

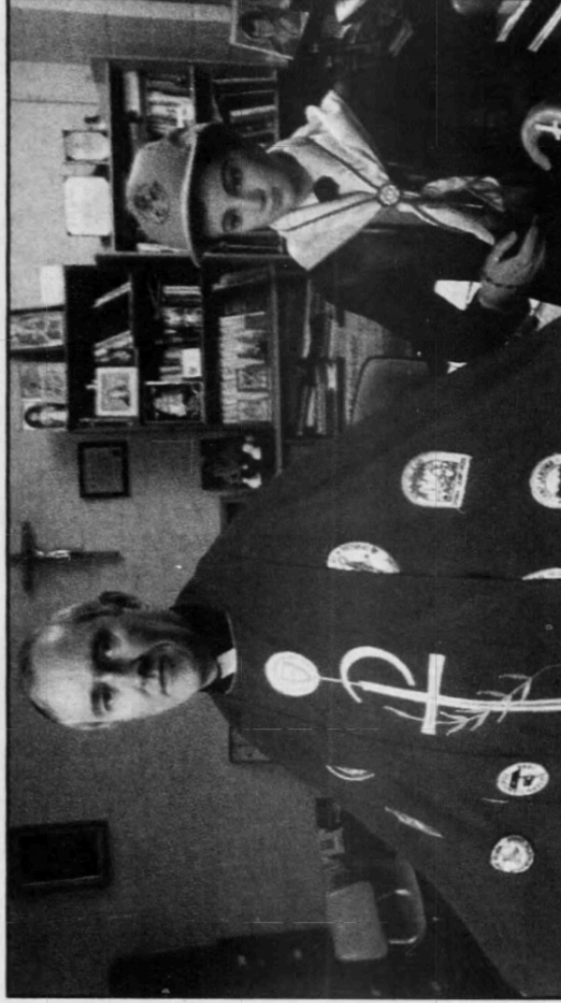
REACHING OUT

A SAINT AND A SCOUT

At the entrance to the **Rev. Peter Malloy's** office at the Marian Shrine in West Haverstraw is a life-sized statue of St. Dominic Savio, an Italian boy who died at the age of 15 in 1857, and, almost a century later, was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. Around its neck is a Boy Scout neckerchief, and on its head, a Boy Scout cap.

Malloy, a Salesian priest, is the national director of the St. Dominic Savio Club, a youth leadership program for school-age boys and girls with some 4,000 members nationwide. Each year, with the help of his personal computer, he corresponds with all 16,000 members or former members, either on their birthdays or on the feast days of the saint for which they were named.

The gussied up statue "kind of serves to combine two programs I believe in and that are very similar in purpose," says **Malloy**, who has served as Rockland's Boy Scout chaplain since 1977. "Both groups stress leadership among young people, and both are positive in their approaches to helping young people grow... I think if St. Dominic Savio were alive today, he'd be a Boy Scout."



Malloy with the statue of St. Dominic Savio: 'Personal contact is important.'

Malloy, 45, has a long history of involvement with youth. Through his 25 years as a Salesian—he took his first vows in 1962—he has worked with young people as a teacher, parish youth director, camp counselor and cleric.

He visits several Savio Club chapters each year. Last year, he visited 68 chapters in 12 states.

"The personal contact is so important," he says. "It makes them feel important. Months and even years after

I've visited a place, there will be young boys and girls who still write and call and talk about the time they met me. It makes a difference to them that someone cares enough about them to come out and meet them and talk to them..."

As Rockland's Boy Scout chaplain, **Malloy** visits weekend and summer campsites, saying Mass in a vestment covered with patches from religious retreats. "I wear the patches because it... gets the attention of the kids who

ALL WELCOME

Malloy's clubs and many of the Scout retreats and services he conducts are open to everyone, not just Catholics. "Once," he says, "I was giving a talk to a chapter about the life of St. Dominic Savio and how they should all try to be a saint like he was. One of the boys later asked me, 'Can I be a saint if I'm not a Catholic?'"

are in the Scouts, and sometimes some who aren't and might like to be," he says. "It's a conversation piece, to be sure."

Malloy says the problems facing young people have remained the same.

"Kids are under so much pressure to succeed," he says. "That's still the main problem. It's an American heresy: You're only as good as what you produce. An 'A' student is better than a 'B' student. It's our job to teach youth that they are inherently good."

He gets lots of mail from young people and answers each letter personally. "Kids are confused," **Malloy** says. "They're looking for guidance, and too often they don't get good advice. It's my goal to make them aware of their worth and give them some hope."

—Dennis Lyons