

BROTHER JOHN NASH

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

Transcribed by Ann Sandri

For the Marist College Archives and Special Collections

Brother John Nash

Transcript – Nash, Bro. John

Interviewee: Nash, Bro. John

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Summary: Brother John comments on his various positions throughout his time as a Marist Brother. This includes: his education, early teaching career, his time at Marist College, and his comments and opinions on Marist College as what it was like when he was here and where he thinks it is headed.

Gus Nolan (00:01):

Okay. Today is Wednesday the 31st of July. We have the chance to interview Brother John Nash, Marist brother and an archivist also for the Marist brothers and a help for John Ansley, the archivist here. Good morning John.

Bro. John Nash (00:25):

Good morning.

Gus Nolan (00:25):

How are you? Cool.

Bro. John Nash (00:27):

I am doing very fine, enjoying the air conditioning.

Gus Nolan (00:31):

John, this interview is for the historical records, the oral interviews. I like to divide it into five basic parts the first before Marist and then coming to Marist, here at Marist, post Marist and then we play a little future thing, looking into the crystal ball what do you think Marist will be in the future? 10 years, 20 years. Will it be here? And finally, general observations that if you had a chance to talk to the board, what would you like to say? So back to the beginning before Marist, could you give us a little thumbnail review of John yourself? Early childhood, grade school, high school and then we'll move on through that section.

Bro. John Nash (01:18):

Okay. I was born in the Bronx, South Bronx, New York, and a member of the St. Luke's parish. And in those days you really were in a Catholic community. You know, most of your friends are Catholic, most of your social life was Catholic. My family moved to Throgs Neck when I was in the sixth grade where my grandmother and grandfather had lived since the early thirties.

Gus Nolan (01:47):

Could you say where in Throgs Neck, Fort Schuyler?

Bro. John Nash (01:50):

Yeah, right. Right. Where the almost where the toll booths are to the bridge. They took my parents, my grandparents house when they built the bridge in 55. So I, and there I went to St. Francis Chantal elementary school. Then I went to St. Helena's. I really didn't, couldn't get into any of the Catholic schools, I wasn't smart enough.

Gus Nolan (02:14):

I wouldn't say that.

Bro. John Nash (02:15):

No, no, I wasn't. The pastor had to pull, pulled strings to get me into St. Helenas and I was there for a year and then I came to the Juniorate in Esopus.

Gus Nolan ([02:27](#)):

Okay. During those great two years and early high school, say something to you about your life. In other words, did you have particular interests, sports, a particular hobby, that you could put into this part of this story?

Bro. John Nash ([02:43](#)):

Yeah, when I lived with my grandmother, I used to pick blackberries every morning at the blackberry patch and I used to catch butterflies and I had my own little garden. And I think that that sorta sprung my interest in biology, which I later majored in here at Marist college.

Gus Nolan ([03:03](#)):

Okay. Well you went to St. Helena and while you were at St. Helena's, about what year would this be?

Bro. John Nash ([03:12](#)):

54 and I was only there for a year.

Gus Nolan ([03:16](#)):

You say that with precision because then in 55, I guess you went to high school there in Esopus.

Bro. John Nash ([03:22](#)):

That's right.

Gus Nolan ([03:23](#)):

Okay. Do you not know who is on the staff then?

Bro. John Nash ([03:26](#)):

Yeah, Joe Damian was there, Stephen Urban came later. Two of the great assets were Robert James and Leonard Votel. Lenny became archivist, the first archivist for the Marist brothers.

Gus Nolan ([03:44](#)):

Leonard Votel. Yes, so that's the beginning of it. And then, uh, moving on here from the juniorate, you eventually went to the novitiate?

Bro. John Nash ([03:59](#)):

Well, in those days, the formation program was very, very exact. If you enter the juniorate when you graduated, you went to the novitiate in Tyngsboro for two years. The first year was a partial year, the second was novitiate year, and some men just came right into the novitiate. For me the novitiate was extremely exciting in a very human way. It was working on a farm, I mean, scraping cows, harvesting potatoes, a being in a silo as the silage is coming over.

