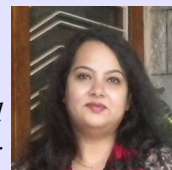




## A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT .....

Warm greetings from the Edmund Rice Family, Bangalore!



The last few months have been extremely fruitful and rewarding and we are grateful for all the co-operation and support of the Brothers, our members and all our well-wishers for the programmes we have undertaken and the richness of fellowship it has built among us and the beautiful ways through which God has drawn us nearer to himself.

The last editorial team comprising of Cynthia and Patsy did a remarkable job of bringing out interesting and informative newsletters which everyone across the World appreciated. May God bless their efforts abundantly. I would like to thank Janet and Michelle for accepting to take on the task now and I wish them God's immense blessings.

Due to our President Alex's decision to re-locate to Malaysia in September 2014 the group made a decision to hold fresh elections and a new leadership team was elected. I would like to show our deep appreciation for the excellent and dedicated service he and his team did during their tenure.

Our group was greatly blessed by the presence of the Christian Brothers who travelled to Bangalore to conduct highly informative and deeply spiritual programmes that filled our group spiritually and enthused us immensely in remaining committed to the charism of Blessed Edmund. We were delighted to have among us Br. Philip Pinto, Br. Wilfred D'souza, Br. Joe Johnson, Br. Steve Rocha, Br. Moy, Br. Avinash and Br. Sunil Britto. Thank you very much dear Brothers and we look forward to you visiting us again.

Our outreach project with the Children at the "Edmund Rice Learning Centre", at Adigondanahalli is doing well by God's grace and continues to enthuse all our members and it brings us happiness and fulfillment to visit this village periodically and conduct entertaining and educational programmes for the children.

We have sponsored the education of four children this year. Disha, Jaison, Suftiya and Divya have shown remarkable improvement in their studies. Kindly uphold them in your prayers.

For the spiritual growth and renewal of the group, besides the Formation programmes conducted by the Brothers and prayer time at each meeting, The group has regular Masses and Retreats. Recently, Fr. Eric Rodrigues CSsR conducted an Advent Recollection for us which was highly appreciated by everyone.

Some of the members have been faithful in praying the rosary in their houses by inviting ERF members and neighbours to join them. This has been deeply enriching to the group. It was also decided that members will take turns to meet and spend time in Adoration in front of the Blessed Sacrament and offer this prayer time for Vocations to the Brotherhood and the perseverance and strengthening of the Brothers in their Vocation.

Our group makes every effort to ensure that members who attend meetings enjoy their time and bond together. Birthdays are celebrated at each meeting over cake and snacks and the members make an effort to mingle closely with each other and support the others in times of need.

To conclude I am grateful to the Almighty for having kept our group alive and active and for the manifold blessings we have each received through the year. Our dedication to follow in the footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice has brought great fulfillment to each of us and may this wonderful saint guide and lead us in our future endeavours.

Regards,  
**Anisha Lingham**

## **ERF LEAGUE OF PRAYER**

***"Pray as if everything depended upon God and work as if everything depended upon you." (Francis Cardinal Spellman)***



After a short Christmas break, we continued with the Rosary and prayer in different homes. Taking time off from a busy schedule is difficult, But "Where there is a will, there is a way" has been our motto.

For those who are interested in visiting the sick and housebound, here are a few opportunities not only to visit but also spend time with them in prayer and interaction.

Mr. & Mrs. Pacheco are unable to go out of their home and are happy to have us over as often as possible.

Mr. Bartholomeusz, who suffers with Alzheimer's is not inclined to go anywhere, but warmly welcomes our group when we go to his home. Being a musician, he is enthusiastic about joining in the singing of hymns accompanying us on his guitar. After the Rosary, he and his wife normally entertain all of us with the old, popular numbers.

Thus such meetings, not only involve prayer, but provide opportunities for fellowship. The prayer becomes personal as Intentions of each family vary and requests for prayers are also received.

