

**Resource material for Prayer
based on
'Listening for God'**

General Chapter, Rome 2002



St Helen's Province, Ireland

For Private Circulation

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The Heart of Being Brother

Congregation Chapter Rome 2002

An Emmaus Journey

Our experience invites others to deepen their own Emmaus journey and to make their own ongoing discovery of the same gift. Our conversations arising from this experience signal something new that is beginning among us, but those conversations need to carry on and involve all of us. What happened at the Chapter can also happen in any gathering where we are prepared to enter the same eucharistic rhythm by trusting each other with our stories, starting just with the fragments of any ordinary day in our lives....

Introduction

What we do with our hearts affects the whole universe

This booklet of prayers was put together as a follow up to the Seven Directions that emanated from the Christian Brothers' General Chapter in Rome in March 2002. It is meant to be a resource for the Brothers and others who might like to spend some time praying these new directions. Take time in praying these reflections. Allow each of the directions to challenge you personally and to challenge you as a community. Each of the prayer sessions are so structured that they can be used instead of the usual Evening Prayer. They can be used in full or in part, depending on the time available for reflection. There is also a CD of most of hymns used in these prayers. A suggested hymn for each prayer session is offered. Hopefully these directions can be the focus of our prayers for the years until the General Chapter of 2008.

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David Ryan

Deepening the Spirituality of Being Brother

What have we discovered?

To be a Christian Brother is to receive a precious gift which invites us daily to walk the Emmaus way into the unfolding mystery of our quest for God.

What are our Heart Decisions?

To facilitate gatherings of Brothers to explore our lived spirituality, brotherhood, and Eucharist in the context of the Emmaus story.

To continue our journey into the heart of Edmund's charism with our Presentation Brothers.

To continue to avail of and evaluate present structures, processes, and programmes of Congregational and inter-Congregational renewal, including Trasna and Passover.

To provide training and support for leaders who aspire to lead others in their journey to the heart.

DEEPENING THE SPIRITUALITY OF BEING BROTHER [1]

HYMN: *Companions On The Journey* No. 5

We are companions on the journey,
breaking bread and sharing life,
and in the love we bear
is the hope we share
for we believe in the love of our God...
we believe in the love of our God.

No longer strangers to each other,
no longer strangers in God's house,
we are fed and we are nourished,
by the strength of those who care...
by the strength of those who care.

*We have been gifted with each other,
and we are called by the Word of the Lord
to act with justice to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly with our God...
to walk humbly with our God.*

Leader:

We are gathered to pray today about our spirituality as brothers. The theme of the Congregation Chapter 2002 was 'Listening for God'. The message from the Chapter is entitled 'The Heart of Being Brother'. It says: "***We have discovered that to be a Christian Brother is to receive a precious gift which invites us daily to walk the Emmaus way into the unfolding mystery of our quest for God.***"

Let us pause for a moment of quiet to reflect on the above message from the Chapter.

READING: LISTENING WITH THE HEART

Reader 1:

The most original insight of the Bible is that 'God speaks' to us through nature and history. The human heart is called to listen and to respond.

Responsive listening is the form the Bible gives to our basic religious quest as human beings. This is the quest for a full human life, for happiness. It is the quest for meaning, for our happiness hinges not on good luck: it hinges on peace of heart. Even in the midst of what we call bad luck, even in the midst of pain and suffering, we can find peace of heart if we find meaning in it all. Biblical tradition points the way by proclaiming that God speaks to us in and through even the most troublesome predicaments. By listening deeply to the message of any given moment I shall be able to tap the very Source of Meaning and to realize the unfolding meaning of my life.

Reader 2:

To listen in this way means to listen with one's heart, with one's whole being. The heart stands for that centre of our being at which we are truly 'together.' Together with ourselves, not split up into intellect, will, emotions, into mind and body. Together with all other creatures, for the heart is that realm where I am paradoxically not only most intimately myself, but most intimately united with all. Together with God, the source of life, the life of my life, welling up in my heart. In order to listen with my heart, I must return again and again to my heart through a process of centring, through taking things to heart. Listening with my heart I will find meaning. For just as the eye perceives light and the ear sound, the heart is the organ for meaning.

(A Listening Heart by David Steindl-Rast)

Leader:

Let us just pause again to reflect on what we have heard.
(Instrumental background music)

PSALM

Come, let us praise Yahweh joyfully,
acclaiming the Rock of our safety;
let us come into his presence with thanksgiving,
acclaiming him with music.

For Yahweh is a great God,
a greater King than all other gods;
from depths of earth to mountain top
everything comes under his rule;
the sea belongs to him, he made it,
so does the land, he shaped this too.

Come in, let us bow, prostrate ourselves,
and kneel in front of Yahweh our maker,
for this is our God,
and we are the people he pastures,
the flock that he guides.

If only you would listen to him today,
'Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,
when your ancestors challenged me, tested me,
although they had seen what I could do.'

'For forty years that generation repelled me,
until I said: How unreliable these people
who refuse to grasp my ways!
And so, in anger, I swore that not one
would reach the place of rest I had for them.'

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

- That we might have the courage to 'listen to him today' (Ps)....
Lord hear us
- That we might take time daily to notice how God speaks to us in the
'fragments of any ordinary day in our lives' (Heart of Being Brother)
Lord hear us
- That we might take the initiative 'to lead others in their journey of faith'
(Heart of Being Brother)
Lord hear us
- That we might have the generosity to respond to invitations to 'explore
our lived spirituality, brotherhood, and Eucharist'
Lord hear us

- That the memory of the brothers who have gone before us may inspire us to be faithful 'to the unfolding mystery of our quest for God.'
Lord hear us
- Personal reflections or intentions

OUR FATHER

Concluding Prayer

God, we thank you today for the gift of our brotherhood, which you have given to us as a precious gift. We ask that we may be open to new expressions of this gift as we journey with others, especially those in the Edmund Rice network. We ask this through Christ our Lord.



Deepening the Spirituality of Being Brother [2]

Reflective Music as an aid to Centering

REFLECTION:

Like all Christians, we Brothers are called to internalise Jesus's passionate commitment to his Father's dream for the Kingdom: a caring inclusive community of brothers and sisters united with the one Father – God.

We gladly respond to the gracious invitation to be the body of Christ – a body of people inspired, energized, and motivated by the indwelling Spirit of the Risen Lord, so that we become, in truth, the real presence of Christ in our world, for Christ has no body now on earth but ours. And so the Incarnation is ongoing.

Our call is to manifest in our lives God's presence in our world.

It is because of this that we strive to grow in reverence for one another as brothers so that our holy communion may give witness to all that God's dream is, in fact, a possibility.

In this way, our life together reflects, however imperfectly, the communitarian life of the Blessed Trinity.

HYMN: *Christ has no body now but yours* No. 14
(JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT)

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours;
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world;
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do.
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world;
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are his eyes, you are his body,
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours;
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world;
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

GOSPEL READING: *(John 14: 15-20)*

If you love me, you will keep my commandments; and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he is with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you. A little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me because I live and you will also live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.

AS BROTHERS

we do not seek power, status or prestige;
do not belong to any hierarchy;
do not seek to be “saluted in the market-place”,
But
to walk with others on a basis of equality,
seeking daily
to respect the otherness of our fellow-travellers,
to offer ourselves as fellow-pilgrims on life’s journey,
to engage in what might well be the ministry of ministries’
to be life-enhancing presences in our world—
ambassadors of him who came that all may have life,
and may have it in abundance.

PRAYERS OF PETITION:

As Brothers, Lord, we ask you to deepen our commitment to your dream for a world where justice, peace, freedom, and unity may become a reality for all. We pledge ourselves to work to the best of our ability to be truly Kingdom-people, witnesses to the reality of authentic, caring community. Lord, hear us

As Brothers, Lord, we desire to share our gifts, our possessions, our time, and our values with one another, with the Edmund Rice Network, and with all with whom we come in contact.
Lord, hear us

As Brothers, Lord, like Edmund we open our hearts to you present and appealing to us in the poor and all who are in any way marginalised. Lord, hear us

As Brothers, Lord, we pray that we may find you in the ordinary, in whatever lifts our spirits, in the beauty of nature, in the humdrum of our daily lives, and in whatever awakens in us a compassionate heart. Lord, hear us

As Brothers, we ask you, Lord, to open our eyes and hearts to the lonely, those who feel unloved, who suffer from “the famine of the heart.” Open our eyes and hearts to the unique value of those we live with, so that no Brother may feel unwanted or unappreciated.
Lord, hear us...

As Brothers, Lord, we pledge ourselves to reverence all of your creation, and to bow in humble gratitude for the gift of planet earth.
Lord, hear us

Our Father

Our Father

who cannot be confined to time, place or space,
but who are the Source of all creation,
may you be revered and obeyed by all people.
May your dream for a world of justice, peace, freedom,
unity, and love become a reality,
as it is with you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Give us this day all that we need to nourish us physically,
mentally, emotionally, and spiritually;
Forgive us when we fail to be loving,
as we forgive those who hurt us.
And may we always be enabled to resist whatever is not your will;
And deliver us from all evil.
For yours is the Kingdom to give and ours to receive;
Yours is the power to give and ours to accept;
And you, Father, are the all-holy One.
Amen.

For Brotherhood

Father, You have made us.

Red, yellow, brown, white, and black, tall and short,
fat and thin, rich and poor, young and old –
all are Your children.

Teach us to co-operate rather than to compete,
to respect rather than to revile,
to forgive rather than condemn.

Your Son turned from no one.

May we learn, like Him, to be open to that share of
the divine that You have implanted in each of Your
sons and daughters.

And may we forge a bond of love that will make
a living reality the brotherhood
in which we profess to believe.

Amen.



Deepening the Spirituality of Being Brother [3]

- Music playing gently in background
- As you take in a breath imagine you are breathing in:
A warm sunny day
Freshly cut grass
Scent of your favourite flowers
Sound of children laughing
- Continue to breathe deeply, feeling your heart beat –
Relax – relax – relax –
God, you are closer to me than my own breath.

May each breath I take deepen my awareness of your presence.

God you are as real as the sounds around me.

God you are as present and life living as the air I breath.

* * * * *

THE BRIGHT FIELD

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
the treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, not 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 was,
but is the eternity that awaits you.

R. S. Thomas.

'TO THE CHILDREN'

To all the children,
to the children who swim beneath the waves of the sea,
to those who live in the soils of the earth,
to the children of the flowers in the meadows, and the
trees in the forest,
to all those children who roam over the land,
and the winged ones who fly with the winds.

To the human children too,
that all the children may go together into the future
in the full diversity of their regional communities.

Thomas Berry.

WATCH AND LISTEN CAREFULLY

The man whispered, "God speak to me",
and a meadow lark sang.
But the man did not hear.

So a woman yelled, "God speak to me",
and the thunder rolled across the sky.
But the woman did not listen.

The man looked around and said, "God let me see you",
and a star shone brightly.
But the man did not notice.

Next the woman shouted, "God show me a miracle",
and a life was born.
But the woman took no notice.

So the man cried out in despair, "Touch me God and let me know you are there",
whereupon God reached down and touched the man.
But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

PSALM

In this erratic era of change,
 this earthquake season of transition
 which causes the crumbling and collapse
 of social structures and traditions,
I personally am a victim of the upheaval
and must seek a new direction.
I am challenged to rise up out of the rubble,
Not a victim but a victor.

O God of creations and transformations,
 who constantly begets new beginnings,
 inspire me by your perpetual creativity.
Call me to change,
 to dig deeply within myself,
 to find the uncultivated capabilities,
 the undiscovered diamonds and reserves of resources
 that you buried deep within me.

