



PROFILES

Of Edmund Rice Christian Brothers NA

Autumn 2019

PRESENCE

The opening of the 2019-2020 academic year in the northern hemisphere is accompanied by an edition of PROFILES featuring Brother Hugh O'Neill, CFC, Congregation Leader of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers, Brother Simon Peter Odongo, CFC, a brother from Kenya who has recently completed a Master's degree at Iona College, and Brother Donald Dominic Murray, CFC, in ministry to Companions of Edmund Rice on the West Coast of the United States.

There are also five "mini" profiles of the members of the Edmund Rice North American Province Vocation Young Adult Ministry and Discernment Program. Each has a longer profile that can be accessed at www.ercbna.org. Their inclusion is intended to remind us: *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into his harvest.* Matt 9:37-38. Recently there has been an upsurge of interest in the religious life. The Synod on Youth and Pope Francis have highlighted the need for mentors as a new generation listen for the voice of the Master Teacher.

Brother Hugh O'Neill, CFC

Congregation Leader



Hugh O'Neill was born in New Westminster in British Columbia, Canada. One of seven children, he came to know the Brothers at St. Thomas More Collegiate School in Burnaby, BC. He majored in Biology at Memorial University of Newfoundland obtaining a dual degree in science and education. Later he completed a master's degree in special education at the University of British Columbia.

His first teaching assignment was in the Brothers' school in Antigua, British West Indies. Over the next two decades he served as a teacher and administrator in schools in Newfoundland, Ontario, and British Columbia. After a term as principal and community leader in his alma mater, he delighted in

a return to the Caribbean, this time as principal at St. Mary's Academy in Dominica. Three short years later he began an extended ministry in the service of leadership. He was elected Province Leader for the Canadian Province. When the three provinces in North America merged in 2005, he was elected as the initial Province Leader for the larger entity. His mandate was renewed for another six years in 2008. At the General Chapter of the Congregation of Christian Brothers, he was elected Congregation Leader.

Pictures since then suggest the scope of his ministry among the youth served by the Brothers throughout the globe.



Beausang School Embul-Bul, Nairobi, Kenya, Africa



Lusaka, Zambia, East Africa — Br. Hugh receives a goat from the family of a brother making his final profession—a traditional gift when one of their members has been received into a new family.



Kanvilli School, Tamale, Ghana in West Africa.



Canto Grande, Lima Peru



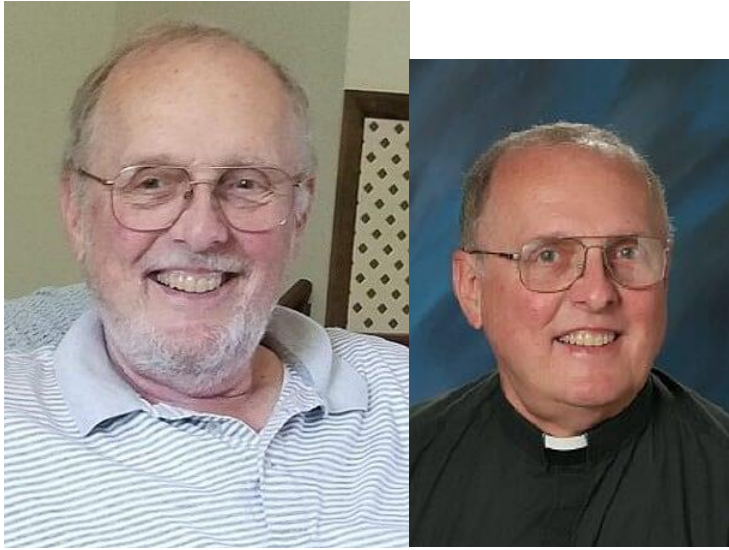
While Brother O'Neill's official residence is in Rome, much of his time is spent visiting the brothers' communities throughout the globe. Under his leadership the Congregation has sought to give ever new expression to the inspiration and charism of Edmund Rice, ever seeking out those most in need of brothering. Asked to comment for this piece he responded: *My current role within the Congregation has allowed me to experience the spirit of Blessed Edmund's charism living in the hearts and minds of thousands of individuals fully engaged in Edmund Rice ministries across the world. They are committed to the legacy of Blessed Edmund in their efforts to make this a better world for all.*

Vuvu, Papua New Guinea In traditional honorary headgear. Below with students vested and armed for a traditional whip dance..