Efforts are being made to be creative with the prayers by varying the themes. At the beginning of the New Year 2015 we asked for God's blessings and guidance through the coming year. To celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes recently, we focused on the sick. On another day, the prayers and Mysteries focused on all current issues and problems faced in the world today. As the season of Lent and Easter approaches we wish to focus on Christ's Suffering, Passion and Resurrection.

To enlighten those present, often, the Saints are remembered on their feasts through a write-up on their lives and work and a sharing on how we could emulate them.

As a refreshing change from prayer and discussion, sometimes a game of housie is included. This is particularly enjoyed by the elders.

We would like to thank in particular, Mrs. Marie Bartholomeusz and Jerry and Daisy Fernandes who though, not members of the ERF, welcome us to their homes to pray with them. May God bless them abundantly!

***In the words of Blessed Edmund, "Be intent on prayer and whatever happens will turn towards your good."***



***- Patricia and Cynthia***

**"Were we to know the merit and value of only going from one street to another to serve a neighbour for the love of God, we should prize it more than silver and gold."**

**Blessed Edmund Rice**



**FORMATION PROGRAMME BY BR. JOE JOHNSON  
HELD ON 31st. AUGUST 2014**

The day started with Mass at the NBCLC Chapel at 9.30 am celebrated by Fr. Francis. The programme was conducted by Br. Joe Johnson of the Christian Brothers and was attended by 15 members. It comprised of two sessions of ninety minutes each, pre and post lunch.



The interaction centered around the Nairobi Chapter Document. The power point presentation started with the song "Just to be ----" which conveyed the message of trust in God and accepting our position in His scheme of things. We are loved by God whatever our position in life. We should consider it a blessing, no matter what our role, and we should live life to the full. We should make the most of the opportunities offered each day and show a child like trust in God.

This was followed by a silent reflection when we were asked to list 3 blessings, 3 challenges and 3 significant happenings in our lives. Pairs/ Groups of 3 were then formed and experiences were exchanged. This helped to make us all build bridges with each other and understand one another better.

Another song "I am who I am ----" was then played and we were asked to capture our feelings about it in one word. The message conveyed was that we should accept who and what we are and try to better ourselves. It exhorted us to "Encounter the Mystery" we call God and experience the awakening in His presence. We should exhibit solidarity with the "Earth Community".

Br. Johnson then traced developments at the last 3 Chapters which are briefly covered as under :-

- 28<sup>th</sup> Chapter at Johannesburg 1996 which issued 4 Directions.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Chapter at Rome 2002 which gave 7 insights.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Chapter at Munnar which called for 7 goals.

The post lunch session saw group work being undertaken in pairs or groups of 3 persons. We were given printouts listing the seven Chapter Calls emanating from the Munnar Chapter and asked to list one practical step to give concrete expression to each Chapter Call. These were then consolidated by Br. Johnson for forwarding to members. Thereafter members were to meet and discuss and decide upon one important step that the ERF would like to select and implement in the coming months.

The programme concluded with the song "Holy Now" by Peter Mayer.

**- Peter Aranha**



**Teachers Day Celebration at Adigondanahalli**

Teachers Day was celebrated on the 6th of September at Adigondanahalli. Anisha, Michelle and I attended the celebration in the evening. We were greeted by the children with flowers. The children sang individual and group songs. They danced with full energy to some latest film songs and the audience also participated with much laughter and joy. One of the older student gave the vote of thanks. After this, Anisha, Michelle and I thanked everyone. Later we spoke to the children and inquired about their studies. They seemed happy and told us that they were doing well. The evening ended with us having tea and snacks with the Sisters. It was a fruitful day and a blessing to see the bright smile of the children.

**- Raki Jayaraj**



## **Children's Day Celebration at Adigondanahalli November 2014**

In the month of November members of the ERF drove down to Adigondanahalli to honour and express their love for the children. Prior to this a few members went down to Metro and bought heaps of presents through the generosity of members of the group and donors. On arriving at the village we all enjoyed the thrill of packing the presents and then as planned we went in order, organizing games for each level of children. Interesting, yet simple games were organized and we were impressed with the children's intelligence, skill and knowledge being kids from a remote village. Our members made a good deal of effort to plan and organize very creative games and the Sisters, the aged among us and the rest of us also had a great time.

