

# Life of Edmund 3 Rice recalled at Mass

By Audrey Magee

LONG before the term 'development' was devised, the founder of the Christian Brothers of Ireland, Edmund Ignatius Rice, understood that the cause of the poor was served not only by emergency relief but also through development, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Desmond Connell, said yesterday.

Speaking as principal celebrant of a Mass at St Andrew's Church, Westland Row, Dublin — which was attended by the Taoiseach, Mr Reynolds, and his wife, Kathleen — to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the death of Brother Rice, Dr Connell said this concept of development, and the formation of a population sufficiently educated to manage a democracy, was essential to Ireland's modern progress from the Act of Union to independence.

In his homily tracing the life of Brother Rice, Dr Connell said he had been born in 1762 near Callan, Co Kilkenny. He founded the religious order after his pregnant wife, Mary Elliott, died following an accident and their daughter was born severely handicapped.

After the accident, Brother Rice considered withdrawing from the world as an Augustinian lay brother but was swayed by a woman who challenged him to follow the example of the Presentation Sisters, who were already caring for poor girls. He sold his business, made provision for his daughter and established a school for young boys in Waterford.

"I cannot even sketch the growth from that burst of seed," said Dr Connell, adding that Brother Rice went on to expand the role of the Presentation Brothers and his work led to the eventual establishment of the Congregation of the Christian Brothers.

The chief concelebrants of the Mass were the Bishop of Down and Connor, Dr Patrick Walsh, and the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Dr William Lee.

The Presentation and Christian Brothers commissioned Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin to compose a Mass reflecting the Gaelic spiritual tradition that influenced Brother Rice and his followers. *Missa Gadelica* was sung by, among others, Nóirín Ní Riain and four sean-nós singers. The music was played by the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the 90-minute Mass was broadcast live by RTE.

The President, Mrs Robinson, sent a message of congratulations. Among the attendance were the Government chief whip, Mr Noel Dempsey; the Minister of State for Education, Mr Liam Aylward; the Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr Brian O'Shea; Mr Peadar Clohessy TD; Ms Patricia McKenna MEP; Mr Eric Byrne TD; Mr Gay Mitchell TD; Mr Jim Mitchell TD; Mr Phil Hogan TD; Mr Pat Upton TD; Mr Alan Dukes TD; Mr Sean Barrett TD; Ms Maureen Quill TD; the deputy lord mayor of Dublin, Mr Ciarán Cuffe, and the Dublin city and county manager, Mr Frank Feely.

Diplomatic representatives present included the Australian ambassador, Mr Terence McCarthy; the Canadian ambassador, Mr Michael Wadsworth; the Indian ambassador, Mr Satinder



*The Taoiseach, Mr Reynolds and his wife, Kathleen, with Brother Bede Minehane, (left), superior general Presentation Brothers, Brother Anthony McDonnell, Provincial of St Helen's Province Christian Brothers and Brother John Heneghan, (right), Provincial of St Mary's Province Christian Brothers, at St Andrew's Church, Westland Row, Dublin yesterday for the anniversary Mass. Photograph: Jack McManus.*