Hope overcoming Fear

“The oldest and strongest emotion of humanity is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown”

“We do not fear the unknown. We fear what we think we know about the unknown.”

Dear Brothers and all inspired by the Charism of Edmund, If anything is certain, it is uncertainty. The last few weeks and the events of the last few days bear this out. The unprecedented decision to “prorogue” the Congregation Chapter came unexpectedly but was not a surprise. As our Chapter delegates make their way home to face isolation restrictions, one can only wonder as to what will be the next move as the world faces a pandemic of extraordinarily swift progression.

First let us welcome back Brothers Peter Clinch, Tony Hempenstall, Jeff Regan, Marty Sanderson and Geoff Whitefield who have arrived safely and let us support them as they take on the responsibility to ensure they do not contract nor spread the virus to us. We also welcome Dean McGlaughlin and Richard Walsh home as they spend both the isolation and some family and holiday time here in Australia and New Zealand.

We think of our Brothers Gerard Brady, Paul Conn, Bernard White, Peter Dowling and Julian McDonald who were unable to change their transport arrangements in sufficient time before the borders were closed in Peru and now will see out the restrictions in a foreign land. Damien Price is on renewal in Nemi, Italy and is in lockdown at the centre there (his reflection is included in this newsletter).

In our own region the panic buying we have all witnessed is a result of what we think we know or what we have been bombarded by social media into believing that we should know. To many, perhaps to most, it is the antithesis of what good neighbours/citizens believe themselves to be. It is a siege mentality and it is an example of selfishness in the extreme. Our generation has never experienced a rationing of goods and services as the generation during wartime did. We have always had more than we wanted and certainly more than we needed. We did not need to share. We gave of our excess to others in need, but not out of our substance.

Today there is a cry for restraint – to think of others – the elderly, the frail, the vulnerable, as well as ourselves. We cannot do this if we are fearful. Fear of the unknown can be irrational or it can be embraced for what it is – something we have to face and to conquer so that we can move on in strength and understanding leading to transformation.

Our world is over-supplied with alarmists – their voice is louder than the voice of reason at times. What we think we know needs to be weighed against the reasoned truth of what is known and what is authentic. “Crippled by fear” will not see us through a crisis.

For us who call ourselves Christians, there is a virtue of hope. Fear can be overcome by knowledge; it can also be overcome by the strength and unity of community. Yes, let us obtain as much real knowledge as possible, but let us also be very conscious that our community brings unity of purpose and direction whereas our promotion of individuality brings division
and diminishment. In the regular updates, declarations and edicts we receive from Government, there is a constant simple reminder. Prevention is as important as seeking a cure. It is in simple things that we need be vigilant e.g. attention to hygiene.

In Oceania we have had the tour of the relics of St Therese and her parents. The “Little Way” of St Therese was about doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. It was not about the flamboyant, the eye-catching, the spotlight.

As together we live through the uncharted future, may we realise that our attention to the little things we know we need do, will be our way of supporting each of our Brothers and Sisters in our community.

Ted Magee cfc

**Pandemic**

What if you thought of it

**as the Jews consider the Sabbath—the most sacred of times?**

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,

on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.

Center down.

And when your body has become still, reach out with your heart.

**Know that we are connected in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.**

(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives

are in one another’s hands.

(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils of compassion that move, invisibly, where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—

for better or for worse,

in sickness and in health,

so long as we all shall live.

-Lynn Ungar 11/3/20

**News from Edmund Rice Camps WA (ERCKWA)**

This is a very special year for ERCKWA as we celebrate 30 years of providing camps for kids and families marginalised in some way and living within our communities. We also celebrate 30 years of training and empowering exceptional young adults to plan and lead over 15 camps annually.

Fitting in our 30th year that we commenced a wonderful new partnership with Edmund Rice College Bindoon to run our 8 mega camps at the college campus. We took four back to back
Mega Camps (6 day) camps to Bindoon in January providing days of fun for over 100 leaders and 85 kids. Having also re-established camp site opportunities with Trinity College for our mini camps at Camp Kelly in Dwellingup and secured catering support, transport and event support from Trinity College, Aquinas College and CBC Fremantle, we also celebrate a wonderful relationship with our EREA Schools.

What we might claim as major successes in the “back end” of our operations is bearing fruit at the coal face and what better way to demonstrate this than to hear direct from our leaders who collectively volunteer over 10,000 hours a year to our programmes.

