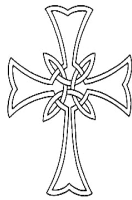


Contents

PRESENTATION BROTHERS SCHOOLS TRUST

CHARTER



An unfolding Catholic educational tradition
animated by the spirit of Edmund Rice

All are welcome, all are included, all are enriched

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Foreword

After careful consideration and discernment the Presentation Brothers have decided to hand on the trusteeship of their schools in Ireland to a lay Trust. A company, **Presentation Brothers Schools Trust**, (PBST), has been established for this purpose so that the schools may continue to provide Catholic education in the spirit and tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice into the future. The company Charter is presented in the following pages.

When Edmund Rice was confronted with the poverty of the youth in the city of Waterford, the life and teaching of Christ, particularly his command “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation” (*Mark 16:16*), inspired him to respond by opening his first school there in 1802. It is fitting, therefore, that a brief biography of Blessed Edmund, the founder of the Presentation Brothers and their inspiration in providing Catholic education in schools in Ireland and abroad for the past 200 years should be an integral part of this document.

Presentation Brothers Schools promoted Christ’s vision of the Kingdom providing a balanced curriculum that respects the dignity of each individual as a child of God possessing a variety of talents. The Brothers believe that this vision of education must continue to be offered to each succeeding generation of young people.

The role of the Presentation Brothers School Trust is twofold. Firstly, to ensure that the “characteristic spirit” is in keeping with Christ’s vision as exemplified by Edmund Rice. Secondly, as legal owner, it is responsible for the property, finances and compliance with statutory requirements.

The Brothers have great confidence in the men and women who have generously accepted this ministry. We see it as a major step into a bright and exciting future for our schools. We entrust the mission to them and pray God’s blessings on the venture.

BLESSED EDMUND RICE

1762 - 1844



‘Who will ever measure all the good that has come from the spiritual insight, warm heart and determined faith of Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice?’

Pope John Paul II on the day of Edmund Rice’s beatification in Rome, October 6, 1996

Edmund Rice

Edmund Rice was born at Westcourt in the parish of Callan, Co. Kilkenny, on 1 June 1762. The Penal Laws, which had been framed in 1704 to keep in check the Catholic population, had been relaxed somewhat and a minority of enterprising Catholics were able to improve their position. Edmund's father, Robert, worked a 180-acre farm leased from Lord Desart.



The Rice family home, Callan,

Edmund attended a hedge school, an illegal pay-school set up by a travelling teacher. The religious education he received in the family home was augmented by lessons from an Augustinian travelling friar, Fr. Patrick Grace. Later, more fortunate

than many of his contemporaries, he attended a commercial academy in Kilkenny city where he received a practical and classical education.

When he was 18 years old, Edmund became an apprentice in the business of his uncle, Michael Rice, a well-established victualler and ship's chandler in the thriving port of Waterford. Michael's own sons were not keen to follow in their father's footsteps, and such was his uncle's confidence in Edmund that he signed over the flourishing business to him when Edmund was 24. At this time the laws, which had made it so difficult for Catholics to own property, were more relaxed and Edmund was able to invest in land and property.

Marriage

Edmund married Mary Elliot, daughter of a leather merchant, in 1785. Four years after they married, Mary gave birth prematurely to a daughter but died later. The baby, also named Mary, suffered a disability.

Edmund, an avid reader of the Bible, often referred to this period of his life saying 'The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, so blessed be his name forever.' (*Job 1: 21*)

Faith and Good Works

Edmund's stepsister Joan came to Waterford to care for Mary and to keep house and Edmund continued with his successful business career. His religious life intensified. He went to Mass before work each day and in the evenings read spiritual books, especially the Bible and the works of St. Teresa of Avila.

Like many of the Catholic merchants of the time he lent money to poorer Catholics. He visited the poor in their homes and arranged the release of debtors from prison. His prison visits brought him in contact with unfortunates under sentence of death, and he was known to comfort them by his presence and his prayers at the scaffold near John's Bridge.