And as I step out to the edge,
 afraid and doubtful of my abilities,
 come and support me with your hand.
With your belief in me
 and your great hand to support me,
 all things are possible,
 as I seek once again to balance myself
 and to learn something new.

ENCOURAGEMENT

A group of frogs were travelling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered round the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all of their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead.

Finally one of the frogs took heed of what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out.

When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

So let us be supportive in what we say. Speak life to those who cross your path. The power of words is such that it is sometimes hard to understand that an encouraging word can go such a long way. Be special to others.

Hymn of your choice:

Recommended – “Ground of all Being” Hymn No 8
from “Melodies of the Universe”.

Believe in Miracles

Love your life.
Believe in your own power,
Your own potential,
And your own innate goodness.

Every morning, wake with the awe
Of just being alive.
Each day, discover the magnificent,
Awesome beauty of the world.

Explore and embrace life in yourself
And in everyone you see each day.
Reach within to find your own specialness.
Amaze yourself,
And arouse those around you
To the potential of each new day.

Live this day well.
Let a little sunshine out as well as in.
Create your own rainbows.
Be open to all your possibilities:
Possibilities can be miracles.
Always believe in miracles!

A Blessing

May you listen to your longing to be free.

May the frames of your belonging be large enough for
the dreams of your soul.

May you arise each day with a voice of Blessing
whispering in your heart that something
good is going to happen to you.

May you find harmony between your soul and your life.

May the mansion of your soul never become a haunted place.

May you know the eternal longings that are at the heart of
time.

May there be kindness in your gaze when you look within,

May you never place walls between the light and yourself.

May your angel free you from the prison of your guilt, fear,
disappointment, and despair.

May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world to
father you, mind you, and embrace you in belonging.



Healing and Reconciliation – A Need and A Call

What have we discovered?

As Brothers we are called to accept as gift the growth that comes through facing our pain and loss in a troubled world and suffering planet. As we learn to offer and receive healing and reconciliation, we find our wounded hearts bear within them the hope of new life and a renewed sense of joy.

What are our Heart Decisions?

To promote the highest standard of integrity and accountability in our lives and ministries.

To apply the learning from failures in the proper care of the young and to continue to respond in justice to people who have been affected by our past failures.

To formulate strategies for healing and reconciliation in community living and ministry.

To give particular attention in initial and on-going formation to programmes of healthy psycho-sexual development and ways to deal with trauma.

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION – A NEED AND A CALL [1]

1. **Leader:** [Allow the Brothers a few minutes of quiet to recollect themselves.]
(Quiet music if feasible.)

2. **1st Reader:** As Brothers we are called to accept as gift the growth that comes through facing our pain and loss in a troubled world and suffering planet. As we learn to offer and receive healing and reconciliation, we find our wounded hearts bear within them the hope of new life and a renewed sense of joy.
(Congregation Chapter, Rome 2002)

3. **Leader:** We will take a few minutes to ponder the following questions
 - (a) What in my life do I need forgiveness for?
 - (b) How am I hurt?
 - (c) How am I broken?

4. **2nd Reader: Reflection:** Theme – Healing

A man can lead a healing life on many levels.

Relationships heal when they are loving, affirming, reliable, committed, and loyal.

Nature heals: a tree, a walk by the sea, a stroll through the countryside; or a potted plant gives life when we turn in its direction.

Beauty heals: music, a poem, a novel, or a picture may move us and teach us about life.

Meditation heals: solitude, quiet relaxation, prayer, and cosmic consciousness bring an inner peace.

Laughter heals:

Physical activity heals: doing something for others helps us. At the basic level, accepting ourselves as loving and lovable men, just as we are, is the foundation for all healing.

5. **Leader:** Let us reflect and share with each other how healing comes to us in our daily lives.
6. **3rd Reader:** Childlike confidence in the Lord.
Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart
(Mt. 11: 29)

Antiphon. *Unless you become like little children
you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

O Lord, my heart is not proud,
nor are my eyes haughty.
I busy not myself with great things
nor with things too sublime for me.

Truly I have stilled and quieted my soul like a
weaned child.
Like a weaned child on its mother's lap
so is my soul within me.

O Israel, hope in the Lord both now and forever.
(Ps. 131)

Antiphon. *Unless you become like little children ...*

7. **4th Reader** Scripture Reading: Rom. (12: 9-12)
Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
8. **Prayers of the faithful.** Those present share their intercessions.
9. **Leader:** Before we end this prayer let us share peace with each other.
(Sign of peace)
10. **Leader:** Closing Prayer.

O God, remind me ten thousand times and more
of your endless absolution; not even sorrow required on my part,
so broad the bounty of your love.
Yes I can – I will – forgive, as you have forgiven me.
Amen.

and may even threaten my relationship with him.

But You know what they are, O Lord,
and how far I have fallen short
of Your standards and expectations.

I am only human, Lord.

It was not by my choice that I was propelled
into this fractured world.

The weaknesses that plague me
are not all of my doing,
nor can I handle them by my strength alone.

I know that nothing can be hidden from You,
I can only acknowledge my indictment
and accept Your loving forgiveness.

Purge me of my guilt, O Lord;
heal the hurts of those
who have been afflicted by my failures.

Revive my flagging spirit, O Lord.
Restore to me the joy and assurance
of a right relationship with You.
Reinstate me in Your purposes,
and help me to avoid
the snares and pitfalls along the way.

It is only then that my tongue will be set free
to sing Your praises
and my hands to perform the tasks
You have set before me.

It is only then that I can relate
deeply and meaningfully to my brother
and communicate to him
the message of reconciling love.

I bring You no oblation or sacrifice, my God;
only a foolish and self-centred heart.

I do come to You with a sincere desire
to be Your servant,
to walk in Your course for my life,
to receive Your love and channel it
to my fellowmen about me.

I thank You, God, that this is acceptable to You
And that I will remain Your son forever.

3. Slow to believe

You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets!

Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?'

We read in the Chapter document, **“The Heart of Being Brother”**, that the delegates

started to talk with each other about all that had been happening among us, our joys and our pain. Candles of good news emerged, and we found joy in each other and in our companions, who assured us that we were not alone in the dark. But the more honestly we spoke the more our cherished hopes seemed to recede into the distance.

But gradually, imperceptibly, another word started to be present in our midst – a word of new hope, of confidence, of life overtaking death. It was not that the floodlights of our accustomed certainties were switched on, but the flickering candles seemed to glow brighter as our appreciation of the darkness deepened. We were discovering life and healing even in the crucifying experiences. It was as if we were seeing everything anew, seeing with new eyes. It started to dawn on us how slow we had been to see what was really happening. We began to perceive the meaning implicit in our suffering – how fitting it was to have become marginalised ourselves, since we desired to develop compassion for those at the margins.

And as we became more at home with the presence of hope in our midst we found the courage to enter our deepest truth in all its starkness, to trust each other with the secrets of our hearts. What we came to see was that the breaking open of our stories, of our simple humanity, was profound prayer. As we got in touch with our fractured humanity we found ourselves touching divinity. Suddenly we recognised who it was that had been in our midst all along, that burned at the heart of our stories and our experience. All these years we Christian Brothers had prayed the words ‘Live Jesus in our hearts’ – how obvious it now seemed...

4. Questions for reflection

“As Brothers we are called to accept as gift the growth that comes through facing our pain and loss in a troubled and suffering planet”

Can you accept that gift?

“As we learn to offer and receive healing and reconciliation, we find our wounded hearts bear within them the hope of new life and a renewed sense of joy.”

Have you found that hope of new life and a renewed sense of joy?

The delegates at Chapter came to experience “that the breaking open of our stories, of our simple humanity, was profound prayer.”

Have you a similar desire? How would you go about making a beginning?

After spending some time reflecting on these questions, share on what you feel invited from within.

5. Scripture Reading: Luke 5:23,24.

If you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first and then come back and present your offering.

Call to mind ways in which you are in need of reconciliation, ways in which you have offended others or in which others have offended you. The offence may reveal an attitude of a bad heart or mind. It may reveal ways in which you misused your hands in relation to others or they had towards you. You may have used your feet to walk into trouble or not to have bothered going to the aid of another.

While you are reflecting on this we will play the song, “Lay your hands gently upon us.” When you are ready, pick a stone or a number of stones symbolising ways in which you have offended. You may wish to hold the stones for a brief period, reflecting on what they symbolise. Then as you place them on the cross at the appropriate places, ask Jesus to bring healing in those areas and to help you let go.

HYMN: *Lay your hands gently upon us* No. 23

Chorus

*Lay your hands gently upon us,
let their touch render your peace,
let them bring your forgiveness and healing,
lay your hands, gently lay your hands.*

You were sent to heal the broken hearted.
You were sent to give sight to the blind.

You desire to heal all our illnesses.
Lay your hands, gently lay your hands. *Chorus*

Lord, we come to you through one another.

Lord, we come to you in all our need.

Lord, we come to you seeking wholeness.

Lay your hands, gently lay your hands. *Chorus*

6. Intercessions: as one feels drawn.

7. Acceptance of others – brothers, past pupils, others.

Each person is invited to pick the stone of another as a sign of our need to forgive people and be forgiven by people. The stones are placed in a circle around the cross of Christ who is at the centre of all forgiveness.

The community stands in a circle around the cross and prays the Our Father together.

8. Closing Prayer:

These words are spoken by Carey Landry, in his song, “**Lay your hands gently upon us**”. Let us pray them together:

Lord Jesus, you are able to sympathise with our weaknesses, since you yourself were weak. Let the fullness of your power be with us
You know our need for healing. Touch our minds and our bodies
and make them whole. Let us know your complete forgiveness
and help us to forgive ourselves completely. Let the gentleness of
your healing touch rest upon us. Amen.

HYMN:

The Brother Song

No. 22

Will you let me be your brother,
Let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my brother too.

We are pilgrims on a journey;
We are travellers on the road.
We are here to help each other

Walk the mile and share the load.
I will hold the Christ-light for you;
In the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.
I will weep when you are weeping.
When you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
'Til we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.



Seeking New Brothers

What have we discovered?

Rekindling our efforts to seek new members will in turn transform the heart of the Congregation and rediscover the precious gift of Brotherhood.

What are our Heart Decisions?

To appoint Brothers to full-time vocation ministry for provinces and regions

To establish trans-province formation centres world-wide in readiness to accept new members and to identify suitable personnel who will undergo professional training for formation.

To recognize and respect the culture from which the candidates for formation are drawn and acknowledge the international aspect of the Congregation.

To create communities of welcome where new members feel at home.

Seeking New Brothers

[1]

'Rekindling our effort's to seek new members will in turn transform the heart of the Congregation and rediscover the precious gift of Brotherhood?'

Invitation to Pray:

Leader: As vowed religious we are invited to participate in the life and mission of Jesus in a particular way. This evening we are invited to commit ourselves with fresh enthusiasm. We gather now, as community, to give thanks to God for the opportunity we have had to live and serve as vowed religious. May our life in community be a sign for the world and a compelling force that leads people to faith in Christ.

All: We pray that men and women may respond to God in their lives, that they may be open to religious life as a viable option for their future, and that we may serve as sources of encouragement and inspiration in their search.

Hymn: Any appropriate hymn may be sung or played.

Psalm: **Psalm 95**
A psalm of personal commitment, obligation and decision.

O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
Hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him giving thanks,
With songs let us hail the Lord.

For the Lord is a great God,
And a great king above all Gods;
In his hands are the depths of the earth,
And the tops of the mountains are his.
His is the sea, for he has made it,
And the dry land, which his hands have formed.

