



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS
OCEANIA PROVINCE

OCEANIA PROVINCE WEEKLY NEWS

VOL 2 | ISSUE 23

We Acknowledge the Traditional custodians who have walked and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

A Move from Intensive to Organic Farming

A Reflection on The Congregation Leadership Group meeting in Rome – June 2018



The facilitator for the CLG meeting in Rome this year, Mathieu Daum, used the image of a field and types of farming to help illustrate the movement that is required within the Congregation. The image of transitioning from **intensive to organic farming** was given as a way of expressing the preferred way forward for the Congregation. In Congregational language, what is strengthening, and at the same time, stifling the flame of brotherhood within our group?

An outmoded form of farming is named “intensive farming”, where artificial fertilizers are added to the soil to promote accelerated growth. After continual use of this method, the soil itself becomes poisoned by artificial additives. The soil become dependent upon artificial chemicals which in turn contaminate the produce from the farm. In the end the soil can no longer produce healthy produce because poison has become the dominant ingredient of the soil. The farmer needs to cease intensive farming and transition to organic farming. The new farming technique will improve soil quality and must consider and relate with other eco-systems within the region – trees, waterways, air etc. As a result of the new farming method integrating with the local environment, the farm co-operates with the local ecosystems rather than competing.

What changes are required within our Christian Brother system and culture? Can we name the poison that is within our Province / Congregation that is stifling our growth? The Congregation has tried over previous years to bring about cultural change. The CLG meeting suggested that our recent attempts for cultural change have not freed us from the paralysis that prevents us from letting go of past practices and attitudes. There is still “poison” in the system that needs to be named and removed. The group was challenged by the facilitator not to divert our attention to the positive elements within our group. Healthy growth and change will happen when “we” can embrace our shadow side.

Recently, I was a participant in a settlement conference with a person who was badly abused when in a Christian Brothers Institution. It was a difficult meeting for me to acknowledge, yet again, the dysfunction that allowed such events to happen. It is too easy to side-step the issues raised in a settlement conference by stating, “it was in the past”. We use the term “historical” sexual abuse of a child. While the act was historical, the





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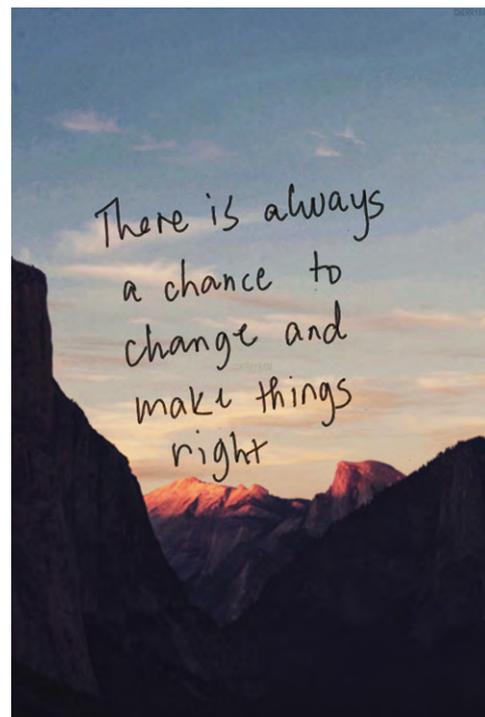
impact of such abuse is still very much alive today.

How are the cultural aspects of our shadow still present within the Province? How are the people who work with us as paid employees and volunteers affected by the constant adverse media regarding the Catholic Church / Christian Brothers? How are the young men joining the Congregation influenced by present culture? What are our blind spots? What type of leadership is called for to meet such challenges and bring about the required cultural change? What is the remnant of the past that still poisons the body? To fan the flame for being brother today includes naming and accepting our shadow and a commitment to change regardless of age or status.

The meeting in Rome used the phrase – “The Change starts with me”. How can each of us bring about the change required to improve the health of me, communities, Province and Congregation? The facilitator challenged us by asking what shall I **stop** doing that will give me more energy for life? What drains energy from your community? How can we live in right relationships with each other? How can individuals let go of past hurts and be free to enter into life-giving relationships with fellow brothers?

The call to live simply and be in harmony with our environment is a desperate need today. Can I live counter-culturally by not being consumer driven and live a community life rather than being fixated on my own needs? The energy source for this call is the Mystery we call God. It is a call to deepen our vocation as Religious Brothers. Pathways into a healthy future are not found but created. Can we recreate the future for the Edmund Rice Mission in Oceania together?

Peter Clinch cfc
Province Leader





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Br Frank Hennessy in Timor Leste

Tuesday 5th June was a very significant day in the life of CER as it was the first visit of Mary MacKillop International (MMI) staff to Railaco Criac to meet, teach & discuss the future with sections of our staff in Card making & Pre-school teaching. It set the ball rolling in the partnership that is developing for MMI to assume 3 CER projects into the future. In our discussions with MMI they requested we address the maintenance issues in the TEKA buildings in preparation for the hand over later in the year. **Peter** has commenced the process at Deleso with a new door/frame, internal lining of walls & a covered verandah. Then built a storeroom for the TEKA-Samelete 3.

