



PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America

A PROVINCE OF THE CONGREGATION OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

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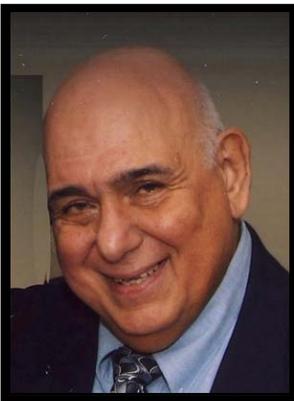
March, 2011

VINCENT A. (VINNIE) RUSSO

June 8, 1937 - March 9, 2011

The following was submitted by Edmundian, Jack (Denis '59) O'Keefe

Godfather of Edmundians



Vincent A. Russo
June 8, 1937 - Mar 9, 2011

“Vinnie Russo” - the name sounds like a Mafioso from *The Sopranos* or *Goodfellas*. He even had a scar, not from a knife fight but from crashing through a glass door rushing to a track meet at Brother Rice in Chicago. He looked like an Italian tough guy. But nothing could be further from the truth.

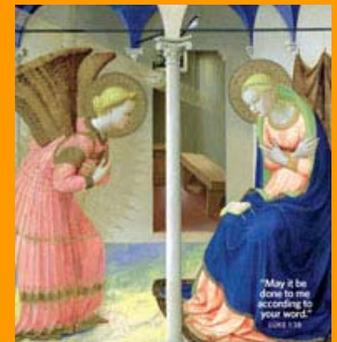
Husband to Cathy, father of Anne and Cara, grandfather of Vincent, Vinnie was the Godfather of the Edmundians. He sent out hundreds of emails requesting help for the sick and dying, forming a cyber prayer group for us all. He kept us together, as Jim Wright from Canada wrote in the wake guest book, “Your online initiative reached a wide circle of people who’d had the same goal you had.”

During the holidays Vinnie and Cathy came to St. Joe’s in New Rochelle and decorated the residence, making life a little more cheerful for the elderly and the sick, many of whom were former colleagues of Vinnie’s. Such kindnesses marked Vinnie’s life. As a young teacher at St. Bon’s in Newfoundland, he voluntarily assisted John McCarthy with the brass section of the concert band, payback for his own instruction in the trumpet at Power Memorial years before. At Brother Rice he received high marks from Sean Moffett and Joe Gattone for his mentoring and teaching.

At All Hallows with his friend Joe Lips, Vinnie would moan when the cook brought out ketchup for spaghetti dinner, thinking of his mother who spent ten hours cooking tomato sauce for *real* pasta. It was Joe Lips who introduced Vinnie to Cathy, and they had a blessed, happy marriage. When Vinnie and Cathy had the brothers over for dinner, every monk became an uncle to Anne and Cara. The food was so good and so plentiful that guests had to go for a walk after dinner to work off some of the great pasta--no ketchup at those meals. When Vinnie had an Edmundian meeting in New York, he always made sure he got back to Jersey in time for supper with Cathy.

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Through fasting and praying, we allow Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God.

Pope Benedict XVI

Cathy became an Edmundian as much as her husband. At the West Park Mass run so ably by John McCarthy, she and Vinnie would scurry around to check every last detail - the Mass book, the food and drink, the priest, and the homilist. Along with Mike Delaney and John McCarthy, Vinnie had helped launch the Edmundian society in 1986. He was elected chairperson several times and held the post until his death. Years ago he made two trips to Chicago to kick start the local Edmundians, Midwesterners always a little slower than the “wise men from the East.”



Cathy & Vinnie Russo

The older I get, the more I revere kindness. It was the kindness of Christ and Edmund Rice that drew us all to the monks in the first place. Vinnie never lost that spirit but passed it on to Cathy, Anne, and Cara. For him the Edmundians were one more way to preserve the values he held dear. In the guest book, John Donnelly wrote: “Vinnie’s generosity to the Brothers and Edmundians is his last and inspiring legacy.” Greg McNally put it best with his words: “There is not enough to say. . . .” What praise, when a man’s kindness exhausts our powers to honor him.