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
Let us kneel before the God who made us
For he is our God and we
The people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me though they saw my work.

O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your heart.

Leader: God, we praise and thank you for the wonder that you have created each of us to be. May we respond to your love in our lives with renewed enthusiasm and a deep desire to share this with others. Help us to trust that you continue to guide us and hold us fast.

Reader: *The Emmaus Moment (Luke 24:13-35)*
That very same day a group of them were on their way to a common future, which lay just ahead, beyond what they could see. As they walked into the future they talked about all the happenings among them. As they talked with one another God joined them and moved with them.
But something kept them from seeing and understanding what was REALLY happening. So, God entered their hearts and asked, "What is it that troubles you? What are you wondering about? What questions unsettle you?"
The group stopped, full of fear and anxiety, and began to reflect, saying:

We thought it would be simpler.
We thought our choices would be clearer.
We thought our values and priorities would be more evident.
We thought there would be more uniformity.
We thought we would agree more easily on basic issues.

We thought our resources would be more extensive.
We thought God would lead us more directly.
We thought that conflicts, doubts, and confusion would lessen.

We thought that our common charism would ensure a
common vision.
We had hoped our future would be uncomplicated.
We had hoped things would not be so messy.
We had hoped our experiences would confirm what we knew,
not change it again.
We had hoped our familiar theories would still fit.
We had hoped.
We had hoped.

And now, some among us are saying that things are not as we
first imagined them to be. Now some are saying that the future
continues to challenge us in different ways: IS THIS OF GOD?
And God said, "How slow you are as a group! How hard it is for you to
trust! Have I not promised from the beginning to be with you, to
sustain you, and to continually reveal my plans to hearts that are
open? Have I not promised you more than you can ask for or
imagine?"

And God spent time going over the history of the people gathered,
and the ways that the mystery continues to be revealed. God raised up
many ordinary events and interactions and showed the people
gathered God's own way of being with them.

By the time the people had begun to understand the depth, the
breath, and the height of the love of God for them, they were already
one step further into the future.

They wondered if they could sustain that kind of hope: it felt as if God
was not going to be present as clearly as they had thought. They
invited God to remain with them and to continue to help them notice,
celebrate, and be open to the ongoing revelation, to walk through
those doors into an unknown future.

And God chose to stay with the people.

God and the people gathered, the people recognized the mystery at
work among them, and they grew more confident in sharing with
others that God's love could be counted on. They move on with their
lives, trusting that what God has in store will be created together and
will include more than they could ever ask for or imagine.

Magnificat Ant.

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
Since God has had regard for my humble state.*

Magnificat: A moment to celebrate our vocation

My soul glorifies the Lord,

my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
Henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
On those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
And scatters the proud-headed.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
And raises the lonely.

He fills the starving with good things,
Sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
Remembering his mercy,
The mercy promised to our fathers,
To Abraham and his sons for ever.

Ant: *My soul magnifies the Lord,
Since God has had regard for my humble state.*

Intercessions:

By our community living, our listening to the Word among us, and by sharing our vulnerabilities, may we be opened up to the energy and hope that so often lies buried within us.

Lord, hear us.

May we, who are called to follow Christ through the profession of religious vows, open our eyes anew to this call in our time and place. Grant us the courage, the skills and the faith to continually discern the understanding and lived reality of our vows for today's world.

Lord, hear us.

May we grow ever more and more into the awareness that we, as community, with all our vulnerabilities and imperfections, are the Body of the Risen Jesus. May we find space to be in touch with and celebrate this mystery in our daily lives.

Lord, hear us.

May we continually reflect on and evaluate the quality of our community lives so

that our homes may be places of open hospitality and welcome to all who wish to be associated with us.

Lord, hear us.

May we, by our vitality, our joy and our hope attract new members and associates to join with us in an experience of community, prayer and ministry.

Lord, hear us.

Time is provided for voluntary intercessions.

Our Father.

Concluding Prayer:

All:

“Glory be to God
Whose power, working in us,
Can do infinitely more
Than we can ask for or imagine.”

Eph 3: 20

Hymn

Any appropriate hymn may be sung or played.



Intercessions (*spontaneous*)

Theme: *Seeking New Brothers.*

Concluding Prayer:

Lord, you have called us to brotherhood; you have called us to constant conversion and to making simplicity a way of life. You have called us to intimate sharing and to mutual support. We pray that New Members may join our Congregation, and that we may be open to what that new membership may be. Holy is the work now beginning; blessed is the first step; blessed are they with courage to begin this work. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN:

Holy and Anointed One

No. 11

(*R. Butler*)



Educating the Minds and Hearts of the Young

What have we discovered?

We acknowledge the immense contribution over the last two hundred years that Brothers and their colleagues have made to the liberating education of the young. There is joy and gratitude in the development of greater shared responsibility among our partners in the school ministry.

What are our Heart Decisions?

To ensure that Christian Brother schools are communities of learning and of faith and justice, where students, parents, and staffs are educated to a practical awareness of social inequity.

To continue a process of identifying the distinctive values of Edmund Rice education.

To develop across the Congregation a network of those involved in the transmission and development of the Edmund Rice charism in the school network

To address the issue of future ownership and responsibility for Christian Brother schools.

EDUCATING THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF THE YOUNG [1]

YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES

Dedication of our Prayer time

O God, at the beginning of this time of prayer, we lift up to you our hearts overflowing with gratitude for the many gifts and blessings that you have given to us and to the Congregation. We ask that all persons who are in need this day, especially the young and those who are close to our hearts, may also be refreshed, and strengthened by the rivers of grace that will flow from this place of prayer. May your Holy Spirit take us by the hand and lead us deep into the centre of our hearts, into your Holy of Holies. Amen.

Lighting the Community Candle

As we bring fire to this candlewick, making it glow with light, may we also bring the fire of love to this time of prayer and worship. May this holy candle send forth dancing rays like sunrise on the most glorious morning, and may these rays of light encircle us and those we love. We give thanks, O Lord, for all the graces you have bestowed on our Congregation since its inception and for this happy moment, and we ask that as we are as one in this circle of light, we may always be one with you in the circle of your loving presence.

The Mission of the Christian Brothers

‘When Edmund Rice converted the stable in the fashionable New Street area of Waterford into his first school, among the objectors was Mr Compton, a Quaker and a friend of the founder. For Mr Compton, the opening of such a school for the poor not only lowered the tone of the area, but it was foolish and impractical. In taking this view, the Quaker was simply mirroring the attitudes of the time, which held that the education of the lower classes was worse than a waste of time and resources: it was a dangerous political act, undermining the established social order.

These objections were obviously unconvincing to Edmund Rice who, according to accounts, told Mr Compton that “the only hope of improving the lot of the poor was through education and that of himself he could not hope to

effect great changes in the boys, but he felt confident with the blessing of God to be able to uplift and raise them to the status of men". '

(from a talk to the Provincial Chapter of the Brothers, August 1995, by Peadar Kirby).

Reflection

While there are still political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions to the great ills of our own time, the spiritual malaise appears to be primary and must be addressed at the spiritual level. We, as Christian Brothers, have an enormous amount to offer on this journey inwards. How can we accompany the bruised and battered in our society on their journey towards Christian maturity? How can we become 'anam cara' to the young and immature? How can we help to make the commitments of Baptism and Confirmation realities in the lives of those we come into contact with?

Readings

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour. *(Luke 4:18-19)*

I am the light of the world:
anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark; he will have the light of life. *(John 8:12)*

Accepting the Word of the Lord

Who needs the light today? Are there still poor to whom we can announce the joyful message? In his own day many heard the message of Jesus but did not understand the importance of what he was saying for their own lives; for them Jesus was not yet *the good news*. In our Baptism and again in Confirmation we professed to accept Christ into our lives.

The leader of the prayer group holds a copy of the Holy Bible and says:

Receive the Holy Scripture.
Accept with humility the word of
God that it may bear the fruits of
faith in your heart.

Response: May your words, O Lord, be to me spirit and life.

Listen to this law, my people,
pay attention to what I say;
I am going to speak to you in parable
and expound the mysteries of our past.

What we have heard and known for ourselves,
and what our ancestors have told us,
must not be withheld from their descendants
but be handed on by us to the next generation;

that is: the titles of Yahweh, his power
and the miracles he has done.
When he issued the decrees for Jacob
and instituted a Law in Israel,
he gave our ancestors strict orders
to teach it to their children;
the next generation was to learn it,
the children still to be born,

and these in their turn were to tell their own children
so that they too would put their confidence in God,
never forgetting God's achievements,
and always keeping his commandments,

and not becoming, like their ancestors,
a stubborn and unruly generation,
a generation with no sincerity of heart,
in spirit unfaithful to God.

They blasphemed against God.
'Is it likely', they said, 'that God
could give a banquet in the wilderness?'

Admittedly, when he struck the rock,
waters gushed, torrents streamed out,
but bread now, can he give us that,
can he provide 'meat for his people?'

Response: *Your words, O Lord, are spirit and they are life*

Prayers of Intercession

1. Lord, in Baptism we die with Christ to rise again in him. Strengthen us by your Spirit to walk in the newness of life as your adopted children.
Lord, hear us.
2. Lord, your word of life gives us a new birth. May we receive it with open hearts, live it with joy, and express it in love.
Lord, hear us.
3. Lord, fulfil your promise. Send us your Holy Spirit to make us witnesses before the world to the good news proclaimed by Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Lord, hear us.
4. Lord, we thank you for our share in your continuing work of creation; praise you for your gifts to humankind of inventive skill and creative vision.
Lord, hear us.
5. Lord, who gives us courage and strength, help us to risk reaching out to others.
Lord, hear us.

Our Father

Final Prayer

Lord, we believe in you and know that you love us as we walk each day beside you. You know us by name, and we want to be your friend and to grow as friends among ourselves.

May your Word enlighten our steps so that we may inspire fidelity and confidence in you and in one another.

Be with us, Lord, in all we do and say in our friendships; make us ready to forgive and to understand, to forget ourselves and our own concerns, and look on the concerns of others as equally important.

Help us always, Lord, to know you as a friend, and, in knowing this, to offer our friendship to others.

This we ask of you through Jesus Christ your Son.

Amen.

Educating the Minds and Hearts of the Young [2]

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold
future promise.....

Oscar Romero

OPENING PRAYER:

Spirit God, Giver of all gifts, you are the life-giving Spirit who sets us free. You are both promise and uncertainty, poverty and hope, comfort and challenge. Gift us with courage to proclaim the truth, and strengthen us to work for justice and peace.

Waken in us a spirit of joy that we may celebrate the giftedness of ourselves and our sisters and brothers.

To all of us send your Spirit, O God, to make us whole, to make us know that you have created us in your image, and that you are our Mother and Father, our sister and brother, our friend. Amen

Introduction

That same day, Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables. (Mark 4:1,2)

Parable of the sower

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Jesus went on to say, 'The Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field. He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. The

soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the ear, and finally the ear full of corn. When the corn is ripe, the man starts cutting it with his sickle, because harvest time has come.'

Pause for Reflection

Gospel Reflection

I believe that this is one of earth's finest moments, that the sun lifting yellows and greens into the life of tiny poplar leaves is much like God's own Spirit of love lifting life into me.

I believe that the Word of God has many times been planted in my life, often because of another who received the seed in ready soil, brought forth a harvest, and shared that goodness with me.

I believe that the call to be a sower of the Word is a privilege and a blessing, that no one can ever earn the right or claim the duty, that it is a gift freely given and a ministry to be constantly celebrated in gratitude.

I believe that great things can come forth from even the tiniest seed planted in love and cared for tenderly in the heart of another.

