

The Mission of Edmund Rice Continues

READINGS FROM *EDMUND RICE: THE MAN AND HIS TIMES* – DESMOND RUSHE PAGES 41 – 43

READING 1

Edmund had relatively little experience and no training as an educationalist and special measures were patently needed to cater for the illiterate poor with whom he was dealing. Many of them were lacking in discipline. Commonsense and compassion were two of the major elements Edmund applied in his approach, and in arranging an established routine, he also showed an acute understanding of the peculiar needs of the situation. He also displayed a remarkable capacity to be ahead of his time.

READING 2

Pupils were placed according to their newness and their degree of improvement. Starters were provided with ruled slates and sharp-pointed slate pencils with which to write on them, while proficient boys had copy-books and pens. Kindness and sympathy were encouraged, and monitors were appointed to write headlines for copying and to conduct reading practices.

READING 3

From the start, Edmund left no one in any doubt that the education he was interested in was unequivocally Catholic. The three R's were important ... but from the first days in Mount Sion, however, there was a strong emphasis on religious instruction. He saw a knowledge of, and a dedication to, religion as an essential element for his pupils and through them, he hoped their illiterate parents would also benefit. Instruction was not enough; practice was also necessary and the boys were given ample opportunity and exhortation.

Reflection Questions:

The tool through which Edmund revolutionized Irish society was *education*. When he first began his mission there was no expectation that the poor could rise above their station in life. To feed the poor was seen as charity; to educate them was considered madness.

What is our mission today?

How are we called to continue the “madness” of Edmund Rice?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of justice, in Edmund Rice you have shown us that nothing is impossible to those who trust in you. Teach us to be active agents of the Holy Spirit in the renewal of the world. Keep our eyes on the gospel vision and never lose heart. Like Edmund Rice may we be a voice in the wilderness and bring your Word to all we meet. Amen.

**Live, Jesus, in our hearts ...
forever.**

