Student Spotlight: Rev. Lawrence Nwabueze, O.P.

University of Dayton

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Reverend Lawrence Nwabueze, O.P.

Reverend Lawrence Nwabueze, O.P. comes to the University of Dayton from Nigeria where he completed his undergraduate degree in the Faculty of Education. He is a member of the Religious Order of Preachers (Dominicans) in the Province of Saint Joseph the Worker, Nigeria and Ghana (O.P.). The O.P. operates schools in Nigeria with a goal of being vessels of God's love in the challenges of modern-day West Africa. Father Nwabueze was ordained a priest on January 3, 2004. He arrived in the United States on his first mission outside his home country in December of 2005.

Father Lawrence spent four years in as the Catholic Chaplain at the Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pennsylvania. During this time, he lived with and provided liturgical and sacramental care to the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius and Catholic residents and staff of Maria Joseph Manor Continuing Care Community. His days were spent visiting, praying with, and counseling patients on matters concerning Catholic health ethics, though he notes his most memorable moments as those he spent ministering and serving sick children and the elderly.

From 2010 to 2011, Fr. Lawrence served as the Director of his Province's Office of Development and Mission in Maryland while doubling as Chaplain to Catholic patients at the Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C. His duties as Director focused chiefly on fundraising for the Dominicans of the Province of St. Joseph the Worker. He also attended to some of the needs of other members of the O.P. in their school or mission assignment in the U.S. and Europe. His role as Chaplain at the Washington Hospital Center involved visiting with patients, praying, and providing spiritual counsel.
After a friend, and UD Religious Studies faculty member, expressed his great respect of the Educational Leadership doctoral program, Father Lawrence chose to enroll. Following the approval of his superiors, he started his graduate studies at UD in the spring semester of 2013. Fr. Lawrence hopes that attaining his doctorate degree will prepare him to join the faculty and staff members at the Dominican schools in Nigeria.

“I have every reason to be happy with [the choice to attend UD] because, my exposures so far, in the graduate school, especially the emphasis on diversity, speak to the reality of the Nigerian environment where I hope to serve eventually,” said Fr. Lawrence. “I look forward to the acquisition of more tools that will enhance my understanding of transformational leadership in schools, especially at the higher education level, in an ever changing human society.”

Fr. Lawrence also noted UD’s many opportunities for financial aid as being fundamental in his choice to enroll. He has held a research assistantship position since 2013 that has helped with the cost of tuition and enabled him to continue his studies.

When asked about his most rewarding work, Father Lawrence remarked about his experiences with ill patients. “The fact that I have been privileged, by my calling, to provide support to patients and their families...in hospitals and in their homes, has been highly uplifting. You come out of most encounters appreciative not only of your own good health, but also the fact that many people still have room for God in their lives even in extreme health crises.”

Father Lawrence anticipates completion of his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership in 2019.