CER has been assisting Samelete 1 with the refurbishment of their community centre. Local teams are doing the work while CER supplies the materials. This has caused the TEKA to be relocated. We are still to be satisfied that the new facility reaches the standard required for pre-school.

The villages are awash with NGO's this month. I guess the dry season has enabled them to hold consulting meetings with each community to address the individual village needs then to action them.

- *Plan International* are working with the communities on tree planting to combat erosion (Railaco Criac), constructing a levy bank to stop flooding (Ria Mori), road repair (Samelete 2), better water access & storage. (Railaco Leten). Agriculture & road repair (Fatacado)
- *Red Cross* 2 day seminars on basic first aid – all villages.
- *Coffee CoOperative Timor* mobile health unit – all villages
- *Government Health Department* – immunisation of infants.



As you would have read in past editions of musings we are in the 4th year of Vanilla growing. Well, on the 20th the field workers, **Pedro & Cirilio**, took 3 farmers to Dili, **Hermanegilda, Manuel & Domingus** to sell their first crop of Vanilla beans. So at the healthy sum of around US\$ 57.00 per Kg – the farmers together carried 25Kg of beans for sale - resulted in a tidy sum. The word will spread & the crops will increase. Congrats to the field workers & thanks to TTN for this initiative. Coffee harvesting is in full swing this month.

Some weeks ago several families were involved in an accident coming up the hill to Railaco Criac. A young boy **Helda** (aged 10) was being treated by traditional medicine - later collapsed & died. The ceremony & funeral was very moving. The family tribute is seen in the sculptured castle over his resting place.

MMI visited again (29th) - **Laura, Kirsty, Karen** (Sydney), **Alipio, Sr. Cathy** (Dili) to learn more of our projects & also to experience the terrain by going down to Deleso village. All were impressed by the teaching of the staff there. They also engaged with some card ladies & the vanilla field workers.



Frank Hennessy cfc



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Edmund Rice Camps Tasmania

Edmund Rice Camps Tasmania recently conducted its first Head 2 Heart Weekend at Levendale Tasmania. The weekend was a great success.

Paul the Campania School Principal of the participants has been in touch with Brendan Webb of ERC Tasmania with this comment: *“Walking around outside this morning I have had so many students come up and say they had the best weekend on camp. I can’t thank you enough for providing the opportunity for the students. Thanks”.*



Transition Support Team Bulletin

Dear Brothers,

Warm greetings from Stellenbosch.

We have just concluded a series of meetings with the CLT and the African Leadership teams ably facilitated by Michael Burke. The TST head now to Nairobi for our ‘TST month’.

[READ HERE](#) our reflection Letter on Obedience (or Vow for Mutual Collaboration as Diarmuid O’Murchu likes to call it). It is the last of the three reflections we authored on Vows for Religious Life. Please forward them to the Brothers and wider Edmund Rice network.

Many thanks for your continued support and prayers,

Your brother,
Br Sunil Britto
Transition Support Team



Edmund Rice New Zealand Conference ‘Hauora’

The Edmund Rice National Gathering in New Zealand this year will be focussed on Hauora – encouraging wellbeing. The Conference will be exploring ways of making mental health a greater priority in our Edmund Rice Entities, Ministries and communities. Taking a holistic approach to wellbeing in a spirit of presence, compassion and liberation, for all in the community is a vital means of giving expression to an Edmund Rice spirit in the world today. The Conference is open to all Edmund Rice people.

For further details see the flyer [below](#) or go to the Conference website via either www.edmundrice.org.nz or www.erjustice.org.nz. The Conference runs across the weekend of the 8th and 9th of September 2018.

Peter Hay



Hauora – encouraging wellbeing

Hauora, mental health, wellbeing are topics that are at the forefront of international and national discussions today. So how can we make it an even greater priority in our Edmund Rice schools, communities, and organisations, especially when working with people who are vulnerable, when we aspire to such values as presence, compassion liberation as well as fundamental touchstones such as liberating education, gospel spirituality, inclusive communities, and justice and solidarity? This gathering is not only open to the Edmund Rice Network in New Zealand but also to anyone else who wants to join in the conversations, listen to challenging keynote speakers, participate in focused workshops, build networks, and gain valuable insights to take back home. This gathering explores such topics as understanding wellbeing, mental health, caring for the environment, working with people who are vulnerable, creating supportive communities and workplaces, and finding ways of acknowledging and nurturing our own personal wellbeing.

Date: Saturday 8th September 2018 - 9:30am until 5:30pm
Sunday 9th September 2018 - 9:30am until 1pm

Venue: St Thomas of Canterbury College, Middlepark Road. Christchurch, New Zealand.
Start time 9:30 Saturday - End time 1pm Sunday

Accommodation: The conference is not a live in conference. It is for participants to find their own accommodation. The conference website will offer suggestions and contacts.

Meals: Registration includes morning and afternoon teas, lunch on Saturday and a departing hot soup and a roll on Sunday.

Gathering Dinner: Saturday evening 7pm in nearby Church Corner, Riccarton. (cost extra)

For more information AND on-line registration

Conference website: via either www.edmundrice.org.nz or www.erjustice.org.nz
Campbell Wood ER Justice National Project Officer campbell@erjustice.org.nz
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