At one time Edmund considered becoming an Augustinian friar, like his brother John. But in 1797 when Bishop Hussey of Waterford wrote a pastoral letter castigating Catholic parents who put their children's faith at risk by sending them to Protestant proselytising schools, Edmund could see that poor parents had no opportunity of educating their children except in such schools.

Influence of the Presentation Sisters.

In 1798 Presentation Sisters came to Waterford, and Edmund, at the request of Bishop Hussey and of his friend Fr. Power, helped the Sisters establish themselves in the city. The example of the Sisters in educating the local girls and the need for

similar education for the boys convinced Edmund that he should commit himself to this work.

In 1800, with a few volunteer helpers, he began to teach some street children in the evenings at his stores in Barronstrand Street. Later he rented livery stables and converted them into classrooms. He made financial arrangements for his daughter Mary to be taken care of by close relatives and began to wind up his considerable business interests, intending to dedicate his life to God through Christian education.

He hired two assistants but they couldn't cope with the unruly boys of the streets and they left. Neighbours resented having young delinquents in their locality and complained; his business friends were sceptical of a project that appeared to them eccentric and pathetic.

'The Monks of the Presentation'

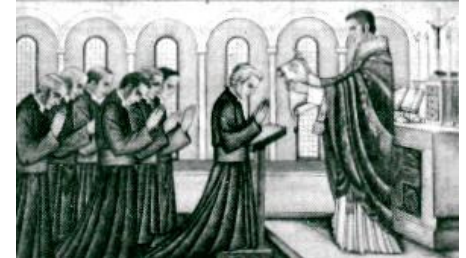
Early in 1802 two young men from Edmund's native Callan, Patrick Finn and Thomas Grosvenor, who had also been thinking of dedicating their lives to God, joined him. They began a form of community life, attending Mass daily, teaching all day and spending time in prayer and spiritual reading before retiring for the night. Their home was the loft over the stables in New Street.

In 1803 Edmund and his companions moved to Mount Sion, a monastery and school that he built on a hill overlooking the city. Here 'the monks', as Edmund and his companions were called, taught up to 150 pupils each, assisted by the brighter pupils in a monitor system. They also held night classes for illiterate adults. Edmund built a small bakehouse to provide a daily meal for the pupils, with a loft overhead in which tailors made clothes for them.

He continued his jail visits and his personal involvement in several charitable works. Protestants, especially Quakers, appreciated his efforts and became his benefactors.

Religious Profession

In 1808 Edmund had nine companions. His friend, John Power, was now Bishop of Waterford and he and Edmund drew up a rule of life based on the Constitutions of the Presentation Sisters.



On 15 August Edmund and six others took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, officially becoming a Diocesan Congregation of Brothers, under the authority of the bishop.

They were known as the 'Monks of the Presentation'.

They were known as the 'Monks of the Presentation'.

General Chapter 1822

The Brothers had already established two foundations outside of Waterford city, at Carrick-on-Suir and Dungarvan, and Bishops in other dioceses began to request them to set up communities. By 1821 there were communities in five dioceses: Waterford, Cork, Dublin, Cashel and Limerick. This was encouraging but also caused a problem: when communities were established, Bishops were reluctant to release Brothers to go to another diocese to found a new community.



Amalgamating all the communities under a Superior General was the solution and approval for this arrangement was granted by Pope Pius VII in 1821. In January 1822 the Brothers elected Edmund Rice as their Superior General, becoming a Pontifical Congregation. They compiled a new Rule and renamed their Congregation the **Christian Brothers**.

A further difficulty

Bishop Murphy of Cork would not allow the Brothers at the North Monastery in his diocese to make this change, but they slipped away one by one to Waterford and made their vows under the new formula. However, one Brother accepted the Bishop's direction.



Br. Augustine
Riordan

Br. Augustine Riordan moved to the South Monastery where he continued to live according to the old rule. He was joined by a few companions and the little community

continued as a Diocesan Congregation, the Presentation Brothers, until they also became a Pontifical Congregation in 1889.

