



PROVINCE NEWSLETTER

Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America

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The Novitiate Group of 1950 Meets Sixty Years Later

By Brother Paul Hennessy, CFC

In 1950 all of North America was one province; hence all novices were in Santa Maria Novitiate in West Park, New York. There are ten members of that group still alive in the Brothers. It was decided to get together to celebrate our sixty years of brotherhood. Six of us were able to travel and join in a wonderful week of fraternal love in Southwest Florida.

Brothers Andy Rose and Ron MacKenzie came from Vancouver; Brother Gabe McHugh from Toronto; Brother Harry French from Dominica, Brother Jerry McCarthy from New Rochelle and Brother Paul Hennessy stayed home in Venice. It was a leisurely time, highlighted by a Mass and dinner at the Blessed Edmund Rice Center in Arcadia.

Brother George Fitzpatrick wrote the following to Paul, which sums up our sentiments:

“Warm regards to self and all others of THE GROUP as you meet to celebrate what was great about 1950. As cliché-ish as it is – but true – I’m with you in spirit. I was so looking forward to being with you but flu-like symptoms became pneumonia and I was grounded. I’m getting better. In fact I went to school today and lasted the whole day. Alleluia!



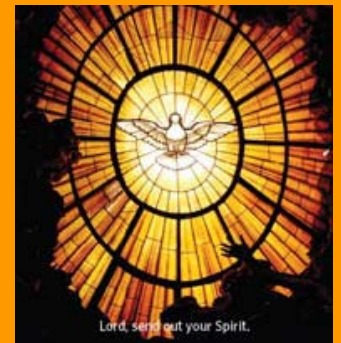
Standing (l to r) Brothers Harry French, Gabe McHugh, Ron MacKenzie
Seated (l to r) Brothers Andy Rose, Jerry McCarthy, Paul Hennessey

“What do I remember about ourselves? Each of us is a book with a story. I’m sure the ‘stories’ will be relived the few days you’ll have together. And what beautiful stories! Often at prayer, I weep for joy at the way God has guided my life. And it all begins with the formative process all of us were a part of. Memories of our West Park days form the backdrop for gratitude. It’s such a privilege to live with and get to know men with a common purpose. Look at the good done in the sixty years of our brotherhood! I’m so blessed and grateful that I’ve had the privilege of life with men of God. I say in all sincerity: Thank you.

“May these few days continue to strengthen and bless all of you in Venice. Every good wish for a strengthening of brotherhood.”

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“Whenever the divine favor chooses someone to receive a special grace, or to accept a lofty vocation, God adorns the person chosen with all the gifts of the Spirit needed to fulfill the task at hand.”

St. Bernadine of Siena

JERICO HOUSE - A DECADE OF DREAMING

Welland, Ontario

The time is now! The dream is being fulfilled! The new Jericho House in Ontario, Canada, is being constructed and should be ready for occupancy for December, 2010. These are exciting times for Brother Bill Carrothers, cfc, and Sister Jacque Keefe, cssf, the directors of ministry at Jericho House. They and the members of the Jericho Board of Directors have been assiduously planning this new building for the past ten years and, through their dogged and persistent efforts, the new facility will rise on a 6.8 hectare site in Wainfleet, Ontario, just thirty minutes from Buffalo, New York, and Niagara Falls.



**Br Bill Carrothers, cfc
and Sr Jacque Keefe,
cssf**

The ministry of Jericho House began in 1986 in the basement of the then Holy Cross Monastery in St. John's, Newfoundland. In 1989 the ministry moved to the Brothers' Canadian novitiate house in Mono Mills, Ontario, and eventually moved to the Niagara Region in 1997.

Throughout these years, the Jericho House mission and ministry has always revolved around young people and their potential. Bill and Jacque firmly believe that young people have tremendous gifts and talents for leadership, a sincere commitment to social and ecological justice, and wonderful spiritual insight. They strongly contend that young people already possess these gifts in abundance, and it is their task to provide the fertile environment, the needed encouragement, and the nurturance for these leadership qualities to grow and flourish. They are totally committed to that vision for Jericho House.

