

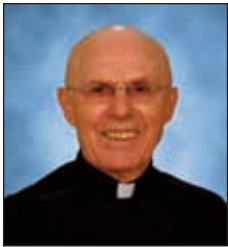


Today's MARISTS

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USA PROVINCE



Thanksgiving / Advent 2009



THANKSGIVING *Reflection*

-Fr. John Jazwiecki, SM

Ever since I can remember, I thought that one day I would like to live in Florida and enjoy eternal sunshine, the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and while there search for the mysterious “fountain of youth.” I am now convinced that the sought-after fountain is somewhere else.

On July 3, 2009, I enjoyed a Marist Retreat along with many of my brothers who are professed Marists from all across the U.S. At the end of the retreat we enjoyed a special dinner to celebrate significant Marist anniversaries. We all received a laminated “place mat” listing the names of all the Marists who were celebrating special anniversaries of their religious profession or priestly ordination in 2009. I didn’t attempt to add up all the years of commitment of all these men to consecrated Marist life, but I know that if I had, the sum would be a huge number. This celebration of anniversaries is now an annual tradition. Each year at the end of our annual retreat, we celebrate and honor our Marist brothers and their years of dedication and commitment to the Marist Way of life. This year, I was especially honored and pleased to see my name on the placemat, along with those of many other Marists, indicating that it has been 45 years since my priestly ordination.

As I look back over those 45 years of priestly ministry, I have the sense and special feeling of always being blessed as I moved from one ministry and city to another. Wherever I ministered, I always found wonderful and very special people who were parishioners and co-workers, and who became long-time dear friends. As I moved from one location to another I always carried the names, faces and special memories of many wonderful people who became and still are a great part of my life.

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Father Ted Keating, S.M.,
Provincial

Dear Friends,

Many people in our U.S. society today say that they are spiritual but they have difficulties with religion. Traditionally, the one was always associated with the other. It is even more confusing to hear this from Catholics because we have always treasured the belief that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Therefore, to be Catholic means to be mystical and spiritual on the one hand, and rooted in the Catholic religion and its belief system on the other. When I have explored this contrast about spirituality versus religion with Catholics, it often boils down to someone being angry with something the institutional Church has done while they miss the reality that the institutional face of the Church is merely one dimension of her mysterious nature in the purposes of God for the world.

Marist spirituality, as articulated by Jean Claude Colin, our founder, further closes that stated gap between religion/Church and spirituality. In Colin's mind, "these critical times," as he called them, indicate the need for a new lens on traditional spirituality. In his era, the French revolution had a world and culture which demanded more respect for human dignity, the values of freedom

and liberty, and respect for conscience in a pluralistic world. Colin was also aware of what he called the need for "a new Church" more rooted in the Mother of Mercy whose "embrace is to all" and a church more firmly focused on helping those alienated from her to find their way back. He often referred to this as the "Work of Mary."

Provincial LETTER

Marists, both vowed and lay, are called to be "hidden and as it were unknown" in the world as a core element of their spirituality. "These critical times" call for a gentler, less triumphal pastoral approach that "takes people where they are" in compassion and non-judgment. Marists seek to "empty themselves" of all that would impede God's healing grace and mercy from reaching through them to whomever they meet. They focus on the key virtues of humility, self-abnegation (self-forgetfulness), radical obedience to the will of God, and ardent love of neighbor. These are the pillars of Marist spirituality set forth in the Constitutions for the Society that Fr. Colin wrote for us. All the terms used in this paragraph are normal parlance among vowed and lay Marists when talking about their spiritual values.

But with respect to those who would divide religion/Church and spirituality, notice how this spirituality is precisely for the Church and its mission in the world. Marists strive to be acutely aware of some of the excesses of the institutional Church in its history. The visible Church is filled with our own wounds and brokenness, and always will be until the return of Jesus Christ. Therefore the Church's struggle to be what it is called to be in the world does not surprise or shock us. We find that as the Church journeys through history, she can be as weak and wounded as we are. As one great ancient writer said, "Nothing human is alien to me." We all participate in this brokenness and our spirituality leads us to let God judge, as Jesus instructed us. This awareness was behind John Paul II's many efforts to ask forgiveness for the excesses of the Church throughout history. Some were shocked by his "mea culpa" but we Marists were not. Fr. Colin prepared us for this.

