all in attendance. Our Year 4 pupils sang beautifully and had the audience close to tears with their performances of songs taken from 'The Greatest Showman', 'Frozen' and the global 'Cold Play' hit 'Viva La Vida'!

Key Stage 2 enjoyed successful residential to Barnstondale and to the Isle of Man and the entire school has the most fantastic day at our 'Runchella Festival' where our pupils and staff enjoyed ice creams, glitter tattoos, hair and face painting, petting zoo, foam party, candy floss, inflatables and ribbon dancing under the glorious sunshine on our field.

Our Summer Fayre was a huge success raising vital funds to support the learning journey of our pupils and Year 6 impressed our school community in their annual end of year play. This year they performed 'I'm an 11-Year-Old, Get Me Out of Here!' demonstrating impressive dramatic skills, comic timing, singing and dance moves.

Additionally, we were proud to host the Annual Charism of Edmund Rice Awards Day here at Runnymede where fellow Edmund Rice schools gathered to present their projects and to celebrate their amazing advocacy work. All pupils in attendance were awarded with beautiful medals by Brother D Sassi in recognition of their hard work and then treated to a delightful lunch of fish and chips, ice creams from a local ice cream van and candy floss before tackling a giant inflatable obstacle course. Although the wind and rain threatened to dampen the experience, we had an amazing time celebrating and it was fantastic to meet and listen to the projects undertaken by other schools in our network.

We were delighted to award our children with their effort, attainment, Magna Carta Awards and Year 6 Awards at our annual Prize Night in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King where pupils showcased their musical and dramatic skills and our wonderful choristers showcased their talents. It was a very memorable occasion, and we are o proud of each and every one of our Young Edwardians for their efforts and infectious enthusiasm this academic year! Well done!

Light That Shines On:
The Legacy of Hollie Gordon

In May 2025, our community at St Aidan's Catholic Academy in Sunderland, along with the wider Edmund Rice Network, lost a truly radiant soul: Hollie Gordon, Head of Religious Education, beloved colleague, teacher, and friend.

A Journey That Changed
Everything

In July 2023, Hollie travelled to South Africa for three weeks to immerse herself in the work of the Edmund Rice Network and Justice Desk Africa.

This experience was a turning point—a profoundly spiritual, emotional, and transformative journey.

Jessica Dewhurst, CEO of The Justice Desk Africa, offered a powerful tribute:

"Hollie was such a light—kind, courageous, and deeply compassionate. I will always remember the joy and love she radiated during her time with us in South Africa.

She threw herself into every experience with open arms and an open heart, and it was clear how much the work and people here meant to her. Seeing her wear her JDA bracelets with such pride was a beautiful reminder of the bond she had with this place and the people in it."

During her time there, Hollie worked closely with Mabel, founder of Little Cherubims Ark in Mamelodi, Pretoria—a woman she called brave—and Theo, who built an early years school in Nyanga, Cape Town, within an informal settlement, whom she described as inspirational.

These encounters brought her face to face with the Service that forms the heart of the Edmund Rice vision: walking with the marginalised, with dignity, love, and solidarity.

She returned home and not only moved but renewed.



Building Justice at Home

Hollie brought that transformation home with her. Energised and committed, she worked to root her experiences in the life of the school.

She helped establish a Justice and Peace Group with sixth formers, creating space for young people to explore faith in action.

Through discussions, projects, and prayer, she gave students the tools to critically engage with the world around them and respond with courage; fulfilling the call of Liberation, which seeks not just to inform minds, but to awaken hearts.

In January 2025, she accompanied two Year 12 students to the United Nations in Geneva, allowing them to witness global justice work firsthand. This was no ordinary school trip; it was a continuation of her mission: forming young people who could “look out of the window” and respond to what they saw with action and advocacy.



A Legacy That Lives On

In the hallways of St Aidan's, in the classrooms, assembly halls and prayer spaces she helped shape, in the words and lives of her students past and present, Hollie's legacy lives on.

She didn't just teach the Edmund Rice Charism, she was the charism: present to others, compassionate in her service, and deeply committed to liberating hearts and minds.

