

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

OF EDMUND RICE EDUCATION



REACHING OUT

A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND ITS EXPRESSION

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INTRODUCTION: ‘You go into my vineyard, too’ (Mt. 20 : 3-4)

Edmund Rice was a spectacularly successful businessman who used his wealth to found a religious order of teaching Brothers and begin a revolution in education for the poor

From humble beginnings in Waterford in 1802, the network of Edmund Rice Schools played a transformational role in the emancipation and progress of Irish society and , through the global mission of generations of Christian Brothers, established schools in all five continents.

Edmund Rice came to England in 1825 to negotiate the establishment of the first two schools in the English Province, in Fox Street, Preston and in Manchester. By 1880 the Brothers had founded 22 schools, serving the poor of the great industrial towns, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Preston, Sunderland, Leeds, Salford, and Bolton.

‘They came to England to teach the children of the desperately poor Catholics for whom there was little hope of any education. For thirty years they were the only group of Catholic male religious working among such people, and they set a standard for the Catholic monitorial schools for the poor. From the mid-century onwards a new class of trained Catholic primary teacher came into being, the desperate deprivation slowly passed away, and the needs of the Catholic community in England changed.’

W. Gillespie, ‘*The Christian Brothers in England 1825-1880*’

Given the universal provision of publicly –funded education in the developed world, since the Second Vatican Council the mission of the Brothers has re-focused on new challenges on the margin, mainly in Developing World countries but also outside the mainstream in Ireland and England. Accordingly the leadership and governance of the schools in England has been progressively transferred into lay hands.

Two hundred years after the founding event, at the start of the third Millennium, the Christian Brothers resolved to hand on responsibility for the trusteeship of their schools to lay associates in the charism. The Heart Decisions of the 2002 General Chapter embraced ‘Deeper appreciation of the gifts of our companions in Edmund’s spirit’ and ‘the reshaping of structures : New Wineskins for New Wines.’ The transfer of trusteeship will complete the process of laicisation and free the remaining Brothers for other roles on the margin and in ‘New Life in Mission.’

Who will ever measure all the good that has come from the spiritual insight, warm heart and determined faith of Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice? Once more Ireland has given the Church and the world a striking testimony of complete fidelity to Christ: “Keep doing all the things that you have been taught by him ... Then the God of peace will be with you.” (cf. Phil 4:9) Beatification message of Pope John Paul II, Sunday, 6th October, 1996

In Ireland (June 2008) and Northern Ireland (January 2009) Edmund Rice Schools Trusts were established to hold the schools and carry forward Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The recognition of these lay trusts as foundations within the Church opened a new and significant chapter in the history of the Edmund Rice charism. It expresses and embodies the positive empowerment of lay companions in Blessed Edmund’s spirit and responds to the Second Vatican Council’s call for ‘new creations’ within the Church : ‘a new era of group endeavours of the lay faithful’, ‘a ‘Christian springtime’, ‘a lively season of associations’.

As Pope John Paul II expressed it in his Year 2000 address to the Congress of the Laity, held on the theme of ‘Witnesses to Christ in the New Millennium’ : ‘The hour of the laity has truly struck’

It was as lay Catholics that Nano Nagle and Edmund Rice, among others, established their first schools. Edmund Rice Schools Trusts are radical in the sense of a return to roots, with committed lay people conducting schools on behalf of the Church, playing a full part in its mission to evangelise our world.

On all Christians ... rests the noble obligation of working to bring people throughout the whole world to hear and accept the divine message of salvation.

Vatican II - Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (1965)

In England the process of empowering lay people to take on responsibility within the schools has been active for decades. The appointment of lay heads in Christian Brother schools, beginning in 1991, was followed by an extensive whole-school ‘identity process’ defining the overall values of the family of Edmund Rice schools and the specific Mission Statement of each school. This was conducted within the framework of the Catholic Education Service’s project, ‘Defining the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School.’ In 1995-6 the Christian Brother Schools Team , with extensive consultation of the 12 school communities and working with school representatives, produced the document, ‘*Eight Essentials of Christian Brother Education*’ which has provided the guiding philosophy of the English Edmund Rice schools since.

The ‘*Eight Essentials*’, progressively embedded in school planning and evaluation, staff induction, and in-school and inter-school in-service conferences, were reviewed and modified through a further consultation process in 2006. They are here presented as the ‘Essential Elements of Edmund Rice Education’ and provide the controlling principles and objectives of the Edmund Rice Schools in England.



INTRODUCTION: THE SCHOOLS

Edmund Rice's first school, in Waterford in 1802, was in a renovated stable, and he lived in the spartan loft upstairs while he financed the building of a model school at Mount Sion nearby. His new lodgings were in stark contrast to his former life as a successful and wealthy businessman.

For Edmund, this decision was the fruit of a long period of prayer and reflection. More than a decade before, his beloved wife Mary had died after giving birth to a daughter with special needs. Having ensured proper care for his daughter, he turned his attention to how he should spend the rest of his life. He had always been a benefactor to the poor and an activist for human rights, but now decided to dedicate his whole life to the welfare and education of marginalised children. The Presentation Sisters were already educating girls and he sought to provide a similar service for boys, many of them 'street children', wild and unruly. His first care was for their spiritual well-being, but for him there was no artificial separation between the spiritual and the practical. He not only taught them, he also set up a bakery and tailor's shop to feed and clothe them.

Inspired by Edmund's vision and mission, many volunteers joined him, and together they formed a community of Religious Brothers based on deep faith, love of neighbour, and the pursuit of justice. Soon, other communities and schools were established throughout the country to further the same mission, and the mission expanded, with the Irish diaspora, into the five continents. Originally, the schools were for boys only, but in more recent years many have become fully co-educational.

