

## Prayer Resources for Edmund Rice Celebrations

### EDMUND RICE INTERCESSIONS

#### 1. **A Person of His Times**

Edmund was a modern man. He understood the world he lived in and the way it worked. He was able also to see God's presence in the world and slowly grew to understand that presence.

*All: Lord, help us to understand the world around us and teach us to see your presence in that world.*

#### 2. **A Business Person**

Edmund was a man of business. He was at ease in the marketplace and used his business skills to the full. He never laid aside those skills but used them throughout his life to feed and clothe the poor, to fund his schools and to support his Brothers.

*All: Lord, may each one of us discover the skills you have given us and use them generously in the service of others.*

#### 3. **A Husband**

A happily married man, Edmund knew the joys of intimate relationship. He was able to open his heart to share himself fully with others. He understood commitment.

*All: Lord, gift each one of us with happy relationships. Help us to understand that we have to work constantly at our relationships if they are to enrich our lives.*

#### 4. **A Widower**

Edmund experienced the devastation and despair of bereavement when he lost his wife through tragedy. His loss, however, became for him a further embracing of God's presence in creation and God's presence in darkness.

*All: Lord, help us to embrace life in its fullness and not allow ourselves to become twisted and misshapen by suffering when it does come our way.*

#### 5. **A Father**

Edmund had a daughter, Mary. He shouldered the responsibility of parenthood. Today parenthood appears to be more and more difficult.

*All: May they love their children with a love that will enable those children to develop into mature Christian men and women. May parents help young people value the spiritual dimension of life.*

#### 6. **Father of a Disabled Daughter**

Mary, Edmund's daughter, was disabled. This was a further cause of grief and sorrow to Edmund. It takes great love and courage to raise a disabled child and accept that child's giftedness.

*All: Lord, may your arms reach out to parents and to others who care for the disabled. Teach us all to love with the courage, selflessness and commitment that these families show day after day.*

#### 7. **Teacher**

Edmund was a teacher. He was the master dancer who taught the dance of life to children running wild in the streets. His dance and his teaching were full of wisdom and joy.

*R/ Lord, may all our teachers be masters of the dance and bring wisdom and joy to their work. May the art of education always be prized by us and in our society.*

## 8. **Friend of the Poor**

Those who were less well off in society were befriended by Edmund. He spent both himself and his fortune on their behalf. Today, the level of poverty around the globe challenges all of us who live comfortable lives.

*All: Lord, may the poor be our passion as they were Edmund's. May we dedicate ourselves to their service. May we be determined to make a difference and leave nothing undone that can be done.*

## 9. **Friend of the Condemned**

As the condemned walked to the gallows, Edmund walked with them. He was not afraid to brave the derision of the crowd and the contempt of his peers to stand with those about to be executed. He held their terror.

*All: Lord, you knew the agonies of condemnation and execution. May we refuse to condemn. May we stand by those who are despised, denigrated and mocked in our society. May we also value life itself and not be afraid to speak for the protection of life.*

## 10. **Friend to the Stranger**

On the quayside, Edmund once bought a young black boy from a sea captain to save him from an existence of hardship. He cared for him and saw that he was afforded an opportunity to lead a life of dignity and freedom.

*All: Lord, may we welcome strangers to our shores as Edmund did. May we allow them the opportunity to lead lives of dignity and to contribute meaningfully to our society.*

## 11. **Founder of Religious Congregations**

Edmund founded two religious congregations. He had a profound awareness of God's part in his life. He believed that God had called him to do a work for him that no one else could do.

*All: Lord, may our sense of your presence in our lives equal that of Edmund. May each one of us have the courage and strength to live out our vocation, whatever that vocation may be.*

## 12. **A Person of Faith**

As a person of faith, Edmund centred his life on God and lived to serve him by serving his brothers and sisters. No difficulty could distract him from that focus. No disappointment could dishearten him. No setback could dissuade him.