Gus Nolan ([04:36](#)):

Who is the master of novices?

Bro. John Nash (04:40):

David Kammer was Master of Novices.

Gus Nolan (04:45):

Okay, and was there a Brother Luke there at the time. No.

Bro. John Nash (04:48):

John Francis is there.

Gus Nolan (04:50):

Okay, Luke's brother was Driscoll I believe

Bro. John Nash (04:52):

Yes. Jude Driscoll was there.

Gus Nolan (04:55):

Yeah, just putting that into perspective for myself in those years. Moving on from the Novitiate then you came to Marion college or Marist?

Bro. John Nash (05:06):

No, by this time, Marist had been called Marist and my group was the first group never to have religious themes. We, you know, we, we never had a religious name. And in my archival work, that's the biggest problem because some guys kept their first part of their religious name and adopted their family. It's, it can be a mess.

Gus Nolan (05:32):

Tell Brother Augustus Joseph that.

Bro. John Nash (05:32):

But there with my group, we never had religious names. It was the beginning of the changes.

Gus Nolan (05:37):

Yeah. And this would be prior to Vatican 2, or just approaching it?

Bro. John Nash (05:41):

I think it was during Vatican 2

Gus Nolan (05:44):

Okay. Coming to the college then, when you came to the college, did you have your first year, you didn't have any college yet at all? You finished high school in Tyngsboro?

Bro. John Nash (05:58):

No, we didn't finish. We finished high school in the juniorate in Esopus. So when we came to novitiate, our first year was considered a first year college. So we did a lot of philosophy courses, which wound up being electives. So when we came here, we started as sophomores and when I was here, when we came here, we were in the process of building Donnelly,

Gus Nolan (06:28):

So the gym was already up, what is now the Marion building. It was already over there, the chapel

Bro. John Nash (06:32):

The chapel was completely finished and all the cement had been poured for Donnelly. When I got here, we were putting up dry wall, electricity and doing the plumbing. And I hoped to have been an electrician because it's a clean job, but I found out that I'm color blind so I wound up being a plumber.

Gus Nolan (06:58):

Good thing you didn't go to the electrical program because you may not be here now. The college program again, you are majoring in biology and who is the principal teacher?

Bro. John Nash (07:11):

We had, what's his name, he's a layman. He passed away recently, I'm forgetting his name.

Gus Nolan (07:20):

I was just trying to think of it. When I was in a Scholasticate in the college we had two choices. English or Biology.

Bro. John Nash (07:28):

No, we had a fairly large, right because lay students had just started to come in. When my first year or certainly my second year, we never associated with lay students much, only in class, but that was not to keep us away from them. It was the people who were running the show didn't want these young men to feel that they were being sneakily trained to be Marist brothers. So they kept them far away from us. So we only met Lee students in the

Gus Nolan (08:05):

Adriance building goes up, was supposed to be the cafeteria or the visiting place or for the lay students. That was it's first function, but it's only, it was wiped out by registrar's office, and Nilas Donnelly had an office in there and I know other groups. Okay, I'm doing too much talking, back to you, what about the running of the college from the Marist brothers point of view? Did you have what they call a key or something of that sort? And now a particular chore? Nothing you are

Bro. John Nash (08:45):

You mean like an employment of something? Yeah. One of these that was difficult was you had to take a week out of your classes to work full time on the construction and other people took notes for you, but you missed a whole week of studying, of writing, of reading, and you worked full time on the building of Donnelly and you had to catch up. So that was difficult. But otherwise everybody had their tour of

Gus Nolan (09:13):

Well being a former farmer did you have anything to do with the cows or did we still have cows?

Bro. John Nash (09:17):

Yeah, at that time it was interesting. We didn't have cows, but we had chickens and pigs and around Christmas time, one of the pigs, one of the sows, tried to get at her a little piglets that were under this heat lamp and as she knocked down the divider, the heat lamp fell into the straw and it burned the piggery down. Now I don't know the exact title, but the next day the Poughkeepsie Journal, the headline read something like "Eight Marist pigs die in flames." And that was when Linus Foy said, that's the end of the chickens, that's the end of the pigs.

