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Charism, Character, Calling

University of Dayton

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With 2015 decreed as the Year of Consecrated Life by Pope Francis, University of Dayton Libraries is honoring the priests, sisters and brothers — the vowed religious — who devote their lives to serving God and humanity.

*Charism, Character and Calling*, on display through March 31 in the Roesch Library, tells these stories through treasures from three special library collections that preserve the history of the U.S. Catholic
Church, tell the story of the University's Marianist heritage, and draw scholars from around the world to study Mary, the mother of Jesus.

"To many, consecrated life is mysterious," said Kathleen Webb, dean of University Libraries. "Because it's not typically a highly visible or attention-seeking life, people are often not aware of the impact that consecrated religious have had on our community and our world. This exhibit helps shine a light on their faith, their commitment to a life of service, as well as their humor, their creativity and their call to religious life."

The exhibit showcases the three collections — U.S. Catholic Special Collection, the Marian Library, and University Archives and Special Collections — all which rich sources of information and insight about Catholic life and beliefs.

Included in the exhibit are:

* Dolls garbed in the habits of four orders of Catholic sisters from a collection of more than 135 examples.
* Crowns of flowers and thorns worn by sisters during ceremonies in which they took their vows or celebrated their jubilees, the anniversaries of their vows.
* Books and photographs from celebrated consecrated men and women throughout history.
* Brochures encouraging young people to consider religious vocations throughout the 20th century.
* Videos and profiles illustrate how vowed religious men and women spend their free time, their devotion to their faith and community living with other vowed religious.
* Artwork shows how many vowed religious live their call through painting, quilting, writing poetry, sketching and woodwork.

Many vowed religious provided personal items for the exhibit, such as a handwritten postcard sent from Brother Tom Pieper, S.M., to his family years ago. He told his family not to worry, that he had arrived at the University of Dayton and would be all right.

Personal reflections from more than 30 vowed religious provide insight into the lives of familiar faces from around campus and the Dayton community.

Sister Mary Louise Foley, F.M.I., spoke of watching the Flyers and challenging anyone to card games, and her great pleasure in winning.

Father François Rossier, S.M., who grew up in Switzerland and now calls the University home, recalled playing soccer as a child and his love for rock 'n' roll, especially the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin.
The University of Dayton's Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute is a globally recognized center for the study of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and holds the world's largest collection of printed materials and artifacts devoted to her. The collection includes more than 100,000 books and pamphlets in more than 50 languages, and a vast collection of more than 3,000 Nativity sets and Marian art from around the world. Visit the library at udayton.edu/imri.

The U.S. Catholic Special Collection preserves records of the Catholic Church and Catholic life in the United States. It also supports the University's doctoral program in religious studies focusing on the U.S. Catholic experience. This collection shows the commitment of the University of Dayton to the history and heritage of the Catholic Church in the United States and its intellectual and popular traditions.

University Archives and Special Collections chronicle the University's development as a top Catholic and Marianist institution of higher learning. Materials date from 1850, when St. Mary's Institute was founded as a grammar school for boys, to the present. The archives include records created by University departments, faculty papers, rare books, drawings, photographs, maps, audiovisual recordings and University publications.

The exhibit is free and open to the public during library hours. For directions and library hours, visit udayton.edu/libraries or call 937-229-4265.

For more information, contact Nichole Rustad, digital projects and graphic design manager for University Libraries, at 937-229-1335 or nrustad1@udayton.edu.