She led with humility and loved without limits. Her light continues to shine through every student she inspired, every justice initiative she championed, and every act of kindness she planted.

As we move forward, may we honour Hollie by continuing the work she so joyfully began.

And may we, too, like her and like Blessed Edmund, look out of the window, with eyes open to injustice, hearts open to others, and hands ready to serve.



Immersion 2025

Arriving at Freetown in the middle of the night was a daunting experience: stepping out of a rickety water-taxi into a completely unfamiliar part of the world had each member of the Immersion team feeling quite worried.

However, our worries quickly faded upon meeting the wonderful members of Saint Ambrose Academy in Allen Town, who were waiting at the bottom of a (very tiring) hill leading to the school with welcome banners for each of us. Hearing the stories of the kids, not just at Ambrose, but also at Lumley Beach, gave us the impression that we weren't just visitors but members of a wider family.

This continued throughout our visits to the school – whether we were enjoying a lesson in the local language, Krio, from the vice-principal, going to the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, or giving lessons in cricket, magic or Manchester slang to the pupils, there was always an atmosphere of camaraderie and joy.

We'd heard before going that “you won't change Africa; Africa will change you”, but it wasn't until we were on Immersion that this registered – it was a collage of sights and experiences, from meeting the Christian Brothers and learning about Sierra Leone's tumultuous past, to the fun and excitement of Sports Day or the tragic and shocking sights of the poorest community, Susan's Bay. Even in those more deprived places, where hundreds of people had been pushed to living at the lowest level of the city, heaped in amongst waste and dirty water, passing children and families would smile and say hello to our group.

Our time in Sierra Leone was an eye-opening glimpse into how global actions and inequality can affect those on the margins, who we rarely think about, but most importantly, it was a trip which showed universal human kindness and warmth, making each day challenging but rewarding.

By Euen W & Harry S

Inspiring Futures: Careers Talks from Old Boys and Industry Leaders

Sixth Form students at St Ambrose College enjoyed two insightful careers talks from distinguished alumni and an industry expert.

The sessions showcased exciting pathways into both professional services and engineering.

Representing Deloitte were Old Ambrosians Max Nugnes and Leon Frettsome, who shared their journeys into one of the world’s leading consultancy and accountancy firms. They explored the broad career options available at Deloitte, from Audit & Assurance and Risk Advisory to Technology and Consulting, and highlighted the firm’s inclusive culture, progression opportunities, and routes into employment through apprenticeships and graduate schemes. Their advice underscored the importance of soft skills, networking, and gaining experience beyond the classroom.

The second talk featured Tom Higgins from Laing O’Rourke. Mr Higgins, a veteran of the construction industry, spoke passionately about the sector’s evolution and its vital role in addressing global challenges such as sustainability and urban development. Students learned about major projects in Manchester and beyond, and the wide range of roles available in construction, from project management and engineering to sustainability and digital design.

Both talks highlighted how ambition, adaptability and hard work can lead to rewarding careers. We are grateful to our alumni and guests for sharing their experiences and inspiring our students.



New Head Boy Profile— Toby Ariyo

Hello! My name is Tobi Ariyo, and it is my pleasure to introduce myself to you as the Head Boy for 2025- 2026. I am not your typical rugby-playing Head Boy

I dabbled a bit at flanker, lock, eight and even winger but I never quite reached first team standard. I think pretty much every coach I have played under can attest to my evident passion, but equally glaring lack of skill.

Very much unlike our outgoing Head Boy Joe Baldwin, who has been as much of an inspiration on the pitch as he has been off it. Joe has been a testament to all things Ambrose and fantastic ambassador for the school. I wish him well in all his future endeavours and hope to emulate his example of service and leadership in my own tenure as Head Boy. I offer the same well wishes to all our Year 11 and 13 leavers.

Reflecting on Joe’s legacy brings to the fore my desire to leave a legacy of my own. To that end, it is my pleasure to announce the ‘Excellence Diploma’: a four-streamed award designed to stretch and challenge boys beyond the curriculum and encourage them to become the most excellent version of themselves.