At the present time, Bill, Jacque and a married layman, Mr. Gary Bowron, work full time in youth ministry. They facilitate a three day program for Confirmation candidates at the Spiritual Outdoor Education Centre in Ridgeway for the Niagara Catholic District School Board, as well as conducting many full day retreats for secondary school students in the Niagara/Toronto school systems and their TORCH Leadership programs for young people aged from 11 to 19 throughout the country. In addition to their active ministry, they, with the help of the Board Members, have spent endless hours raising the 1.85 million dollars needed to construct their new building. With the help and loyal support of thousands of local, national and international men and women they have accomplished the task. They both feel energized by the enthusiasm of people for the vision of this interfaith centre for young adults.

That ten-year dream has been turned into concrete reality on a Rathfon Road construction site.

"The journey has been a long one and not necessarily a smooth one, but it's been wonderful because of the people we have met along the way," Brother Bill Carrothers said. Bill and Sister Jacque Keefe, cssf, spoke at a groundbreaking ceremony of Jericho House on Saturday afternoon, May 15, 2010. Jericho House is a place and ministry that focuses on young people and helps to nurture their sense of leadership, commitment to social and ecological justice, and their awareness to spirituality.

Jackie and Bill thanked Jericho House's board of directors, its many volunteers and the building team consisting of Brower Construction, Westside Construction, Rankin Construction, architect Emilio Raimondo and Quartek Group Inc., for all of



(l to r) Brother Barry Lynch, cfc, Sr. MaryAnne Olekszyk, cssf, Mr. Paul Murphy, Mr. Wayne Badawey, Ms. Adriana Magazzeni, and Mr. Gary Bowron.

their work in making the dream a reality.

The Wainfleet location, expected to be completed this September, is a 1,235-square-metre facility that will feature a chapel, overnight accommodations for 38 people in 18 flexible bedrooms, a dining area, lounges, supervisor suites, laundry rooms, a large meeting room, kitchen and offices and living quarters for staff.

Among the guests attending the ground breaking and offering congratulatory greetings were Wainfleet Mayor Barb Henderson, Port Colborne Mayor Vance Badawey, Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn, Welland, MPP Peter Kormos and Welland MP Malcolm Allen. Each of them commended Jericho House for the work it does with young people and said the facility and its programs will benefit the youth of Niagara.

ANNUAL SCHOOL LEADERS CONFERENCE OLYMPIAN OPPORTUNITIES Vancouver, BC



**Sr. Ona
Bessette**

The Olympic flame was extinguished and most athletes of the world were home savoring their memories when 52 school leaders of the Edmund Rice Christian Brother North America schools arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia, to begin their annual meeting coordinated by the Office of Educational Services. Gathering at Vancouver College and St. Thomas Moore Collegiate, March 23 – 25, 2010, the Trustees, Board Chairs, Presidents, and Principals of our schools from across North America came together to pray, learn and share ideas, and strengthen the bonds that unite the Edmund Rice Consortium of Schools in furthering the mission of Catholic education in the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice.

The conference keynote speaker, Edmundian Dr. John (Valentine '58) Stapleton, challenged the participants to look at the Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education through the lenses of Christian Brother educational tradition, documents of the Church, and the standards of excellence in educational leadership. His scholarly input prompted lively conversation and reflection on the purpose of education in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice for the young people of our world today.

A rich aspect of the gathering was the sharing of “best practices” in the schools. School leaders learned about the Gurian Institute (Frank Lazarek from O’Dea HS – Seattle, Washington); Band of Brother (John Birney from Br. Rice HS – Bloomfield Hills, Michigan); Writing Across the Curriculum (Tim McElhiney – Bergen Catholic HS – Oradell, New Jersey); Effective Board (John Nixon from Vancouver College, Vancouver, British Columbia) and Mission Trips (Br. Steve Casey, CFC from Bishop Hendricken HS – Warwick, Rhode Island). New ideas were spurred; as one participant commented, “I always come away from this gathering with new knowledge and ideas.”

A perennial expectation of the conference is the opportunity to network with others and support each other in the ministry of educational leadership. School leaders left Vancouver more invigorated and ready to face their challenges strengthened by the support of their colleagues. “I am always proud of our schools and the people who serve them. I always return with a new sense of energy. I am eager to get back to my building and try some new things.”

