

SALESIANS NAME NEW PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

By Michael Mendl, S.D.B.

The Rev. Thomas A. Dunne, S.D.B., has been named the next provincial superior of the New Rochelle Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco. His six-year term will begin on July 1, 2009.

The New Rochelle Province presently includes the United States east of the Mississippi River, with 165 priests and brothers serving in Salesian schools, parishes, youth centers, houses of formation, and chaplaincies in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Illinois, and the Archdiocese for the Military Services. Starting on July 1 it will also include the whole of Canada, 30 priests and brothers serving works in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia.

Father Dunne was appointed by the Rector Major of the Salesians, the Very Rev. Pascual Chavez, S.D.B., after consultation within the present New Rochelle Province and the Canadian Vice Province and with the consent of the Salesian general council in Rome.

Father Dunne, a native of Brooklyn, was born in 1943. His family belonged to Holy Name Parish. After three years at All Hallows High School in the Bronx, Father Dunne transferred to Don Bosco Juniorate in West Haverstraw for his senior year in 1959-1960.

Father Dunne entered the Salesian novitiate at Newton, N.J., in August 1960 and made his first religious profession on August 16, 1961. He earned a B.A. in philosophy from Don Bosco College, also in Newton, in 1965 and subsequently studied theology at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, from 1968 to 1972, graduating with master's degrees in religious education and divinity. He was ordained in Columbus on March 25, 1972. In 1989 he was awarded a doctorate in religious education from Boston College.

Father Dunne was vice provincial in 1981-1985 and 1988-1991, province director of religious education in 1973-1985, and province director of youth ministry in 1985-1991. In 1996 he was the province's elected delegate to the 24th General Chapter of the Salesians, and he was elected the alternate to last year's 26th General Chapter (in case the elected delegate was unable to serve).

From 1992 to 2006 Father Dunne was director of the Office of Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston. Since 2006 he has been serving on the provincial council with responsibility for the Salesian Family (Salesian Sisters, Salesian Cooperators, and other affiliated groups) and the province's communications department. He was also charged with starting up a program for the formation of lay collaborators in Salesian contexts.

Father Dunne has also had assignments as a teacher or administrator in Salesian schools in Cedar Lake, Ind., Ipswich, Mass., Boston, and the novitiate in Newton, N.J. He was director of the Marian Shrine-Don Bosco Retreat Center in West Haverstraw from 1985 to 1988.

Father Dunne will succeed the Very Rev. James Heuser, S.D.B., who became provincial on July 1, 2003. Father Heuser's announcement to the province in a letter dated January 14, 2009, describes Father Dunne as "a man rich in faith who gives witness daily to a life centered on God and the young. He lives as a brother among brothers, with practical charity and concern for his confreres. Possessing both astute intelligence and wide experience, he is an effective teacher and animator."

Father Chavez, the Rector Major, has also announced the appointment of Father Timothy Ploch, S.D.B., as provincial of the San Francisco Province, effective the first week of February 2009. Father Ploch has been pastor of Holy Rosary Parish in Port Chester, N.Y., since 1999 and was provincial of the New Rochelle Province from 1991 to 1997.