I believe that usually only God knows what sprouting and greening will come from the Word planted through my ministry. I am content in knowing that I have tried, with the Sower's grace, to seed that Word in faith and with joy.

I believe that even the most insignificant aspects of life can be the seed of God's gifting, that deeper faith can root and mature in very ordinary soil.

I believe that some dying of seed has to take place before it can give itself over to life, that every heart has its germination time, its dark moment, before the future hallowedness of harvest comes.

I believe that it takes much patience to sow a seed, to freely give it away to the heart of earth, to allow it to take root and to grow in its own good time.

I believe that my life will always know its season of hope, that I will find flowers after every finality of ice and snow, that I will find green, growing things after every harsh, barren reign of winter's rage.

And, most of all,

I believe in the sower of all seeds, in the God of Springtime, in the Giver of all good and growing things, my Lord and my God.

Litany of the Seeds

Creator God, we ask you
to grant us the faith and the
enthusiasm to labour to scatter
the seeds that will one day grow.

Response: *Creator God, listen to us*

Caring God, we ask you
to water the seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

Response: *Caring God, listen to us*

Mother God, we ask you
to root the seeds in soil that
will ensure their future development.

Response: *Mother God, listen to us*

Nurturing God, we ask you
to provide the growth for seeds
that will produce effects far beyond
our capabilities.

Response: *Nurturing God, listen to us*

God of the Present, we ask you
to show us that we cannot sow
every seed, but that we can sow
some and we can do that much very well.

Response: *God of the Present, listen to us*

Eternal God, we ask you
to help us to be sowers of seed
of a future not our own.

Response: *Eternal God, listen to us*

Companion God, we ask you
to help us to take the steps on the
seed-scattering journey and to create
opportunities for your grace
to enter and do the rest.

Response: *Companion God, Listen to us*

The Edmund Rice Network – The unfolding Story

What have we discovered?

The development of the many expressions of the Edmund Rice charism fills us with joy and brings new life and energy to the Congregation.

What are our Heart Decisions?

To support and resource formation programmes enabling all expressions of the Edmund Rice network to explore the heart of the charism.

To develop more effective channels of communication among the various sectors of the Edmund Rice network.

To encourage further expressions of and deeper commitment to the Edmund Rice charism.

The Edmund Rice Network

The Unfolding Story

[1]

HYMN:

The Spirit of the Lord

No. 17

The Spirit of the Lord is now upon me
to heal the broken heart and set the captives free,
to open prison doors and make the blind to see.
The Spirit of the Lord is now on me.

The Source of our Network

Edmund Rice had a passionate predilection for the poor. Nevertheless, his primary motivation was his passionate love for God. He did not set out to organise a group of dedicated teachers but to form a group of men in love with God and to prepare them for a life lived for God's glory.

Edmund lived his life himself first and then, by example and a kind of spiritual contagion, led others to live it too. He would have stressed that the primary ministry of Brothers in the Church is not any particular apostolic activity or pastoral service. Rather, it is a ministry of holiness and prayer. The first and most important contribution which Brothers make is to radiate holiness by the devotion of their own lives and to make the Kingdom of God present in the world through their own total dedication to that Kingdom. It is not primarily by what they do, but by what they are, that consecrated men and women serve the Kingdom and transform the world.

There is no adequate reason for becoming a Religious except that of desiring exclusively to give one's whole life to God, seeking closer union with Jesus, pursuing holiness, adopting a Gospel-based way of living, and desiring to live totally the call of Christ: "Come follow me". Everything else, all the works we perform, flows from this source.

(Pause in quiet)

Psalm 62

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.

My body pines for you
like a dry, weary land without water.
So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.

For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise.

So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy.

On my bed I remember you.
On you I muse through the night
for you have been my help;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.

Glory be to the Father...

Reading

Extract adapted from

Edmund Rice: The Man and His Times by Desmond Rushe. p49ff

Edmund was a man of exceptional stamina, with seemingly endless reserves of physical strength. He was a man of dispassionate passion insofar as he was consumed by a love which was intense and transcendental but which was expressed with a tranquility of mind that was altogether lacking in extroverted or demonstrative elements. If people felt obliged to describe him as one sent by God, they did so because they recognised an aura of sanctity springing from a deep well and not because of any image-building on the part of the man himself.

Edmund was inexhaustible in expanding the range of his concern.

He taught in the school and looked after the administrative side of a school catering for several hundred pupils.

He supervised the making and distribution of bread and clothes for poor scholars.

He involved himself willingly in a variety of works which were time-consuming and often grim. Worried about parents of his pupils, their illiteracy and their lack of religious instruction, he set up evening classes at Mount Sion, which were well attended. He introduced a Sunday morning school, and it too flourished.

He also found time to spend with prisoners in Waterford's city and county jails, where he and his Brothers gave instruction, disbursed money for prisoner comforts, and brought consolation and comfort to those serving sentences, especially those awaiting execution.

In stark contrast to prevailing attitudes, Edmund turned his efforts undeviatingly towards the poor. The more wretched, down-trodden, and suffering they were, the more he applied himself to their cause. One instance of the scope of his work can be found in his involvement with the Association for the Suppression of Mendicity, a society set up in the early 1820s for farmers and families who had been ruined by bad weather, crop failure, and partial famine conditions.

The whole atmosphere of Mount Sion was glowing with his presence, and novices who entered heard of his remarkable charity, of his spirit of reverence which showed itself in his attitude towards all things concerned with the worship of God, his great respect for the mysteries of religion, and his unhesitating submission to spiritual authority. It was the prudence, the almost inspired foresight, the charity, the forbearance, the enlightenment, all of which were the fruits of silent prayer before the tabernacle, that enabled him to steer the barque of the Institute through all the turbulent waters of the early years.

Song/Reflection

WHEN I NEEDED A NEIGHBOUR

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
Well, the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,
Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there...

I was cold, I was naked, were you there .

When I needed a shelter, were you there.

(Pause in quiet)

Shared Prayer

Different individuals are invited to choose a topic from the following, reflect on it briefly and then make their own 'spontaneous' prayer around their chosen theme.

1. For those who manage, teach, and support our mission in the schools.
2. For the boys and girls, the men and women who are drawn to Edmund Rice's charism and work.
3. For those who reach out to the refugee and the stranger.

4. For those who work for the relief of hunger and disease.
5. For those who reach out to those in prison.
6. For those who strive to relieve the concern of the homeless.
7. For those who organise young people to find a dignified way of life.
8. For those who reach out to addicts and compulsive personalities.
9. For those who strive to make known the person and charism of Blessed Edmund Rice.
10. For all those people who carry on the mission of Blessed Edmund.
11. For the Brothers who witness the life-style of Blessed Edmund and his early followers.

Concluding Prayer:

One Heart for Mission

Nano, Edmund, formed in your separate stories in the heart of the one Lord, you looked on the hard realities of your world and saw the Spirit's boundless possibilities. Living always close to your people you learned to share the Spirit's urgent longing:
".....that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Hearts broken open to the world's pain, hearts afire for justice and compassion, hearts free for service, joyful in welcome, steadfast to endure, you walked with firm step, hands open to receive life and to share life, learning to be sister, brother with each one, especially with the poorest, with the least.

At home now, in the presence of the One,
your lives show forth a unity not clear
when you walked your separate journeys here,
a unity of vision and of heart.
Together teach us all who walk your way
how to live as brothers, sisters, now
in our world which yearns in travail still
to be reborn, one family in God.

"Were not our hearts burning within us as he walked with us in the road?"

The Edmund Rice Network

[2]

Remembering with joy, bringing new life and energy to the Congregation

HYMN:

Come and Journey

No. 3

(David Haas)

Come to the song, come to the dance.
Bring all you are and all you can be.
Come with your voice, come with your heart,
Come and journey with me.

Come let the sun fill up your eyes.
Take the time to look around
And love, just love, and walk with each other,
Come and journey with me.

Come and see, come and be.
Be all you are, and all you can be.
And leave all behind,
And calm your mind,
Come and journey with me.
Come and journey with me.

Philippians 1:3-7

*I thank my God whenever I think of you, and every time I pray for you all.
I always pray with joy for your partnership in the Gospel from the very first day up to the present. I am quite confident that the One who began a good work in you will go on completing it until the Day of Jesus Christ comes. It is only right that I should feel like this toward you all, because you have a place in my heart.*

Quiet Time for Reflection

In quiet for a few moments bring to mind someone in particular – family member, friend, work colleague, faith-friend – who understands and shares your commitment to the charism and spirit of Edmund Rice.

Allow time for a spirit of gratitude to surface as these significant people come to mind.....

Accompanied by some quiet background music the following verses may be read aloud:

(Adapted from *Seasons of the Heart – Macrina Wiederkehr*)

My heart proclaims a feast – I have come to sing you songs.

I sing of your *warmth*.

The steady glow of your friendship
keeps melting the ice in my heart.

I sing of your *conviction*,
your passion for the truth,;
your thirst for justice calls
forth my hidden prophet.

I sing of your *gentleness* –
a strength sometimes hidden
behind strong convictions,
a strength I once couldn't see because
of my own walls of fear.

I sing of your *conversion*.
I celebrate God's love for you
and your constant coming home to that love.

I sing of your *hope* –
your willingness to go on
when all seems to be crumbling.
Not with eyes seeing all
but with expectation of the *promise*.

I sing of your love,
poured out joyfully at times,
reluctantly at times,
but poured out all the same.

And, finally, I sing of your forgiveness –
your loving me anyway.
I celebrate your patience,
your compassion,
your love,
and understanding.
I thank my God whenever I think of you.

Intercessions/Reflections

We allow a space for anyone who wishes to share a reflection or a prayer.

Concluding Prayer

Loving Jesus, Faithful Companion on the journey, we thank you for your presence in our colleagues in the Edmund Rice Network. We thank you for the encouragement and love we receive. Open our hearts to receive you in all the different relationships and ministries which are emerging in the spirit of our Founder, Edmund. May we be always ready to share the riches of our tradition. Encourage us to open up our lives to our fellow travellers and to trust them with our personal and collective sacred stories. Amen.



The Edmund Rice Network

[3]

LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP

Now we must look ahead, we must “put out into the deep”,
trusting in Christ’s words: “Launch out into the deep!”
What we have achieved cannot justify a sense of complacency,
and still less should it lead us to relax our commitment.

On the contrary, the experiences we have had
should *inspire in us new energy*
and impel us to invest in concrete initiatives
the enthusiasm which we have felt.

Jesus himself warns us:
“No one who puts their hand to the plough
and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

In the cause of the Kingdom
there is no time for looking back,
even less for settling into laziness.
Much awaits us, and for this reason
we must set about drawing up
an effective Edmund Rice Network.
It is important, however, that what we purpose,
with the help of God,
should always be profoundly rooted
in contemplation and prayer.
Ours is a time of continual movement,
which often leads to restlessness,
with the risk of “doing for the sake of doing”.

We must resist this temptation
by trying “to be” before trying “to do”.
in this regard we should recall
how Jesus reproved Martha:
“you are anxious and troubled about many things;
one thing is needful”.

(Adapted from *Novo Millenio Ineunte*, Jan 6th 2001)

Pause for reflection

Prayer for New Life

Comfortable and well-worn are my daily paths,
whose edges have grown grey
with constant use.

My daily speech is a collection of old words
worn down at the heels
by repeated use.

My language and deeds, addicted to habit,
prefer the taste of old wine,
the feel of weathered skin.

Come and awaken me, Spirit of the new.
Come and refresh me, Creator of green life.
Come and inspire me, Risen Son,
you who make all things new:
I am too young to be dead,
to be stagnant in spirit.

