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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fr. Victor Laroche, OP, welcomes new Xavierites as new University Chaplain

As the nation's only historically Black and Catholic Institution, Xavier's ministry is the cornerstone of its history and identity. Recently, the University welcomed Father Victor Laroche from the Order of Preachers as the new Chaplain and special assistant to the President for Catholic identity. A member of the Dominican Friars and originally from Haiti, Laroche comes to the campus versed in his commitment to holistic education and the pursuit of truth.

A gifted linguist, Laroche is fluent in four languages- English, French, Haitian Creole and Spanish. He is also able to read and speak both Italian and Portuguese efficiently.

The father hit the ground running at Xavier, participating in the traditions observed by Xavier during New Student Orientation. He led masses, prayers, rituals and more, inspiring hundreds of first-time students with his homilies.

"The mission statement of my Dominican Province resonates with the mission of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacraments and their call to share the gospel message, especially among the Black and Indian peoples and challenge the deeply rooted injustice in the world today," said Laroche. "I hope to prayerfully proclaim the Word of God, share the gospel message, and walk in the footsteps of Jesus, following the examples of St. Dominic, St. Martin de Porres, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Katharine Drexel."

Xavier's reputation preceded it, for Laroche was very familiar with the University. His appointment continues the tradition of having a Dominican Friar serve as the spiritual leader of Xavier, who have been present at Xavier since the 1940s. Laroche succeeds the mantle from Father Etido Jerome.

Laroche made his first profession to the Dominicans in 1996 and was ordained in 2002. He holds a Master of Arts in Theology and a Master of Divinity from Aquinas Institute of Theology. He has served in various leadership roles, chaplaincy, non-profit, campus ministry, and canonical and pastoral responsibilities. Most recently, he was the Socius and Vicar Provincial for the Dominican Province of St. Martin de Porres from 2018 to 2022.

He brings a wealth of knowledge from his experience as a young adult minister. He has previously acted as a retreat and spiritual director, as well as a pastoral care/grief counselor across diverse cultures and age groups. In Haiti, he assisted with the planning and supervising of faith-led alternative spring breaks and served as an interpreter. For three years, he was elected House Superior (Prior).

Laroche looks forward to learning more about the history of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and the rich history, culture, and traditions of Xavier University. He will share the gospel message through daily and Sunday masses and be available for blessings, sacraments and conversations with Xavierites, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, administrators, and benefactors. He hopes to assist in this year's celebration of St. Katharine Drexel's 10th anniversary and Xavier's 100th anniversary in 2025.

"We are so excited to welcome Father LaRoche into our Xavier family. He brings with him rich experiences as an educator and public faith leader," said **Curtis Wright, Vice President of Student Affairs at Xavier**. "I can't wait to see and feel his impact on our community."

An embodiment of Xavier's mission to promote a more just and humane society, Laroche roots himself in the four Dominican charisms of Prayer, Study, Community and Service, promoting justice, peace and care.

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About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, America's only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier's College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.

Established in 1925, by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African American and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master's programs, have provided Xavier students (2815 undergraduates and 787 graduates) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula is to provide students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at www.xula.edu or contact Regi Reyes at (504) 520-5240 or rreyes@xula.edu.



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Fr. Victor Laroche, Op

University Chaplain & Special Assistant to the
President for Catholic Identity

New Xavier University
of Louisiana Chaplain
settles in