Both the Christian Brothers and the Presentation Brothers prospered and membership increased though the two congregations remained technically illegal. Even when the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in 1829, a penal clause was inserted to make provision for the 'gradual suppression and final prohibition' of male religious orders. The penalty for any new member who joined could be transportation for life to the penal colonies of Australia. Edmund worried greatly that the men who had entrusted their lives to him by joining the congregation were facing a very uncertain future, but in practice, the new law was not enforced. In 1838 at the age of 76 Edmund resigned as Superior General. He lived to see Brothers depart to set up communities in Gibraltar, USA, England and Australia, but the years of carrying a heavy burden of responsibility took their toll. He gradually became an invalid and towards the end of his life he was confined to his room. Edmund Rice died on 29 August 1844 at Mount Sion. On 6 October 1996 Pope John Paul II declared Edmund Blessed, the final step in the process that may lead to his canonisation.

PRESENTATION BROTHERS SCHOOLS TRUST

CHARTER

Our Mission

We are committed to working together to make Christ's Gospel of love known and relevant to each succeeding generation.

Our educational tradition draws on the Gospel values of love, justice, freedom, mutual respect and hope. It is both a vision and a tradition which sees education as the key to growth and transformation in the context of the search for meaning, happiness and the common good. This tradition honours Mary, the mother of Jesus, Our Lady of the Presentation, as our model in faith and in living the teaching of Jesus and of His Church.

Our Foundation

The provision of Catholic Education by the Presentation Brothers goes back to the decision by Edmund Rice to provide schooling for deprived Catholic boys in 1802. The continuation of the contribution of a distinctive Presentation education will be ensured through the setting up of the Presentation Brothers Schools Trust.

...four core elements that guide us...

A Presentation Brothers school has **four core elements** that capture best its contribution to Catholic education:

- ❖ A genuine and tangible spirit of respect and caring for each member of the school community;
- ❖ A comprehensive and holistic education;
- ❖ A vibrant experience of community and partnership;
- ❖ A deep commitment to gospel values as lived in the Edmund Rice tradition.

Describing Our Values

...a spiritual vision...

This Presentation tradition has unfolded in a vision of educational communities whose guiding aim is the communication of, and an invitation into a relationship with, Jesus Christ as Saviour of all people. This spiritual vision of life is communicated in our schools through religious teaching, the celebration of the Sacraments, a prayer life and the lived example of people's lives in a supportive Christian community setting.

...each is precious...

The Presentation vision of education involves a deep respect for the individuality and integrity of each person and recognises that all men and women are children of God who have been embraced by Christ's redemptive love. This involves a deep reverence for all who form the school community based on an appreciation that they are made in the image and likeness of God. A life is seen as a gift from God that ought to be cherished, celebrated and defended. The Presentation vision sees education as the key to growth in personal responsibility and to personal formation and transformation in the context of a deep sense of mission to, and service of, others. Our vision of education has a special concern for people who suffer poverty and disadvantage.

...in partnership with...

A Presentation education is one marked by a partnership approach. Our schools work together and separately, supporting and assisting one another under the auspices of the *Presentation Brothers Schools Trust*.

Within each Presentation Brothers school the partners are invited, welcomed and enabled to participate in all aspects of school life.

...gathered together...

A Presentation Brothers school is a respectful community where the importance of personal dignity is promoted. A Presentation Brothers school is a place where all members of the school community can work and learn in a positive atmosphere free from harassment, bullying and intimidation. There is an appreciation of the impact we have on each other's lives. We grow, develop and, indeed, become human only in right relationship with ourselves, each other and God. Ultimately a Presentation Brothers school is a place where positive human development is nurtured, encouraged and facilitated. It promotes the living of life to its full potential, the exercising of ethical judgements in solidarity with and for other people. It is also a place where there is a sense of our responsibility as stewards of God's creation.

