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University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



Celebrating the Marianist Heritage

01.10.2007 | Campus and Community, Catholic The Rev. Cyprian Davis, O.S.B., a leading scholar on the history of black American Catholics, is the winner of this year's Marianist Award from the University of Dayton. He will receive the award and deliver a public lecture at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 1, in the Kennedy Union ballroom.

The award -- one of the University of Dayton's highest honors -- is part of a series of special events on campus between now and March 1 to celebrate UD's Catholic, Marianist heritage.

Davis serves as professor of church history at Saint Meinrad School of Theology in Indiana. In 1991 he won the John Gilmary Shea Award from the American Catholic Historical Association for his book, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, a work Publishers Weekly labeled as "groundbreaking research" and "a chronicle both sad and inspiring."

The Catholic Church in the United States was not a leader for the emancipation of slaves. But the Catholic emphasis on the dignity of the person merges with the sense of dignity found in the history of black Catholics, according to the Rev. Paul Marshall, S.M., rector of the University. Marshall says that Davis' telling of those worlds merging is "a living story of freedom."

Davis himself, Marshall says, has a "presence. He carries the sacred with him. You can see God within him."

A Benedictine monk for more than half a century, Davis serves as archivist for Saint Meinrad Archabbey as well as for the Swiss-American Benedictine Congregation and the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus. Holding a doctorate in history from the University of Louvain in Belgium, Davis has been a visiting professor at several African institutions and also regularly teaches black Catholic history at the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University in New Orleans.

He served on the subcommittee for the preliminary drafts of the bishops' pastoral letter *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (1979) and the black bishops' pastoral letter *What We Have Seen and Heard* (1984).

Each year, the University of Dayton presents the Marianist Award, one of its highest honors, to a Roman Catholic whose work has contributed to the intellectual life. Theologians, philosophers, historians, anthropologists, scholars and critics are among those who have received the Marianist Award and discussed the relationship of their faith to their professional work.

Other events during Marianist Heritage Celebration include a food drive for Catholic Social Services food bank, a Marianist trivia contest called FamilyFeUD, a student-led recitation of the rosary in multiple languages and a panel discussion about service opportunities available for students after graduation. On Feb. 9, the University of Dayton will bestow the 2007 Lackner Awards upon Amy Lopez, director of Kennedy Union, and Steve Mueller, director of the counseling center. The award honors faculty and staff who have made a significant contribution to the Catholic and Marianist character of UD. For a schedule of all events, click here ([url: http://marianist.udayton.edu/](http://marianist.udayton.edu/)).

Founded in 1850 by the Society of Mary, the University of Dayton has grown into a top-tier national university and one of the 10 best Catholic universities in the nation. The Marianists are characterized by a special devotion to Mary, mother of Jesus, and a faith that builds community through service. Committed to education, the Marianists minister to youth and in solidarity with the poor.

Contact Father Paul Marshall, S.M., at 937-229-4122.