The plan targets what I believe to be the four specialist areas of college life:

- Scholarship
- Leadership
- Sportsmanship
- Advocacy

Boys will work towards three objectives in each, with a boy who completes all twelve objectives earning The Diploma. Congratulations to the College deputies: Ben McB (Senior Deputy Head Boy), Chigozie M, Damiete B, Charlie A, and Benedict K. Our friendship and support for each other will be vital as we approach the year ahead.

I am very much looking forward to the challenge ahead and I am deeply honoured to be the 79th Head Boy of Saint Ambrose College.

Deuteronomy 31:8- “He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

Tobi A Head Boy 2025-26

Courageous Leadership

What does it mean to be a courageous leader in an Edmund Rice school? How does one take a stand on highly subjective issues? How can we inspire each other to make meaningful change within our school community.

It was these questions that a delegation of Jack P, Valdis C and myself had the privilege of discussing at this year’s Edmund Rice conference in Liverpool.

We started the day by receiving ‘hope rocks’ which reminded us of the importance of hope in a society in which bad news dominates public discourse. Hope is an essential part of leadership, and as a team, we were encouraged to look to the future of our school with a sense of hope and optimism. After this, it was discussion time, as we argued our stance on certain ethical and moral issues. More important than the highly opinionated sides of the room, was the empty space in between.

We learned that as a leader, sitting on the fence is not an option and we must argue our point of view with courage, in spite of how loud contrary views seem. In the afternoon, we continued exploring these ideas with anti-apartheid activist Desmond Tutu’s online course titled ‘Courageous Leadership’. The most striking concept for us was the principle of ‘Ubuntu’: the individual owes their existence to the collective around them.

As a school student leadership team, I hope we can realise this concept further as we work towards producing lasting change in an interdependent school community. The day finished with remarks from Br. Ger O’Connell, a cherished member of our own school community who does vital work with Asylum seekers in Salford, and had many a story to tell us about his wide-reaching experiences working with Edmund Rice International and the Christian brothers!

Tobi A Head Boy 2025-26



One Heart Concert for the Community

We are proud to share that our school was part of an inspiring event that highlighted the power of hope, unity, and compassion in the city of Liverpool.

Following last summer’s unrest and division, a heartfelt initiative called One Heart: A Concert for Community brought people together through the unifying power of music. The event took place on June 19th at Liverpool’s Metropolitan Cathedral, and it celebrated solidarity, cultural diversity, and the resilient spirit that binds communities. Our school was honoured to be represented by Ekene U, a Year 12 student, who delivered a powerful and heartfelt speech during the evening.

Ekene’s words received high praise from attendees, who said he radiated confidence and passion. His speech, titled “Hope for Real People,” was inspired by a performance our students recently staged for school leaders, based on our previous school show “Real People.”

Y12 France Trip

This term, our Year 12 French students swapped their blazers for baguettes as they headed to the sunny coastal town of Les Sables-d’Olonne for a unique work experience week.

Their challenge? Become teaching assistants in a local French primary school – and yes, that meant being bombarded with rapid-fire questions from six-year-olds who speak faster than any GCSE listening exam!

Each student was placed with a French host family, offering a real taste of local life – quite literally! Between navigating the mysteries of regional delicacies and adjusting to cars driving on what must be the wrong side of the road, there was never a dull moment.

Navigating the classroom wasn’t the only challenge. There were also the small matters of driving on the “wrong” side of the road and figuring out why roundabouts in France seem to go on forever. Outside of school, Nathan took to the treetops – literally – with an exciting accrobranche (tree-climbing) adventure, and Ben stepped back in time with a visit to the spectacular Puy du Fou historical theme park.

The trip was a perfect mix of cultural immersion, language learning, and good old-fashioned fun. Everyone returned a little more independent, a lot more fluent, and with some unforgettable memories.

Bravo à tous!



Teen Tech Finals

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the outstanding achievement of Year 9 students Mohammad and Rory, who represented the school with distinction at the TeenTech Finals 2025, held at the prestigious Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) in London.