Check out what’s happening at the South African Novitiates (Cape Town and Stellenbosch)
www.cbnovitiates.co.za

BROTHERS CELEBRATE TWENTY FIVE YEARS MINISTERING IN FLORIDA

On May 5, 2010, the Tampa Catholic High School community celebrated a communion service on the feast day of Blessed Edmund Rice. In addition to commemorating Edmund's special day, the Tampa community celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Brothers presence in the state of Florida. All the Brothers that ministered at Tampa Catholic over the past quarter of a century were invited to the celebration. Brothers Jo Warren (RIP) and Damian McCullagh (Saint Joseph's Community) were also present and remembered in spirit at the event. At the conclusion of the communion service, in the presence of the Tampa Catholic school community, eight Christian Brothers renewed their vows and sang the Salve Regina. Following the ceremony the Brothers hosted a reception in their residence for the school faculty and staff, and later that evening enjoyed the spirit of brotherhood with a dinner at the Rusty Pelican Restaurant.



Top Row L to R: Brothers Jay MacDonald, Dom SanPietro, Peter Zawot, Mark Ventura
Bottom L to R: Brothers Joe Fragala, Jack O'Neill, Jim van Koolbergen , Chris Burns

STRATTON ROAD COMMUNITY New Rochelle, NY

The proverbial "good time was had by all" certainly characterizes well the gathering held at the Stratton Road community in honor of Brother Kevin Barry's sprint into senior citizenry.



Back (l to r) Brothers Greg McNally, Al Cussen, Kevin Barry, Kevin Cawley.
Front (l to r) Brothers Phil Considine, Xavier Sullivan, Al Killelea.

MOUNT ST. FRANCIS COMMUNITY St. John's, Newfoundland

Brother John Batterton celebrated his 94th birthday on Thursday March 11, 2010. John is currently the oldest member of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America.



On the left, Brother John Batterton cuts his cake. In the center, John with Brother Bert Darcy, and on the right John receives congratulations from Brother Raph Bellows, on behalf of the community.

GROUP REUNIONS

The following Novitiate groups are having reunions in New Rochelle this summer:

- Novitiate Groups 1953, 1954, and 1955 will have their reunion June 11 and 12 at 21 Pryer Terrace. Please contact Edmundian John Murray '54.
- Novitiate Group of 1965 will have their reunion July 9, 10, 11 at Iona College, La Penta Student Union building. Please contact either Edmundians Bob Gontcharuk or Ron Pellerin.
- Novitiate Group of 1960 will have their reunion July 16, 17, and 18 at 21 Pryer Terrace. Please contact Br. Jerry McCarthy jjm@cbinstitute.org.

ASSOCIATES OF BLESSED EDMUND RICE Bonita Springs, Florida

Each year, the Associates in Bonita Springs renew their commitment as Associates of Blessed Edmund Rice. Lois Boomgaard has been an Associate for 20 years and is one of the first Associates in North America.



(left to right): Jim Loughran, Br. Jerry McCarthy, Leticia Ruiz, Bruce Fedor, Evelyn Fedor, Lucia Morton, Lois Boomgaard, Rigo Rodriguez

BROTHER JOE FRAGALA (CHRISTIAN BROTHERS NEW ORLEANS) CELEBRATES FIFTY YEARS AS A BROTHER

Congratulations and best wishes to Brother Joe Fragala (CB New Orleans Community) who celebrated his golden jubilee as a Christian Brother at Café Reconcile in New Orleans on Saturday, May 15, 2010.

(The following is an article which appeared in the Clarion Herald of New Orleans. It is reprinted with permission.)



**Mr. Peter
Finney, Jr.**

Hurricane Katrina robbed New Orleans of so many precious people and things that sometimes it's difficult to appreciate the concept of hidden blessings, but then you meet someone like Edmund Rice Christian Brother Joe Fragala, and somehow the scales of justice providentially begin to balance.

Three years ago, the fullblooded Italian and New Yorker – a native of The Bronx – made his way below the grits line as part of a team of three brothers with a mission of helping the Archdiocese of New Orleans in any way possible.

They were long on experience: Brother Joe is 68 and on Saturday celebrates 50 years of ministry as a religious brother, mostly teaching and counseling high school kids; Brother John Casey is 63, a lifelong teacher and nationally prominent school administrator; and Brother Charles Avendano is 84, with a love for people in need and the energy of a man 30 years younger.