The "hidden and unknown" catch phrase for our spirituality is therefore a mission as well as a spirituality. We become "hidden and unknown" in self-emptying humility (see Philippians 2:6-11) so

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Provincial Letter

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that we may be part of the “new Church” (Fr. Colin’s term), that is seeking to bring to birth the hidden God in this secularized world around us where we know He is always present, but always in mystery. We embrace the call to be hidden and unknown precisely so that we can be sensitive to His presence in all whom we meet, in every culture that we encounter, in every ordinary moment of our lives. Our spirituality calls us to live into the mystery of the hidden God present in each moment of our existence. But this requires that we empty ourselves of all that would keep us from being able to encounter that mysterious presence. We do not, however, lock our spirituality away in secrecy. Feel free to take it from us anytime you want. The more you take it from us, the stronger it gets. But be careful, it may be “hidden and unknown” when you look for it in our vowed or lay Marists. They are busy trying to stay out of God’s way in the world and hoping that God is making the best use of them.

I wish all of you, members of our extended family, a very blessed Thanksgiving and Advent and the blessing and joy of Christ’s peace at Christmas.

Father Ted Keating, SM

Part One — Before the Marists

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF MARIST PRESENCE IN THE MISSIONS OF WEST VIRGINIA — 1902-1952

As of the beginning of September 1902, there are 12 Marists missioned in West Virginia: six in the Wheeling area, two at Paden City, and four in the hills of Central West Virginia, where Marists have ministered for 107 years.



The first students at St. Vincent de Paul School, Wheeling, W. Va. with Fr. Ernest Pflieger, S. M. Fr. Pflieger was pastor at St. Vincent de Paul from 1919 to 1924.

It was daunting territory in the early 1900s. West Virginia, especially in its central part, where the parishes of Buckhannon and Richwood are situated is a rugged mountain state. Lack of quick and sure communication in a mountainous country, as well as the scattered and isolated condition of Catholics in these sections gave rise to most of the problems and difficulties encountered by the pioneer priests in the early days. The priests had to be resourceful and as rugged as the country itself.

Buckhannon is in one of the most scenic spots of the Mountain State. It takes its name from the small river through it and which has its source in the mountains around Pickens. The name of the river itself derives from the native American word Buckhongahelas. Even before 1902 Buckhannon was and still is the natural center from which to radiate into the adjoining territory.

Before the arrival of the Marists, Buckhannon belonged originally to the parish of Kingsville. The pastor, Fr. Fitzpatrick, a diocesan priest, has become a legendary figure in the area. Fr. Fitzpatrick visited Buckhannon once a month.

Before 1902 the town of Richwood was almost non-existent. A map of central West Virginia will show clearly that it was impossible to attend properly to the religious needs of the Catholics in these missions. They were more or less a religious “no man’s land.”

Two diocesan priests, Fathers Gormely and DeLoan, were appointed successively to take care of all the Catholics who were sprinkled over a rough and then roadless territory of about 4,000 square miles. A number of zealous and energetic priests were necessary to give even a minimum of religious service and instruction, but priests were scarce at that time...

The Marist story in West Virginia will be continued in the next issue

In Memoriam



Brother Albert Thiffault was born in Fairbault, Minnesota in 1929. He took his vows as a Marist Brother on September 8, 1961. During his years as a Marist, he served at the Marist Seminary in Washington D.C., Chanel High School in Bedford, Ohio, St. William Church in St. Simons Island, Georgia, the Marist General House in Rome, at the Marist College Community, Holy Name of Mary Church and finally at the Marist Community in New Orleans, Louisiana where he lived since his retirement in 2001.



CULTIVATING VOCATIONS

When I speak to candidates and other groups, I continue to bring awareness of a culture of vocations that is missing in today's world. Let's go back in time to another era when the idea of vocations was discussed openly. We had many dedicated sisters and brothers among us whose lives challenged our youth to embrace a life of idealism and sacrifice in the service of Christ and the Church. Thousands of young men and women responded because these religious men and women had created that culture of vocations. Our own Catholic families were an integral part of that culture.



Parents today need to ask their children two things:

- 1) What do you want to do with your life? and
- 2) What do you think God wants you to be?