Competing in the highly competitive Transport category, Mohammad and Rory showcased their ground-breaking project, H2GO – an innovative approach to hydrogen fuel generation.

Their idea aims to make hydrogen-powered vehicles more practical and eco-friendly by eliminating the need for external refuelling stations. Instead, their system generates hydrogen on demand inside the vehicle through a chemical reaction between aluminium and an acidic electrolyte.

The system is cost-effective, scalable, and 3D-printable – with real potential for future development. Throughout the day, both students impressed judges and industry experts alike with their confidence, professionalism, and deep understanding of the scientific principles behind their design.

Their pitch was clear, compelling, and delivered with a maturity beyond their years.

Feedback from judges was overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on the real-world potential of their solution. Mohammad and Rory were not only outstanding in their delivery but also exceptional ambassadors for the school, engaging with visitors, answering questions thoughtfully, and conducting themselves with integrity and enthusiasm.

The Activities of the Edmund Rice Society

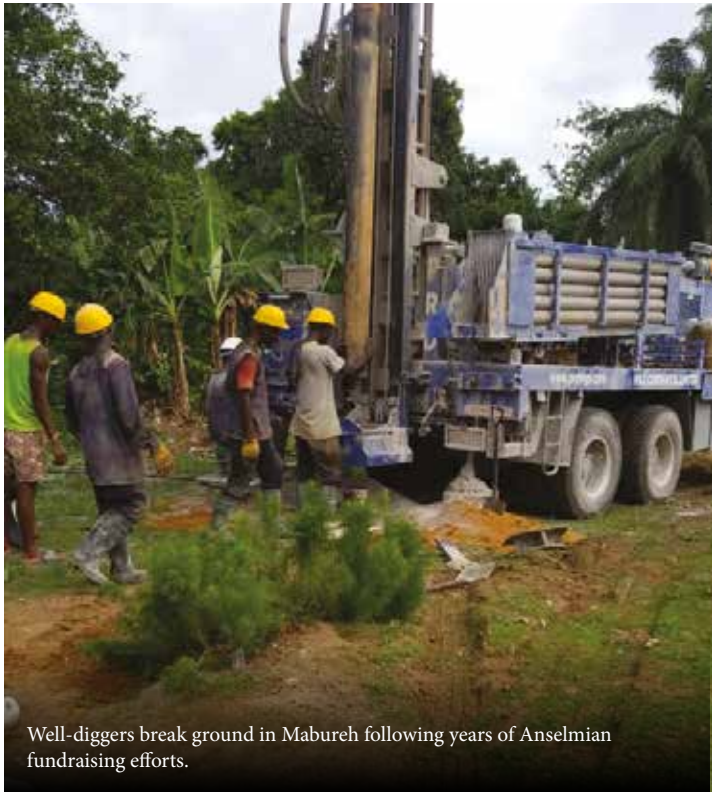
The Edmund Rice Society has achieved a great deal in this past year, in both the fields of Advocacy and in Education.

Recognising the strength of charitable work at the College, the Society made it its mission to attach this work to Catholic Social Teaching during the Advent and Lenten Seasons; through assemblies and form times reflections they asked students to consider the root causes of the problems they were trying to alleviate through their fundraising.

Taking this further in December, and building up to Human Rights Day, the Society ran a day-by-day campaign that sought to use the Human Rights Accord as a lense for looking into conditions in Sierra Leone, where our Sister School St. Joseph's is located.

Moving into the second half of the year, the Society began by writing a letter to our local MP, Mrs. Alison McGovern, to express the concerns of the Church regarding the progress of the 'Assisted Dying Bill' through Parliament, together with further concerns regarding the efficacy and strength of the safeguards which the Bill proposes. Further to this, the Society invited and hosted Mrs. McGovern in a visit to the College, where she was able to field similar questions in person.

Finally, as a response to the experiences of our current President when he visited the Edmund Rice International Offices in Geneva, the Society will host a four-day 'Model UN' for KS3 students, which will allow them to experience first-hand the workings and proceedings of the General Assembly. If successful, the Society plans to host a similar event for the Sixth Form in the coming Academic Year.