Finally, the children sat down and enjoyed the prize distribution ceremony. All the children received packets of useful gifts and present and went home cheerfully. Needless to say the ERF members had the best time of all and as we sat down to tea in the Sisters dining room we were delighted we made the effort to cheer the children.



*Michelle Francis*



### **ON BEING PART OF THE EDMUND RICE FAMILY, BANGALORE**

Indeed, it was quite by chance that I had come to be part of the ER family here in Bangalore. A very good friend of the family, Marguerite, visited my home one day in August and kindly explained the whole story on Edmund Rice story vividly to me and quietly asked me whether I would join the group at their next meeting. She also left a little booklet on Edmund Rice and after reading it I was intrigued that ER had a vision and mission much the same as Don Bosco, the saint I also greatly admire. Well, I did make it to that meeting way back in August 2014, which began with Mass in the NBCLC Chapel, followed by a session by Br. Joe Johnson, who had led us through the Formation Session and had also elaborated on the 7 Chapter Calls. I was understandably intrigued and touched by the entire Session, which fully convinced me that I had indeed joined the right family group to enhance my belief in our Saviour and as His disciple, to dedicate myself to the vision and mission of Edmund Rice, in genuinely caring for others, with compassion and fortitude.



I have been warmly welcomed by the ERF, Bangalore and thank each one in the group for their kindness and support in making me feel special to be in their midst. And just recently, when we held elections to establish our new Leadership Team, I was voted to be Secretary and was honoured to accept. Being a member of this beautiful Edmund Rice Family, I hope and pray, as time goes by, to be able to reach out to those, most in need of our compassion, support and encouragement. And with the wonderful team, we have at hand... hope to achieve all that we aspire to do for HIS people...and encourage more people to join us in our endeavours to lift the down-trodden, support the weak and helpless, educate the underprivileged, help sustain the unemployed, pray for the lost and bring greater glory to Him, our Lord... Amen.

**- Jenny Saldanha**

## DAY OF RECOLLECTION ON 7TH DECEMBER 2014 BY FR. ERIC RODRIGUES

The day began with Rev. Fr. Eric Rodrigues explaining the symbolism of the Advent Wreath. Traditionally, the wreath holds four candles which are lit, one at a time, on each of the four Sundays of the Advent Season. The four Sundays symbolize Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace.



Fr. Eric's talk was followed by the screening of the movie "Treasures of the Snow" taken from the book by Patricia St. John. The message of this film is encapsulated below.

Life would be perfect if:  
 Anger had a **Mute** button  
 Mistakes had a **Back** button  
 Hard times had a **Fast** button and  
 Good times had a **Pause**.

The story of the lives of the two families in a small village in the Swiss mountains helps us to feel the depth of this statement. "**Even God does not like the hardness of Tongue and Heart. That is why he made them boneless!**".

Among the several messages that the story conveys, the fact that there is good in the worst of us and bad in the best of us, stands out. The narration is parallel to the letter of St. Paul to the Romans Chap 7:15 which reads "**for what I want to do I do not do but what I hate I do**".

The intrinsic good doubtless comes from the fact that God made us in His own image and likeness. However, we often conceal the good and choose to display the bad, which is a result of our evil designs of hatred, jealousy, pride, revenge and controlling spirit. It is indeed evident that an eye for an eye makes the world go blind and ends in disaster, even loss of a precious life. What is even more evident is that two wrongs never make a right.

The compelling note therefore, is to set aside trivial, face the light and let the dark shadows of our past remain behind us.

In conclusion, we are called to suppress negative emotions, stop looking for faults, and use the talents that God has bestowed on us. Then we will be in a position to reach out to others.

It is the only way to reinstate God's image in us to know and realize that we pass this way but once, and remembering, that the footprints we leave behind do count and inspire the generations to come.

*- Lynette D'Souza*



### Lenten Reflection

"Never allow vain notions of your own sense, abilities, or other natural or acquired qualifications to take root in your mind, but always beseech God to make known to you, your sins and imperfections."