High are the walls that guard the old,
the tried and secure ways of yesterday,
that protect me from the dreaded plague,
the feared heresy of change.
For all change is a danger to the trusted order,
the threadbare traditions that are maintained
by the narrow ruts of rituals.

Yet how can an everlastingly new covenant
retain the freshness and vitality
without injections of the new,
the daring, and the untried?

Come, O you who are ever-new,
wrap my heart in a new skin,
ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit.
Set my feet to fresh paths this day:
inspire me to speak original and life-giving words
and to creatively give shape to the new.

Come and teach me how to dance with delight
wherever you send a new melody my way.

(Edward Hays)

SCRIPTURE

“Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now It springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (*Isaiah 43:18- 19*)

*And the one who was seated on the throne said,
“See, I am making all things new.”* (*Revelation 21:5*)

“I know the plans I have in mind for you, plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you. Then when you call to me, and come to plead with me, I will listen to you. When you seek me, you shall find me, when you seek me with all your heart I will let you find me. I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have dispersed you. I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.” (*Jer 29:11 -14*)

A CANTICLE OF HOPE

**At this time, we are called to ignite a new meaning of hope.
It is a time of expectation and perseverance.**

**A time of relationship and listening to the wisdom
that resides in the recesses of our souls.**

**A time when, through new moments of self-expression,
our imagination erupts, and the divine becomes present in our lives.**

**A time when the inward search activates an increased momentum towards
meaning and purpose in our lives.**

**A time of great expectations and yearnings for a future of promise and peace
for the whole community of life.**

**A time to foster a listening heart that rediscovers the divine presence in the
poor of every species.**

**A time to encourage the prophetic voice and support the formation of an
ecological consciousness.**

**A time to face our fears and take whatever risks are necessary to discover
community and experience belonging.**

A time to realize that “the future is in the living room”, where people gather for theological reflection, dialogue, relationship, hope, information, energized action, and support.

A time to risk being on the margins of institutions and at the centre of the issues that are critical for this moment.

A time to ponder what the divine is inviting us to create.

INTERCESSIONS

For the gift of vision:
to see the things we sometimes miss
because our earth-eyes are so limited

ALL: Give us your vision

For the gift of conviction:
to live radically the gospel
you have preached to us

ALL: Give us your spirit of being servant

For the gift of servanthood:
to empty ourselves as you did,
to be willing to bend low
to wash feet, to heal wounds

ALL: Give us your spirit of poverty

For the gift of hope:
to stand on tiptoe with all of creation,
to wait believingly for rebirth, for growth,
for completion

ALL: Give us hope

For the gift of reverence:
to be gentle with the mystery of each other’s uniqueness,
to stand on holy ground and acknowledge
the value of all creation

ALL: Give us your reverence

For the gift to recognize my gifts when they are given:
to own them,
to claim them,
to acknowledge them as mine to give away.

ALL: Give us your own power of recognition

OUR FATHER

THE EDMUND RICE PRAYER



The Edmund Rice Network

[4]

This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God (*Micah 6:8*)

A Reading

“Very soon the rooms were filled with boys, poor lads utterly ignorant of even the first notions of religious or secular knowledge. They were rude and rough in manner and not at all amenable to the salutary restraints of school discipline. But Edmund Rice, joining to a commanding presence an agreeable and winning manner, gained the confidence of the most wayward, and soon established regularity and discipline in the school.”

(Edmund Rice, McCarthy, P 80)

Blessed Edmund Rice and his followers were united in their desire to work for justice, to free the people from the social, political, and spiritual bondage of their day by sharing from their own resources and providing opportunities for advancement of the poor through education and care. Inspired by the living memory of Edmund, the continuing challenge facing those who are linked within the Edmund Rice Network today, is to work together, carrying forward his vision and mission....*to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God.*

Hymn: Where to now, Edmund?

(Chorus)

We are called. We are gifted.
We are learning to respond
To the needs of the times
We are living here today.
We are called, we are lifted
We are hanging on your word –
Where to now Edmund?
Where would you go now?

Go to each other; yes, that’s what Jesus said.
Serve one other; that’s exactly what you did.
Out on the edges, the shadows,
A star was burning bright

To guide the young ones; you taught them
To claim their human right.
You said, "It's ours to choose, choose life!"
In God the healing;
Name what you're fearing;
God is revealing through the pride of the poor standing tall.

Peter Kearney from the album 'Islands of the Heart'

Scripture

If a man who was rich enough in this world's goods saw that one of his brothers was in need, but closed his heart to him, how could the love of God live in him? My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active.

(1 John 3:17-18)

Reflections

Saint John told his friends: If people are well off in worldly possessions and see their neighbours in need, but close their hearts to them, how can the love of God be remaining in them? Are we prepared to work, together with others in the Edmund Rice Network, and take the steps required to provide for the needs of the new poor and marginalised in our society?

"You cannot divide love. Its nature is to multiply, to embrace openly and widely, to draw in, not to exclude, to make each feel part of the group, to make each feel completely at home, to reconcile."

"Reconciled Being, Love in Chaos". by President Mary McAleese.

Prayers of Intercession

May the God of Edmund, who inspired him with love, give us vision and hope for a better world. *Lord, hear our prayer*

Jesus, you who healed the sick, fed the hungry, and spoke words of hope, grant to us, who are joined in common purpose in the Edmund Rice Network, the grace to give generously from what we have, whether of our money, time, talents, joy, or hope.

Lord, hear our prayer

You give us all that we have, and intend that we share with our sisters and brothers. Teach us to be open of heart and action so that we might act justly in the spirit of Edmund Rice. *Lord, hear our prayer*

Give us the grace of charity and, like Edmund, help us to see you, Jesus, in all people, especially in your poor people. *Lord, hear our prayer*

May the Spirit who worked in Edmund's life, and who continues to work in the world of today, guide us in our lives as loving Christians. *Lord, hear our prayer*

Praying with Edmund Rice

Father, you led Edmund Rice to serve you in great and unexpected ways.

May we be just as open and willing to be guided by you.

Open our ears to hear your call.

Open our eyes to see you in the face of a brother or sister.

Open our mind to understand your ways.

Open our hearts that we might be fired by your love. *Amen.*

("God is in the Ordinary", Teresa Pirola,)

Thanksgiving

Lord, we thank you for all you have done for us today. Help us to see you more clearly in our lives. Remember, Lord, all those we love.

Teach us to be more generous towards them. Stay close, Lord, to those who have been with us today, especially our fellow travellers in the Edmund Rice Network.

Comfort those whom we have harmed; forgive those who may have hurt us; bless those who have encouraged us.

May the work we have done today, Lord, give glory to you and be of service to our neighbours.

Final Prayer

These are new days.

We are called to live on the margins, or at least be aware of those who do, and take steps to be in solidarity with them in some way.

We open our hearts to Christ present to us in the poor. Amen

HYMN:

Song of Micah

No. 19

Refrain:

This is what God now asks of you.

Three things, that I want you to do,

To act justly, to love tenderly

And to walk humbly with your God

Blessed are you when you call my name,
I will hear you when you cry.

Blessed are you when you know your shame,
Rejoice for now has come your time.

Rejoice, you become love's sign.

Blessed are you who are poor of heart;
You shall have the earth to own.

Blessed are you when your own depart;
No longer shall you mourn.

Rejoice for I shall call you home.

Rejoice in me your peace alone.

Blessed are the ones who work for peace;
May you rest in heaven's care,

Blessed are you who know hunger's grief;
Justice will be yours some day.

Rejoice, though tears have strewn your way,

Rejoice in my kingdom you shall stay.



The Edmund Rice Network

[5]

HYMN:

Christ be our Light

No. 2

Refrain:

Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts,
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church
Gathered today.

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.
2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.
4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless,
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
Walls made of living stones.

Reading:

(The following poem could be read by several readers, perhaps taking a paragraph each.)

In this poem from Guatemala, “The Word” is taken from the sanitized realm and starkly placed in the world around us.

The Word, for our sake, became poverty clothed as the poor
who live off the refuse heap.

The Word, for our sake, became a sob a thousand times stifled
in the immovable mouth of the child who dies from hunger.

The Word, for our sake, became danger in the anguish of the
mother who worries about her son growing into manhood.

The Word cut us deeply in that place of shame:
the painful reality of the poor.

The Word blew its spirit over the dried bones of the churches,
guardians of silence.

The Word awoke us from the lethargy
which had robbed us of our hope.

The Word became a path in the jungle, a decision on the farm,
love in women, unity among workers,
and a star for those few who can inspire dreams.

The Word became Light.
The Word became History.
The Word became Conflict.

The Word became indomitable Spirit,
and sowed its seeds
upon the mountain,
near the river,
and in the valley,
and those of good will, heard the angels sing.

Tired knees were strengthened,
trembling hands were stilled,
and the people who wandered in darkness
saw the light...

The Word became the seed of justice,
and we conceived peace...
The Word made justice to rain,
and peace came forth from the furrows in the land.
And we saw its glory in the eyes of the poor
transformed into real men and women.

And those who saw the Star
Opened up for us
The path we now follow.

A time of reflection on the poem above. A time to remember
with gratitude those who have been mentors to us on our
journey.

A New Creed (Canada)

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
 who has created and is creating,
 who has come in Jesus,
The Word made flesh,
 to reconcile and make new,
Who works in us and others
 by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:
 to celebrate God's presence,
 to love and serve others,
 to seek justice and resist evil,
 to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
 our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
 God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Our Father (extended):

(Remembering especially the Edmund Rice Network spread throughout the world in the following countries; Canada, USA, Antigua, Dominica, St Lucia, Barbados, Grenada, Trinidad, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Sudan, Ireland, England, Italy, India, Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, East Timor, Fiji, Cook Islands, and Burma).

Our Father,
who is in us here on earth,
Holy is your name
in the hungry
who share their bread and their song.
Your kingdom come,
which is a generous land
which flows with milk and honey.

Let us do your will,
standing up when all are sitting down,
and raising our voice
when all are silent.
You are giving us our daily bread
in the song of the bird and the miracle of the corn.
Forgive us
for keeping silent in the face of injustice,
and for burying our dreams,
for not sharing bread and wine,
love and the land,
among us, now.
Don't let us fall into the temptation
of shutting the door through fear,
of resigning ourselves to hunger and injustice,
of taking up the same arms as the enemy,
but deliver us from evil.
Give us the perseverance and the solidarity
to look for love
even if the path has not yet been trodden,
even if we fall.
So we shall have known your kingdom
which is being built for ever and ever.
Amen.

Concluding Prayer:

Let us pray together:

God, our midwife,
Contain in your hands
the breaking of waters,
the blood and din of our birth.
Then, through our tears and joy, deliverer,
your wrinkled, infant kingdom may be born.
This is our hope, this is our prayer,
Through Christ your eternal Word.
Amen.

HYMN:

Christ be our Light

No. 2, Verse 5

Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
Making your Kingdom come.

Refrain.



A Prophetic Call to a Quest for Justice

What have we discovered?

Through the dislocation that comes from regular contact with poor and marginalised people, our hearts are transformed as we deepen our shared reflection of this experience in the light of the Gospel.

What are our Heart Decisions?

To engage with the poor and marginalised at our doorsteps and assist communities to develop a way of theological reflection and faith sharing.

To encourage Brothers to engage in radical relationships of equality with all God's creation and to support the Earth Charter

To promote networking across the Congregation on issues of justice and right relationships.

To expand our educational outreach in areas of great poverty, responding with a heart like Edmund's.