*All: Lord, may our faith in you burn brightly. May you truly become the centre of our lives. May we realise that in you is the meaning of life. May you be the beginning and the end of all that we do.*

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## **STREETS**

“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.”

*Edmund Rice*

“I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”

*Pope Francis*

## **Prayer: Cast all your cares into the arms of Divine Providence**

1. Edmund said, "Cast all your cares into the arms of Divine Providence."

*All: We pray that our trust in the goodness and kindness of God will never waiver.*

2. Edmund said, "Have courage, the good seed will grow up in the children's hearts later on."

*All: We pray that we will never be discouraged in the lives and will always endeavor to sow good seeds in the hearts of those we serve.*

3. Edmund said, "The world and everything in it is continually changing ... Perfect happiness is not to be expected but in another world."

*All: We pray that we shall not be afraid of changes or of letting go of anything that holds us back from the fullness of life.*

4. Edmund said, "One thing you may be sure of, that whilst you work for God, whether you succeed or not, God will amply reward you."

*All: We pray that we will always remain faithful to the values and teachings of Jesus.*

5. Edmund said, "Were we to know the merit and value of only going from one street to another to serve a neighbor for the love of God, we shall prize it more than silver or gold."

*All: We pray in gratitude for the opportunities that life has offered us in serving the needs of others around our globe.*

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## **Prayer inspired by the Blessed Edmund Rice Prayer**

1. The life of Edmund Rice was spent in the service of the poorest of the poor. From a life of comfort and wealth, Edmund gave everything up to serve the Lord in a life of dedicated service. (Pause)

*All: O God, we thank you for the life of Blessed Edmund.*

2. When Edmund saw the poor, he recognised he was seeing the suffering Christ and he knew that a cup of water given in his name was indeed an act of supreme love of God. (Pause)

*All: He opened his heart to Christ present in those oppressed by poverty and injustice.*

3. The generosity of Edmund can, perhaps, frighten us into inactivity. Can we, however, make even the smallest sacrifice to help those who are in need? Can we act with faith knowing that we may not see the outcome of our generosity in our lifetime? That is true faith. (Pause)

*All: May we follow his example of faith and generosity.*

4. Compassion means really feeling for the suffering of others and acting out of this feeling of solidarity with the poor. This demands real courage because it may ask us to do the difficult thing in response to the suffering of the poor. (Pause)

*All: Grant us the courage and compassion of Edmund.*

5. Love lies at the heart of all concern, where we overcome our own needs and reach out to those less fortunate. Love transforms lives because love is a decision to go beyond our own needs for the sake of the other. Love is not a feeling. It is a decision. (Pause)

*All: Strengthen us as we seek to live lives of love and service. Help us to love. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

## Does the Spirit Burn in You?

Why are you not careful, Edmund Rice?  
The floor boards creak, the ceiling rafters strain,  
holding hope in pummelling wind.  
You lie awake, alone on straw above the stable,  
refashioned now to serve a cherished dream.  
Yet through the frosty panes the stars are blazing.  
Be careful, Edmund. If your heart ignites,  
what turbulent fire, Spiritfanned!  
It will consume your dross and burn the waste  
of ignorance, stir dormant Tara embers.  
Perhaps it is some passing madness, or else  
what seems impossible to me,  
blazes with the possibility of God!  
*By Hugh Sharpe cfc*

## INTERCESSIONS

Brothers and sisters, we are gathered together to celebrate the mystery of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Let us ask God to open for the entire world this fountain of life and blessings.

