



SOCIETY OF MARY ★ MARISTS IN THE U.S.

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VOCATION OFFICE UPDATE

VOCATION AWARENESS: GEORGIA & MICHIGAN

For the third year in a row, representatives from the Marist Family gathered at Marist School Atlanta in January for a vocation awareness week with the students. Representing Missionary Sisters was Sr. Anne Marie Woeste SMSM, Br. Al Rivera FMS for the Marist Brothers, Mr. Jack Ridout, Vocation Director for the Marist Fathers and Brothers, along with school chaplain Fr. David Musso, SM. This year we were happy to have 2 men who have taken a further step in answering that call to religious life, Br. Luis of the Marist Brothers and Mr. Nik Rodewald who is currently a postulant with the Marist Fathers and Brothers in Washington, DC.



Nik speaks to students in Atlanta

The focus of this year's presentations was the continued awareness of "God's call" in your life. During his presentation Br. Al invited a few students to come forward to choose a "snack" and then they were asked to explain why they chose it. This was an exercise in decision making which hopefully showed that all decisions are good, but different. Religious life needs to be considered along with remaining single or getting married.

Presentations were also made to the students at Our Lady of Assumption Parish School (a Marist parish) as well as Notre Dame Academy in nearby Duluth, Georgia, a Marist Fathers and Brothers sponsored school. All in all, close to 1,000 students heard about the call to religious life, especially Marist religious life.

In March the Province expanded its "vocation awareness" efforts to include the Marist Schools in Pontiac, Michigan. During the week of March 19th I was able to speak with several groups of students, including Marist Academy, individual seniors at the Marist residence and awarded prizes to 8th Graders who participated in a poster/essay contest devoted to awareness of vocations.



Marists: Joe Hindelang, Louis Plourde, Ron Nikodem, Jack Ridout
Contest winners: Jaimie Krankel, Jessica Kennedy, Anthony Zaleski

The Marist Community invited six young men who they felt would be interested in hearing more about a vocation to religious life. The evening turned out to be a mini "come and see" which included a meal, and some sincere discussions about the "ins and outs" of religious life, priesthood/brotherhood and what would be their first steps in "answering God's call."

I spoke about vocations to the students at Marist Academy and after receiving some amusing questions from the kids, I remembered an old TV show hosted by Art Linkletter called "Kids Say the Darndest Things." With students this young, you can't always anticipate the questions they might ask, so the last little girl asked the burning question: "Can you guys have toothpaste?" which immediately brought lots of laughs to the students and faculty.

So, toothpaste notwithstanding, the "vocation" days and discussions went well and introduced another side of the need for vocations to these students at Notre Dame Prep and Marist Academy.

Stories by Jack Ridout, Vocation Director