A PROPHETIC CALL TO A QUEST FOR JUSTICE [1]

(The selection of appropriate music, ambientation, and use of periods of silence and sharing is left at the discretion of the prayer leader)

We need only walk the streets, alleyways, slums, brothels,
and the dark recesses of our hearts' evening
to see the faces of God
– in places where we thought he'd never be –
you see we keep forgetting Jesus and the folk with whom he chose to be.
Noel Davis: "God of our Shadows"

Opening Prayer

We who have lost our sense and our senses – our touch, our smell, our vision of who we are; we who frantically force and press all things without rest for body or spirit, hurting our earth and injuring ourselves, we call a halt.

We want to rest. We need to rest and allow the earth to rest.

We need to reflect and to rediscover the mystery that lives in us, that is the ground of each unique expression of life, the source of the fascination that calls all things to communion.

We declare a space of Quiet, for simply being and for letting be, for rediscovering the great forgotten truths, for learning how to live again. Today we know of the energy that moves all things: the oneness of existence; the diversity and uniqueness of every moment of creation, every shape and form; the attraction, the allurements, the fascination that all things have for one another. Humbled by our knowledge, chastened by surprising revelations, with awe and reverence we come before the mystery of life.

ISAIAH 58: 1-11

Shout for all you are worth, raise your voice like a trumpet.
Proclaim their faults to my people, their sins to the House of Jacob.

They seek me day after day, they long to know my ways,
Like a nation that wants to act with integrity
And not ignore the law of its God.

They ask me for laws that are just, they long for God to draw near:
'Why should we fast if we never see it, why do penance if you never notice?'
Look, you do business on your fastdays, you oppress your workmen;
Look, you quarrel and squabble when you fast and strike the poor man with
your fist.

Fasting like yours today will never make your voice heard on high.
Is that the sort of fast that pleases me, a truly penitential day for men?

Hanging your head like a reed, lying down on sackcloth and ashes:
Is that what you call fasting, a day acceptable to Yahweh?

Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me – it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks–
To break unjust fetters and undo the thongs of the yoke,

To let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke,
To share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor,

To cloth the man you see to be naked and not turn from your own kin?
Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over.

Your integrity will go before you and the glory of Yahweh behind you.
Cry, and Yahweh will answer; call, and he will say, 'I am here'.

If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word,
If you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed,

Your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon.
Yahweh will always guide you, giving you relief in desert places.

RELIGIOUS LIFE – THE PROPHETIC DIMENSION

(Joan Chittester, osb)

Ezekiel is not here now to call us to globalism; Jeremiah is not here to prod us
to virtue rather than orthodoxy; Isaiah is not here to warn us against militarism;
Micah is not here to berate us for using the poor as objects of the rich; Hosea is
not here to alert us to the domestication of the Church; and Amos is not here
to unmask the effects of ruthless affluence.

There is only you and I now, and our communities that call themselves
“religious”, who can bring presence to these things. And presence may not be
much, but it is all we have and it may be all that matters. We must come to see

presence itself – no matter how powerless it seems – as the reason for our existence, because, in the long run, Christian presence is all any of us has to bring, and it is everything we will be judged on – not our success, not our achievements, not our institutions – only our presence and its lasting ring of truth will mark the final merit of us all...

It is not the loss of institutions that religious must fear, it is the loss of the fire/heat of the charism itself. It is the potential loss of prophetic presence that strikes at the root of religious life today. Religious life is to remind the world of what it can be, what it must be, of what it most wants to be: deep down, at its best, at its most human core. Religious life lives at the edge of society to critique it, at the bottom of society to comfort it, at the epicentre of society to challenge it. Religious life is a reminder of God's will for the world. The charism is the fire in the eye of God that focuses in our own. Who will ask the 'whys' of life in every period, if not the religious of the Church? Who can possibly be called 'religious' unless they do?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

How might discipleship of Jesus affect our way of being with the people to whom we minister?

How do the issues taken up by Jesus relate to our situation as disciples today?

Who are the oppressed and excluded today?

How can we stand up against this?

In what ways is the religious tradition oppressing people?

What might be required of us as persons/community/congregation by our answers to these questions?

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray for poor persons, the ones that come to our door asking for bread but who really need a sense of dignity. It is easy to give a bit of food and then ask the person to move on without even looking into his or her face, more difficult to speak to the person and, along with the food, give something of myself. May we be willing to satisfy people's hunger for **DIGNITY**.

Let us pray for our neighbours, especially the ones who are a bit odd and who are often left alone. The most they may get from others are a few hurried words about trivial things, mostly about the weather. May we make time for our neighbours, make the person feel wanted and be willing to satisfy the hunger for **BELONGING**.

Let us pray for the pupils in our schools, the ones who aren't so bright and may never bring honour to the school, the ones who never give us a sense of reward and fulfilment. May we never write them off, always be patient, help them to

BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES.

Let us pray for children around the world, especially the demanding ones. Some have all the material things they need, but hunger for **LOVE**. Others are written off because they are different, handicapped. Let us show them that they are not useless, that they can play their part.

Let us pray for older people, so often considered as useless and ignored by society. Let us go out of our way to include the elderly, to seek their advice, to learn from their wisdom, to satisfy their hunger for the feeling of being **USEFUL**

Other intentions...

OUR FATHER (For freedom)

Our Father,

New freedoms have trickled into our lives, so slowly that we are almost unaware of them.

Now we revel in the joys of fresh water, yet we stick to the shallows and think we are swimming!

When we dare to listen we hear you say, "Launch out into the deep!"

But as we feel the rising stream we are disturbed, for others as well as for ourselves.

We view our new freedoms gratefully, but inside you place such responsibilities. Overflow our hearts with the healing of liberation!

May loving justice flood our dreams!

Never let us rest until our emancipation is shared with all who are enslaved or alienated.

CONCLUDING PRAYER – FOR GIFTS

Jesus, give us your eyes for admiration, tenderness, pardon, understanding, and compassion.

Give us your ears as places of receptivity, attention, sensitivity, listening, and support.

Give us your mouth as an instrument of singing, of courage, of forgiveness, of tenderness.

Give us your hands for affection, for nearness and closeness, for respect, healing, and helping.

Give us your feet for approaching, for standing with those who are in need, for proximity.

Give us your heart of compassion, tenderness, love, and vulnerability.

A Prophetic Call to a Quest For Justice [2]

HYMN:

The Cry of the Poor

No. 16

(The verses can be recited and the refrain sung or the complete hymn can be sung.)

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord,
for He hears the cry of the poor.

Refrain: *The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Blessed be the Lord.*

Let the lowly hear and be glad;
the Lord listens to their pleas.
And to hearts broken He is near,
for He hears the cry of the poor. **Refrain.**

Ev'ry spirit crushed He will save,
will be ransom for their lives,
Will be safe shelter for their fears,
for He hears the cry of the poor. **Refrain.**

We proclaim the greatness of God,
his praise ever in our mouth.
Ev'ry face brightened in His light,
for he hears the cry of the poor. **Refrain.**

Meditation

(Can be read by one person, with a pause between sections, or read by two people taking alternate verses.)

This is what the Lord wants: that I act justly,
love tenderly, and walk humbly with my God.

This is what the Lord wants: that I wince at injustice;
that I allow the kid without a school,
the family without a home, the old robbed of their dignity,
make me sad, angry, make me wince.

He asks that I look with an eye of compassion,
listen with a sensitive ear, touch with a gentle hand,
walk at another's pace, enjoy another's good fortune,
cry with another's pain.

And he asks that I walk humbly with him:
allowing myself to be led in the way of his suffering,
in the path of his lowliness, to the garden of his resurrection.

And that is real religion.
Lord, help me to act justly,
love tenderly, and walk humbly with you.

Exod. 22:21-27

You must not wrong or oppress an alien; you were yourselves aliens in Egypt.
You must not wrong a widow or a fatherless child. If you do, and they appeal to me, be sure that I shall listen; my anger shall be roused, and I shall kill you with the sword; your own wives will become widows and your children fatherless.
If you advance money to any poor man amongst my people, you are not to act like a moneylender: you must not exact interest from him.
If you take your neighbour's cloak in pawn, return it to him by sunset, because it is his only covering. It is the cloak in which he wraps his body; in what else can he sleep? If he appeals to me, I shall listen, for I am full of compassion.

Magnificat

I acclaim the greatness of the Lord; I delight in God my saviour,
who regarded my humble state. Truly from this day on all ages will call me blest.

For God, wonderful in power, has used his strength for me.
Holy the name of the Lord,
whose mercy embraces the faithful, one generation to the next.

The mighty arm of God scatters the proud in their conceit,
pulls tyrants from their thrones, and raises up the humble.
The Lord fills the starving and lets the rich go hungry.

God rescues lowly Israel, recalling the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham's heirs for ever.

Intercessions

I remember that you, God, have chosen the poor to be rich in faith.
R: May I never dishonour them.

One who is kindly will be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

R: Gracious God, give us compassionate hearts.

Lord, you knew what it was to be in exile from your homeland.

R: Be mindful of those who must live far from their family and country.

Lord, be mindful of those who are exploited and discriminated against because of race or creed.

R: Lord, make us aware of the injustices of our world, and fill us with the desire to raise up the lowly.

Lord, remember all those who have died because of persecution or violence.

R: Give them the fullness of life, and joy in heaven.

Our Father

Concluding Prayer

God, our Creator, you who fashioned us in your own image and likeness, we thank you for the spirit of justice with which you rule. We pray that we, too, may make your justice known to all. May we always be disciplined in our acts and ever faithful in our words. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.



A Prophetic Call to a Quest for Justice

[3]

Prelude:

Take time out under the stars. Observe the Milky Way, our own galaxy. Our Sun is just another star in that galaxy, and our Earth is just a satellite around that star. God creates each and every one of them. Some are just nebulae like M42 in the sword of Orion. Each of us is present there. Our little bit of cosmic dust is part of this great creation. There are one hundred billion galaxies in all. In this wonderful panorama all are equal are in the eyes of the beholder.

The gathering:

Each person may share his feelings of wonder, awe, gratitude etc. Then as we look around our local area on this planet we notice that justice does not seem to exist for many people, and each person is asked to briefly state an example of injustice encountered.

Biblical texts:

(O.T. Micah: 6. 8)

This is what Yahweh asks of you:
Only this, to act justly,
To love tenderly,
And to walk humbly with your God.

(N.T. Mt 25.40);

As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my
brothers, you did it to Me.

Edmund Rice Texts:

Share on examples from the Founder's Life.

Contemporary text

The bread that they lack is what summons us, together with You, to be their daily bread.

(Pedro Casaldáliga: *Mi Cuerpo es Comida*)

In alternate groups slowly enunciate our vision for Justice (as one would a psalm).

- Justice is right relationships: personal, social and with the earth.
- Justice is not an option, it is Gospel.
- We are called to witness by Prophetic Action to our option for the poor and the oppressed and to solidarity with them (Constitution 26).
- Justice is to permeate our life and our mission.
- Justice is central to personal and community renewal.
- And leads to lived Reconciliation and Eucharist.

We learn to do justice by contact and solidarity with those who suffer injustice, if there is appropriate reflection in the light of the Gospel.

Spontaneous Shared Prayer

Final Prayer:

As Brothers of Edmund and Jesus, may we respond to the gospel imperative of justice by allowing our comfort to be disturbed and our hearts to be broken through the dislocation that comes from frequent and regular contact with the poor, the dispossessed, the voiceless, the marginalized, and the invisible. We ask this through Jesus our Brother. Amen.



