



SOCIETY OF MARY ★ MARISTS IN THE U.S.

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I was in prison and you visited me...

Many of the men in prison are almost forgotten by their families, they receive no visits or mail. With our visits in the Kairos Weekend, and the reunions afterwards, they come to know of a love that most have never known before. The inmate whom I 'hosted' by being the one to greet him said to me as we talked for a few minutes before the first session started: "You must think that I am the scum of the earth." I was surprised by his statement, and as I assured him that I did not think of him like that, that I was also a sinner and that we were all created in the image and likeness of God. One of the most important aspects of this ministry is in letting these men know that God loves them, we love them, and many others unknown to them outside love them thus returning to them a sense of human dignity.



The inmates continue what was started in the Kairos weekend with bible study groups and Prayer and Share prayer groups. Monthly reunions continue the relationships begun in the Kairos weekends. This ministry sees its effect in the lives changed dramatically for those who participate. Georgia claims the state's recidivism rate is 30%, but when those who violate parole are included, the rate is near 70% in the first three years after release. Those who have gone through a Kairos Weekend have a recidivism rate of 15%. Additionally, the prison sees almost no violence while the Kairos team is in the prison. They can begin to see meaning for their lives and hope for the future, even if they must remain in prison for many more years.

by Joel Grissom SM

Lived experience...Wisdom

Marist **Paul Cabrita** serves as parochial vicar at St. Peter the Apostle Church in Savannah, Georgia and as moderator of its nearby school. Paul was a teacher for more than 20 years with a master's degree in deaf education from Western Maryland College. In a recent interview for the diocesan newspaper *Southern Cross* he noted that this training developed the ability to "reteach a lesson spontaneously at a different level." Paul spoke of how to "visualize something" when discussing "sacramental awareness" and offered the example of the parallel between the process of initiation at baptism and how the character Scotty Smalls in the 1993 film "The Sandlot" was welcomed onto his baseball team. "You kind of explain the faith commitment and the reality, and so the idea of religion as a lived experience—so just not memorizing facts and figures but how is it applying to your life," Paul said.



Paul recalled the wisdom of Monsignor Costigan, senior parochial vicar at St. Peter's: "Don't be afraid to make a mistake and own up to it. We're not perfect. We're going to make mistakes." Paul relates such humanness to the Marist charism "hidden and unknown in the world" which encourages Marists to be like Mary, "to remain in the backseat, so to speak, but always point to Jesus in a very compassionate, merciful, loving way."

Read the online story

<https://southerncross.diosav.org/news-20170216-extern-priest-merges>