Before anyone commits themselves to the corporate world, the convent or seminary he or she needs to consider how and where God is calling them –to the single life, to married life or as a consecrated religious and/or priest. Most young Catholics, will be called to married life, and we must do everything we can to prepare them for that vocation.

A change in vocations is underway. A recent study by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the National Religious Vocation Conference found that “that those who are choosing religious life today are passionate about it.” The study also tries to understand the characteristics, attitudes and experiences of the men and women who are choosing to enter religious life today, as well as the qualities of those orders who are attracting new candidates and retaining new members, of which there are many.

We can no longer rely on those many religious who nurtured the culture of vocations, for the fruit of their work is just about gone. Today we must rely on families, dedicated lay teachers, CCD teachers, and youth ministers to instill the importance of discerning one's own personal vocation in our youth. If all of us fail to inspire a culture and sense of vocation in a new generation of believers, we will all suffer the consequences; in fact those consequences can already be seen around us.

What does a young person who might be considering a vocation look like? He is that young man in your religious education class, the young woman who is a confirmation candidate, the altar server, the leader of the youth group, a lector, or the member of the Bible study group who will be tomorrow's priest, sister or brother. May I ask you to join the Marists in storming heaven with our prayers and may I ask you to say one Hail Mary each day for vocations to the consecrated life.

- Jack Ridout, Director of Vocations

MARIST DONOR ACCOMPLISHES AMAZING THINGS

With their time, talent and treasure, Marist donors accomplish amazing things. Marist Laity member Bob Spruce is an example of one enthused with the spirit of the Society of Mary who has used his gifts of time and talents of insight, drive and innovation to transform Marian formation and build community in his local parish.

As a new Catholic who had never met a Marist, it was Bob's 2001 chance encounter with an Englishwoman visiting his parish in Houston that introduced him to the Marist Way. Bob felt something was missing in his parish life, and was intrigued by what this woman told him about the Marists. He read a biography of Marist founder Fr. Colin and "I developed a personal relationship with Mary as a result of that book," remembers Bob.

Bob decided to start a Marist Laity group even though the closest Marist parish group was in Brownsville, Texas. Soon, this Marist Laity group became a formal ministry of his parish. His small group has provided parish morning prayer six days a week; led days of reflection on Marian topics, and organized a mission drive to collect school supplies for 1,200 children in the elementary formation program run by the Marists in Brownsville and in Matamoros, Mexico.

Bob's insight into the needs of busy families in his 4,000-family parish has led him to new ways to provide formation



in Marian spirituality, such as his self-directed study program with a professed lay mentor. "This way, if you don't have time to attend meetings, you use materials on the website, www.maristlaity.com explains Bob.

Bob's talents will be of great help to the Marists as part of the congregation's Marist Way Committee, which began meeting in August 2009. "The task of the 'Marist Way' group is to take Marist spirituality beyond the professed Marists and make this spirituality available to the Church at large. ... Marist spirituality changes the way one behaves and how one approaches the other. Parishes won't change unless individuals change," says Bob. He observes that fostering the growth of community in parishes is critical to our Church today.

For Bob Spruce, the gifts he has shared with the Marists never compares with the gifts received from them. "Marist spirituality has done a great deal for me, by bringing focus into my spiritual life and renewing how I live my life."

MARIST EDUCATION IN ATLANTA



*Debra Orr, President,
Notre Dame Academy,
Duluth, Georgia*

In the fall of 2004, a grass roots effort began to open a Catholic elementary school in a suburban area northeast of Atlanta. At this time, the demand for Catholic education was exceeding the supply. In 1999 and 2000 the Archdiocese opened up five new elementary and high schools, but, despite this considerable effort, there were still many more families seeking Catholic education for their children than there were available places in Catholic schools.

In response to this need, a group of parents gathered to explore opening a Catholic elementary school. This grass roots effort quickly took on momentum. The first step was to ask then Archbishop Donahue for permission to open a Catholic school. The Archbishop granted the permission and made clear that the Archdiocese was not in position to offer help to this effort. It was at this time that I approached the Society of Mary. In Atlanta, there is not a more recognizable or respected name in Catholic education than Marist. Marist School in Atlanta is recognized for excellence in all areas – academics, athletics, arts, and spirituality. As I familiarized myself with the Society of Mary and the Marist Fathers at Marist School, it became clear that the Marist charism in education was a good fit for our efforts. Our goal was to open a Catholic school that was simple in structure but strong in program. We were looking to open a Catholic school that would welcome families of all faiths.