A Prophetic Call to a Quest for Justice

[4]

We reflect this evening on the question of Justice, which is usually described as: “A harmony which comes from fidelity to right relationships with God, people, and the environment.”

HYMN: *Stay low to the ground* No. 12

The Beatitudes: Cut to the heart of Justice: be a peacemaker, be merciful, “hunger and thirst for Justice.” “Blessed” are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, and those pure in heart. “Blessed” also are those who are persecuted, even “reviled” in their fight for Justice. These principles opposed many of the conventional values of the Jewish and Roman world of Jesus’s day, and are in direct opposition to the values of many governments, most advertisements, and many people today. They spell out a moral revolution that rocked the world in Jesus’s time and still rock the world today wherever they are lived in their fullness.

Sustainability: Satisfying our own needs whilst not endangering the needs of future generations is a spiritual concept and an integral part of Justice. There is an urgency for fairness in a fragile world. Extractive Economies and Consumerism are impoverishing our Earthly home. The issue is to deflect the rich from the affluence that is causing pollution, poverty, inequity, social breakdown, and depression. Unlimited economic growth is the religion of materialism, and cannot be pursued in tandem with the spiritual concept of *Sustainable Development*.

“There is enough in the world for everybody’s need, but not enough for anybody’s greed.” (Mahatma Gandhi.)

Prayer for a New Dawning

*Great Spirit of the Universe,
you are always there, sustaining, loving, and accepting.
Let us absorb a broader vision of our origins,
our role, and our destiny.
Free us from misinterpretations of Creation Stories*

*that have hindered our growth,
influenced our politics, education, and legal systems,
and have led us violently to seek control over the Earth,
with the destruction of millions of other forms of life.
We are your latest species,
interconnected with all living beings:
“newcomers”, but unique,
in which the Universe reflects upon its own awesome beauty.
May we raise our voices in a prophetic call for Justice,
and make Peace with Earth.*

Systemic Change: Justice involves a change of mindset. Prosperous countries are asked to think, not in terms of “giving” to the “poor”, but rather of taking less from them. The solution is not more aid, or even more trade, but less exploitation, less injustice, less appropriation, less taking and more fairness. Whilst we may feed the poor at our door, and involve ourselves in works of charity, we must also ask, “Why are they poor”? Caring for the neighbour is a matter of Justice rather than an excess of love. The issue of poverty, therefore, must be pursued at the source of Power. It’s not in the mindset of politicians to change. We are called to be a driving force behind that change to enable people to live life with dignity.

The Natural World:

*The beauty of the trees,
the softness of the air,
the fragrance of the grass,
speak to me.*

*The summit of the mountain,
the thunder of the sky,
the rhythm of the sea, speak to me.
The faintness of the stars,
the freshness of the morning,
the dew drop on the flower,
speak to me.*

*The strength of fire,
the taste of salmon,
the trail of the sun,
and the life that never goes away,
They speak to me.
And my heart soars.*

(Chief Dan George.)

We need a new basis for our relationship with the Natural world. That basis is Earth Justice. Not only do humans have rights, the Earth has rights too. Therefore, we had better listen to the voice of the Earth as well as the cry of the poor. With the advance of technologies and scientific breakthroughs, industrial civilisation has been far too greedy and has depleted the natural world. Every component of the Earth community has three rights: the right to be, the right to habitat, and the right to fulfil its role in the ever-renewing processes of the Earth community.

Prayer of Confession:

Gracious God,
Who made the covenant promise with our ancestors,
we gather here today a rebellious people:
We want to act out your intentions for us,
but we keep getting mixed up
by all the glitter of the world around us.
You tell us to honour creation,
and we use other people, animals, and plant life only to meet our wants.
You offer daily bread to every living creature,
And we steal that bread from our brothers and sisters
In the name of our greed.
You promise us new life, and we shrink from it in fear.
Heal us God, lest we destroy ourselves.
We need your presence among us. Amen.

Perspective:

- ❖ If you have food in the fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep... you are richer than 75% of this world.
- ❖ If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace... you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.
- ❖ If you woke up this morning with more health than illness... you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.
- ❖ If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, the pangs of starvation... you are ahead of 500 million people on this, our Planet.
- ❖ If you can attend church without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death... you are more blessed than 3 billion people in this world.
- ❖ If you hold your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful... you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.
- ❖ If you can read this message you are blessed... more than 2 billion people in the world cannot read at all.
- ❖ Count your Blessings.

Prayers for a New day of Justice and Peace for all

Give us Lord, a vision of our beautiful Planet. Let it be place where the weak are protected, and no one goes hungry or poor;
A world where the benefits of culture are shared;
A world where different races, nations, classes, ethnic groups, and religious beliefs live in mutual respect;
A world where Peace is built with Justice, fired with love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to energetically work towards systemic change in an ever-changing world.



New Wineskins for New Wine

What have we discovered?

Restructuring is an urgent call to transform minds and hearts. It facilitates new life in mission and ministry, promotes prophetic religious living, and ensures a redistribution of resources in a spirit of fraternity

What are our Heart Decisions?

To embrace with our hearts over the next six years a coordinated reshaping of our present Congregational structures.

To conduct a professional analysis of our personnel and resources in order to assess adequacy for current and future mission.

To ensure accountability in the process of the redistribution and stewardship of resources.

New Wineskins

[1]

O Lord, open our lips,
And our mouth shall declare your praise.
O Lord, open our eyes,
That we may behold your presence.
O Lord, open our ears,
That we may hear your call.
O Lord, open our hearts,
That we may respond to your love.
O Lord, open our lives,
That we may rejoice in your creation.

Leader: Restructuring is an urgent call to transform minds and hearts. It facilitates new life in mission and ministry, prompts prophetic religious living, and ensures redistribution of resources in a spirit of fraternity.

(General Chapter 2002)

(Silent Reflection)

All Father of all creation, help us to embrace in our hearts a coordinated reshaping of our present Congregational structures. Help us to ensure accountability in the process of the redistribution and stewardship of our resources, and to be mindful that everything we have is your gift. Grant this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Ant: Blessed be God for ever.

I am the Lord, your Holy One
Creator of Israel, your King.
Blessed be God for ever.

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea,
a path through the mighty waters...
Blessed be God for ever.

I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
Blessed be God for ever.

I give waters in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert, to give drink
to my chosen people.
Blessed be God for ever.

The people I have formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.
Blessed be God for ever.

Glory be to the Father.....

Jer. 29:1-14

I know the plans I have in mind for you – it is Yahweh who speaks – plans for peace,
not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you.
When you seek me you shall find me, when you seek me with all your heart; I
will let you find me – it is Yahweh who speaks. I will restore your fortunes and
gather you from all the nations and all the places I have displaced you – it is
Yahweh who speaks. I will bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.

Silent Reflection:

In light of God's promise, how do I feel in my heart about the call of the
General Chapter?

A Psalm of New Wine Skins.

Comfortable and well-worn are my daily paths
whose edges have grown gray with constant use.
My daily speech is a collection of old words
worn down at the heels by repeated use.
My language and deeds, addicted to habit
Prefer the taste of old wine,
The feel of weathered skin.

Come and awaken me, Spirit of the new;
Come and refresh me, creator of green life;
Come and inspire me, risen Son,
You who make all things new.
I am too young to be dead,
To be stagnant in spirit.

High are the walls that guard the old,
The tried and secure ways of yesterday,

That protect me from the dreaded plague,
The feared heresy of change.
For all change is a danger to the trusted order,
The threadbare traditions that are maintained
by the narrow ruts of rituals.

Yet how can an everlastingly new covenant
retain its freshness and vitality
without injections of the new, the daring, and the untried?

Come. O you who are ever-new, wrap my heart in new skin,
Ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit.
Set my feet to fresh paths this day;
Inspire me to speak original and life-giving words
And to creatively give shape to the new.

Come and teach me how to dance with delight
whenever you send a new melody my way.

Prayers for our needs

We pray that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit, that our hearts will be renewed, and our vision clarified in love, so we ask:

R/ O loving Creator, fill us with your Spirit.

O God grant us to be sensitive to your presence in our lives,
– by taking time to pause for reflection and remembrance. **R/**

May we have the freedom to share what has been given to us,
– to liberate those with burdens too heavy to bear. **R/**

Guide our leaders that they may govern with wisdom and love,
– so that all may live in peace and harmony. **R/**

Give eternal rest to the faithful departed, especially the Brothers
who have departed this life
– may they rest in peace. **R/**

Our Father/Hail Mary

Concluding Prayer

Father of all creation, we thank you that you have given us a world rich in resources, and made us stewards of your mysteries; help us to act responsibly, not wasting or destroying what we do not need, not polluting the earth, or sea, or sky, that we may act with love towards all things, and so reflect the great love you have for the world. Be with us, Lord God, creator of all, to strengthen us on our journey, to guide us in all our doings, that we may share in the love and care for your world. Amen.



New Wineskins for New Wine [2]

'Restructuring is an urgent call to transform minds and hearts. It facilitates new life in mission and ministry, promotes prophetic religious living and ensures a redistribution of resources in a spirit of fraternity.' (General Chapter ROME 2002)

HYMN:

City of God

No. 15

1. Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!
A new day is dawning for all those who weep.
The people in darkness have seen a great light,
The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Refrain:

Let us build the city of God.
May our hearts be turned into dancing.
For the Lord, our Light and our Love,
Has turned the night into day.

2. We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.
The One who has loved us has brightened our way.

Refrain

3. God is light; in him there is no darkness,
Let us walk in his light, his children, one and all.
O comfort my people; make gentle your words,
Proclaim to my city the day of her birth.

Refrain

Psalm 124 **Ant.** *Those who were sowing in tears, will sing when they reap.*

What cowards we are,
we who claim to be the sons of God!
How insipid is our faith
in an insecure and faithless world!

The pressures are increasing.
The old props are filling away.

Many of the old traditions and standards
we held so dear are no longer relevant
in our rapidly changing society.
Even the proclamations and exhortations,
the prophecies and promises
that excited and supported us in our youth,
sound hollow and empty, frightfully inadequate
in these times in which we live.

The little boxes we wrapped around our God
are breaking up;
we can no longer hold on to Him
in our expanding, exploding universe.

Though we cannot hold on to God,
He does hold on to us.
Those who trust in the true God are more secure
than the great mountains that rise
above the clouds that cover us.
Though everything changes about us,
Our great Gods cannot be changed.

Though the sands may shift around us,
Even our institutions and governments,
And the ideals and aspirations of men,
Our great God is not subject to the impermanence
Of our temporal world.
Though the storms sweep in upon us,
Our relationship to our loving God is forever.

What cowards we are, we who claim to be the sons of God!
We don't have to be afraid:
Let us have faith in God!
Glory be to the Father.....

Ant. Those who sow in tears will sing when they reap.

Canticle from Ezekiel 36: 24-28

Refrain: *And now I make all things new*

I will take you from every nation and country
and bring you back to your own land (R)

I will sprinkle clean water on you and
make you clean from all idols
and everything else that has defiled you (R)

I will give you a new heart and a new mind.
I will take away your stubborn heart of stone
and give you an obedient heart (R)

I will put my spirit in you and will see to it
that you follow my laws
and keep all the commands I have given you (R)

Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors.
You will be my people, and I will be your God (R)

Scripture Reading

Matt 9:17

Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins will burst, the wine runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine into fresh skins and both are preserved.

Short Responsory

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Repeat

V/ Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. R/

V/ Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. R/

Magnificat Ant. The Almighty has done great things for me; holy is his name.

(An appropriate version of the Magnificat is sung)

Intercessions:

I may have faith enough to move mountains: but if I have no love, I am nothing.
With this in mind we pray. R/ Lord, grant us your love.

