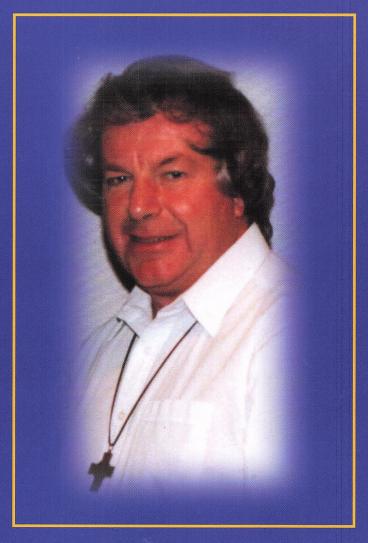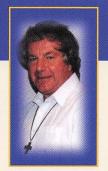# Fr.Edward Murphy, S.D.B

*"When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, 'Do not weep'....The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother"* *(Luke 7: 13.15)*

**Born: 15th February,1941**

**Born into Eternal Life: 20th December, 2000**

### *"Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."  (Matthew 25:13)*

Neither the day nor the hour was known to Eddie Murphy, when on December 20th, 2000 he suffered a severe and fatal heart attack while stopped at a busy Sydney intersection.  The suddenness of the incident left his religious community and the Parish of St. John Bosco, Engadine stunned and in shock.  The number of people who attended his viewing on Thursday evening and the Funeral Mass on Friday were numb with disbelief.  Many of them were commenting on his jovial appearance just the night before at a Parish celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for Christmas.  Still, the numbers who attended his Funeral Mass bore testimony to this man who was admired for his pastoral involvement and compassion towards all people, especially those in particular need.

Eddie (Edward) Peter John Murphy was born to Mary and John Murphy on February 15th, 1941 in Wigan (U.K.). Eddie was one of five children.  John and Anthony died before his birth, and his sister Mary Rose died while he was working in Australia some years back.  His one surviving sister Rose McKeown is residing in England.



Eddie was a learned person.   He gained his Bachelor of Science (in Mathematics and Physics) from the Imperial College, London.  He obtained diplomas in Engineering in later years.  It was while working with British Aerospace at the age of 18 years, and contemplating signing an eight year contract with them to work on the



design of guided weapons system, that Eddie made a decision to study for  the priesthood as a Salesian.  He entered the Salesian pre-novitiate at Bolton (UK) in 1958-59 and the Novitiate at Burwash (UK) in 1959-60, where he made his first profession on September 8th, 1960.   He studied philosophy at Beckford (UK) and completed his tirocinium at Farnborough and Shrigley (UK).  Eddie studied theology at the Salesian Pontifical University (Rome) from 1967-71,  and was ordained on 24th April, 1971 at Bolton (UK).  His priestly ministry saw him teaching at Farnborough, Beckford, Shrigley and Bootle (UK).  He was also involved in retreat work at Bollington, Bolton and Stockport (UK).

In 1989 Eddie decided to transfer to the Australian Province. After a small hiccup — with his immigration papers—which saw him returning to England to sort things out—he settled in Australia. His ministry within this Province saw him involved mainly in parish ministry at Engadine, NSW (1989-90, 1991-98, 2000), Bairnsdale, Victoria (1998-1999) and as Parish Priest at Brooklyn Park, South Australia (1999-2000). He was also involved in retreat



work while living at Salesian Provincial House Oakleigh, Victoria (1990-91). In 2000 Eddie returned to Engadine (NSW) to the community in which he spent the majority of his years while a member of this province, as chaplain to the John Paul Village (Nursing Home, Hostel, Self Care Units and Serviced Apartments) and parish duties. Eddie's priestly and Salesian ministry can be best summarised as years devoted to those in particular need. The quote used at the beginning of this letter and used also at Eddie's funeral Mass, speaks of Eddie's pastoral charity and devotion. Just as Jesus was moved with compassion at the sight of the widow at the funeral of her only son, so too was Eddie moved to be present to those in his ministry who had experienced a particular difficulty or who required someone to be there for them. The Australian Salesian Provincial, Fr. Ian Murdoch, made mention of this during his homily at the Eddie's funeral Mass when he said that this gospel story" *reminds us of Fr. Eddie and the great compassion he showed towards others, and his ability to lead people to a deeper understanding of God's love for them. It is also a story that promises us that Fr. Eddie now experiences in all its fullness the compassion and love of God that he ministered so well to others".* Fr. Peter Rankin, Parish Priest of Engadine, at a memorial Eucharist for Eddie on January 19th, 2001, stated that "*Eddie's life was one of love and compassion, service, commitment and dedication."* Fr. Rankin spoke of Eddie as a zealous, compassionate and non-judgmental person.

At the Funeral Mass, Mark Doran, a parishoner from St. John Bosco Parish and a young person who experienced Eddie's ministry, made the following reflection about Fr Eddie: "*Fr Eddie was a man of short stature, but I often wondered how a bloke with such a big heart could fit into such a small package! Fr Eddie had time for everyone. It was during his time with the Antioch group, of which I was a member, that I was fortunate enough to meet this person who was a friend to all. Fr Eddie's approach to youth ministry was true to the values of St. John Bosco and Salesian educational practice. He loved the young people and we loved him, very, very much. We all felt so comfortable in his presence that it wasn't uncommon for us to call him just Eddie. Sure he was a priest, but he was also our friend and we treated him as such".*

**Some of Eddie's colleagues and friends from the English Province share some of their thoughts and reflections**

*"We were together at Bootle and Bolton… he was a great laugh and always such good fun. Eddie was always larger than life, and in death, his memory will live on, with a smile! Heaven is now a funnier place."*

*"I wish to offer my condolences of Eddie's death, and my thanks for the way in which you and the Province cared for him over the years...we were at school together, and spent three years in Philosophy and three in Theology together."*

*"The news of his death left me very sad, but thankful to God for having been much encouraged by Eddie's kindness when I was considering the Salesians twenty years ago and his quirky humour and booming laugh".*

*"I worked with Eddie on the retreat team and we became good friends. I remember when my mother died and also my father, Eddie was right there with us both at their funerals...that's how I shall remember Eddie, as a brother. He was always so very kind and good fun too".*

**The Salesian Constitutions state that those confreres who have "lived to the full the gospel project... are for us a stimulus and help on the path to holiness (n.25). May the life and death of Eddie be for us that stimulus to continue to work for the growth of the Kingdom through lives of holiness and compassion to others.**

**Fr Bob Bossini (Rector) and Community, Engadine, NSW**

**Data for the Necrology**
**Fr Edward Murphy, SDB :**
**59 years of age,**
**40 years of profession;**
**29 years of priesthood.**