



# *DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER*

## *OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS*

887 Highland Ave. • P.O. Box 7 • Fall River, MA 02722 • Tel. 508-675-0211 • FAX 508-675-5204  
• [www.fallriverdiocese.org](http://www.fallriverdiocese.org)

## *News Release*

July 3, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *POPE NAMES NEWARK AUXILIARY BISHOP TO LEAD FALL RIVER DIOCESE*

FALL RIVER — Pope Francis has appointed the Most Reverend Edgar Moreira da Cunha, S.D.V., currently an Auxiliary Bishop of the Newark, N.J. Archdiocese, to become the Eighth Bishop of the Fall River Diocese. He succeeds the Most Reverend George W. Coleman who, in accordance with Church Law, submitted his letter of resignation upon turning 75 years of age on February 1, 2014.

The acceptance of his resignation and the appointment of Bishop da Cunha were announced today in Washington, D. C. by the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Carlo M. Vigano.

Bishop da Cunha, 60, will be installed as Bishop of Fall River in the context of a Mass to be celebrated on September 24, at the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption in Fall River. Details of his installation will be announced in forthcoming weeks.

In his ministry in the Fall River Diocese, Bishop da Cunha will shepherd a community of faith of approximately 302,484 persons who worship in 84 parishes and 11 mission churches in Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands.

Bishop da Cunha was born in Nova Fatima, Bahia, Brazil, on August 21, 1953, the son of Manoel and Josefa Moreira.

He attended local schools in Nova Fatima, Bahia, including the minor seminary (or Vocationary) of the Vocationist Fathers in Riachão do Jacuípe. There he joined the Vocationist Fathers, also known as the Society of Divine Vocations. He studied Philosophy at Universidade Catolica do Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, and Theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, New Jersey, graduating with a Master of Divinity degree.

Bishop da Cunha was ordained to the priesthood for the Society of Divine Vocations, in the Church of St. Michael, Newark, by Bishop Joseph A. Francis, S.V.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Newark, on March 27, 1982. Following his ordination he served as a parochial vicar of St. Michael Church, Newark, and as director of vocations for his Congregation. In 1983,

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when the Archdiocese entrusted Saint Nicholas Parish, Palisades Park, to the Vocationist Fathers, Bishop da Cunha was transferred there to serve as parochial vicar and vice superior of the local community and at the same time continued his ministry of promoting vocations.

During his time as vocation director he was very active and served on the board of the Eastern Religious Vocations Directors Association. In 1987 he was appointed pastor of St. Nicholas Parish. In 1992 he was elected secretary of the Council of the Vocationist Delegation in the United States.

From 1994 until 2000, Bishop da Cunha served as novice master and director of the Vocationary, the house of formation that the Society maintains in Florham Park, N.J.

His appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Newark and Titular Bishop of Ugres was announced by the Holy See on June 27, 2003, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. He was ordained a Bishop on September 3, 2003, at the Sacred Heart Cathedral Basilica and was appointed Regional Bishop for Essex County on October 15, 2003 and then Vicar for Evangelization on May 4, 2005. He was named Vicar General for the Archdiocese of Newark on June 6, 2013 and as such has since served as the principal deputy of the archbishop in the administration of the archdiocese.

Bishop da Cunha is presently a member of the Newark Archdiocesan Board of Consultors, Presbyteral Council, the Clergy Personnel Board; the New Jersey Catholic Conference (NJCC) Board of Bishops and chairman of NJCC Public Policy Committee; he has served as member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; Committee on Migration; and currently he is a member of the Sub-Committee on the Church in Latin America, the Sub-Committee on Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugee and Travelers; he serves as a Consultor to the Sub-Committee on Hispanic Affairs; he also serves as Episcopal Liaison to the Brazilian Apostolate (in the U.S.). He is Chairman of the Archdiocesan Implementation Team for the New Energies – Parish Transition Project in the Archdiocese of Newark.

The Diocese of Fall River was established in 1904 and covers 1,194 square miles, encompassing all of Bristol County, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and the towns of Mattapoisett, Marion and Wareham in Plymouth County. Bishop Coleman has led the Diocese since July 22, 2003.

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**NOTE: A NEWS CONFERENCE WITH BISHOP DA CUNHA WILL TAKE PLACE TODAY, JULY 3, 2014, AT 11 A.M. AT THE DIOCESAN COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE, 887 HIGHLAND AVENUE, FALL RIVER.**