Edmund's life, lived in fidelity to the Gospel, continues today to inspire people in a network of schools that stretches across the world.

A proud tradition moving forward

This 'Charter' document is an extended version of the 'Essentials', drawing out their implications for school life and practice as an aid to the further growth and flourishing of schools inspired by the Edmund Rice vision.

It is the work of the Edmund Rice Schools Team and representatives from the schools. It is both a foundation document for a future Edmund Rice Schools Trust, and a developmental template and tool for the schools now. The Charter provides the guiding principles by which all schools and communities of learning in the Edmund Rice network in England assess themselves.

In progressively handing on their schools to their lay companions, the Christian Brothers are placing their confidence in a group of people deeply conscious of the great heritage of these schools. Faithful to the Church and inspired by Edmund Rice's educational charism, these associates are committed to ensuring the future of the schools as Christian communities dedicated to a shared vision of learning and excellence.

The eight schools in trusteeship are :

- **St. Anselm's College , Birkenhead**
(secondary, Voluntary Aided)
- **St. Ambrose College, Hale Barns, Altrincham**
(secondary, Voluntary Aided)
- **St. Edward's College, Liverpool**
(secondary, Voluntary Aided)
- **St. Joseph's College, Stoke-On-Trent**
(secondary, Voluntary Aided)
- **Redcourt St. Anselm's School, Birkenhead**
(primary, independent)
- **Runnymede St. Edward's School, Liverpool**
(primary, independent)
- **Ambrose Preparatory School, Hale Barns, Altrincham**
(primary, independent)
- **St. Joseph's Preparatory School, Stoke-On-Trent**
(primary, independent)

Four other schools, committed to the Edmund Rice vision, are in association:

- **St. Aidan's School, Sunderland**
(secondary, Voluntary Aided)
- **St. Boniface's School, Plymouth**
(secondary, Voluntary Aided)
- **St. Mary's College, Crosby**
(secondary, independent)
- **St. Mary's Preparatory School, Crosby**
(primary, independent)

Edmund Rice schools educate young people from a diverse range of social backgrounds and are quick to respond to the emerging needs of students and communities. The approach is neither functional nor utilitarian, but takes its inspiration from the holistic vision of the founder expressed in the following essential elements:

- **Evangelising the modern world**
- **Promoting the spiritual**
- **Building a Christian community**
- **Compassion for those in need**
- **Concern for the whole person**
- **Striving for excellence**
- **Education as a Christian calling**
- **Education for justice**

The spirit of the Charter calls on each individual school to seek to embody and develop these values, interpreting them in the context of their own identities and traditions, and responding to emerging local needs.



A full-page background image showing the silhouette of a person standing on a sandy beach with their arms outstretched towards a bright sunset over the ocean. The person is wearing a hoodie and pants. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong backlight effect and casting a long shadow of the person onto the sand.

EVANGELISING THE MODERN WORLD

Participating in the mission of the Catholic Church by bringing the Good News of Christ to all aspects of the life of the school community, and in dialogue with youth and contemporary culture, thus fulfilling the specific calling of the Congregation of Christian Brothers: *'The Evangelisation of youth through the Apostolate of Christian Education'*

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Proclaims the Good News

Edmund Rice's first concern was 'forming Christ in the hearts of the pupils', bringing young people into a relationship with Jesus Christ. The 'aspiration' of the Christian Brothers, daily repeated to one another, was *'Live Jesus in our hearts forever.'* As they were 'missioned by the Church for the evangelisation of youth', so this role now passes to lay companions and successors in Edmund's spirit - as teachers, support staff, and governors committed to communicating the message and love of Christ to young people in ways which engage them.

'I am the Way; I am Truth, and Life' (John 14.6)

'Jesus came into the world so that all may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10)

Places Jesus Christ at the centre of its life and teaching

The Edmund Rice school takes as its inspiration the vision of true humanity and human fulfilment given to us by Jesus Christ: The community 'talks Jesus' and - in worship, assemblies, meetings, and gatherings of all kinds - uses the Christian model of fullness of life, relating joys and sorrows, triumphs and failures, challenges and opportunities, to the life and words of Jesus. It is nourished by the Lord's continuing life-giving presence in the Gospel and the sacraments.

There are innumerable events in life and human situations which offer the opportunity for a discreet but incisive statement of what the Lord has to say in this or that particular circumstance (Paul VI - Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975)

A Catholic school makes Jesus 'a living presence as the one genuine Teacher, the perfect man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection' (Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988)

First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.... places in which God's active presence in human affairs is recognized and in which every young person discovers the joy of entering into Christ's being for others (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008)

Celebrates and communicates the Good News through an explicit ministry of the Word and an implicit ministry of works

The Edmund Rice School uses a whole range of explicit means to proclaim the Good News, including sacramental practice, liturgy and para-liturgy, whole-school and year-group assemblies, class prayers, prayer groups, religious education, opportunities for catechesis...and everyday personal encounter!

It also communicates the message of the Gospel implicitly as a lived experience through the warmth and depth of its human relations and the quality of its pastoral care - staff to pupil, pupil to pupil, staff to staff, staff to parents, sharing a pervasive ethos of love, service, and justice.

You are writing a Gospel, A chapter a day, By the deeds that you do, And the words that you say. Many read what you write, If it's false or it's true. Now what is the Gospel, According to you?

'You evangelise as you go - you don't go to evangelise'
(a teacher on a joint INSET day)

Catholic schools are sometimes the sole means by which the Christian tradition can be presented to those who are distant from it. Europe calls out for credible evangelizers, whose lives, in communion with the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, radiate the beauty of the Gospel....The "new evangelization" is the task set before you! Rediscover the enthusiasm of proclamation...I repeat to you again today: Europe, as you stand at the beginning of the third millennium, "Open the doors to Christ! Be yourself. Rediscover your origins. Relive your roots".