The camp has allowed me to have a greater appreciation for the strength of the kids I had the privilege of getting to know. As someone who has never really had much contact with kids a lot younger than myself, it was eye – opening to see the incredibly kind and compassionate values instilled in these kids from a multitude of backgrounds, many of which have been difficult for them and their families for whatever reason. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to form a relationship with them, see the sheer joy on their faces all day and every day, and to be able to offer them the friendship and fun, actively giving back to community.

My favourite moment was during reflection. Prior to this I had been playing a lot of basketball with Raymond during MAC Time (Multiple Activity Choice). The topic of reflection was their most favourite moment of camp. We went around the circle sharing the kids’ favourite moments and Raymond said” Playing basketball with Zac”. Only then did it hit me about how much we can have a positive impact on the kids through small acts of kindness and inclusion every day.

The absolute best experience I have ever had, the connection and bonds created with the children at risk are ones I will cherish forever. The experience has helped me develop and grow as a person due to my connection with the kids as well as my fellow leaders.

It is so encouraging to see the positive collaboration between ministry and EREA that is sustaining ministry and ensuring the Edmund Rice Charism is thriving. Add to this the invaluable support from ERMO and ERFA and we can look forward to the next 30 years of camps ministry in the West!!

Kevin Knapp
Chief Executive Officer
ERC Bindoon
From the Province Earth Sustainability Coordinator

The General Chapter

While many of you will have been following the daily bulletins or the website from the Chapter, including its dramatic proroguing, till we know not when, a couple of comments are worth adding from the perspective of this column. One can say without revealing too much detail or suggesting potential outcomes, that the agenda of the cosmos and cry of earth and poor is very much on the discerning agenda of the chapter at the moment.

As well one can report that the Chapter venue in Lima and the actual organisers had wise use of resources and recycling in the organising. There was virtually no paper used at the Chapter more than an occasional page for group prayer. All was done digitally. As well the bins pictured were prominent and once translated for us, used reasonably well. A further comment worth making. On LATAM (the Latin American airline) once the meal was over the attendants went through collecting first of all the plastic cups and bottles and then the soft plastic wrappers before gathering the general food waste. This did not happen on Qantas. All in the one bin!!
Creation Spirituality
Some of you may know of the Irish based Journal of Contemporary Theology “The Furrow”. A recent short article appeared called . Certainly worth a read for anyone trying to incorporate this into their spirituality.

Indian Dipole – More Science
On one side of the Indian Ocean, torrential rain, a locust plague and food shortages are devastating parts of east Africa. On the other, severe drought fuelled Australia’s unprecedented bushfire season. We can legitimately point the finger at climate change, but that’s only part of the story. A natural climate phenomenon called the Indian Ocean Dipole (sometimes known as the ‘Indian Nino’ - a difference in sea surface temperature between the ocean’s east and west sides - is another catastrophic force behind these events. Right now, we’re in a “positive” dipole, meaning east Africa has warmer waters and more rainfall, while Australia has cooler waters and dry conditions. To find out how historically common this is, researchers led by ANU’s Nicky Wright drilled into coral skeletons to read the climate signature forged in their tree-like growth rings.

Between the years 1240 and 2019, nearly 800 years, there were 10 extreme positive dipoles. But six of them happened in the last 60 years. That means human-caused climate change is making them more frequent, and we can expect another severe drought sooner than we anticipated. (The Conversation March 10th)

Equinor + & -
Good news and better news. Recently we mentioned the application by the big energy drilling company Equinor to drill in our Great Australian Bight. Due to the pressure of Greenpeace and other ordinary people petitions and actions, they have withdrawn from the proposed project. Apparently they still have their eyes on another potential field on the southern coast of WA but that’s a watching brief. However this company sees the future in the energy provision market. Apparently they hope to use their drilling and platform making expertise to create a large wind farm on the ocean some distance from New York. Renewable energy on a large scale with imagination.

School Climate Strike Friday May 15 - Postponed
Another victim of our current world situation and the dreaded ‘C’ word. However when one is tempted to criticise our youth and Greta and her worldwide workers and supporters, it is worthwhile remembering their straightforward platform of three demands. Hard to argue with and nor is their sense of great urgency.

1. No new coal, oil and gas projects, including the Adani mine
2. 100% renewable energy generation & exports by 2030
3. Fund a just transition & job creation for all fossil-fuel workers & communities
Earth Hour 2020 - Saturday 28 March 8:30pm till 9:30pm

Are you going to have a go at this? It’s more than just a token effort and can be a sobering experience to turn off for an hour. It can also help us feel/sense some solidarity with much of the third world where turning off or being turned off, is a common reality.

Signing on at the website helps you keep to it as well, especially when your favourite show or sports team is on that night!!

Jeff Regan cfc