



Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America

A Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers

December 2, 2020

Dear Brothers, Colleagues and Partners in Mission,

Greetings from the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province Center in Elizabeth, NJ where we have just completed our Thanksgiving weekend. This week, we begin the new Church year with the onset of the Advent season. Advent is that time in the Church calendar when we patiently prepare for the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day.

2020 has been a year marked by the spread of the coronavirus throughout the world. In March, our schools quickly shifted to some form of remote learning to help slow the spread of the virus. The 2019-2020 school year ended with creative ways of hosting Graduation celebrations amid the virus' strong grip. In August and September, as schools began to reopen for the 2020-2021 academic year, the virus remained with us and innovative hybrid models of learning were put in place across the Consortium of Edmund Rice Schools. Thankfully, our students continue to learn despite the challenges posed by COVID-19.

In July, our newly appointed Province Leadership Team took office as the virus continued to wreak havoc on society. It has been a great disappointment for us that due to travel restrictions, quarantines, lockdowns, etc., we have not been able to freely travel about the Province to visit our Brothers' communities and/or our school and outreach ministry sites. We regret this reality, but we are grateful that Zoom, Skype, Google-Meet and other platforms have allowed us to carry out the business of the Province as best we can. As I write, I am reminded that I have not flown since returning from the prorogued Congregation Chapter in Lima, Peru on March 16th. Hopefully, the New Year will allow for vaccines to combat the virus and usher in a return to some sense of normalcy.

The suspension of the Congregation Chapter has had a significant impact on all parts of the Congregation. As such, all Province Chapters have also been put on hold until after the completion of the Congregation Chapter once it has been reconvened. To date, there has been no indication of when this might be.

Brothers, friends and colleagues, as I first wrote to you back in March, "this is an unprecedented historical moment for our Congregation, as we are in uncharted waters with the suspension of the Congregation Chapter at its midpoint. I thank you for your patience and understanding in working with us through this time of ambiguity and uncertainty. Likewise, this is an unprecedented and historical moment in our world, as government leaders and health officials attempt to determine how best to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. I encourage all of our constituents to monitor and follow the instructions of your local leaders in acting to protect the safety and well-being of all those who are inspired by the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice."



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With regards to our Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province operations in New Rochelle, NY which had been an epicenter for the virus when it first reached our shores, we continue to monitor closely the directives of local leaders, particularly during this current period with the resurgence of the virus in and around the City of New Rochelle, Westchester County and New York State.

For the time-being our offices remain open and operational. Should the Mayor of New Rochelle, the Westchester County Executive or the Governor of New York State issue directives placing restrictions on us, we will follow the below schedule.

- 1. Finance and Education Office personnel will have access to the building on Tuesdays and Thursdays.**
- 2. Development Office personnel will have access to the building on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.**
- 3. All personnel will work from home, except for the days indicated above.**
- 4. Anyone experiencing cold, flu-like, etc. conditions is to remain away from the building.**
- 5. The building will be thoroughly cleaned each day.**

Please note, that at any time, anyone not comfortable with being in the building on a regular basis should contact their direct supervisor to work out a schedule that ensures individual safety while at the same time ensuring that work is completed in a timely and efficient manner.

As we embark on this Advent season, let us pray for the grace to patiently await the Incarnation of Jesus, our brother who walks with us on our journey. Let us continue to hold in prayer all those who have been so deeply affected by the coronavirus. And let us pray for the safety and well-being of our loved ones around the world. May our Advent journey be one of hope for all God's people.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bro. Kevin M. Griffith, CFC
Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America, Province Leader