



Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America

A Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers

Feast of St. Patrick

March 17, 2020

Dear Brothers, Colleagues and Partners in Mission,

Greetings from the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province Center in Elizabeth, NJ where I returned yesterday following two weeks in Lima, Peru. The Lenten journey which chronicles the many twists and turns in the life of Jesus of Nazareth culminates with his passion, death and Resurrection and only makes sense if we believe in the Good News of the Risen Jesus.

The 32nd Congregation Chapter of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers began on March 1, 2020 at the Casa de Espiritualidad San José de Cluny in Magdalena del Mar, Lima, Peru. The Chapter commenced with an afternoon of prayerful reflection and a spirited celebration of Peruvian culture and Christian Brother life in the Latin American Region. For the ensuing two weeks, the Chapter endeavored to go about its daily business by inviting all participants to keep open minds, open hearts and open wills, as together we embarked on discerning God's will for our Congregation.

You will recall that the 2014 Nairobi Chapter stated: "It is the agenda of the world that sets the mission direction of the Church and our Congregation." This simple, but profound statement became our lived reality as we followed closely the effects of the coronavirus pandemic that has gripped our world. Government decrees regarding international travel in Peru and around the world caused us to pause and consider the consequences of such decrees on our ability to continue in Chapter-mode while the world around us was literally changing by the moment.

Ultimately, we made the difficult, but necessary decision to prorogue the Chapter indefinitely, as it had become obvious to us that our Congregation would be best served if we suspended the Chapter and allowed the participants to return to their homes. Thus, as of 1:00 pm on Saturday, March 14, 2020, the 32nd Congregation Chapter was put on hold following the unanimous vote of the Chapter Delegates to do so.

The suspension of the Congregation Chapter will have a significant impact on all parts of the Congregation. As such, at this time, **all Province Chapters have also been put on hold until after the completion of the Congregation Chapter once it has been reconvened.**

Thus, our Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province Chapter scheduled for July 8-15, 2020 in Jacksonville, FL will not take place at that time. Rather, it will be rescheduled once we know when and where the Congregation Chapter will reconvene.



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As already determined, the current Province Leadership Team will remain in place until July 14, 2020 when the newly appointed PLT will take office.

Friends, 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.

With regards to our Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province operations in New Rochelle, NY which has become an epicenter for the virus, the following decisions have been made until further notice:

- 1. All offices at 260 Wilmot Road will be closed on Mondays and Fridays.**
- 2. Development Office personnel will have access to the building each Tuesday.**
- 3. Education Office personnel will have access to the building each Wednesday.**
- 4. Finance Office personnel will have access to the building each Thursday.**
- 5. All personnel will work from home, except for the days indicated above.**
- 6. Anyone experiencing cold, flu-like, etc. conditions is to remain away from the building.**
- 7. The building will be thoroughly cleaned each day.**

Let us pray for continued openness of minds, hearts and wills in discerning God's call to us at this time in our Congregation's and world's history. Let us 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 Lenten journey toward the Risen Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts and actions through the intercession of Blessed Edmund, our Founder, and Mary, our Mother of Perpetual Help.

God bless,



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