

19 April 2013

## ***The Proposition - A Way into the Future - Christian Brothers***

- 1** The Christian Brothers Congregation Leadership Team offers the following Proposition to the whole Congregation and hopes everyone will play a part in bringing it to fruition. Every Brother will be affected, and we believe many will find the challenge inspiring.
- 2** By 2020, the Christian Brothers will be a vibrant, cohesive group, living and working in areas of the world where there is great need. The main areas of involvement in the initial phase will be in the developing world.
- 3** Brothers in the developed world are invited to participate fully in this direction.
- 4** The spirituality of the Brothers will be inspired by the unfolding story of the Universe, a contemporary understanding of Jesus, and the example of Edmund Rice.
- 5** The Christian Brothers live their particular vocation as Religious within the Catholic Church.
- 6** The Brothers will actively engage in advocacy as they live in radical solidarity with the Earth and with people made poor. Advocacy moves beyond service to address systemic injustice.
- 7** At the heart of the Brothers' work will be a mutual engagement with poor people, focused on spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, and economic well-being.
- 8** The Brothers' presence in local areas will seek to be a catalyst among the people so that all recognize their own power, resilience, and giftedness as they together engage with poverty and injustice.
- 9** The Brothers' approach to working with people will be based on Community Engagement, which empowers people to recognise and respond to their needs and those of the environment in a spirit of collaboration and collective responsibility.
- 10** Once people are confident of their ability to maintain mutually agreed goals, the need for the continued presence of the Brothers will be subject to dialogue.
- 11** An orientation process for the new communities will identify and critique existing attitudes and behaviours as well as presenting appropriate attitudes and behaviours. Orientation is essential to prepare Brothers spiritually, psychologically, attitudinally, and professionally for respectful engagement with people. Such preparation will involve learning the language and customs of the people among whom they live.
- 12** The Congregation will initially create 15 to 20 new communities in the developing world. This provides for a critical mass of Christian Brother communities in order for the Proposition to be viable.
- 13** Brothers joining the new communities may be drawn from different Provinces. In this way, the Brothers deliberately choose to become an intercultural Congregation to facilitate the necessary movement of Brothers in meeting the most pressing needs of people made poor.

- 14** The Brothers in these new communities will be committed to sharing the spiritual search both within and beyond the community. People of all backgrounds will be welcome to engage with the community in this search.
- 15** The new communities will be joyful places, where members trust and support one another in the daily challenges of living together. It is in such communities that the expression of vowed living will be clearly visible.
- 16** Simplicity and beauty will be the hallmarks of the community house and lifestyle.
- 17** The new communities and their associated activities will work to become resilient and self-sustaining, both economically and environmentally.
- 18** There will be a “Hub” community providing support and services to groupings of four or five associated new communities in the developing world areas.
- 19** In the developed world there will be spirituality centres that will provide on-going spiritual enrichment and training for Brothers, their colleagues, and the wider community.
- 20** Engaged in a common enterprise that responds to the needs of people, the Brothers will work collaboratively, drawing on their individual skills and abilities.
- 21** Each new community will regularly engage in evaluation processes relating to the effectiveness of their work, the quality of community life, and commitment to personal and spiritual development.
- 22** The Congregation will attract as new members mature young men who are enthusiastic to engage in the spiritual search, participate in ministry with poor people, and commit themselves to living in community.
- 23** People from the Edmund Rice Network and other volunteers will be welcome to share the life of these new communities on a short- or long-term basis.
- 24** A Transition Support Team will establish, support, challenge, and review the new communities and their activities on a regular basis.
- 25** The Proposition will require the allocation of significant resources for training, accommodation, and running costs for the community members and their activities.
- 26** The responsibility for seeking funds will be undertaken by Development Offices. A key role of these offices will be to develop partnerships with donors to support the thrust of the Proposition.

*“In you, I am doing something new.” Isaiah 43:19*