Well-diggers break ground in Mabureh following years of Anselmian fundraising efforts.



Our 2024 Immersion visits Brother Kerrigan's gravesite.

Culture Day

This term our school came alive with colour, music and pride as we celebrated Culture Day—a vibrant event dedicated to embracing the rich diversity within our school community.

Students and staff proudly wore traditional clothing representing their heritage, creating a spectacular display of global cultures in our hallways and classrooms.

Culture Day reminded us of the importance of inclusivity and respect. It was more than just dressing up — it was about celebrating who we are and where we come from. Thank you to all who participated and helped make the day meaningful and memorable!

Sierra Leone – Building a Well in Mabureh

St. Anselm's has long-standing associations with Sierra Leone, dating back to when Br. Kerrigan, a former headmaster, was killed in the country by rebels in April, 1995.

He had been working with the Christian Brothers Mission there. In honour of that work, the College has become ever-increasingly invested in the support of educational institutions in the country, most especially St. Joseph's School for the Hearing Impaired, Makeni, together with Christian Brother projects in Freetown. Seven years ago the school began supporting a rural community just outside of Makeni called Mabureh which is, even by the standards of Sierra Leone, deeply impoverished, and had at that time been decimated by the Ebola epidemic. After seven years of fundraising, mostly facilitated through our annual 'Brother Kerrigan Walk' the College has been able to donate the required £15,000 to the Edmund Rice Development Fund, so that a well can be dug in the village, which has no access to clean water.



Introduction of the Edmund Rice Student Leadership award for all 6th Form students

The Values for Living course is a comprehensive Sixth Form programme rooted in the ethos of Blessed Edmund Rice, aiming to help students recognise their God-given purpose and develop as thoughtful, compassionate individuals.

Framed around the pressing challenges of individualism, emotional instability, and superficial relationships, the course encourages students to reflect deeply on their own lives and the world around them. Pope Leo XIV’s call to “touch the hearts of students” underpins the programme’s goal to nurture courage and personal integrity in shaping a better, more loving society.

Structured over two academic years, the course is delivered through a thematic carousel that includes History of the Christian Brothers, Social Justice, Leadership, and Action alongside bespoke lessons reflecting on positive human relationships. Students rotate between teachers, completing reflective booklets and engaging in active discussion. Module’s link to the Edmund Rice Schools Student Leadership Certificate, which recognises students’ development and participation. Assessments are based on attendance, lesson participation, and booklet completion, with outcomes graded as Gold, Silver, or a fail. Year 13 students also take part in community projects, applying their learning in tangible ways.

The curriculum is both academic and practical. From studying the life of Edmund Rice and the mission of the Christian Brothers, to engaging with contemporary Catholic Social Teaching, sustainability, and servant leadership, students are invited to think critically and compassionately. Student feedback reflects the course’s impact: many highlight its role in deepening their understanding of social justice, inspiring leadership aspirations, and encouraging active engagement with global and local issues. In this first year of the programme, 42 Year 13 students were awarded the Gold Certificate and 47 achieved Silver.

Certificates were presented by Ann Nichols, the Edmund Rice England Network Facilitator.



Edmund Rice Youth Ambassadors at the UN.

In January Year 12 Edmund Rice ambassadors, Lucas and Anna, travelled with Edmund Rice International to the United Nations Human Rights congress.

They had the opportunity to learn about the work that ERI have done.

Lucas wrote: “I was extremely proud to represent St Edward’s in the UN Headquarters this week in Geneva. Not only was it a once in a lifetime experience, it was as trip to remember as I am grateful to Edmund Rice International for allowing me to learn a lot about their amazing organisation and the redeeming work and opportunities they provide.

The trip also allowed me to explore a beautiful city and make new friends from all around England.

Finally, thank you to all the staff and I would most definitely recommend it for any future Sixth Formers.”

Year 7 Edmund Rice Formation afternoon

In February, the Edmund Rice Network visited the College to deliver a special formation session with Year 7 students, helping them explore the life and legacy of Blessed Edmund Rice.