1. For the universal Church, that it may ever more fully and eagerly embrace its mission to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world through the witness of service and love. We pray to the Lord .... Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For all who follow in the footsteps of Blessed Edmund Rice: the Presentation and Christian Brothers, and all members of the ER Network, that they may respond with the same courage and generosity to the call of Christ to the marginalized and outcast of our own day. We pray to the Lord ... Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For each us, called to one Discipleship, that the life of Blessed Edmund may encourage and inspire us to love one another as Christ has commanded us. We pray to the Lord ... Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For the young, to whom Blessed Edmund devoted his life, especially those on the fringes of our educational system, that they may hear Christ's call to grow and bear fruit through the witness and ministry of others. We pray to the Lord ... Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For all who suffer disability and illness, that they may find healing through the love and care of others and may the compassion they awaken be a source of renewal in our world. We pray to the Lord ... Lord, hear our prayer.
6. For all who suffer oppression and injustice that they may know hope through the witness and courage of others. We pray to the Lord ... Lord, hear our prayer.
7. For all the faithful departed, especially for the deceased members of the congregation founded by Blessed Edmund, that the Lord may reward them in the glory of his eternal Kingdom. We pray to the Lord ... Lord, hear our prayer.

God our Creator, hear the prayers of your people. Grant us what you inspired us to ask of you for in faith. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## LITANY

Glory to you, God our Creator ... Breathe into us new life, new meaning.  
Glory to you, God our Savior ... Lead us in the way of peace and justice.  
Glory to you, healing Spirit ... Transform us to empower others.

Blessed Edmund,  
Model of strength ... **Be our guide.**  
Model of risk  
Model of gentleness  
Model of trust  
Model of courage  
Model of patience  
Model of openness  
Model of perseverance

Teacher of the uneducated ... **Pray for us**  
Teacher of the poor  
Teacher of the marginalized  
Widowed husband  
Single father  
Friend of a political prisoner  
Friend of the condemned  
Friend of the executed criminal

Liberator of the oppressed ... **Lead us to life.**  
Comforter of the afflicted  
Breaker of bondage  
Sharer in Christ's ministry  
Participant in Christ's passion  
Seeker of God's will

Brother of mercy ... **Empower us.**  
Brother of faith  
Brother of contemplation  
Brother of vision  
Brother of wisdom and understanding  
Brother of grace and truth  
Brother, filled with hope  
Brother, centred in God

## OPENNESS

### Prayer for Openness to the Spirit in our Lives

- a) Spirit of God, grant us the LOVE which filled the heart of Blessed Edmund, inspiring him to give all to you.
- b) Spirit of God, grant us the JOY of Blessed Edmund who found his happiness in seeing and serving you in poor and excluded people.
- c) Spirit of God, grant us the PEACE of Blessed Edmund who trusted in you and your providence through countless difficulties.
- d) Spirit of God, grant us the PATIENCE of Blessed Edmund who held to being a person of faith even when misunderstood and opposed.
- e) Spirit of God, grant us the KINDNESS of Blessed Edmund who always had time for the smallest and weakest.
- f) Spirit of God, grant us the GOODNESS of Blessed Edmund whose broad vision saw ways all around to spread the goodness of the kingdom.
- g) Spirit of God, grant us the GENTLENESS of Blessed Edmund who brought the gentleness of Christ to all his relationships.
- h) Spirit of God, grant us the FAITHFULNESS of Blessed Edmund who did not give in to discouragement.
- i) Spirit of God, grant us the SELF CONTROL of Blessed Edmund who prayed constantly that your will would be done in him.

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## Our Heart for Mission

Nano, Edmund, formed in your separate stories  
in the heart of the one Lord,  
you looked on the hard realities of your world  
and saw the Spirit's boundless possibilities.  
Living always closer to your people,  
you learned to share the Spirit's urgent longing:  
"that they may have life, and have it to the full."  
Hearts broken open to the world's pain,  
hearts afire for justice and compassion,  
hearts free for service, joyful in welcome,  
steadfast to endure,  
you walked with firm steps, hands open  
to receive life and share life,  
learning to be sister, brother with each one  
especially with the poorest, with the least.