BROTHER MICHAEL PATRICK JOHN BATTERTON, C.F.C. March 11, 1916 – March 9, 2011



In the early hours of the morning of March 9, 2011, Brother Michael Patrick John Batterton, CFC, passed away quietly in his sleep at St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital in St. John’s, Newfoundland. John was the oldest member of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province. He was two days short of his 95th birthday. John entered our Congregation in 1936 and served faithfully for the next 75 years in Newfoundland, New York, Quebec, and Ontario.

While there were not many members of his immediate family attending his wake and funeral (he had outlived most of them), there were many members of his ministerial family in the persons of the many former students who came to say their final farewell to John. They came from his days at St. Patrick’s Hall School and Holy Cross School in the 1940’s to former students from Brother Rice High School in the 1980’s. All of them spoke the same story:

John was the best teacher they ever had; his classes were never boring; he made the subjects come alive. One tribute at his wake, spoken by a former student, summed it up best for all when he said, “Brother Batterton not only taught school, he also taught life.”

Following a Mass of Resurrection presided over by the Archbishop of St. John’s, His Grace, Martin Currie, John was laid to rest in the Brothers plot at Belvedere Cemetery in St. John’s.

BROTHER FIDELIS BRENNAN, C.F.C. March 20, 1922 – November 25, 2006



Do you know that Brother Fidelis Brennan, CFC, was instrumental in acquiring an environmental educational center for the Roman Catholic School Board of St. John’s, Newfoundland? That center was named after him and is still in operation today and operated by the Environmental Education Commission. It is called the Brother Brennan Environmental Education Center, or more fondly, the Brother Brennan Centre.

You can check it out at <http://www.brotherbrennancentre.ca/>

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

New Rochelle, New York

Schools Justice Network Conference



**Sr. Ona
Bessette**

Justice Coordinators from 14 Edmund Rice Christian Brother schools in the Americas meet at Bethany Center outside of Tampa, FL, for a conference, March 8 – 11, 2011. This was the second meeting of the Schools Justice Network (SJN), inaugurated in New Orleans in 2009. The conference was planned by a steering committee composed of Mr. Tom Gambardella (Bishop Hendricken HS), Mr. Bernie Kully (St. Thomas More Collegiate) Brother Kevin Cawley, CFC (JPIC) and Sister Ona Bessette, CND (OES). Other members of the SJN Executive Committee were instrumental in preparing prayers and presentations: Mr. Tom Schutte (O’Dea HS) and Mr. Daniel Devincenzi and Ms. Glennis Oliver (Colegio Cardenal Newman, Buenos Aires). Brother Moy Hitchen, CFC, from Edmund Rice International also contributed to the program.

Warm and clear weather in Florida greeted the 20 participants and the comfortable accommodations at Bethany Center nourished the spirit of the group. Returnees from the NOLA conference greeted one another and shared stories of activities planned and justice projects initiated. New participants joined readily into the mix as all shared similar hopes and desires to become agents of change and advocacy for the marginalized and poor. Participants shared their hopes for the gathering in words such as, *“I hope to find useful information, share ideas with other schools/teachers, get clarity on justice topics and specify practical action steps to build upon.”*

The topics of the conference flowed from the Congregational and Provincial Chapter directions: Care of the Earth and Immigration. Kevin Cawley, CFC, revisited the essential aspects of eco-justice with the participants. His presentation challenged the schools to look at ways to incorporate these principles into the life of the schools. Daniel Devincenzi and Glennis Oliver from Colegio Cardenal Newman in Buenos Aires, Argentina shared with the conference members the project for creating a sustainable school that they have begun. Their process for reviewing the ecological footprint of the school is a model for other schools to consider.

John Zokovitch, Communications Director from Pax Christi USA, presented a session on Advocacy: The Power of Witness, Strategizing for Change. John had worked with the students at the ACTION Leadership Workshop last September. In this session, he helped the Justice Coordinators to identify their own experiences of service and advocacy. Making links with the experience of students is essential in order to engage them in offering service and working towards advocacy for the poor. The beginning point of moving from offering service to becoming advocates is to ask the question, “Why? – Why are people hungry, mistreated, denied their rights ...?” Confronted with these questions, hearts are more open to transformation and change. Personal transformations lead individuals to move with a compassionate heart to exert influence to bring about change. Individuals working together look for communal and structural transformations that advocate for the voiceless and powerless.