Their mission for the first few months after arriving in New Orleans in 2007 was simple: keep their mouths shut, listen, and pray for spiritual discernment in deciding where they might best serve.

Having counseled kids for most of his career – and loving food – Brother Joe heard about the groundbreaking program started by the late Jesuit Father Harry Tompson at Café Reconcile, where inner-city teens and young adults enter a nine-week hospitality training program that offers the life and technical skills to land a fulltime restaurant job.

The chance to volunteer at Café Reconcile as a coworker and quiet mentor to the teens has been the classroom experience of a lifetime for Brother Joe. It has changed his life, as well as others' lives.

“Kids are aching for somebody to listen to them, not always to be talked at,” Brother Joe said. “This is much easier than teaching high school. I used to teach religion to sophomores. That’s not an easy task. I don’t have the clerical work here – or the parents.”

Brother Joe smiles easily – “My personality is that I get along with 99 percent of the people and I’m pretty easygoing,” he says – and sometimes a listener has to strain to hear him because rather than hold court, he more often holds his tongue, waiting for just the right time to interject an observation or compliment.

“By interacting with kids in an informal way, it’s amazing how much they tell you,” Brother Joe said. “You have to earn their trust just by talking to them every day. I’ll go around and tell them if they’re doing a good job. And they’ll say, ‘Oh, thank you.’ They keep a lot in, obviously, but after awhile they’ll give you a hug. Every day is a learning experience.”

Among the biggest cultural gaps is family background. Brother Joe said his mother was one of 10 children, and there was not a single divorce among his aunts and uncles.

“That’s unheard of today,” Brother Joe said. “I know a lot of these kids have spent time in jail, but they’re beautiful kids. It breaks my heart that these beautiful kids are in this situation. I was fortunate to be brought up by good parents and I had a good family background.”



Brother Joe Fragala

One of the Café Reconcile students was having trouble lifting a box of supplies one day, and Brother Joe asked him why.



(l to r) Brothers Kevin Griffith, Hugh O'Neill, Joe Fragala, Charles Avendano, John Casey

“He told me he had been shot four times,” Brother Joe explained. “It’s accepted like it’s no big deal. I’m concerned about the crime rate and the political scene here. It’s heartbreaking. There are so many good things, and yet you have all these problems with the politicians and young people being killed every day. And it’s like it’s not a big deal. In my 19 years teaching in New York, I never heard a shot.”

The kids who drop out of the program break his heart, and the kids who become success stories – like the young waiter who started at Café Reconcile and is now going to college and working at Dooky Chase’s Restaurant – keep Brother Joe waking up in the morning.

If Brother Joe is reaching only a drop in the bucket, he at least knows he is a force for change and redemption.

“Kids having kids is the crux of the problem,” Brother Joe said. “What is going to happen to these little babies? If that doesn’t change, I don’t see how it will change. I always tell the kids they need divine intervention. If you want to change your life, you have to give yourself over to this God who loves us so much.

“When you’re a successful teacher, it makes all the heartaches go away,” he added. “It’s like raising kids. When they grow up and have a good life, you forget the heartaches.”

Peter Finney Jr. can be reached at pfinney@clarionherald.org

NEWS FROM THE LATIN AMERICAN REGION

‘A little bit of good luck’



**Br. Hugo
Caceres**

Jesús is just one of the millions of children who live in poor neighbourhoods on the fringes of Latin America’s capital cities. It is customary for many rural families who have been impoverished due to overexploitation of the land or the loss of their homes to move to the cities in search of a better livelihood. Very often, however, life in the city does not offer them the advantages they had dreamed of and, adding to the problem is the fact that very often the family unit breaks down because the parents are unable to maintain close links to the children because of work commitments and many children grow up without the benefit of a close parental presence. The result is that the urban problems they experience turn out to be worse than the ones they had previously encountered in the countryside.

For a variety of reasons, Jesús’ experience turned out to be more complicated, in fact, than those of many of his young friends in the area of Asuncion known as Bañado Tacumbú. The streets there become totally inundated when the waters of the nearby river begin to rise. Two years ago one of his brothers was murdered in prison and another brother is presently a druglord in Tacumbu prison, the country’s main penitentiary for adult male offenders. The family situation was made still worse by the fact that their parents split up, and this marital breakdown contributed undoubtedly to the atmosphere of violence in which Jesus’ brothers grew up and which landed them in prison at an early age.