EDUCATION IN ATLANTA *continued on page 6*

EDUCATION IN ATLANTA *continued from page 5*



Notre Dame Academy students gathered in the cafeteria after the celebration of their First Eucharist.

My first phone call was to Marist Provincial, Father Dennis Steik, S.M. He recommended that I speak directly with Father Konzen, Principal at Marist School in Atlanta. I wrote Father Konzen a letter explaining our efforts and our need to have a religious order support our efforts. Within days, Father responded and attended a meeting at my home with a group of parents. From that evening on, the rest quickly followed. The Marists were going to support the new school project in ways that would provide the spiritual and academic animation and identity for our new school.

With the blessing of the Society of Mary, Notre Dame Academy today is in its fifth year of operation and is 460 students strong. With the help of the Marist Fathers, we are able to celebrate Mass with the children every week. We have a clear spiritual identity in the tradition of Father Colin and the Society of Mary. As each year passes and we learn more about the Marist spirituality, we realize how blessed we are to have this connection.

Debra Orr, President, Notre Dame Academy, Duluth, Georgia



When I was contacted five years ago by Debra Orr to discuss a possibility regarding a new elementary school in Gwinnett County, I had doubts that it would be congruent with the educational aims of the Society of Mary. Soon that picture changed. The vision that she mapped out made it easy to see how the Marists' long tradition of Catholic secondary schooling in Atlanta might be complemented by a new and thriving elementary apostolate in the Atlanta area.

Not long before, we at Marist had begun the "Reach for Excellence" program to prepare students from underserved urban middle schools for entrance into top-flight college-prep high schools. It seemed at first that we would not have the personnel or the time to pursue another affiliated project, namely, an association with a start-up elementary school. However, the mutual benefits soon emerged: an educational direction steeped in a definite spiritual tradition for the new school, and the prospect of incoming students prepared in "a Marist way" for Marist School—some of whom would be the suburban children of Marist School graduates.

The Society of Mary in Georgia, with the blessing of the Provincial, collaborated in naming the new school Notre Dame Academy (in part to have schools named "Marist" and "Notre Dame," just as the Marists do in Michigan), agreed to provide a Marist chaplain for regular sacramental and pastoral presence in the school, took a seat on the school's Board of Trustees, and provided the Elements of Marist Education as the key defining document for the design of the new school's curriculum and allied programs. Once up and running, Notre Dame Academy added the International Baccalaureate in order to serve its diverse clientele with the most complete and current academic offerings available.

The partnership has been excellent, and the vision and drive of Debbie Orr is nothing short of phenomenal. With the help of some key backers, and working from a rich experience in Catholic education, she moved rapidly to establish a school that parents said from its beginning was thoroughly Catholic and was child-centered in the best possible ways. The school has added gifted professionals on its staff and a second facility for the earliest ages. Best of all, close to 500 students attend a Catholic school where formerly there was none. The mission to those wanting Catholic education has been extended, and the Marists in Atlanta conduct or aid three distinct educational venues, all under the inspiration of the earliest Marists and the aims laid down by Father Colin for the Marists at Belley, the first Marist school.

May Mary, whose happy task it was to instruct Jesus, guide these efforts for the sake of extending her family, to which they belong by gracious choice.

*Fr. Joel Konzen, S.M.,
Principal, Marist School, Atlanta, Georgia*

IN ROME, NEW SUPERIOR-GENERAL AND NEW ASSISTANTS-GENERAL ELECTED

Following many days of communal, prayerful reflection the delegates of the Society of Mary gathered in Rome elected Fr. John Hannan of Ireland, the Provincial Superior of the Province of Europe, to serve as the new Superior-General.

Pictured are the new Assistants-General, Frs. Kevin Duffy, Lote Raiwalui, Fr. John Hannan, the new Superior-General and Frs. Laurence Duffy and Alejandro Munoz. Fr. Laurence Duffy was elected to serve as the new Vicar-General of the Society of Mary.