In preparation for an immersion experience with migrant farm workers in the Tampa area, the conference participants viewed the film *Dying to Live: The Migrant’s Journey* (<http://www.dyingtolive.nd.edu/other.html>). After the film, Brother Ben McDonough, CFC, spoke about his experiences working in Bonita Springs with

migrant families. His stories and reflections helped to bring the reality of migrant workers closer to home. Students from Bishop Hendricken HS (Warwick, Rhode Island), Tampa Catholic HS (Tampa, Florida), and Trinity Catholic HS (Ocala, Florida) traveled to Bonita Springs last summer to offer service in a summer camp program for children of the migrant families.

The sunny Florida skies gave way to thunderstorms and rain on March 10th as the conference participants boarded a bus to travel to St. Clement Parish in Plant City, FL. Janice Putvin, the Director of Migrant Ministries at the parish, and Lourdes Villanueva, Coordinator of the Redland Christian Migrant Association Headstart Centers (<http://www.rcma.org/index.asp>), organized a program that brought conference participants in groups of five to various centers in Plant City servicing the migrant camps.

The Justice Coordinators arrived in Plant City during the heart of the Strawberry Festival. While hundreds of visitors entered the fair grounds to be entertained and feast on strawberries, conference members visited the educational centers where young children of the farmer worker families were provided early childhood education. The Heartstart Centers operate from October through April or May to provide services for migrant families while they are in the area. Instruction is initially all in Spanish, but as children reach about age four, bilingual instruction begins. Classes and programs are also available for parents to help them raise and educate their children. Many workers at the centers have also been raised in migrant worker families that had emigrated to the area from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador.



Workers in Plant City

From the joyous sounds of young children at play, the next stop for the groups were the camps where the migrant families live in small houses or trailers, often shared with one other family. Conference participants experienced a feeling of welcome and the desire to share refreshments and a few stories. The most memorable part of the day was the time spent in the strawberry fields laboring side-by-side with the workers. Since the day began with rain, picking was delayed until almost eleven o'clock in the morning. Lost hours of work meant loss wages. On that day, a flat of strawberries weighing about eight pounds earned the worker \$1.50. Pickers ran from the rows of berries to the collecting stations with two or three full flats on their shoulders eagerly handing in their goods and waiting to get their blue ticket punched for each flat picked. Rapidly they returned with empty flats and plastic containers to collect more berries. Many wore layers of clothes to protect against the sun and wind; nothing could protect their hands from picking produce that had been sprayed with pesticides. While field managers explained how to pick and fill the strawberry containers and encouraged SJN leaders to try their hand at picking, the reality all around this light moment was ferociously serious. Workers barely had a moment to smile or say hello – their livelihood and that of their families depended on picking sufficient amounts of berries each day.

Returning to the parish educational center, conference participants had time to share initial reflections and stories before they feasted on a lunch of chicken, rice, beans, and tortillas prepared by a parishioner. Janice Putvin gave an overview of the services that the Migrant Ministry Office in the parish endeavors to provide the families in the camps. Rogelio Villanueva, Director of the Hillsborough County Public School Office of Migrant Education, spoke about the available services for the education of primary and secondary school children. Often they come into the schools part way into the academic year and may leave before completing the course of studies. Disruption and discontinuity are the most common elements of migrant children's education. If education is a vehicle of stepping out of the cycle of poverty – will these children have an opportunity for a different future?

Returning to the retreat center, conference participants had time to reflect on the immersion experience. Sharing about the experience revealed the profound impact the visits had on the participants. The *human face* of the migrant reality was revealed in the sharing – the look of determination of workers filling strawberry flats

– the covered face of a young woman protecting her from the strong sun – the laughing eyes of an eager child learning a new word – the expression of hope in the words of a young migrant family for a future for their children. Questions emerged from the reflection: *How do we tell the story of the migrant family to others? How could the schools respond and become voices for the voiceless? How are government policies and budget decisions affecting the survival of migrant workers?*

At the end conference, the School Justice Network representatives identified goals and direction for the group for the next two years. The Executive Committee, composed of Tom Gambardella (Chair, Bishop Hendricken HS), Daniel Devincenzi (Colegio Cardenal Newan), Bernie Kully (St. Thomas More Collegiate), Jay Louis-Prescott (Br. Rice HS – Bloomfield Hills), Douglas Romanik (ACND) and Glennis Oliver (Colegio Cardenal Newman), will guide the Network to continue to deepen the efforts for justice in the schools and grow as advocates for the poor and marginalized.

