

## **Fr. Edmund Rhodes**

*“Standing before the mystery of death had the same impact on our ancestors as witnessing the mystery of birth. In such a twilight place, it is as if time itself stands still to allow the survivors to reflect on life’s bigger questions. Death has the power to heal because it has the power to put life into perspective and to bring forth life’s important priorities.”*

(The American Book of Dying – R. Goves and H. Klauser)

And so, as the survivors in this twilight place, standing before the mystery of death we review together the life of Fr. Ed.

Edmund Leo Rhodes was born on July 19, 1910, in Suffield, Ohio, on a farm east of Akron, Ohio, son of the late Louis and Anna (Michael) Rhodes. He also had four brothers and four sisters, all of whom have died.

He is survived by numerous nieces and nephews. Fortunately, a niece, Mary, and a grandniece, Linda, were with him last Saturday morning when he died. In fact they were praying morning prayer in his presence.

We thank them in a special way and we thank his extended family who has made the trip here to join us in this service.

Ed entered the Society of Mary and professed first vows on August 15, 1929, only a few months before the great stock market crash and the beginning of the great depression.

He made perpetual vows on August 15, 1932. He was ordained to the priesthood on July 27, 1941, in Fribourg, Switzerland, only a few months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor and our entrance into World War II.

He graduated from the University of Dayton in 1932 and from Catholic University of America with an STL in philosophy in 1942.

Early in his career he taught at Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., Chaminade High School in Mineola, N.Y., St. John the Baptist High School in Philadelphia, Cathedral High School in Cleveland and Trinity College in Sioux

City, Iowa, before eventually landing here at the University of Dayton in 1947, where he would stay until 1983.

It is interesting what he wrote about those early days at UD:

*"In 1947 the majority of our students in the College of Arts and Sciences were GIs. Many of them had been through the horrors of actual combat. I had many GIs in my classes. They wanted an education, not just credits. They wanted solutions to problems that presented themselves before they actually enrolled."*

During his 36 years at UD, Father Ed initially spent a few years as a professor in theology, but then the rest of his time as a professor of philosophy, chair of the Philosophy Department, assistant dean of Arts and Sciences, and dean of Arts and Sciences from 1953 to 1958, although he would later serve in parish ministry at St. Aloysius in Cleveland and Nativity Parish in Hollywood, Fla.

He remained a scholar and college professor to the end. Among the few possessions he had in his room at the end, I noticed that he had a Marianist prayer book in French, the New Testament in Greek and Hebrew, as well as a book of crossword puzzles . . . in Latin.

Not many people knew that he also had quite a love for music, which came out, I understand, when he would play the piano. He also had a harmonica among his last possessions.

Despite his academic pursuits, Ed had a wonderful simplicity about him and a beautiful smile. He was always grateful and was sincerely loved by those who cared for him at Mercy-Siena, as evidenced by their tears when he died.

Some of them are here with us this morning. We thank them for their love and care for him. We thank the entire staff at Mercy-Siena.

We thank Kim Evans, Judy Moehl, Bro. Joe Mariscalco, Bro. Nick Rufo and the entire Marianist community at Mercy-Siena for their efforts, support and love for Fr. Ed.

May he rest in peace.

**Fr. Tom Schroer**