After the split from her husband, Jesús’ mom became blind as a result of an illness she contracted while working as a cook in an industrial establishment. Although she received compensation from the company, the family continued to live in poverty (and still does) in a humble dwelling in the poverty-stricken Bañado.

After some time, the father pleaded to be allowed return to the family home and the mother acceded to his request. Unfortunately, he began to sell drugs from his bedroom window which faces on to the street, and the mother did not realize what was happening due to her blindness.

One day Brother Chuck Fitzsimmons had a heated exchange with this man when he saw him selling drugs to one of the young 14-year-olds with whom Brother worked at the time in rehabilitation and labour projects for young people who find themselves in physical or moral danger. Two days after this confrontation the police arrested the man in the course of a house search.

With two male members of the family now in prison, and the added burden of having a murdered brother and a blind mother, Jesús' future does not look at all promising. We who live and work here are left facing the problem of how to bring about a change in the lives of children who, like Jesús, live in the poorest neighbourhood in Asuncion. When the Brothers first came to the Bañado, one of the initiatives they put in place was the organization of recreational camps which would allow children to have the experience of spending a few days sharing their difficult lives together under the guidance of young Christian leaders. These Edmund Rice Camps offer the children a variety of activities aimed at helping them to develop their personality in a positive and holistic way. They include, for example, organized football matches, group work in which they are given the opportunity to share their views on topics such as friendship, drug prevention, sexual development, Edmund Rice as a model for Christian living, etc. Swimming pool facilities are provided every day to the delight of the children and they also engage in activities such as arts and crafts and proudly take home the fruits of their labours. One of the activities the children enjoy more than any other, in the best Latin American tradition, is music and song. The food, which is abundant and always prepared to everybody's satisfaction, includes: fruit, pasta, rice and beef. Before each meal the organizers take turns to lead the children in prayer - which is probably a totally new experience for most of them.

But the really nice part, the heart of the Edmund Rice Camp, is the wonderful spirit of brotherhood the young leaders offer the children. Right from the start they do a great job in selecting the really needy ones – those whose parents earn a living by collecting objects for recycling, those who have family members in prison and those who are shy, isolated or at risk. They guide the children in the various camp activities and are always at their side to encourage and give them love and affection. Their work and dedication is really in tune with the best Edmund Rice tradition.

This summer (2010) 33 children between the ages of 12 and 15, along with 15 Christian leaders from the local parish, accompanied Br Chuck Fitzsimons and the aspirant Nimio Benitez on the 13th Edmund Rice Summer Camp. Obviously the selection of the children who are going to take part is a very important task because financial constraints do not enable them to include all the children who would like to participate and also because past experience has taught that not all children who come from violent backgrounds are suitable for interaction with other children in this setting where they are required to share food and recreational activities together.

When Brother Chuck suggested that Jesús might be allowed to take part in the Edmund Rice Camp, there were surprised looks on the face of some people who honestly voiced their doubts about the advisability of the suggestion. But after some dialogue on the matter they all agreed that Jesús needed 'a little bit of luck' in his very precarious existence. The good news is Jesús quickly dissipated all doubts beyond everybody's expectations. This son of the blind woman and the druglord really made a success of things – he took part in games of football with a great sense of responsibility and interacted very well with the other children. On the last day, the whole group – the leaders and the other 32 children – celebrated his birthday, and he was awarded a prize for being the one who showed most progress during the four days duration of the summer camp.

When Brother Chuck visited him at the end of the four days, Jesús was ready and willing to return to school, to continue improving his football skills - the sport he loves so much, and was considering the possibility of taking part in the parish Confirmation program. Some of the camp leaders are catechists on this program, and they will undoubtedly keep a caring eye out for a child who deserved 'a little bit of good luck' in his life.

What is a
Brother?

An Answer to
God's Call.



We connect with
the poor and the
marginalized in
our world.

We share and reflect
our experiences in
the light of the
Gospel.

We find our hearts
transformed.

We are Christian
Brothers.

*What we do with
our hearts affects
the whole universe.*



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

Are you being called to be brother to the world?
Congregation of Christian Brothers • www.cfcvocations.org

More information on the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers at these links:

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