The session introduced pupils to Edmund’s inspiring journey—from his early life in Ireland to the global impact of his mission to educate and serve those made poor. Through an engaging and interactive presentation, students learned how his values continue to shape the work of Edmund Rice schools around the world today.

Year 7 pupil Katie K shared her reflections on the experience:

“Wow, I just went to an Edmund Rice assembly... We learnt all about his life and how he has now, over a hundred years later, managed to help people all over the world.”

Pupils took home prayer cards and wore special badges bearing the Edmund Rice logo, while a video link-up showcased other schools in the international network.

Katie described the day as “inspiring” adding, “We all learnt something valuable that day and will remember it forever.”



One Heart, Many Voices:
St Edward's Students
Sing for Unity at
Liverpool Cathedral

In June, students from St Edward's College took part in One Heart: A Concert for CommUNITY, a powerful evening of music held at Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral.

The event, which took place on June 19, was organised in response to the unrest and division experienced in the city last summer.

Designed to promote unity and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Liverpool, the concert brought together people from all walks of life to share in a message of hope, resilience, and solidarity through the universal language of music.

The St Edward's College Choir performed alongside The Asylum Link Choir—a group of asylum seekers who sing as a way of building community—and The Choir with No Name Liverpool, made up of individuals who have experienced homelessness and social isolation. St Edward's students contributed their voices and their spirit to an evening that highlighted compassion, inclusivity, and the healing power of music.

Hosted by acclaimed writer Frank Cottrell-Boyce, the concert left a lasting impression on performers and audience alike, showing how young people can lead the way in building a more united and hopeful future.



St. Joseph's College Pilgrimage to
Lourdes – May 2025

In May, 13 students and 4 staff from St. Joseph's College joined the Archdiocese of Birmingham pilgrimage to Lourdes, serving as helpers to assisted pilgrims. For many, it was a transformative week of service, reflection, and deep connection.

Several students joined with uncertainty — unsure of the religious aspect or what to expect — but all returned with a profound appreciation for the experience. Daisy described it as “beautiful” and “welcoming,” especially moved by the torchlight procession. Amelia said Lourdes was “ineffable,” a place of silent understanding and grace, while Candice shared how the pilgrimage opened her heart to faith and human connection.



Students formed close bonds with the pilgrims they supported, offering companionship and care with humility. Ellie noted how “assisting elderly and disabled people in Lourdes goes far beyond physical help — it’s about building genuine human connections in a place filled with hope.”

For Holly, moments like praying at the Grotto or dancing with a pilgrim under the stars were deeply moving. Others echoed the feeling that Lourdes changed their perspective on life. Isabel said, “Kindness consumes you,” while Kyle found joy in the friendships formed and the shared purpose.

From silent reflections by candlelight to laughter on the rooftop, every moment was rich in meaning. Whether strong in faith or exploring it for the first time, each student encountered something powerful — a sense of peace, belonging, and love.

Lourdes offered not just a break from daily pressures but a space to discover something greater. As Isaac wrote, “You discover places in yourself you never knew were there.”

We are so proud of our students for their compassion, joy, and service. Lourdes 2025 will remain a special chapter in their lives — and ours.

Sam Chater, Pilgrimage Leader



Breathing Spaces: A Place to
Pause, Reflect, and Connect

In the hustle and bustle of work, time often feels like our most limited resource. Meetings, emails, deadlines, and decisions seem to fill every part of the day. Therefore, true moments of pause are rare. That’s where Breathing Spaces comes in - not to add another task, but to offer something different: the chance to simply stop.

At its heart, Breathing Spaces is a simple idea - but a powerful one. A small group gathers and spends a few quiet minutes engaging with a shared stimulus. It might be a short poem, a photograph, a line from a novel, or even lyrics from a song. The stimulus is chosen not to spark analysis or debate, but to invite presence, openness, and curiosity.