(John Paul II - Ecclesia in Europa, 2003)

The 'E' word is not as difficult as it sounds! **'Evangelisation'** comes from the Greek euangelion (εὐαγγέλιον), meaning **'good news'**, a **'good message'**. For Christians the Good News is: God loves us; He loves us so much he gives us His Son; Jesus lived and died for us and lives again; his life and teaching give us the fullest truth about God and about humanity.

'The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of a Christian life'
(Code of Canon Law 793.1)



AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Actively and critically seeks to realise Gospel values in the life and relationships of the school

An Edmund Rice School strives to bring the Gospel to bear in and on all aspects of school life and policy : pastoral care, school organisation, curriculum and co-curriculum, internal and external relationships.

It takes as the ideal of an authentic Christian community the values set out in the Beatitudes : faithfulness and integrity ; dignity and compassion ; humility and gentleness; truth and justice; forgiveness and reconciliation ; purity and holiness ; tolerance and peace service and sacrifice. This will sometimes mean challenging conventional and secular models and perspectives.

Respects the religious freedom and autonomy of pupils and staff

'Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.' (Matthew 19:14)

The Edmund Rice School welcomes all pupils regardless of denomination or religious faith. It respects the truths and integrity of other traditions and faiths and is committed to genuine dialogue. It encourages pupils to grow in their own faith and practice while at the same time respecting the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school. It celebrates the richness and diversity of the school community.

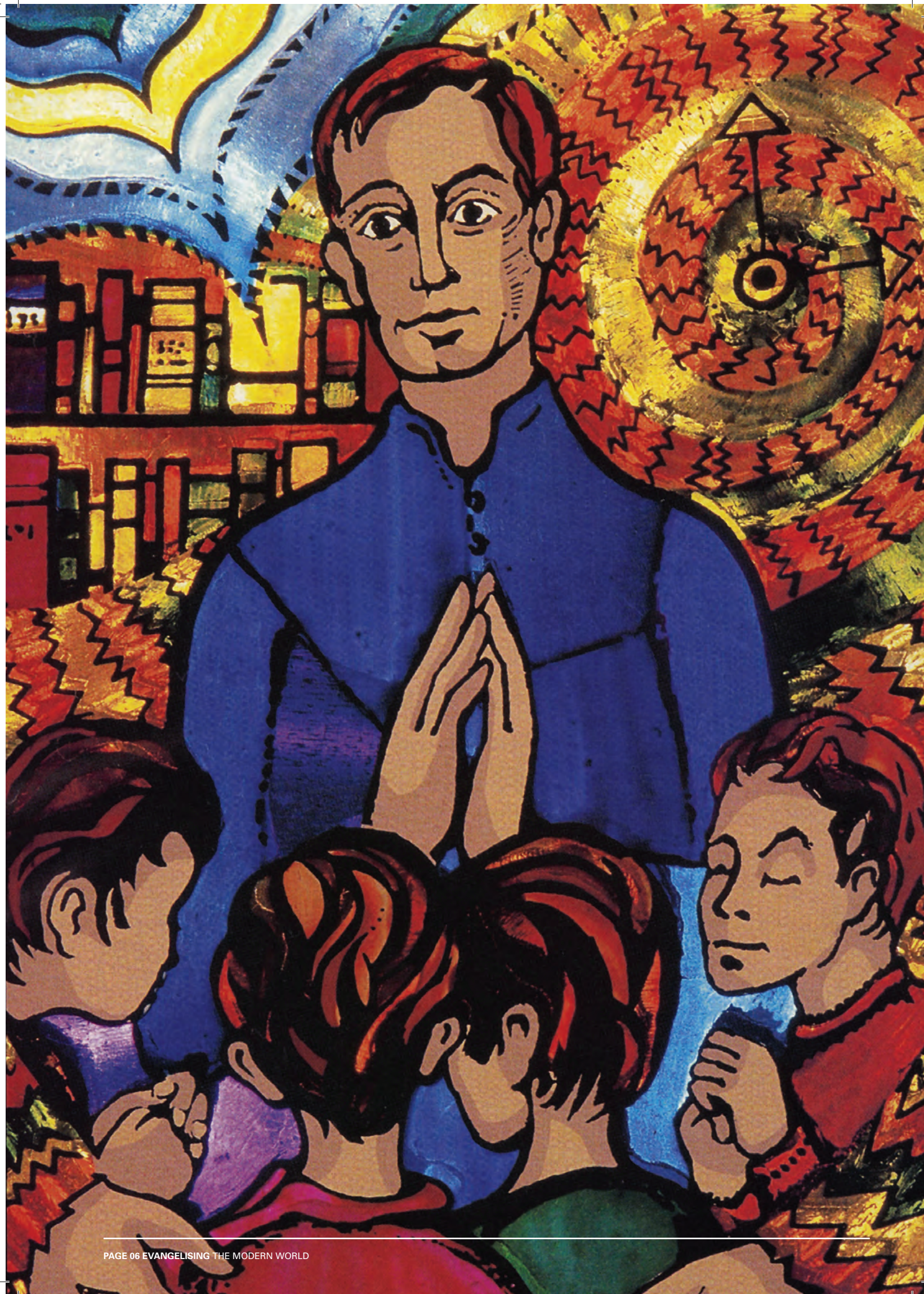
Evangelising is not 'proselytising', 'indoctrination', or 'harassment': pupils are not coerced into believing. The message is proclaimed and presented, and hopefully lived in love and welcome, care and service, but faith requires willing assent and acceptance is free.

Religious freedom, freedom of conscience, is recognised by the Church as a fundamental human right. All pupils are equally respected and valued : there are no second-class citizens.