Sister Ona Bessette, CND, is the director of the Office of Educational Services for the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America and works from her office in New Rochelle, NY.

ST. MARY'S ACADEMY

Roseau, Dominica, West Indies



**Br. Bosco
Wakeham**

The **EDMUNDS** is an Apostolic Club for students in Christian Brothers' schools or former schools. The motto of the Edmunds is "The Lord Giveth" (Job 1:21). The Edmunds of St. Mary's Academy visit the Dominica Infirmary every Thursday after a short prayer-scripture service in the Brothers' Chapel. Except for the months of July and August, a group of Edmunds has been visiting the Infirmary once a week for 26 years. The old folks love to see young people who have time to chat with them.

The objective of the Edmunds is "To emulate Blessed Edmund Rice":

- in his love for the Eucharist;
- in his love for Sacred Scripture;
- in his love for Mary, the Mother of Jesus;
- in his love for neighbour-the poor and the needy;
- the sick and the shut-ins; the imprisoned and the young.

To be an Edmund means:

- To be faithful to Sunday Mass.
- To read at least six verses of Sacred Scripture every day.
- To recite one decade of the Rosary daily.
- To say the Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer every day.
- To perform one specific apostolic act of charity every week.
- To attend a short shared-prayer /shared experience meeting with fellow Edmunds every week.

Each group of Edmunds must have a Christian Brother or an Associate of Edmund Rice as a moderator. The moderator should have contact with the local Pastor and/or his assistants so that the Apostolic work of the Edmunds may be of service to the parish and the Church.

Membership in the Edmunds is open to pupils 12 years old and older. A personal invitation in writing with a copy of the objectives and means listed above is given to suitable prospective members. The replies in writing of those who accept the invitation to become an EDMUND are to be kept by the Moderator of the group. Each group of EDMUNDS should have a minimum of three members, a maximum of 12.



The Edmunds 2011



The Edmunds and Br. Bosco Wakeham (front left) visiting the old folks in the Dominica Infirmary



The Associates of Blessed Edmund Rice of Roseau, Dominica pose with the Brothers community in Roseau and our Province Leader, Brother Hugh O'Neill.

ARCHBISHOP CURLEY-NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL Miami, Florida

Through Hard Work and Fasting, Students from Archbishop Curley Notre Dame High School Raise Awareness About World Hunger



Ms. Lisa Morales

During the first week of March, 65 students representing The Edmund Rice Community (ERC) of Archbishop Curley Notre Dame High School fasted for 27 hours from all food and beverages other than water, seeking to raise their own consciousness about world hunger and in a gesture of solidarity with the poor. They also raised over \$4,000.00 and packed and distributed over 3,200 lunches to Miami's homeless. Now in its fifteenth year, the group broke last year's record by about 400 more packed lunches – each one contained a prayer card written by students.

The Edmund Rice Community (ERC) is made up of approximately 30 students and Christian Brothers who meet twice each month, plan and organize community service projects. "HungerFest" is a yearly event that raises consciousness of poverty and world hunger through Lenten practices of prayer and almsgiving. ACND students spend two days bagging lunches with products donated by the student body as well as the community. They also wash cars for a small fee and receive sponsorship donations from members of the community. In a gesture of solidarity for the poor, the students stay overnight at school and fast for the period that the event takes place.

This year students' efforts benefitted many organizations including: St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank at St. Patrick's, the Housing Assistance Center, the Salvation Army, the Miami Rescue Mission and the Women's House, Camillus House, and Safe Space. Monies raised are sent to Abrigot, St. Louis du Nord in the Diocese of Port De Paix, Haiti, ACND's sister school.

