Very Reverend Charles Balic is First Recipient of Marian Library Medal
DAYTON, Ohio, August 11, 1971 --- Very Reverend Charles Balic, a Franciscan scholar from Yugoslavia who is President of the International Pontifical Marian Academy in Rome, is the first recipient of the new international Marian Library Medal. Father Balic, who has been a leading scholar on Mariology for 40 years, received the award at the International Mariological-Marian Congress in Zagreb, Yugoslavia this week.

The presentation was made by Reverend Theodore Koehler, a French Marianist who has been director of the University of Dayton's Marian Library for the past two years. He represented Reverend Raymond A. Roesch, S.M., President of the University, and was accompanied by Brother William Packovec, S.M., Marian Library cataloger, and Reverend William Cole, S.M., and Reverend Robert Maloy, S.M., members of UD's Department of Theological Studies who have devoted much of their priestly life to the study of Mariology.

The medal was conceived and designed on the UD campus by Brother Joseph Barrish, S.M., Assistant Professor in UD's Fine Arts Division, in consultation with Reverend Koehler.

The new award replaces one given annually from 1953 to 1967. This award was given to the Marian scholar who published the most significant American work on Mary, The Mother of God, during the year. Bishop Fulton Sheen of New York was the first recipient in 1953 and Reverend Thomas Aquinas O'Meara, O.P., the last in 1967.

The new medal will be given every four years at the International Mariological-Marian Congress and awarded to "the scholar who discovers and explores the very fountainheads of Marian doctrine and piety."

The need for an international award became apparent during the 1960s when Mariological increased in worldwide stature. The era of almost instant communication and transportation brought Marian scholars in constant touch with one another and unified much of the work which was being accomplished in this religious field.

The University's Marian Library serves as an extensive research source for Marian scholars who have come from all over the world to utilize the library's material. The study center has over 34,000 books and pamphlets, several thousand issues of journals and magazines, and hundreds of artifacts on Mary, The Mother of God.

Father Balic, who was born in Croatia on December 6, 1899, has been a priest since 1923. He pursued his doctoral work at Louvain, where his thesis concerned the Marian theology of Franciscan authors of the 13th and 14th centuries. He has inaugurated the publication of several important series of historical studies on Mariology. His own works on the Assumption paved the way for the proclamation of that dogma in 1950.

He founded the Pontifical Marian Academy and has been the general coordinator for the Mariological congresses since 1950. A bibliography of Marian works, he has either edited or written from 1931 through 1966, fills more than seven pages in the recent issue of Ephemerides Mariologicae.