"Rabbi" - which means Teacher - 'where do you live?' He replied, 'Come and see' (John 1. 36-38)

Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an initial act of evangelization. (Paul VI - Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975)





A close-up photograph of two hands, palms facing each other, holding a small, lit candle. The hands are cupped, and the warm, orange-yellow light of the flame illuminates the skin, creating a soft, glowing effect. The background is dark, making the light from the candle and the hands stand out. The overall mood is serene and spiritual.

PROMOTING THE SPIRITUAL

Nurturing a living faith, fostering Christian spirituality, educating in Gospel-based values, living beyond the material dimension

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Responds to our fundamental identity as spiritual beings

The challenges and opportunities provided proclaim and demonstrate there is more to life than material comfort and success and more to education than externally measured academic achievement and the secular curriculum. They address spiritual hunger and spiritual search.

'Man is a naturally religious being, anima naturaliter religiosa' (Basil Hume)

'To be a human person is to be 'capax Dei', hungry for God. Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee' (St. Augustine)

'There is a space in every person which only God can fill' (Michael Ramsey)

'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4)

It was said of Edmund Rice that had Christian Brother schooling delivered 'nothing more than temporal blessings' he 'would not have spent a single day in its advancement':

'No the soul of man, more than the body, was his concern. He wished men charitable and he wished them godly; affluent and free he wished them too, provided that freedom was based on virtue...The basis of that education was religion and virtue, and the mind of youth was taught to look heavenward whilst it read the things of earth' (1845)

Nurtures a distinctive Christian spirituality

The Edmund Rice school seeks to develop a Christian- Catholic sacramental spirituality, drawing on the Church's rich treasury of sacramental practice, liturgy, reflection, prayer, symbolism, religious art, poetry, and music, and the lives of the saints. Within this tradition it emphasises, in the manner of Edmund Rice, an active lay spirituality and call to holiness. It invites students to find God's presence in all aspects of experience, in life's 'high' and 'low' moments, in joy and in suffering. Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith and of the Edmund Rice charism help to convey the sacredness and challenge of the learning environment.

Gives priority to religious and moral formation

The Edmund Rice school recognises that pupils, even in Catholic schools, often lack knowledge and experience of basic elements and notions of faith and repeat gestures and signs of faith without full awareness of their meaning. It opens up the experience of Christian spirituality to those for whom this is new and provides ongoing catechesis for those with previous formation. Concern is shown for the spiritual and religious development of Christians of other denominations and members of other faiths, who are encouraged to explore and grow in their own faith tradition.

Celebrates Our Lady and Blessed Edmund Rice as models of faithfulness

Edmund Rice schools, following Blessed Edmund himself, venerate Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as the model of true discipleship, pointing us always towards her Son and showing us how to be his faithful followers with the courage to say 'yes':

'Do whatever he tells you' (John 2.5)

They also draw on the life and vision of Blessed Edmund Rice as an example of how fidelity to Christ may be lived out in the context of school and society. They strive to celebrate Edmund's model of heart-centred lay spirituality, a spirituality that is reflective and cultivates an awareness of the presence of God in all dimensions of life, recognizing that 'God is here.' This idea continues to provide the inspiration for the schools which continue in Edmund's name.

Fosters prayer

The Edmund Rice school is a 'school of prayer', encouraging pupils to express their own spontaneity in prayer in a spirit of 'pray as you can'. There is space and time to pray, and pupils are introduced to the rich diversity of ways of praying, informal and formal, and given the opportunity to lead prayer.

Allocates time, space, and resource to the spiritual dimension of school life

In allocating human and other resources an Edmund Rice school will make a priority of provision for religious education and catechesis, chaplaincy, and enhanced opportunities for spiritual exploration and nourishment. This includes forums for reflection, days of recollection, away days, residential retreats, themed weeks, mission weeks.

Religious education is recognised and resourced as the 'core of the core curriculum'.

Edmund's schools halted daily from 11.30 to noon for daily catechesis. Edmund called this time 'the most salutary part of the system' and took his schools out of the National System when it became incompatible with the religious programme

Challenges and empowers young people to share, witness, and lead

The Edmund Rice school creates an ambience in which it is easy and natural for young people to believe, share their beliefs, pray and worship together, and act out their faith. It encourages peer leadership and ministry and the fullest possible pupil role in leading liturgy and prayer.

'Holiness befits your house' (Psalm 92.5)





BUILDING A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Growing as a school community in which the quality of care and relationships is Christ-inspired, based on mutual respect, self-sacrifice, and fully human dignity

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Strives to be a true community of the Church

The Edmund Rice School is also an 'ecclesial experience', an experience of the community of the Church, and for many pupils their only one. Thus it strives to be a living expression of the kind of communion ('koinonia') we want the Church to be, a 'home and school of communion' in which relationships are built on love, mutual respect and acceptance, tolerance and forgiveness, selfless generosity and 'bearing one another's burdens' (Gal.6.2). The community of the school is itself a schooling in right relationships, teaching young people how to relate and how to care.

The challenge for every community claiming to be Christian is to make it 'the home and school of communion', 'a true communion of persons', otherwise it is a 'mere mechanism without a soul', a 'mask of communion' rather than a means of expression and growth. True communion means seeing others as 'another you,' sharing their joys and sufferings, welcoming and prizing their gifts not only as gifts for them but as 'gifts for me'.

Pope John Paul II, Letter for the Third Millennium

Lives out the three dimensions of a community of the Church:

.....proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria)
.....celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia)
.....exercising the ministry of charity and justice (diakonia)

The fullest nourishment of the school community and fullest expression of its spiritual identity is its gathering in the Eucharist as the 'source and summit of the Christian life'. Growing in faith, sharing a spirituality of communion, the Edmund Rice School is also outward-looking, contributing to the common good.

