

Towey named president of Ave Maria University

by [Kevin Eckstrom](#)

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(RNS) Domino's Pizza magnate Tom Monaghan has stepped down from leading the conservative Catholic university he founded near Naples, Fla., and named the former director of the White House faith-based office as president.

Monaghan's Ave Maria University on the edge of the Everglades will be headed by Jim Towey, who once served as Mother Teresa's U.S. lawyer and headed President George W. Bush's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives from 2002-2006.

Monaghan, 73, who has poured millions of his personal fortune into the school he founded in 1998, stepped down from the day-to-day operations as CEO and will assume the post of chancellor.

"The start-up phase is over, a strong foundation is now in place, and now we must go about the difficult work of building the best Catholic liberal arts university in America," Towey said in a statement.

After leaving the White House, Towey served as president of Saint Vincent College, a small Catholic college outside Pittsburgh, until last summer.

Towey succeeds Nicholas J. Healy, who has served under Monaghan as the school's president since 2002.

"Really, for us as a board, they've done the impossible," Board of Trustees chairman Michael Timmis told the Naples Daily News. "They've created a university out of tomato fields. It's incredible. It's unparalleled."