Lord, sustain us as we build and grow towards you
– increase our faith as we work.

We are assailed by doubts, and weighed down by uncertainties
– release our hearts, to journey towards you with hope.

Confirm our pilgrim Congregation in the faith of Blessed Edmund and his early followers

- help us to encourage each other, sharing our gifts.

Saviour and light of all peoples, keep our missionaries in your special care

- may the light of your Spirit burn strongly in them.

Bring those who have died in your peace – especially the Brothers we have known and those whose anniversaries occur today – to that knowledge which fulfils faith and answers hope

- grant them the fullness of your love.

Our Father

Concluding Prayer

Let your people's cry come into your loving presence, Lord. Forgive them their sins, so that by your grace they may be devoted to your service, and rest secure under your protecting hand.

We make our prayer through our Lord. Amen.



Hymns

1. A New Heart for a New World

(Trisha Watts/Monica O'Brien)

Refrain

Create a new heart, Holy Lord,
beckon our lives through your word,
open our eyes to your call,
united as one for your world.
Heighten our minds to your thoughts,
heal us of pride and of hurt,
may we go forth in your name
we pray our hearts change.

- 1 The heart of the cross, lowly and poor, calls us on.
Lord it is you promising hope, promising truth.

Refrain

- 2 Restless, the hearts who yearn for your peace in this land.
Deepen the dream, justice brings life, justice redeems.

2. Christ be our light E 5

(Bernadette Farrell)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Chorus

Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in you church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save.
Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others.
Shared until all are fed.

3. Come and Journey E2

(David Haas)

Come to the song, come to the dance,
Bring all you are and all you can be.
Come with your voice, come with your heart,
Come and journey with me.
Come and journey with me.

Come let the sun fill up your eyes.
Take the time to look around
And love, just love, and walk with each other.
Come and journey with me.
Come and journey with me.

Come and see, come and be.
Be all you are and all you can be.
And leave all behind,
And calm your mind.
Come and journey with me.
Come and journey with me.

4. Come, now is the time to worship C 2

(Brian Doerksen)

Come, now is the time to worship;
Come, now is the time to give your love.
Come, just as you are to worship;
Come, just as you are before your God
Come-
One day every tongue will confess you're God;
One day every knee will bow.
Still the greatest treasure is reserved for those
Who gladly choose You now.

5. Companions On The Journey A1

(Carey Landry)

Refrain

We are companions on the journey,
breaking bread and sharing life,
and in the love we bear is the hope we share
for we believe in the love of our God...
We believe in the love of our God.

Refrain

No longer strangers to each other,
no longer strangers in God's house,
we are fed and we are nourished,
by the strength of those who care...
By the strength of those who care.

Refrain

We have been gifted with each other,
and we are called by the Word of the Lord
to act with justice, to love tenderly,
and to walk humbly with our God...
To walk humbly with our God.

Refrain

6 Galilee Song

(Frank Andersen)

1. Deep within my heart, I feel
voices whispering to me.
Words that I can't understand;
Meanings I can't clearly hear!
Calling me to follow close,
lest I leave myself behind!
Calling me to walking into
evening shadows one more time!

Refrain:

So I leave my boats behind!
Leave them on familiar shores!
Set my heart upon the deep!
Follow you again, my Lord!

2. In my memories, I know
how you are sending familiar rains
falling gently on my days;
dancing patterns on my pain!
And I need to learn once more,
in the fortress of my mind,
to believe in falling rain
as I travel deserts dry!

Refrain

3. As I gaze into the night,
down the future of my years,
I'm not sure I want to walk
past horizons that I know!
But I feel my spirit called
Like a stirring deep within,
restless, 'til I live again
beyond the fears that close me in!

Refrain

7 God has chosen me

(Bernadette Farrell)

1. God has chosen me, God has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.
God has chosen me, God has chosen me to bring new sight to those
searching for light:
God has chosen me, chosen me:

Refrain:

And to tell the world that God's kingdom is near,
to remove oppression and break down fear,
yes, God's time is near, God's time is near,
God's time is near, God's time is near.

2. God has chosen me, God has chosen me to set as alight a new fire.
God has chosen me, God has chosen me to bring to birth a new kingdom
on earth:
God has chosen me, chosen me:

Refrain

3. God is calling me, God is calling me in all whose cry is unheard.
God is calling me, God is calling me to raise up the voice with no power or
choice:
God is calling me, calling me:

Refrain

8. GROUND OF ALL BEING A 3

(from 'Melodies of the Universe')

Ground of all being,
Breath of all life,
Spirit within all peace,
Open our eyes, open our ears.
Truth in our hearts
Awaken our minds;
And then we will know,
Then we will know,
That all is holy, all is one,
All is holy, holy one.

9. He who began a good work C 2

(Steve Green)

Refrain

He who began a good work in you,
He who began a good in you
Will be faithful to complete it,
will be faithful to complete it.
He who started the work,
Will be faithful to complete it in you.

If the struggle you're facing is
replacing your hope with despair,
Or the process is long,
and you're losing your song in the night.
You can be sure that the Lord has his hand on you,
Safe and secure.
He'll never abandon you;
You are his treasure, and
He finds his pleasure in you.

Refrain

10. Healing is your touch B 2

(Monica Brown)

Healing is your touch, O God,
Renewing a spirit of the broken.
Healing is your touch, O God,
Renewing a spirit of the broken.
Healing is your touch, O God,
Renewing a spirit of the broken.
Healing is your touch, O God,
Renewing a spirit of the broken.

11. Holy and anointed One C 2

(R. Butler)

Jesus, Jesus, Holy and anointed One,
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
Risen and exalted One, Jesus.

Jesus, your name is like honey on my lips,
Your spirit like water to my soul:
Your word is a lamp on to my feet,
Jesus I love you, I love you, I love you.

Jesus, Jesus, Holy and anointed One,
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
Risen and exalted One, Jesus

Jesus, your name is like honey on my lips,
Your spirit like water to my soul:
Your word is a lamp on to my feet,
Jesus I love you, I love you, I love you.
Jesus, Jesus.

12 LOW TO THE GROUND F 4

(Libby Roderick)

We stand on the edge of a cliff
In the deepest night I've ever seen,
People looking for light,
People who cherish a dream,
Light shining out from our eyes
And the dreams resting deep in our soul;
it's magic we're needing to keep us from falling;
It's magic we already know.

Chorus

It's music that keeps us alive;
It's dancing sets our hearts free;
it's children remember the laughter and light;
It's animals teach us to see.

Stay low to the ground;
Live close to the earth;
Don't stray very far from the soul.
It's simple things show us the reason we're here,
And it's simple things keeping us whole.

Tell me the place you were born,
Lives that your ancestors led.
The ground that surrounded the people you love,
Streams from which you were fed.
It's wind that carries the seed,
And seed that carries the song;
Food that we're eating is rooted in soil,
And it's soil that is keeping us strong.

Chorus

Temples are falling around us
Stands drawing fears where they've been
I never have seen a holier sight
Than a person who sings in the wind
Our blood is the river of life
Our joy is the sun on the land
All of the love that is inside this heart
Is more than one person can stand

Chorus

13 Now The Green Blade Rises

(J.M.C. Crum)

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain.
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

In the grave they laid him, Love whom men had slain,
Thinking that never he would wake again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain.
Quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:
Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Thy touch can call us back to life again.
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that springs up green.

14 CHRIST HAS NO BODY NOW BUT YOURS A 2

Prayer of St Teresa (John Michael Talbot)

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours;
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world;
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do.
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world;
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are his eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours;
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
Compassion on this world;
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

15 City of God E 2

(Daniel Schutte)

1. Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!
A new day is dawning for all those who weep.
The people in darkness have seen a great light.
The Lord of our longings has conquered the night.

Refrain

Let us build the city of God,
may our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
has turned the night into day!

2. We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.
The one who has loved us has brightened our way.

Refrain

3. God is light; in him there is no darkness,
Let us walk in his light, his children, one and all.
O comfort my people; make gentle your words,
Proclaim to my city the day of her birth

Refrain

16 The Lord hears the cry of the poor F 2

(John Foley SJ)

Refrain

The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Blessed be the Lord

1. I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord, who will hear the cry of the poor.

Refrain

2. Let the lowly hear and be glad; the Lord listens to their pleas;
and to hearts broken God is near, who will hear the cry of the poor.

Refrain

3. Ev'ry spirit crushed God will save, will be ransom for their lives,
will be safe shelter for their fears, and will hear the cry of the poor.

Refrain

4. We proclaim the greatness of God, his praise ever in our mouth;
Ev'ry face brightened in his light, for he hears the cry of the poor.

Refrain.

17 The Spirit of the Lord E 1

(Robyn Horner)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because the Lord our God has anointed me
to bring the Good News to the afflicted,
bind up the hearts of those who are broken,
to proclaim liberty to those who are bound.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
to proclaim that God is here,
to set hearts on fire,
to comfort the lost and all those in sorrow,
to bring them great joy and strengthen their spirits;
and in praise we raise our voices to God.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
to proclaim that God is just and will set us free,
to raise up the poor and honour the humble,
true to the promise, will live with all people.
I will dance I will sing for great is the Lord!

The Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord
moves on the face of the earth,
loving, warming, shaping.
The Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord
moves through me.

18 They will know that we are Christians

(Peter Schotes)

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

Refrain

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land

Refrain

3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride.

Refrain

4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one.

Refrain

19 Song of Micah E 4

Refrain

This is what God now asks of you.
Three things that I want you to do,
To act justly, to love tenderly,
And to walk humbly with your God

Blessed are you when you call my name;
I will hear you when you cry.
Blessed are you when you know your shame;
Rejoice for now has come your time.
Rejoice, you become love's sign.

Blessed are you who are poor of heart;
You shall have the earth to own.
Blessed are you when your own depart;
No longer shall you mourn.
Rejoice for I shall call you home.
Rejoice in me your peace alone.

Blessed are the ones who work for peace;
May you rest in heaven's care,
Blessed are you who know hunger's grief;
Justice will be yours some day.
Rejoice, though tears have strewn your way.
Rejoice, in my kingdom you shall stay.

20 Were you there?

(Negro Spiritual)

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord? (2)
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
2. Were you there when they nailed him to a tree?
3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?
4. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
6. Were you there when he rose from out the tomb?

21. One Step Beyond

(Liam Lawton)

There was a time, such a time when hearts were hurting,
longing to find, some peace of mind,
find an open door.
I knew a time, such a time one heart kept searching,
trying to see, the darkness to free, a heart without it's soul.

We knew a place, such a place in the future
where someone is lost, always a cost with uncertainties.
We know a space, such a space in our future
where love heals the pain, love lights the flame
through the nights of years.

Who will light the lantern and keep it burning bright?
Who will search the darkness where shadows seek the light?
Who will find the courage to sing a different song?
Who will light the lantern and go one step beyond?

22 The Brother Song B 2

Will you let me be your brother,
Let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my brother too.

We are pilgrims on a journey;
We are travellers on the road.
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and share the load.

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
When you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
'Til we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.

23 Lay your hands gently upon us B 2
(Carey Landry)

Chorus

Lay your hands gently upon us;
Let their touch render your peace.
Let them bring your forgiveness and healing;
Lay your hands, gently lay your hands.

You were sent to heal the broken hearted;
You were sent to give sight to the blind.
You desire to heal all our illnesses;
Lay your hands, gently lay your hands.

Chorus

Lord, we come to you through one another;
Lord, we come to you in all our need.
Lord, we come to you seeking wholeness.
Lay your hands, gently lay your hands.

Chorus