Is experienced as a school 'home' and a school 'family'

Edmund Rice was remarkable for infusing his schools with an ambience of 'fatherly kindness', running them 'more in a spirit of love than fear.' He banned corporal punishment and tried to make education familial. He was described by pupils as 'a kind, homely, and fatherly man, having goodness stamped on his face.'

The Edmund Rice School makes itself an 'hospitable space' in which pupils feel welcome, safe, recognized, known by name. At ease within warm personal relationships and welcoming surroundings, pupils are encouraged and enabled to display their talents and work to achieve their potential. The school provides a framework of love, order, stability, affection, and support which is not always experienced outside, where homes and relationships may be broken, disrupted, and unpredictable.

Edmund's Rules of the Society 1832

The Brothers are to have a tender affection for all the children, especially the poorest, as most resembling Our Lord Jesus Christ

They are always to act towards them with kindness and gentleness, and to be considerate to their faults and weaknesses

They are always to address them by their Christian names, treat them with consideration and respect and never allow them to address each other rudely

Is inclusive

The Edmund Rice school welcomes and celebrates the beauty of diversity - of culture, race, and creed. It rejoices in the diversity of the human family and seeks to reflect it, among both students and staff, by learning and teaching about one another. It makes provision for pupils of other faiths to develop, practice, and share their beliefs in dialogue with other members of the school community.

Builds community through participation

The Edmund Rice school values partnership and dialogue, a sense of shared vision, purpose, and ownership shared with both pupils and parents.

It encourages and facilitates positive pupil involvement through School Councils and other forms of representation, prefecting and peer leadership, mentoring across year groups, and frequent opportunities for exercising leadership, co-responsibility, and a pupil voice.

It builds home-school partnership, fostering active parental engagement, through regular communication and consultation, involvement in specific activities, and ongoing forms of association. It recognises that parents, remain the primary educators of their children and initiates meetings and programmes to encourage and enable parents to play their full role.

Builds wider community and community cohesion

The Edmund Rice School collaborates and interacts with the wider communities and agencies essential to its life. It acts in union with the Church and builds partnership with parish and diocese. It seeks to be an integral part of the life of local parishes, dioceses, and the universal Church. It networks with other Edmund Rice schools, both nationally and internationally, and reaches into and beyond the local community to support the Church and Christian Brother ministries in regional and world-wide outreach. This interconnectedness includes focus on issues of justice and environmental co-responsibility. Through its curriculum, strategies of inclusion, and community outreach the Edmund Rice school actively promotes community cohesion.

Critiques its own pastoral policies, provision, and structures

The Edmund Rice school regularly evaluates its own commitment to be a caring and inclusive community and the quality and reach of its care for both pupils and staff. It avoids complacency and seeks continuous improvement of its structures and practices. It will seek to use restorative rather than retributionist justice when student relationships break down.



A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together in a supportive grip. The hands are light-skinned and appear to be of different ages or genders. The background is a solid, light blue color. The text 'COMPASSION FOR THOSE IN NEED' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the lower half of the image.

COMPASSION FOR THOSE IN NEED

Showing, in the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice, particular love and concern towards the weakest members of the school community and reaching out beyond the school in compassion and practical action for the poor and marginalised both locally and internationally

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Responds to Jesus' identification with the most vulnerable

Christ tells his followers: *"Be compassionate as your heavenly father is compassionate"* (Luke 6.36)

Edmund Rice received and communicated the graced insight of 'the beauty, the value and dignity of every human person'. He sought to make real in his own life, and the life of the Brothers, the incarnational insight we find in Matthew 25.31-46, re-emphasised in our own era by the Second Vatican Council in 'Gaudium et Spes':

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ

Everyone must consider his every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity.....making ourselves the neighbour of every person without exception, and actively helping him when he comes across our path..... recalling the voice of the Lord (Matt. 25.40): "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me". Gaudium et Spes 1,27

Jesus, in sharing our humanity, unites himself with all human beings, and especially with the needy or vulnerable, who specially image his presence: what we do for them we do to Christ, what we fail to do we fail to do to Christ. The Edmund Rice School instils in its pupils active concern for others, especially vulnerable others within the school family, affirms the infinite value of each individual person as made in the image and likeness of God, and strives to embody this insight in its pastoral care.

"Live Jesus in our hearts" is about Christ transforming incomplete and wounded humans into compassionate beings, people who can engage authentically with others at their very core. Compassion is at the very heart of an Edmund Rice Education: compassion for the poor and the afflicted was one of the precious heirlooms our beloved Founder left to his children.
(Denis McLaughlin, *The Price of Freedom*)

Identifies and serves the needs of all members of the school community

The Edmund Rice school shows special compassion and active care for the vulnerable, whether pupils, members of staff, or parents and family, especially when lives are disturbed by illness, family misfortune, bereavement, or break-up.

In the Edmund Rice school *'Every Child Matters'*. It reaches out to the socially underprivileged and financially challenged, enabling their full participation in school life. The school is specially alert and sensitive to the needs of the fragile and disadvantaged, giving priority to safeguarding and child protection, and monitors and continuously improves its provision for Special Educational Needs.

Special support is given to children at risk. The school community welcomes and pro-actively supports, so far as resources allow, pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties, whether physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory, or learning, assisting them to take part in all possible aspects of school life. It responds to the needs of pupils who are children of immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers and actively promotes race and gender equality. It combats prejudice directed at other religious groups, for example Jews and Muslims, and reaches out to individuals who feel excluded. It also recognizes and responds to the needs of the specially gifted and talented. It proactively combats bullying, through robust policies for reporting and intervention and through pupil mentoring and buddying. The Edmund Rice School implements programmes addressing the needs of these groups and works to create a community in which each individual can achieve his or her potential and participate fully in the life and opportunities of the school.

