



The Marianists

Bro. Robert Hughes

50 years of profession

I feel very privileged to be in a religious family that emphasizes the dignity of each individual person and allows its members to grow in faith in a way that respects their individual talents. I feel privileged to be able to do the work I do at University of Dayton to help increase the reputation of that institution. With Mary's help, I feel I can do that; and in doing that, I reflect the love Christ has for us all.

I was raised in Hamilton, Ohio, in a very secular Protestant family. I guess we didn't think you had to go to church in order to love Christ. But they did teach me the basic values by which I live today. From my grandmother on my dad's side, I learned discipline and responsibility; from my dad, I learned social justice and to treat everyone equally; from my sister, who was two years younger than me and an extrovert, I learned self-defense; and from my mother, I learned who Jesus was and eventually, learned to love Him.

I arrived at University of Cincinnati, a typical teenager ready to learn how to be a graphic designer in the advertising business, who was, what I would call, a secular humanist. I developed many friends at the university, and I noticed that most were Catholic. They seemed to have many of the values that I had, and I respected them greatly. This also was the time of Pope John XXIII, a very, charismatic pope. I started reading all I could about the Catholic Church and Pope John; I read his encyclical "Peace on Earth" and the one written just before that one. I read Thomas Merton's book "Seven Storey Mountain," about his conversion to the Church, and I read "Protestant, Catholic, Jew" about religion in America.

I converted to the Catholic Church when I was a senior at University of Cincinnati. I decided I wanted to become a priest but was told to wait and not to decide so quickly. I was drafted into the Army. After the Army, I tried again, but did not know Latin, which I needed for the seminary. The director of the seminary suggested I try religious life as a teaching brother, and he had me interview with a Christian brother and a Marianist brother. I chose the Marianist because of family spirit and the fact that every member of the order was respected equally, whether worker, priest or teacher. Being a Marianist has been the greatest gift of my life!