There are no expectations. After sitting with the stimulus, we are gently invited to share what we noticed: what caught our attention, what resonated, what lingered. Sometimes the responses are deeply personal. Sometimes they’re quiet, and observational. But always, they offer a fascinating window into how others think, feel, and perceive. For me, Breathing Spaces is just that - a space to breathe. A space where connection is built through presence, through curiosity, through intrigue, rather than judgement.

In a society that often revolves around problems and solutions, Breathing Spaces stands apart. It isn’t about fixing anything. It’s about noticing. It invites us to respond rather than react, to reflect rather than perform. And in that simple act, something meaningful unfolds: we connect - with ourselves, with one another, with God and with what usually goes unnoticed in the rush of daily life.

These shared moments of reflection can spark insight, shift our perspective, or simply offer calm. They remind us that we’re not alone in our thoughts or challenges - and that taking a moment to pause isn’t a luxury, but a necessity.

Chris Loo, St Joseph's College

Sustainability Week

At St Joseph's we have relaunched our commitment to sustainability this year culminating in a week of sustainability events, activities and lessons.

We initially began by relaunching our student group this year who have easily risen to the challenge of growing their presence across the school, partly by producing a series of newsletters that have been distributed to our whole school community which is full of tips to be more environmentally friendly but also has recipe suggestions and even a sustainability reading lesson.

We wanted this year's Sustainability Week to be bigger and better than anything we have done before. To do that, we challenged our students (and our staff) to take photos of themselves being creative in travelling to school more sustainably, and asked students to design a poster encouraging our parents not to leave their cars idling on the school car park.

We offered gardening opportunities to our sixth form students and cleared a large area of weeds so that new seeds, donated by a local garden centre, could be planted. Teachers have taught sustainability themed lessons, from the maths behind how many trees are needed to offset greenhouse gases, to the impact that music festivals have on the environment and how organisations are adapting these.

Our week culminated in our first ever whole-school Swap-Shop. Students from Years 7-10 were tasked with bringing a pre-used item in and swapping it for another. The response was incredible with well over 300 items being brought into school. Anything that did not find a new home was taken to a local Douglas Macmillan charity shop.

As always, when asked to do something new, the students at St Joseph's have thrown themselves into the week wholeheartedly. The sight of carpooling pre-loved teddy bears really was something to behold!

Mr C M Banner



St Joseph's College Staff Retreat, 20-21 June 2025

Staff from St Joseph's College gathered at the tranquil Dovedale House in Ilam for a reflective and uplifting retreat titled A Time of Hope.

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Peak District, the retreat offered a welcome opportunity to pause and step back from the demands of everyday life. In this Jubilee Year, the theme of hope was at the heart of the experience, inviting participants to reflect on its meaning in their personal and professional lives.

The retreat combined moments of stillness with shared reflections, encouraging staff to reconnect with their own sense of purpose and to support one another in a spirit of community. The natural beauty of the surroundings played a powerful role in the experience, offering space for walks, prayer, and conversation. The local parish Church also acted as the setting for our night prayer, with Rev'd Patrick Griffin, a past pupil of the school, leading us in prayer.

Throughout the retreat, staff enjoyed not only the serenity of Dovedale but also the opportunity to strengthen relationships in a relaxed and open atmosphere. It was a time to be refreshed in body, mind, and spirit — to find renewed inspiration and return to school life with hearts lifted by the enduring message of hope.

St. Mary’s College celebrates thank a teacher day

For Thank A Teacher Day, St. Mary’s College teachers received handwritten thank you messages from the students at St. Mary’s, to say thanks for all that they do for the school and the students.

Organised and facilitated by their thoughtful Student Council members and Miss Gavin. Pupils wrote their messages during form time ready for teachers to receive and read them on Thank A Teacher Day!



Here are just a few of the lovely messages written:

- 'Mrs Townsley, you're a great teacher because you always help me when I need it.'
- 'Mr Lewis, you helped me become a better artist and more confident.'
- 'Mrs Fallon, you're a great teacher because you give up your time for Japan Club and you make history fun.'
- 'Mrs Aspinall, you helped me because I used to really struggle with Spanish and now it's my favourite subject.'