Reaches out in compassionate action locally

The Edmund Rice School moves beyond charitable fund-raising to involving pupils, particularly senior pupils, in community outreach and immersion, bringing them into supportive and serving relationships with vulnerable groups in local society – disadvantaged children, the old, the sick, the mentally and physically disabled, the homeless, immigrants and asylum-seekers. The school encourages active pupil engagement in Edmund Rice Camps and in national campaigns and charities for the alleviation of poverty and the defence of human rights, including those of the unborn and of prisoners of conscience.

Edmund Rice charism statement: *Deeply aware of the Father's providential presence in his life, Edmund Rice was moved by the Holy Spirit to open his whole heart to Christ present and appealing to him in the poor.*
Christian Brothers 1982

Reaches out in compassionate action internationally

The Edmund Rice school reaches out globally in solidarity with people in need, through its links with the world-wide Edmund Rice Network or through wider campaigns for Third World Development and the abolition of global inequalities and poverty. While it responds energetically in times of natural disaster and famine, its focus is on building long-term relationships with developing communities, particularly within the Edmund Rice family, and on student immersion.

Were we to know the merit and value of only going from one street to another to serve a neighbour for the love of God, we would prize it more than Gold or Silver (Edmund Rice, 1810)

Two particular themes in Edmund Rice's action in charity resonate today: *'Giving to the poor in handfuls'* and *'The welcoming of strangers'*





CONCERN FOR THE WHOLE PERSON

Centering the curriculum, opportunities, and challenges of the school on the balanced and integrated development of its students, and staff, across all the positive dimensions of personal growth - religious, moral intellectual, cultural, physical, and social

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Promotes the full and balanced development of the physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral, social aesthetic, and emotional faculties of its pupils

Pupils in Edmund Rice schools enjoy a broad, balanced, and differentiated curriculum for integral human development. Provision is not narrow or skewed. It embraces the established forms of knowledge and all the dimensions of intellectual and personal growth. This includes full provision and high standards for sport, music and art. The aim is to instil a life-long appetite for the adventure of learning, a sense of compassion and service, and a zest for living life to the full.

'The glory of God is the human person fully alive' (Irenaeus)

'Know then, O beautiful soul, that you are the image of God'
(John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor 1993)

'We are God's work of art, created in Jesus Christ to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it' (Ephesians 2.10)

Edmund Rice said: 'Education refers to the whole of our life, here and hereafter'.

'At the heart of the Catholic school is the person of Jesus Christ who inspires a vision of education which is concerned with the development of the whole person - social, intellectual, spiritual, moral, emotional and psychological.' (Catholic Bishops' Conference)

Offers a wide range of co-curricular opportunities

The Edmund Rice School recognises that opportunity for development across all the dimensions of human fulfilment requires 'learning beyond the classroom' and a rich programme of co- and extra-curricular activities and challenges accessible to all pupils.

Gives proper place and resource to religious education

Religious education is provided and promoted as a core subject comparable in academic rigour to other demanding areas of the curriculum. It is resourced accordingly and its staff formed and trained to the highest standards. The aim is religiously literate young people able to think and argue theologically, spiritually, and ethically.

'Assuredly there could not be, in a moral and religious aspect, a worse school than one in which secular instruction should be scientifically and persuasively imparted, while religious knowledge should be confined to a perfunctory repetition of the catechism, and devotional affections not cultivated at all.'

(Catholic School Committee, 1854)

Provides personal, moral, and health education within a Catholic framework

Education for personal relationships is addressed formally within the curriculum and sex education is provided within the perspective of the teachings of the Catholic Church on the value and dignity of the human person, the sacrament of marriage, and the language and meaning of human sexuality. There is active collaboration with parents on issues of health and sex education, recognising the role of parents as the first educators of their children.

Educates for social responsibility and citizenship

Blessed Edmund expected his pupils to 'give something back'. Pupils are encouraged and enabled to carry the message and implications of their faith into action in the wider community. The nationally prescribed curriculum for active citizenship is enhanced as a call to active lay Christian engagement on the model of Edmund Rice. There is emphasis on the social development of pupils, skills for the future, and education for economic responsibility.

Educates for environmental and ecological responsibility

An Edmund Rice school respects and cares for the environment. It responds actively, through the curriculum and the wider life of the community, to the major environmental challenges facing humanity. It relates reverence and respect for God's creation to man's place in the cosmos, interconnectedness with the earth and the whole of creation, and human responsibility and moral imperatives to promote ecological justice and achieve sustainable goals. It celebrates the gifts of God in creation.





STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

Encouraging each individual to use his or her talents to the full, whether academic, cultural, or physical, and pursuing the highest standards in all aspects of learning, teaching, and extracurricular endeavour

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Sets high expectations and achieves high standards

Though human gifts are not given in equal amounts, each of us has the moral obligation to use our God-given talents and potentials to the full.

Our excellence is the highest outcome of which we are capable. The Edmund Rice school actively seeks to enable pupils to achieve their fullest selves, realising their highest potential both in academic subjects and in co-curricular opportunities. It celebrates effort and achievement and encourages excellence in all spheres as gratitude for the gifts God gives us.

To provide choice for Catholic families, and to secure its flow of pupils, the Edmund Rice school strives for levels of academic excellence and career empowerment comparable with the best secular alternatives.

'We must render the secular part of our education as effective as that which others offer....Make your schools equal in every respect to those which are opened to allure away our children'

(Catholic bishops, founding the first Catholic schools in England since the Reformation, in the 1850s)

Makes use of inspiring and innovative teaching and learning methodologies

Edmund Rice's Mount Sion was 'state of the art': advanced methods and modern facilities helped to build the self-worth of the pupils and honour their God-given human dignity. Edmund Rice schools today aim to provide, so far as resources allow, the best and most innovative facilities and methods available in the educational culture of the day.

