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 Contact: Pam Huber
 Huber@udayton.edu

NEWS RELEASE

**UD MARIANIST LECTURER SAYS GROWING LAY VOICE
 INFLUENCING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CATHOLIC**

DAYTON, Ohio — The Rev. Bernard J. Lee, S.M., assistant chancellor at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, will address "Whose Story Is It? The 'Guild' of Catholic Interpreters" at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18, in the Mathias H. Heck Courtroom in Keller Hall at the University of Dayton.

Admission is free and open to the public.

"I am suggesting that the growing role of the lay voice in U.S. Catholicism ... is responsive to deep changes in Western civilization and to the new narrative invited by the Second Vatican Council," Lee said. "Lay Catholics are quietly and surely telling their experience of the Catholic story, and their telling is leaving its mark on what it means to be a Catholic. They are not hijacking the interpretive role, but broadening it into a dialectic. What we experience is a beginning, nothing fuller than that, but a true beginning of an expanding guild of interpreters. But that is a lot."

For the majority of the Catholic Church's history, what it means to be Catholic has been interpreted by priests and theologians who were "entirely male and nearly always celibate," he said. Small changes began after the Second Vatican Council, and Lee noted that, as of 1997, lay parish ministers outnumbered ordained parish ministers. The trend hasn't reversed.

The voice of lay Catholics "is new growth, tender growth, often tenuous growth, clear growth and perhaps the beginning of a new situation, a hidden revolution," Lee said.

His presentation of the Marianist Lecture is part of the Marianist Heritage celebration at the University of Dayton.

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For advance media interviews, contact **Father Bernard Lee** at (210) 431-5081 or via e-mail at bleesm@stmarytx.edu.