125 years of Marist ministry

On Tuesday June 2nd 2009, Cardinal Sean O'Malley joined the Marists of the USA Province to celebrate 125 years of Marist ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston. The anniversary was celebrated at the church of Our Lady of Victories on Isabella Street in Boston, constructed by the Marists. The Provincial for the USA, Father Ted Keating, concelebrated the Eucharist with Fr. Joe Hindelang the Vicar-Provincial for the Province, former Boston Provincial, Fr. Roland Lajoie and Fr. Gerry DeMers the pastor at Our Lady of Victories.

Marists from the Atlanta Sector celebrating jubilees of the Profession of their vows in the Society of Mary. From the top left to bottom right:

- Fr. James L. White (Chicago) - 65 years
- Fr. Thomas E. Dubay (Washington, D.C.) - 65 years
- Fr. Juan Carranco (Moss Beach, CA) - 65 years
- Fr. Frank Springer (San Francisco) - 65 years
- Fr. Jerry Rawa (Richwood, W VA) - 60 years
- Fr. Jim Hartnett (Atlanta) - 60 years
- Fr. John Sullivan (Atlanta) - 50 years
- Bro. Patrick Souza (San Francisco) - 40 years
- Fr. Bruce Lery (Washington, D.C.) - 25 years



Marists from the Atlanta Sector celebrating jubilees of their Ordination to the priesthood. Left to right:

- Fr. Joseph Wilhelm (Wheeling, W VA) – 50 years
- Fr. Mariano Rizzuto (New Orleans) – 50 years
- Fr. Philip Gage (Washington, D.C.) – 40 years
- Fr. Dennis Steik (San Francisco) – 40 years
- Fr. Paul Hachey (Atlanta) – 25 years



**Please consider a year-end gift to the Society of Mary.
A remittance envelope is enclosed, for your convenience.**

Reflection *continued from page 1*

On my return to Florida, after our retreat, I was saddened by the recent news that a special young lady of 107 years, Dorothy Imars, a long-time friend from my years serving at Chanel High School in Bedford, Ohio had passed away on June 22nd. During my correspondence with Dorothy over many years, I always told her that God had given her all those years for a special mission. And now she had finally completed the mission God had given her. On Sunday July 12, I was privileged to celebrate the 101st birthday of another very special lady, Frances Martino, a parishioner of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, our Marist parish in Tampa. I told her from the altar that Sunday that the next 99 years would be much easier. She sat down with a chuckle and a big smile after all our parishioners sang a powerful "Happy Birthday."

As we begin our preparations for Thanksgiving, Advent and the Christmas season, I am keenly aware of and appreciate all the knowledge, blessings, love and support I have received because I've met wonderful people like Dorothy and Frances during the 45 years of my ministry in the Society of Mary. I offer my thanks and gratitude to all my fellow Marists and to all the many individuals I have come to know. I offer all these wonderful people an assurance of my prayers for the love they

shared as their gift to me. Each of you helped to form and shape me as a Marist priest.

I have come to learn and believe that the long-sought-after fountain-of-youth can be found wherever we find ourselves among good people on our journey and that there are many good and wonderful people everywhere. I know Our Lord planned it that way.

On behalf of the Society of Mary and my Marist brothers I wish each and every one of you and your loved ones a blessed Thanksgiving. As we give thanks let us remember to pray for many people who have seen hard times and suffered many hardships during the past year.

As we prepare once again for the coming of Jesus during the Advent season, may we welcome Him into our lives and embody His presence in the world, remembering that He manifests His presence in our world through US everyday. May we be his love, compassion and mercy to all who need it this Christmas and all through the New Year. May God bless all of you for your love, prayers and generous financial support for the Society of Mary.

Fr. John Jazwiecki, S.M.

Fr. John Jazwiecki is originally from Toledo, Ohio. He took his vows as a Marist on September 8, 1958 and was ordained at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. in February 1964. He ministered at Chanel High School and St. Pius X Church in Bedford, Ohio, St. Julian Eymard in New Orleans, Louisiana and at Our Lady of the Assumption in Atlanta. He also served the Society of Mary in various leadership positions at Marist College in Washington, D.C. for many years. He is now in retirement in the Tampa -St. Petersburg, area in Florida.

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