'The inspector observes in this excellent institution everything to admire and nothing to condemn...He abstains from giving any suggestions as he cannot see how the present excellent management of the schools could be improved by anything coming from him'!

(Inspection report on an Edmund Rice school in 1830s)

Provides strong and individualised tutorial and pastoral support

An Edmund Rice school promotes individual excellence through developed tutorial and mentoring systems, including peer mentoring and 'buddying'. Pupils are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning and progress, agreeing targets, evaluating outcomes, building confidence, and raising sights. Barriers to achievement are identified and strategies agreed to liberate potential. The school provides an orderly, safe, and affirmative environment in which excellence can flourish. Different forms of intelligence and different learning styles are recognised and affirmed and strategies developed to realise the full potential both of those with learning difficulties and those who are specially gifted and talented.

Promotes the personal and professional development of staff

Edmund Rice schools are committed, so far as resources allow, to planning and resourcing in-service days, courses, and opportunities for professional development. These include support for higher degrees and further professional qualifications, immersion programmes, and the use of appraisal and performance management. Relevant training is also provided for support staff, and governors. The aim is to enhance personal skills and understanding, promote curriculum knowledge and subject development, and continuously improve the quality of teaching, learning, and governance.

Rejoices in and celebrates success

All are encouraged to develop their talents to the full and rejoice in the achievements of others as successes for all. This includes recognising small triumphs and everyday successes as well as celebratory occasions and awards ceremonies. Successes celebrated include, as well as academic success, effort and progress, behavioural improvement, sporting achievement, musical prowess, and, through the Edmund Rice Awards Scheme, service to the community.

Defines excellence according to the Gospel standard

In an Edmund Rice school the concept of excellence transcends secular measures of examination success and league tables to embrace the standards of the Gospel, where true excellence is serving others and moral and spiritual excellence is conceived as selflessness.

'I am among you as the one who serves' (Luke 22: 27)



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a yellow chalk, writing the number '1914' on a dark green chalkboard. The hand is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt. The chalkboard has some other faint markings, including '900' and some scribbles. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the chalkboard and a wooden ledge at the bottom.

EDUCATION AS A CHRISTIAN CALLING

Valuing and enabling the role and vocation of Christian teachers and support staff as a calling from God and a sharing in the Church's mission

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Recognises and values the contribution of all staff and governors to its mission

'The teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings. Personal relations between educators and students assume an enormous importance and are not limited simply to giving and taking. It depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose.'
(Congregation for Catholic Education : The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium)

Teachers, support staff, and governors are co-workers and witnesses in the privileged task of forming young people in our Christian-Catholic tradition and within the particular charism of Blessed Edmund.

'Through teachers' daily witness, pupils will encounter and appreciate the uniqueness of the school's ethos, and, through grace, come to know Jesus. If this witness is not present then there is little left which can make the school Catholic.....Everyone directly involved in the school is a part of the school community: teachers, governors, administrative and auxiliary staff.'
(Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School 1988)

'Heads, Senior Management Teams, Governing Bodies must show genuine vision, commitment, and fidelity to the Catholic identity and mission of the school. They are not primarily called to be administrators or bureaucrats, but to be prophets who will take a stand for the beliefs and values that underpin an authentic Catholic ethos'
(Patrick O'Donoghue, 'Fit for Mission' – Schools' 2008)

Not all staff will interpret their role as a personal vocation in the Church, but all see it as the exercise of a special profession and recognize their formative role in the lives of young people in a Christian-Catholic context. They accept this responsibility when they accept their post and all are called to live and model the values our schools enshrine.

We can make the classroom a holy place by the way we try to meet students' needs, by the quality of the relationships we establish with them, by our hard work, by our thorough preparation and planning, by our marking of work and assessment of progress, and, above all, by our readiness to listen. Our own good example, our enthusiasm, our combination of challenge and support, together with the way we model collaboration with our colleagues- all these help towards making classrooms holy places.'
(Prof. John Sullivan)

Teaches by witness and example

'Let us preach without preaching, not by word, but by our example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence our hearts bear to You'
(John Henry Newman)

All staff, whether teaching or support, teach by witness and example – by who we are and how we relate, how we 'walk' as well as how we 'talk'. Staff who are practising Christians, both Catholic and of other denominations, are encouraged to 'talk' and 'walk', exercising an explicit witness, a 'ministry of the word' which names the source of grace, connects the life of the school to the Christian story, and is ready to lead prayer, reflection, and worship. The Edmund Rice school needs a critical mass of staff committed to this explicit witness.

All staff contribute to the development of a welcoming, affirming, serving, ethos, and foster supportive relationships by personal example. All staff exercise 'love in deeds' - by the quality of their care and by their professionalism and generosity in support of the pupils and one another.

One of our inter-school conferences resolved: *"All staff, teaching and support, learn from and influence each other and every one of us is a 'teacher' in our own position in the school."*

Young people *'listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses'*
(Paul VI - Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975)

Provides opportunities to nurture & develop personal spirituality

Edmund Rice schools recognise that spiritual growth and leadership require nurture and formation and are committed to providing staff with opportunities and challenges for spiritual companionship and development, both as individual schools and as a family of schools. This includes participation in retreats, days of recollection, immersion programmes and gatherings within the global Edmund Rice Network.

'Experience shows that those who generously come to teach in a Catholic school are also eager to learn about the faith and are seeking to understand their own spirituality. If teachers are to continue to educate the whole child, including the spiritual dimension, then they too must be growing and developing their own spirituality.' Patricia Earl, *Faith Formation of the Laity in Catholic Schools*.