Bl. Edmund Rice

## **Carol Singing and Christmas Get Together**

On 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2014, our ERF group, in the hope of bringing the message of love, peace and joy that the birth of Jesus brings to each one of us, decided to visit the sick, elderly and destitute.

We began the evening with carol singing at Preethi Nivas – home for elderly men. We had a friendly interaction with the group, giving them an insight into the mission of Blessed Edmund Rice and our efforts to do our little bit to take this mission forward. They remembered us and gave us a warm welcome and recalled the simple games and gifts that we had given them last year. We sang for them, greeted each one warmly and handed them gifts and eats.



Next, we sang carols at Jeanette DeMagry's home. Her father proudly informed us that at 97, he was the oldest living member of the school belonging to the Congregation of Christian Brothers, where he had studied. Jeanette's mother who had a stroke in October, 2014, had bravely recovered and joined us in the singing.

We then moved to Cecy D'souza's place. As usual, dear Cecy all in her 90's appreciated not only the carols, but also us being with her to share Christmas fellowship.



The grand finale was at Joan's place, ever so 'Christmassy', where there was so much of participation. Joan's daughter from the U.S. accompanied the carol singers. Raki organized an interesting quiz, which everyone enjoyed. The members bonded over a delicious dinner which had been prepared by the members. Close to 11 p.m., everyone took leave of each other after an enjoyable evening of Christmas fellowship.

We were indeed happy that Alex, our ex-President had come all the way from Penang to be with us on this day. However, there was an element of sadness, as it was the first year that Pauline Nagar was not on our list. She was a wonderful hostess and a very ardent and sincere member of the ERF. May her soul rest in peace!

- Gladys Saldanha and Joan Fernandes



### **Editorial Message**

**We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the members of the outgoing Leadership Team, Alex, Anisha, Cynthia, Ronnie and Janet, for their sincere and dedicated service and for their exemplary work, time and labour put in.**

**We wish the new team consisting of Anisha, Jenny, Peter, Michelle and Janet, God's choicest blessings and success in all their undertakings. May they be guided by Blessed Edmund Rice and continue to receive the support and love of the Edmund Rice Members.**

## **FORMATION PROGRAMME BY BR. PHILIP PINTO — JANUARY 2015**



Brother Philip asked us to see our lives as gifts to be shared. Jesus came to tell us that life and human relationships would be different if our attitude changes. We need to repent and change our ways of dealing with people. Repent means 'think differently', not have just one way of thinking.

Brother Philip spoke at length about our present Pope, Pope Francis. Pope Francis, he said has a great impact because he speaks in the words of the people and in parables i.e. through messages.

He is first among equals.

He took the name of Francis because Francis of Assisi was closest to the example of Jesus.

He sees himself as Bishop of Rome and is an example of a good Bishop/Leader.

He is a new religious teacher who talks about God in a way that excites people.

He speaks about a God of compassion and all experience Pope Francis as a God of compassion.

His message is always about the poor, like Jesus who associated with the downtrodden, sick etc. The poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel.

God does not punish the suffering, but their image of God needs readjusting.

Think about the God moments in your life i.e. the love you experience as love gives you a mission.

He prefers a church that is dirty, rather than a church that goes astray.

Brother Philip then spoke about the 'The Way into the Future' for the Christian Brothers.

The Christian Brothers are attempting a different way into the future by going back to the spirit of the founder (founding story) to get a sense of identity and to the spirit of Jesus.

The effort is to have 20 communities in 5 different locations by the year 2020. The first location is Zambia. A hub will be set up to monitor 4 communities. The intention is to empower people by being Brothers through the feminine values of listening, dialogue, tolerance, patience and non-violence. The Brothers will be with the people in a non-threatening way, without wearing masks by sharing stories, struggles, sharing one's faith and through community prayer. Volunteers will get trained. Proposal to move out of institutions which do not need Brothers as the number of vocations are coming down.

In the laws of nature, the most important thing is relationship. How can we forgive or ask for forgiveness? We should use all the chances to stay together.

- Janet Aranha



**Editorial Team: Michelle Francis, Janet Aranha and Anisha Lingham**

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