A Visit from Dr Wayne Tinsey (Global Edmund Rice Schools Ambassador)

St. Mary’s College was delighted to have the Global Edmund Rice Schools Ambassador, Dr Wayne Tinsey from Australia visit our school recently.

During the visit, he had a tour of the school and met our prefects and some of our students and staff. Our Edmund Rice team and Mr Lee spoke to him about the amazing work we have done and continue to do at St. Mary’s, being Edmund’s people and showcasing the values of Edmund Rice. Students showed Dr Tinsey the positive work they have been doing so far and the impact it has made. They also enjoyed hearing about the ER projects in other parts of the world and how we can continue to work together to make the world a better place.



Human Rights Conference

St. Mary’s College welcomed pupils from the Edmund Rice schools network, St Edward’s College, Liverpool (Official) and St. Joseph’s College to join a group of their Lower and Middle school pupils for an Edmund Rice Human Rights Conference with Ann Nichols and Brother Tino from Geneva.

It was a wonderful day of human rights and advocacy training. They all finalised the day by writing their United Nations submission on education to submit collectively.

Lent CAFOD chickens

During Lent, Ms Gavin challenged the whole school to raise as much money as possible to put towards the purchase of chickens for CAFOD’s fundraising initiative. This gift provides vulnerable families in Kenya with chickens, so they can produce eggs to eat or sell for profit.

Ms Gavin asked pupils to raise money by sacrificing something during their day, rather than giving extra to charity. For example, buying 1 piece of toast instead of 2 and donating the money saved to their form collection. As a school, we raised a phenomenal £748!

A very special mention goes to our three outstanding pupils, Claudia N, Ben B and Eleanor A (pictured from left to right).

Claudia and Eleanor sacrificed a weekend by organising a sponsored walk, and Ben (quite fittingly) donated the profit he makes from selling his own chicken eggs from his farm. This was a great collective effort from our school community, but again special mention goes to 9F who raised the most money overall and our Edmund Rice group who organised an Easter Egg raffle. Great work, as always, St. Mary’s!

More stories and photos on our Year 11 and U6 Celebrations Mass, ER doors and more, can be found on our Facebook page facebook.com/stmaryscollegecrosby



Post 18 Immersions

Mischa Barton of St Mary’s College in South Africa on Immersion with Justice Desk Africa.



EDMUND RICE NETWORK: EVENTS CALENDAR FOR SCHOOLS 2025

To be confirmed – Year 7 formation sessions with office team

ERI Global Schools meet 1 by Zoom

What	Who	When	Where
Youth Ambassadors' Induction Day	All ERI Youth Ambassadors in senior schools	September 17 th	ER Office - Edmund Rice House, Liverpool
New Staff Formation – A Call to Participation	All new staff in ER schools	September 24 th	TBC
Open House Day at Edmund Rice House 2-6pm	Staff in all ER schools	September 22 nd	ER Office – Edmund Rice House
Post Camps Reflection & Planning Day	All Coordinators & Mentors	October 12 th	ER Office – Edmund Rice House
Br Abu Kargbo visit from Sierra Leone	To visit all schools and run workshops on his development work	October 13 th - 25 th	TBC
Schools' Conference	Headteachers, Chairs, key staff, network guests	October 16 th	Wistaston Hall, Crewe
EREBB Global Student Leader Dialogue #1	Student leaders	October 28 th	Online
EREBB Global Student Leader Dialogue #2	Student leaders	October 30 th	Online

Weekend Camps Co-ordinators' Pilgrimage – Rome either 14th-15th Nov or 22nd-23rd Nov

Student Pilgrimage Years 10-11 'Walking in the Footsteps of Edmund Rice'	Year 10 and 11 students	November 7 th - 9 th	Ireland
Belfast Immersion	Year 12 students	November 12 th - 13 th	Belfast
Network Gathering	All network friends	December 4 th	ER House, Liverpool
Street Retreat	Staff UK and Irish schools	December 12 th - 13 th	Around Northwest England

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

www.edmundriceengland.org

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Tiktok @edmundrice5may

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