At home in the Presence of the One,  
your lives show forth a unity not clear  
when you walked your separate journeys here,  
a unity of vision and of heart.  
Together teach us all who walk your way  
how to live as brothers, sisters, now  
in our world which yearns in travail still  
to be re-born, one family in God.  
*By Sr. Raphael Consedine PBVM 1994*

## **AN EDMUND RICE "OUR FATHER"**

(All read the **bold** part of the prayer, and the readers alternate in reading the italic sections - please pray this very slowly)

**Our Father** ... *who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, those that must sneak off to "the hedgerow schools" of our day, hiding their lamps under bushel baskets.*

**Who art in heaven** ... *where everything will be reversed; where the first will be last and the last will be first; where Mary, Edmund's wife and his daughter and all our beloved dead will greet us and welcome us home, where grieving will be no more.*

**Hallowed by thy name** ... *for you are a God who desires intimacy with us, who calls each of us by name and calls each of us "my beloved son" and "my beloved daughter," who called Edmund to pray and mourn and steep himself in holy scripture and the spirituality of a God who has many "interior castles" for each of us.*

**Thy kingdom come** ... *a kingdom where we wake up to our destinies in you; where we find Edmund and the early brothers struggling to teach young people just as we struggle "to do and to teach."*

**Thy will be done** ... *open our freedom, to let you in, so that the complete love that flows through and Edmund to listen to your will in times of great struggle. Help us also to listen with constancy and great sensitivity*

**On earth as in heaven** ... *may the work of our hands, the schools and temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the values of heaven which are joy, graciousness, tenderness and justice. Make us all truly brothers and sisters.*

**Give us this day** ... *Not tomorrow. Do not let us put off being whole and holy, being your face to our students and the world, being, like Edmund, men and women who seek out the prisoner, the disenfranchised and the "Black Johnny" in our midst. \**

**Our daily bread** ... *which you have become in us, in all, in Eucharist and in the bread of the hospitality which Edmund showed and lived whether in the shoe shop, the bakery, the business office or the classroom.*

**And forgive us our trespasses** ... *forgive us our blindness toward each other. Help us really see the person in front of us as your face and not just as a burden. Forgive our racism, our sexism, our incurable propensity to fret about tomorrow and help us in Edmund's own words to know deeply that "providence is our inheritance."*

**As we forgive those who trespass against us** ... *God forbid us to grow bitter in spirit or despairing and even when we are maligned by our own as Edmund was, help us to forgive, to bless and not curse. Why? Because that is exactly what you did Jesus!*

**And lead us not into temptation** ... *for none of us is without sin.*

**But deliver us from evil** ... *that is, from the blindness that lets us not see ourselves, each other, and our wounded world as brothers and sisters, saints in training, lovers in the Holy Trinity, sons and daughters of Mother Mary, disciples of a God who called Edmund and all of us to a reality that we can only imagine.*

**Amen** ... *I believe. Live, Jesus, live in our hearts forever!*

## **AN EDMUND RICE “MAGNIFICAT”**

Today and every day, we live and proclaim the greatness of God;  
We cherish the loving presence of Jesus in our lives;  
We honour the gifts the Spirit has conferred upon us,  
and we commit these gifts to the service of God's Church.

Through fidelity to our vows, through personal and communal prayer,  
and through the enrichment of our community life,  
we are called to live a deep relationship with Jesus,  
and we open our hearts to love each other  
and to love all God's people.

We are endowed with the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice.  
It allows us to trust in the Providence of God,  
to affirm the dignity of all persons,  
to work for peace in a truly just society,  
and to live a life of love and compassion.

As men committed to international brotherhood,  
we seek global solidarity in one God.  
We stand with the marginalized,  
and we challenge injustices wherever we meet them.  
We acknowledge our brokenness and fragility,  
and we claim the growth that God's healing brings to us.  
We acclaim the Edmund Rice Family as a gift to the Church and to the world,  
and we work in partnership with all authentic expressions of Edmund's charism.

As a model of discipleship and of faith,  
as one called to make visible God dwelling among us,  
Mary is our patron and our protection.

God has blessed us and gifted us.  
God has called us to love, to service, to brotherhood.

## **A CREED OF EDMUND'S PEOPLE**

We believe the God-fire burning in our hearts can transform both ourselves and our world.

We believe we are called by God to a deep personal relationship with Jesus, the lover of all creation.

We believe we are called to be good news people.

