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Servant Priest

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A Kettering couple has published a biography of a beloved Marianist priest who quietly inspired countless lives.

Joseph and Joanne Kepes will sign copies of their newly published book, *Philip C. Hoelle, S.M.: Servant Priest*, from 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, July 15, at St. Mark Bookshop in Centerville.

Before the Rev. Philip C. Hoelle, S.M., died in 2005 at the age of 93, he founded the Dakota Center in west Dayton, co-founded the Dayton Christian-Jewish Dialogue and helped build the University of Dayton's Marian Library into the world's largest repository of printed material about Mary, the mother of Jesus. In 1993, the University of Dayton's National Alumni Association awarded him the Christian Service Award. He was the first recipient of the Dakota Center's Founder's Award for 30 years of service to minority youth.

All proceeds from the $10 book will be donated to the Dakota Center.

"His genius lay in his gentle ability to inspire others. For him, people are what mattered most," said Joseph Kepes, who along with his wife Joanne, weaved together Hoelle's life story through interviews and a review of his publications and letters. Their friendship with the priest spanned nearly six decades. Kepes, professor emeritus of physics, taught at the University of Dayton for nearly 40 years. His wife earned a master's degree in religious studies at the University.

The couple liken Hoelle to Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, a French priest who survived the French Revolution and founded the Society of Mary (Marianists) in 1817.

"To us, he was like a gentle, quietly moving river. When the river comes to a barrier, the water slowly builds up and either flows around the obstacle or goes over it," they wrote in the book's postscript. "It is amazing how much he did, doing it so quietly and persistently that most people did not realize what he had accomplished. There is no question that Philip C. Hoelle is a saint."

The Rev. Bertrand Buby, S.M., professor emeritus of religious studies who teaches in the International Marian Research Institute on campus, calls the book a "lively, accurate and clear narrative" that paints a memorable portrait of a quiet, modest priest who "truly helped Mary carry out her mission of bringing Jesus to others."

The book is available online through the North American Center for Marianist Studies (http://www.nacms.org) and at St. Mark Bookshop, 895 S. Main St., in Centerville.

*For more information, contact Joseph and Joanne Kepes at 937-434-2580.*