great contribution of the brave and wonderful men gone before us. But to stay in the past is to do wrong to their memory and their efforts. Everything that has happened so far prepares us for what is to be. Let us not be found wanting.

I have seen the sun break through to illuminate a small field for a while, and gone my way and forgotten it. But that was the pearl of great price, the one field that had treasure in it. I realise now that I must give all that I have to possess it. Life is not hurrying on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past. It is the turning aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush, to a brightness that seemed as transitory as your youth once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

*The Bright Field*, R. S. Thomas

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**A Message**

To accompany **A Way into the Future**

*Brother Philip Pinto cfc*
Dear Friends

The charism of Blessed Edmund is at a crossroads. We can allow the flame to flicker out through preserving the status quo, or we can choose to move in trust to the Spirit’s invitation. The Spirit has been summoning us to march to a new rhythm for at least the last thirty years since we had the first Spirituality Conference in 1982.

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 poor people.

Charism Statement, 1982

“The time is now! The place is here! You are the people!”

With these words the 2008 Chapter called the Congregation to embrace a new way of living that is emerging in our world. This new way of living finds expression in a sense of self that refuses to be limited to the way things have traditionally been. There is a challenge and an invitation to “follow me to the edge”, to “enter into the core of your being”. The Mystery we call God walks with us “in places of the heart beyond our wildest imaginings” and asks us to “fly free as Edmund did”. We are dared to become hope for the world and to risk being different. And above all, we are summoned to trust.

We on the Congregation Leadership Team see this as a cry from our times to become a viable and vibrant example of Religious life that is responding to the urgent needs of our world. Our contact

It is only by fundamentally changing our relationship with poor people that true change and that genuine, future Christian Brother mission is made possible.

A Mission Action Plan in Search of a Theology, Martin Byrne

A new Way of Being with Poor People
The model of Church out of which we aspire to operate is that of the Church of poor people. The spirituality of the Church of poor people bewails the seeming absence of God in the violations of of human dignity, the affronts to life, and in the abuse and destruction of human and earth eco-systems. It affirms the paradoxical presence of the Mystery we call God in these situations. It strives to bear testimony to this saving presence among the people through solidarity with them in their struggles. It is a Church where poor people, equal to all others in dignity, are not only evangelised but become evangelisers themselves. It is a Church where no one is so poor as to have nothing to give, and no one is so rich as to have nothing to receive.

As Religious Brothers we dare to keep alive the dangerous memory of Jesus, Jesus who exemplified an alternative way of living life, who challenged the conventions of the dominant society and of religion that supported and validated it in the name of God.

We offer to you, dear friends in Edmund, this Proposition for your reflection and action. It is not the final word. It is a work in progress.

We need your wisdom and your courage to give these words life. Saying yes to a different future is not to deny the past or the
and interaction with our communities and mission sites have also shown us the reality on the ground. Our reflection on this reality confronts us with the truth that the status quo is not an option. We have become aware of the need to undertake a bold journey towards a new place, a new place to which we are led by the Spirit of Jesus rather than by our conventional reflexes and choices.

Where would we move from here?

And we know when Moses was told, in the way he was told
Take off your shoes.
He grew pale from that simple reminder of fire in the dusty earth.
He never recovered his complicated way of loving again
And was free to love in the same way he felt the flames licking at his heels loved him.
As if the lion earth could roar and take in, in one movement.
Every step he took from there was carefully placed,
   Every thing he said mattered
As if he knew the constant witness of the ground
And remembered his own face in the dust
   The moment before revelation.
   Like the moment you too saw
for the first time your own house turned to ashes
   Everything consumed so the road could open again
   Your entire presence in your eyes
And the world turning slowly to a single branch of flame.

Falling, David Whyte

Like Moses, we too realised that we were standing on holy ground, that we had always been standing on holy ground, and in the midst of the rubble around us, “our house turned to ashes”, we knew we were being summoned anew by the Mystery we call God. Just as everything in Moses’ life changed as a result of his encounter with this Mystery, we know that
Towards a New Way of Living

What we are proposing as *A Way Into The Future* is not primarily a series of action steps. This is first and foremost a way of living life. It is the Jesus way, a way of kenosis, of self-emptying, that is not about the preservation of the Congregation, but about making real the “Kingdom of God” that Jesus was so passionate about. It requires a new mindset, a new consciousness that will change drastically the way we live and work.

*A Way Into The Future* is not simply attempting to adjust what we have been doing. It is presenting something totally different.

Behold I am doing something new

*Isaiah 43:1*