We believe we are called to live in interdependence with all of creation.

We believe we are called to keep our hearts and minds open and attentive to God's will.

We believe we are called to witness by prophetic action to our option to the poor, the oppressed,  
and people at the margins.

We believe we are called to immerse ourselves in the culture in which we live and work.

We believe in community which is prayerful, inclusive and welcoming.

We believe our internationality is a witness to a search for global unity.

We believe it is in facing our own fragility that we can accompany others in theirs.

We believe that in sharing Eucharist and reconciliation we are drawn beyond ourselves to the mystery of God.

We believe others share the charism of Edmund, and are one with us in living it out.

We hear the call to live justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God. Amen.

## **BLESSINGS**

Today let us celebrate the feast of Blessed Edmund Rice and look to the future inspired by his example.

May the fire be in our thoughts  
Making them true, good and just,  
May it protect us from the evil one.

May the fire be in our eyes;  
May it open our eyes to see what is good in life.  
We ask that the fire may protect us from what  
is not rightfully ours.

May the fire be on our lips, so that we may  
speak the truth in kindness; that we  
may serve and, encourage others.  
May it protect us from speaking evil.

May the fire be in our ears.  
We pray that we may hear with a deep,  
deep listening  
So that we may hear the flow of water,  
and of all creation, and the dreaming.  
May we be protected from gossip and  
from those things  
that harm and break down our family.

May the fire be in our arms and hands  
so that we may be of service and build up love.  
May the fire protect us from all violence.

May the fire be in our whole being - in our legs and in our feet,  
enabling us to walk the earth with reverence and care;  
so that we may walk in the ways of goodness and truth  
and be protected from walking away from what is true.

Blessed Edmund Rice, Pray for Us.

*[If a small group are gathered, stand over each person and bless them with one of the lines from the following. Anoint them with some oil if appropriate.]*

May the light of your soul guide you.

May the light of your soul bless the work you do with the secret love and warmth of your heart.

May you see in what you do the beauty of your own soul.

May the sacredness of your work bring healing, light and renewal to those who work with you and to those who see and receive your work.

May your work never weary you.

May it release within you wellsprings of refreshment, inspiration and excitement.

May you be present in what you do.

May you never become lost in bland absences.

May the day never burden.

May dawn find you awake and alert, approaching your new day with dreams, possibilities and promises.

May evening find you gracious and fulfilled.

May you go into the night blessed, sheltered and protected.

May your soul calm, console and renew you.

*From Anam Cara, by John O'Donohoe*

## CONCLUDING PRAYERS

1. God, we thank you for the life of Blessed Edmund.  
He opened his heart to Christ present in those oppressed by poverty and injustice.  
Grant us the courage and compassion of Edmund  
as we seek to live lives of love and service.  
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.
2. Generous God, we are aware of your presence amongst us on this occasion and gratefully acknowledge the gifts and talents that all present have offered to foster the Kingdom of God over many years. We pray that the values and inspiration that we have gained from one another will remain with us always, Amen.
3. Creator God, to live in your Spirit is not to be complete but to be open, not to be perfect but to be growing, not to have arrived but to be firmly on the way. Help us to continue on the path of Jesus in the way of Blessed Edmund and to be faithful to the gift and spirit he has left us.  
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.
4. Lord, you are life, wisdom, truth, blessing and blessedness. You are our hope and our joy. We acknowledge with thanksgiving that you have made us in your image. Direct our thoughts to you and lead us to serve you in the spirit of Blessed Edmund so that we will come to love, enjoy and possess you more and more. Amen.  
*(Adapted from St. Anselm)*
5. Blessed Edmund, in whose steps we follow, we entrust our lives to you. Shelter us from ignorance, selfishness and oppression. Teach us to live in peace, to educate ourselves for justice and peace. Inspire us to act justly, to revere all God has made. Plant peace firmly in our hearts and in our world. Amen.

6. We pray that we may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to God as did your servant Edmund. May we be strengthened with all power, according to God's glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Creator, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.