A close-up photograph of a pair of hands, likely belonging to a child, gently cupping a small, colorful globe of the Earth. The globe shows continents in yellow and green and oceans in blue. The hands are positioned in front of a white, textured fabric background. The text "EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the lower half of the image.

EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

Inspiring the minds and hearts of the young to care for all God's creation and build a more just society, God's Kingdom on earth, and developing in them the talents for active citizenship and transformational leadership

AN EDMUND RICE SCHOOL

Educates in awareness of social issues and the call to action for justice.

Through the curriculum and through the life and service of the school, an Edmund Rice school instils and encourages a sense of justice as a constitutive dimension of the Gospel. It uses Scripture, the Social Teaching of the Church, the life of Blessed Edmund Rice, and the global experience of the Christian Brothers. It seeks to develop informed, socially aware, students recognising their own 'ownership' and responsibility for the society and world around them. The school functions as an outward-looking community, rooted in Catholic and Edmund Rice values, actively seeking the common good.

'Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream' (Amos 5.24)

Catholic social doctrine is an integral part of the Christian conception of life. It should be taught as part of the daily curriculum in Catholic schools of every kind. (John XXIII, Mater et Magistra)

Integrates education for global awareness, eco-justice and the care of the earth

Edmund Rice schools raise awareness of man's connectedness not only within the human family but within the whole of God's creation, the cosmos, and the web of existence. Social justice is presented as involving ecological issues and stewardship of our world. The whole school community is encouraged to work for social and ecological justice and sustainable goals both within school and in the wider society.

God blessed them, saying....Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all living things that move on the earth' (Genesis 1:28)

Develops a sense of critical responsibility and a desire for a constructive commitment and active citizenship

Affirming what is positive in human society, the Edmund Rice school encourages pupils to open their eyes and hearts to the world around them, see the world critically, analyse its needs and its injustices, and 'respond with a heart like Edmund's'. They are encouraged to identify what needs to be remedied and transformed and inspired towards constructive engagement as active citizens working for justice.

Commits to acts of charity and justice

In a spirit of solidarity and compassion the Edmund Rice school actively engages with the poor and marginalised both within its own neighbourhood and locality and in the wider world, by fund-raising, sponsored activities, involvement in national charitable and relief campaigns, and a range of practical outreach, working with disadvantaged and marginalised groups of all kinds.

The Edmund Rice School educates pupils to be 'doers for justice', agents of change, owning their actions. It raises awareness of systemic injustice and through education for Christian citizenship and opportunities for practical involvement and immersion develops skills of enquiry, analysis, communication, participation, advocacy, and responsible action.

'Charity means helping the victim.' Justice asks 'Why are there so many victims?'

Models justice in right relationships within the school community

In its policies and practices, its systems of rewards, discipline, and conflict resolution, and in all its relationships internal and external, the Edmund Rice school seeks to develop a culture of respect and fairness which is itself a 'school of justice'.

- *If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.*
- *If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness*
- *If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect*
- *If children live with fairness, they learn justice*

Provides opportunities for young people to lead in community and voluntary work and in immersion projects both at home and in the Developing World

The Edmund Rice school aims to form pupils as transformational leaders. It creates opportunities for students of all age groups, and particularly senior pupils, to display and develop leadership skills. It frames active engagement in community outreach and domestic and Developing World immersion within opportunities for reflection and faith sharing.

Networks across the Congregation on issues of justice and right relationships

The school draws on and interacts with Edmund Rice ministries, communities, and schools in provinces across the world, sharing experience and strategies, and using the Network's solidarity with the marginalised and commitment to liberation as a resource in educating for justice.

'Those who teach justice shall shine like the stars of heaven forever' (Daniel 12.3)

'My lips will tell of your justice' (Psalm 70)

Edmund Rice's own citizenship agenda:

- Emancipation and civil rights
- Abolition of slavery
- Education as liberation
- Relief of poverty
- Relief of prisoners
- Aid to immigrants and asylum seekers
- Peaceful political action
- Sensitising the wealthy to the inhumanity of indifference
- Taking ownership of society and environment: stewardship





PRESENCECOMPASSIONLIBERATION

A survey of the global Network in 2008 identified the following characteristics of the spirituality which sustains and nourishes Edmund's people:

- Ours is a spirituality that is Jesus-centred. It endeavours to see people, events and situations through the eyes of the God that Jesus spoke about and acknowledged in his life.
- Ours is a spirituality that inevitably leads to compassionate action for, and on behalf of, those who are poor, marginalized and oppressed. It is a spirituality in harness for mission.
- Ours is a spirituality that is reflective and cultivates an awareness of the presence of God in all dimensions of life : **God is here.**
- Ours is a spirituality that is relational. It builds community; it nourishes brotherhood and sisterhood; it transcends boundaries and reaches out to those who are not included.
- Ours is a spirituality that sharpens the prophetic edge, that encourages people to be daring disciples, to speak out on behalf of those who have no voice.
- Ours is a spirituality that encourages belief in the Providence of God while at the same time encouraging people to use their God-given talents on behalf of those who are needy.
- Ours is a spirituality that needs to express itself in ritual and worship as well as fostering a contemplative heart.
- Ours is a spirituality that is intensely Eucharistic, which encourages people to be bread broken and wine poured out for others, especially those who are poor and in need.
- Ours is a spirituality of hospitality. It welcomes the stranger as one who incarnates the presence of God in life.





CREED OF EDMUND'S PEOPLE

We believe the fire burning in our hearts can transform both ourselves and our world

We believe we are called by God to a deep personal relationship with Jesus, the lover of all creation.

We believe we are called to be good news people.

We believe we are called to be stewards of creation.

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

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

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

We believe in community which is prayerful, inclusive and welcoming.

We believe our international network is a witness to a search for global unity.

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

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

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

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

Amen