Fulfilling our Aims

The Presentation Brothers ethos and the continuation of the Presentation story will rest with committed people who embrace their role as witnesses to the Catholic faith and guardians of the distinctive Presentation identity.

...faith life of the school...

Religious education by suitably qualified and committed teachers is crucial in the curriculum of a Presentation Brothers school. Teachers will strive to develop in the individual and the school community an awareness of the presence of God and a relationship with Him. This is done by honouring and celebrating the spiritual dimension to all aspects of life.

The official liturgical life of the Church's year will be marked appropriately.

...all involved...

All members of the school community are encouraged to develop a sense of ownership and commitment to community. Such a sense of ownership is encouraged, developed and facilitated in a collaborative approach to the day-to-day running of the school, to in-school management and to school development planning, which include the following as examples:

- Participation in drawing up school policies;
- Implementation of these policies;
- Organisation of, and participation in, extra-curricular activities;
- Participation in the various bodies and groups that make up the school community, for example, Boards of Management, Student Councils, Parent Associations.

...the student at the heart...

Every effort is made to provide all students with a curriculum that convinces them of their inherent goodness, that nurtures their sense of dignity and self-worth, that treats them with respect and helps them develop their every gift. Presentation Brothers schools are committed to excellence in teaching and learning for all so that our students are well prepared and equipped with the necessary competencies and skills to take their place as responsible adult members of society. Presentation Brothers schools are characterised by the recognition of different educational needs and abilities - there

is a clear willingness to engage with new research and best practice, particularly when it benefits those with special educational needs.

Presentation Brothers schools exhibit flexibility. They manifest a willingness to embrace positive change and adapt, where necessary, within the boundaries of the Presentation Vision. A Presentation Brothers school will have clear pastoral care structures and approaches in place such as Class Tutors, Year Heads and Pastoral Teams where there is a co-ordination of the caring roles in the school for the benefit of all.

...those on the margins...

In keeping with the vision of Edmund Rice, the Presentation Brothers School aims to support those marginalised and rejected by mainstream society while promoting social justice and applying Christian values. There is particular concern for the members of our sister schools in developing countries.

Leadership

The Presentation Brothers Schools Trust bears ultimate responsibility for the continuation of the Presentation story and the distinctive Presentation spirit and ethos. The Trust works in a particular partnership with its Boards of Management to carry out this responsibility. Those in positions of leadership within our schools, especially principals and deputy principals, ensure that the Presentation ethos informs any decisions they make in their different roles as leaders. Leadership in a Presentation Brothers school is marked by openness and a strong professional, spiritual and ethical purpose. Decision-making is, as far as is practically possible, arrived at by consensus with all the partners in education. Leadership prioritises the good of the school community in balance with individual needs. Leaders motivate all members of

the school community to share in the Presentation vision and discover and develop a sense of ownership of their school.

Teaching and Support Staff

All school staff are encouraged to recognise their distinct identity as members of the Presentation Family and thus acknowledge their role as partners in ensuring the continuity of the Presentation story and ethos. A comprehensive Induction Programme will be provided for new members of staff to prepare them for their journey.

Staff members are encouraged to develop their own talents and gifts. All staff exercise a commitment to the development of caring relationships with all members of the school community. This creates a learning environment responsive to the needs of students and staff where the individual can flourish. Staff are valued and appreciated for their contribution to school life, particularly when given voluntarily outside usual teaching hours.

Religious Education Departments

Although promotion of the Edmund Rice vision, the Presentation ethos and Catholic education are the responsibility of the whole staff, and in particular of the leadership of the school, a special responsibility lies with the Religious Education Department within schools.

Religious Education Departments support and enable the celebration of special days within the Presentation tradition, namely the Feast of the Presentation of Mary and the Feast Day of Blessed Edmund Rice.

The Religious Education Department, in conjunction with school management and school chaplaincy service, has responsibility also for the organisation of liturgical celebrations during the school year.