The experience helps students to become well-rounded citizens of society. They spend time researching about world hunger and poverty and make posters with 'factoids' that attract the attention of fellow students so that they can be educated too. It is also a very spiritual experience. After two days of continuous prayer and fasting, they celebrate their achievements together at an Agape Mass and meal.

Benjamin Rusnak, a photographer representing the Food for the Poor organization spoke to the students about his work and the importance of raising awareness about regions of the world plagued by poverty. His photographs document his experiences in countries such as: Honduras, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. The exhibit will be on display at the ACND Gallery of Art on the campus of Archbishop Curley Notre Dame High School until April 20, 2011.



During Archbishop Curley Notre Dame High School's "HungerFest," students packed and distributed over 4,000 lunches to Miami's homeless.



ACND Senior, Sanjay Singh, helps to wash cars to raise funds for the sister school, Abrigot, St. Louis du Nord, in the Diocese of Port De Paix, Haiti.

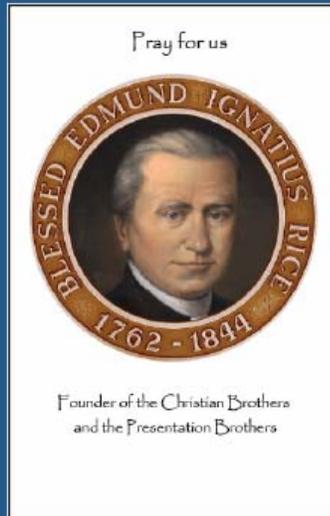
It was clearly determined that artists and students can share a mission to combat poverty in the immediate community and in the world through efforts such as HungerFest. Br. John Corcoran, CFC, an ACND English teacher and organizer of the event, stated: "Mr. Rusnak's photographs and his passion and honesty in recounting the successes and the tragedies those photographs captured definitely personalized the face of hunger for us. His tone setter presentation created a strong sense of purpose and empowerment for good that persisted throughout all of the wonderful work we accomplished during this event. I am sure the students will carry that spirit far into the future."

CAST YOUR NET WIDER

www.edmundrice.net

your global net for your global network

Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer Cards



Will be remembered in the daily Masses and devotions of the Christian Brothers' communities and share in the prayers and good works of the Congregation of Christian Brothers around the world.

Requested by: _____

Address: _____

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

for the Christian Brothers

Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer Cards are a beautiful way to assure loved ones of your prayerful support. Our Prayer Card is a singular expression in honor of some special occasion or at a sorrowful time for a bereaved relative or friend.

The benefactor's donation to the Brothers benefits the ministries of the Christian Brothers.

If you would like a set of Prayer Cards, please contact:

Brother Robert Burke
Christian Brothers Foundation
33 Pryer Terrace
New Rochelle, NY 10804
914-712-7580, ext. 420
rdb@cbfoundation.org



Jericho House, Wainfleet, Ontario

Jericho House Youth Leadership, Justice & Spirituality Center, an ecumenical and interfaith retreat center in the Catholic tradition, opens this month. An ideal location for retreats, meetings, conferences, and seminars.

Info: Jericho House 10845 Rathfon Road, Colborne, ON L3K 5V4; P: 905-834-053, F: 905-834-5230

www.jerichohouse.org

The Jericho House Team:

Sister Jacquie Keefe, cssf, Brother Bill Carrothers, cfc, Mr. Gary Bowron

BEST POEM IN THE WORLD

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.

Bob, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?
I would love to hear Your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake.

'And why is everyone so quiet,
So somber - give me a clue.'
'Hush, child,' He said,
'They're all in shock.
No one thought they'd be seeing you.'

JUDGE NOT!!

Remember...Just going to church doesn't make you a
Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car.

Every saint has a PAST...
Every sinner has a FUTURE!

Author: Unknown

Are You Called To Be A Brother To The World? Give It A Try ...

