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# 'Build Community Amidst Diversity'

University of Dayton

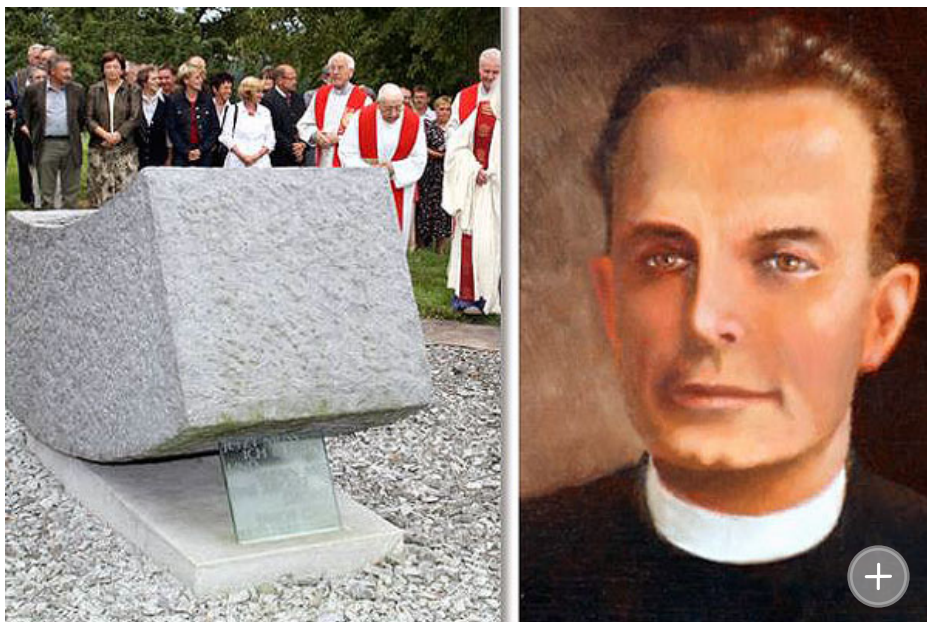
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Monday August 14, 2017

## 'Build Community Amidst Diversity'

In response to the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, the weekend of Aug. 12-13, Vice President for Mission and Rector Fr. James Fitz, S.M., reminds the University community about the courageous life of Blessed Jakob Gapp, a martyr who gave his life defending the Catholic church against the Nazis and whose feast day is Aug. 13.

*Born in Austria in 1897, Jakob Gapp professed first vows in the Society of Mary in 1921. Faithful to the teachings of the Church, he proclaimed the incompatibility of the principles of national socialism with Christianity, according to Fitz.*

*Beginning in 1938, the Nazis persecuted Gapp for his beliefs and, in 1942, arrested him and brought him to Berlin. During the interrogation, Gapp remained unshaken in his defense of the Church and the faith.*

*In his trial in Berlin, Blessed Jakob declared to his accusers: "I am convinced that a Catholic priest may not defend the national socialist*

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*doctrine. He must remain loyal to his faith even while the national socialists are sworn to destroy the Catholic Church in Germany. I am convinced that between Catholicism and national socialist Germany there stands in opposition an insurmountable wall so that a true servant of the Church will oppose any force that the Reich might employ."*

*He was beheaded on Aug. 13, 1943, and his remains were never released for burial because the Nazis feared he might be honored as a martyr. Pope John Paul II beatified Gapp Nov. 24, 1996.*

*Let us as a University committed to the promotion of the common good do all we can to uphold the dignity of all people. Let us pray for an end to the violence, hate and racism that led to the events in Charlottesville. Let us pray and work to build community amidst diversity.*

Photo credit - LEFT: Marianist Family members gather at a memorial stone for Blessed Jakob Gapp in Greisinghof, Austria. The stone is oriented toward Berlin, where Gapp died. RIGHT: Painting of Gapp by Hungarian artist Czonkareti, nephew of the late Fr. Ladislaus Nagy. Posted in *Family Online* Volume 8, Number 16 on Aug. 26, 2009.

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