Religious Education Departments are adequately equipped and resourced so as to enable them to fulfil their duties and operate to the best of their ability. Support from the school chaplaincy service, the parish community, the wider Presentation Brothers family and others shall be sought to enrich the liturgical, sacramental and spiritual dimensions of Presentation School life.

Students

The aim of a Presentation Brothers school is the fullest development of the student within a Catholic context. Students are seen as God's reflections. Their basic goodness is affirmed. They are recognized as responsible partners in education by all members of the school community and respected for their contribution to all aspects of school life. They have a role in policy formation, particularly with regard to school discipline, anti-bullying measures, pastoral care programmes and student councils. Students should leave the school having acquired a good knowledge and experience of the Catholic faith.

The wide range of backgrounds and family circumstances of students is appreciated. Awareness of the diversity of fellow classmates and other members of the Presentation family at home and abroad is acknowledged and highlighted as important. The school will seek out students in challenging circumstances and endeavour to support them.

Students should have access to a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, sporting and otherwise, which

can help to provide a sense of belonging and pride in their school, and develop their own gifts to the full. Each activity is valued as a vehicle of exploration and celebration of the many God-given talents of our students and staff.

Along with the provision of quality education in the academic, cultural, social and economic areas, Presentation Brothers schools help the student achieve a sense of personal responsibility. Thus students should be aware of their potential as 'history-makers'. The whole curriculum, broadly understood, shall help convince them of the deep significance of their lives - that they can and do make a difference. This they do both in a personal and global context. Student Councils and participation in programmes such as the Edmund Rice Awards encourage and facilitate the development of leadership skills within the student body and give students a share in the leadership process of the school.

Parents/Guardians and the Wider Community

The Catholic school is only one of the agents involved in the formation of the students. Parents/Guardians and the members of the local community of the school are encouraged to embrace their role as active partners and collaborators in education. They, in their turn, can expect the support and collaboration of all the partners in the Presentation School in their efforts.

A Presentation Brothers school encourages parents/guardians and members of the wider community to be conscious of their special position as members or potential members of the Presentation Family.

The multi-cultural, multi-faith context in which we now live is acknowledged and appreciated by the Presentation Brothers school, while recognising and promoting our status as a community with a Catholic ethos.

Presentation Brothers schools promote a global responsibility and are characterized by awareness, in all members of the school community, of significant local and global issues.

Realising the Vision

This Charter sets out a vibrant, noble and challenging vision – every member of Presentation Brothers Schools is warmly welcomed to take up the challenge. The Presentation Brothers School Identity Project (2004) clearly sets out the task of implementing the Presentation vision for schools:

Getting the relationships right goes to the heart of the challenge we face in today's Presentation Brothers school. It inspires us to endeavour to build a richer form of community in our schools so that parents and students join teachers and support staff in a shared vision of education and a real sense that this is our school.

(Presentation Education: Key Values of a Proud Tradition, 2004, p.15.)

Creating and maintaining a community spirit and enabling all the partners in education to develop a sense of ownership of their school are vital to each and every Presentation Brothers school. Where these qualities are in operation, where there is loyalty to the founding vision of Edmund Rice, a vision which has its foundations in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a Presentation Brothers school will be a place of hope, happiness and joy.

Our tradition draws its inspiration from the gospel of Jesus Christ and the charism of Edmund Rice. A Presentation Brothers school is based on the conviction that living the Gospel values of love, freedom and justice enables all members of the school community to reach that fullness of life that Jesus promised: "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full." Jn. 10:10
(Presentation Education: Key Values of a Proud Tradition, 2004, p.17.)

The Edmund Rice Icon

A modern icon executed in kinetic stained glass
by Desmond Kyne

The Edmund Rice Icon was inspired by the icons of both the Byzantine and Celtic traditions.

The illustrations and symbols in the various panels help us to appreciate the events and people in his life that led Edmund to a deep love of God.

In what was arguably the most miserable period of Ireland's history Edmund Rice responded to the needs of people less fortunate than himself, practising the second great commandment, "Love your neighbour."
(Mt 22:39)