Brother O'Neill continues:
*Today we often use three words to express Edmund's charism: **Presence, Compassion and Liberation.** For me it all begins with Presence. When I first walked into the chapel at the novitiate in Mono Mills, Ontario, across the curved wall behind the altar was the scripture quote, "Be still and know that I am God." This image has stayed with me and knowing that the Spirit of our loving God surrounds us and dwells within each of us, our task is to make the time to be still, and be present to and aware of this presence. This*

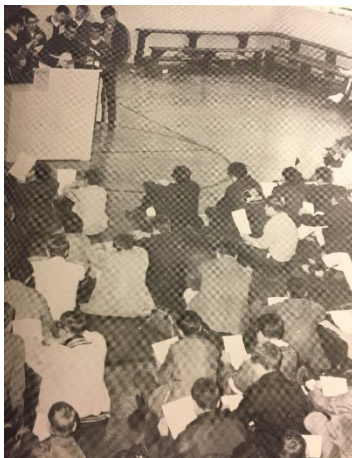
was the good news message of Jesus. Connecting with this Spirit enables us to be compassionate and leads to liberation."



Brother Donald Dominic Murray, CFC

Music served as an entry point for Donald's engagement in the vibrant student life of Brother Rice High School in Chicago. By the time he was ready to graduate, he was president of the marching and concert bands and convinced that his future would be as a member of the Brothers' Congregation that ministered in the school. The following year he professed his annual vows as Brother Dominic.

Having completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics at Iona College, Brother Murray began his teaching ministry at Damian Memorial High School in Honolulu, Hawaii. After one year he was assigned to O'Dea High School in Seattle, Washington, where he taught Religion and Math, directed the small band, and started a class in choral music as well as completing a Master's degree in mathematics from the University of Washington.



Vintage photos of Br. Murry and group animating a 70's Mass at O'Dea High School in Seattle.

His next mission was a return to his alma mater, Br. Rice HS in Chicago, where he again taught Math and worked with the much larger band program, assisting the director, directing the Jazz Band and giving

individual instrumental lessons. Next the province administration reassigned him to the west coast to the job of assistant principal during the merging of the all boy St. Patrick HS and all girl St Vincent HS. After a term as Principal at St.Patrick-St.Vincent HS, Brother returned to O'Dea High School where for the next eighteen years he lead the school in the role of Principal. During much of this time he also served as a member of the leadership team of the Western American Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers.

Currently in the brothers' community in Salinas, California, Brother Murray works with the Christian Brothers Foundation fostering the engagement of the alumni of the west coast schools in the support of the ministries of the Brothers throughout North America.

Brother Simon Peter Odongo, CFC

In May of this year, Brother Simon Peter Odongo, CFC, was awarded a Master's in business administration from Iona College. Christian Brothers Kevin Griffith, Tyrone A. Davis, John Holden, Bob Novak, Kevin Devlin, and Raymond Vercruysee, workmates at Mount Vernon and friends were present as he was recognized with honors from the theater stage of Madison Square Garden in New York City.



Left: Brother Simon Odongo, CFC, MBA, on graduation day. Spring 2019



Right: Brother Robert Novak, CFC, Ph.D., pictured here with Brother Odongo and other Masters of Business Administration graduates, coordinates the visiting scholar program sponsored by Iona College and the Brothers' Community at Iona

Odongo, as he prefers to be known, was born the 9th of his family's ten children in the African village of Siaya in Western Kenya. He is one of five surviving siblings.

As a young man he attended St. Gabriel's Minor Seminary Kisumu Archdiocese, Kenya. Having come to learn of the vocation of the brothers, he sought entry to the Christian Brother Postulancy in Arusha, Tanzania. He was twenty- four years old. His years of formation included a novitiate in Cape Town, South Africa, and subsequent educational and ministerial experiences in Nairobi, Kenya.