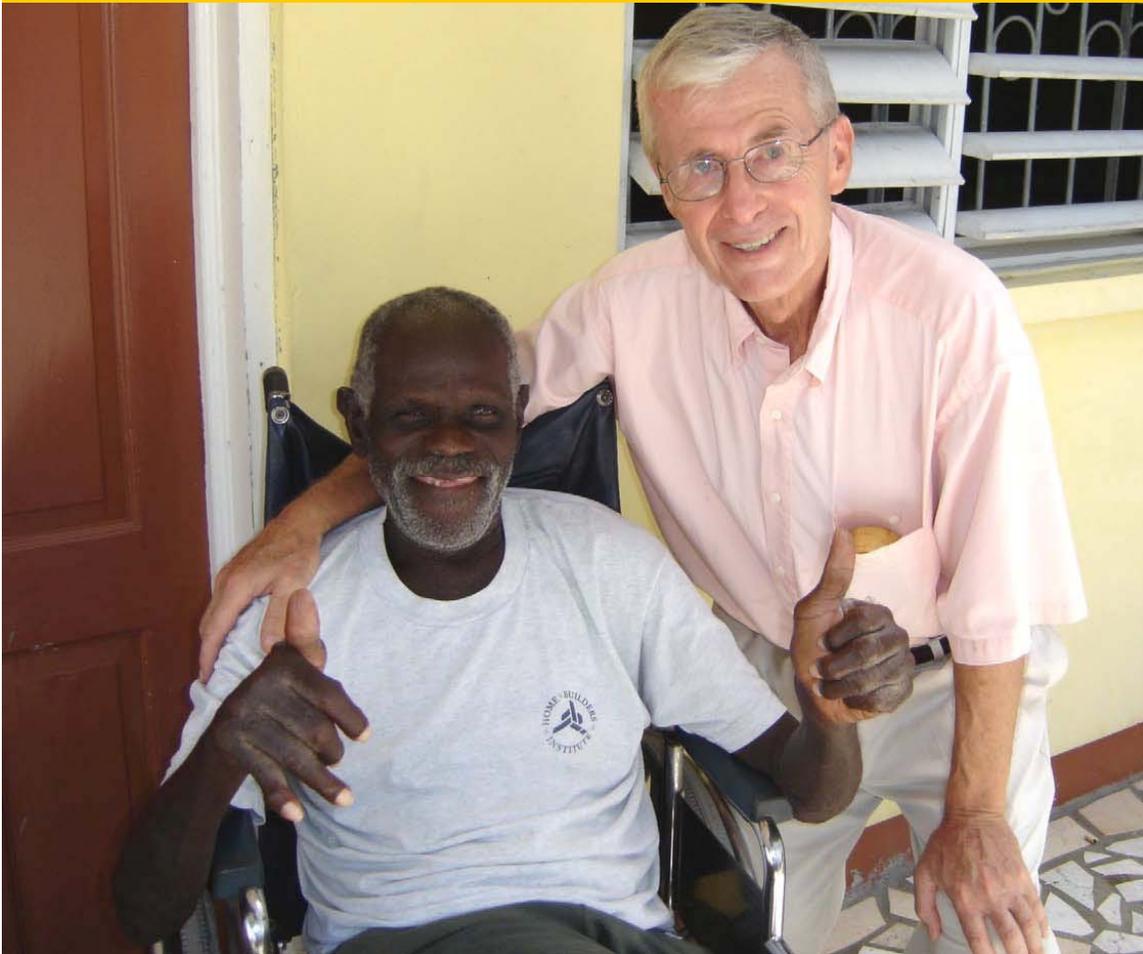
You have nothing to lose and you can learn a lot without having to make a commitment.

If you would like to experience what life as a Brother is like, we'd be pleased to arrange for you to visit.

You may be able to spend a day or so alongside a Brother in ministry and partake in community.

We feel that getting a taste of what we call the Congregation's "spirit" is the best way to help you discern if your call is to the Christian Brothers.

Take time for prayer and discernment and let Him lead you.



Being a Brother is a rich and fulfilling way to live.

www.erbrothers.org

In the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice, the Founder, the Congregation of Christian Brothers is an international community of vowed religious Brothers living and praying in community and missioned by the Church for Christian education. The men the Christian Brothers seek to join with them are Catholic men who sense a call to live in fraternal community and who wish to minister in the educational apostolates of the Church, especially to youth. They are men with the religious inspiration and dedication necessary to live a life of consecrated celibacy and who, through vows of poverty and obedience, place their gifts, talents, and possessions at the disposal of the community in order to meet the needs of God's people. Please contact one of the Brothers listed above.