He demonstrated special skill as a program coordinator at the Mary Rice Center for exceptional children, located on the edge of one of the world's largest slums, Kibera, Nairobi.

Having completed his undergraduate studies at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Brother Odongo was invited to become the staff accountant for the Star Support Group and a tutor at the Solidarity Teacher Training Yambio, South Sudan.



Brother Odongo, holding the keys, is pictured with some of his students on the day of their graduation, after completing a 2-year teacher training program.

He made his perpetual profession as a Christian Brother in 2017 in his home parish in Uradi, Kenya.



On the day of his final profession Brother Simon Odongo and his mother, in the center, pose with three aunts and the local Parish Deacon.

Through the Brothers' Community at Iona College, Brother Odongo was awarded a scholarship to continue his studies and prepare for management roles in the various community engagement ministries of the Christian Brothers throughout Africa. He is currently undertaking a six-months internship program with the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services at Mount Vernon, NY. Mount Vernon, Westchester County, as an accounting coordinator. He is looking forward to a new assignment in Africa at the beginning of 2020.

North American Edmund Rice Vocation Discernment Team:



Brother Gregory Timothy Smyth, CFC, is the Province Director of Young Adult Ministries. He resides in the Christian Brothers Community in East Harlem, NYC, and devotes much of his time to visiting alums of the Edmund Rice Network Schools now on college and university campuses encouraging the gathering of those inspired by the charism of Edmund and interested in service projects and mission immersion experiences. He can be contacted at: 603 300 4697 for text or calls or e-mail gts@cbinstitute.org.

Brother Robert Droel, CFC, teaches and is involved in campus ministry at St. Joseph School in Madison, Mississippi. He maintains contact with other young religious, men and women who participated in the Inter-Congregational Novitiate and other formation programs associated with the Catholic Theological Union. He welcomes exchanges at: rdroel1@gmail.com

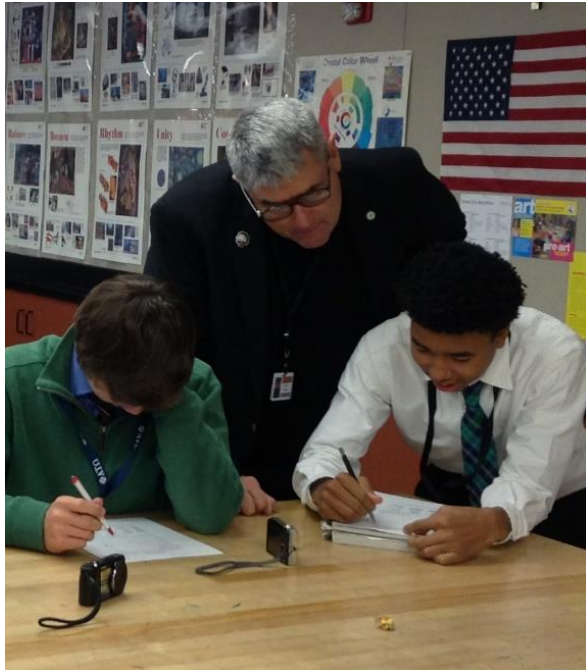


Brother Charles Joseph Gattone, CFC, former Western Province Leader, teaches French and Religion and directs Encounter retreats at Vancouver College, British Columbia, Canada. He may be contacted at: 604-842-1845 for texts or calls or email cjgattone@gmail.com.



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Brother James McDonald, CFC, ministers as Assistant to the President at Brother Rice High School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He is active in the vocation initiatives of the Archdioceses of Detroit and Chicago, where he moderates a national on-line discernment program. He is attentive to whatever comes to him at bromaccfc@yahoo.com , or text 815 272 7742.



Brother Michael Segvich, CFC , former principal of several Edmund Rice Schools, is coordinator of the Religious Retirement Fund at the Archdiocese of Chicago. He welcomes any opportunity to interact with those seeking to discern their calling. He resides at Callan House, 5120 S. Kimbark St. in the Hyde Park section of Chicago and works in the Office for Religious of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He can be reached at 708 431 0670 and mseg50@gmail.com .

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http://ercbna.org/Christian_Brothers.php?op=Publications