Gus Nolan (09:59):

Very good. College years, would be, did you do three years at the college?

Bro. John Nash (10:07):

Three years, yeah full three years.

Gus Nolan (10:08):

And you graduated in 19?

Bro. John Nash (10:09):

'63 And they were tough for me. I was expecting to go for master's degree in biology, so I took organic chemistry and the chemistry program and the physics. And they were tough courses. I don't think I would have passed, one I don't think I would have graduated from Marist college if I was here today. I don't even think I would be admitted to Marist college.

Gus Nolan (10:40):

Oh, that's my line, Not only would I not get a contract to teach, but I wouldn't be able to come as a student. However, that's only a...

Bro. John Nash (10:47):

In 63 I graduate from Marist and then I taught at Lourdes high school.

Gus Nolan (10:56):

Alright. What did you teach at Lourdes?

Bro. John Nash (10:59):

Biology, yeah. One of the good things about the principal at the time, Bernie Garrett, was he had the young brothers teach their major because he said, you need to learn how to teach. And some of the older brothers had to take maybe the odd course that in the old days they would give it to the young brother. Cause some guys went out teaching years ago before me and they had three or four preparations and none of them were in their major. Bernie Garrett was good that way.

Gus Nolan (11:29):

No, you were taken to teach where the need was not what you were able to do, but you learned on the job. What one has to do. You wanted to go into biology in graduate school? What did you go into?

Bro. John Nash (11:45):

I did a master's degree in theology.

Gus Nolan (11:46):

Where?

Bro. John Nash (11:48):

At the Manhattan college, I remember I asked one of the older brothers about teaching religion and religion class was rather short, think it was about a half hour. And he said, you review your homework assignment for the first 10 minutes and for the last 10 minutes you explain your assignment. And in the middle 10 minutes you talk about the love of God. And I felt that it had to be more in teaching religion.

Gus Nolan (12:20):

You'd have to know more to teach more.

Bro. John Nash (12:22):

So anyway, so I know the provincial wanted me to get a master degree in biology, but I wanted to find out what the heck was going on because we were at that point in the midst of the changes of the Vatican council.

Gus Nolan (12:38):

I see, Okay.

Bro. John Nash (12:39):

Because a lot of the people at Manhattan College, a lot of the priests, brothers and sisters left their congregations and the priesthood and got married. Because at that time, many of the people went through training and had no social.

Gus Nolan (13:01):

Interaction with the females for one. They weren't good. They were cause of sin.

Bro. John Nash (13:04):

So when you finally found that you are lovable, it was a shock. And many guys felt that meant that they didn't have vocation.

Speaker 3 (13:15):

Pick up where you were at Lourdes, after Lourdes was there another teaching assingment?

Bro. John Nash (13:21):

Yeah, after Lourdes I went down to Mount Saint Michael, but I was only there for a year because the changes are really happening. I remember my father worked for Rogers Peet, which was a men's

clothing company. So he gave me a clergy, bought me a clergy shirt. At that time, everybody's wearing white shirts with the little black panel in the front called the ticky. And I came in late for a meal one time and I took my jacket off cause it was hot and apparently I was accused of trying to be singular cause I was the only one who had a shirt on.

Gus Nolan ([13:57](#)):

Trying to be, you looked like a priest.

Bro. John Nash ([13:58](#)):

And I was trying to show it off, which was not the case. But anyway, that just gives you like a little, poor Bernie Garret was being bombarded by all these changes and he didn't know what to do. And so I only lasted there a year, he had the provincial shift me down to St. Agnes, which I stayed for about maybe 12-13 years there.

Gus Nolan ([14:20](#)):

Really?

Bro. John Nash ([14:21](#)):

And it was a delight, to teach at St. Agnes.

Gus Nolan ([14:24](#)):

Give me a bit of who was there, was brother Cyril Roberts still there?

Bro. John Nash ([14:29](#)):

Cyril Roberts, Charlie Raymond was there, Michael Williams, Dennis Cavoli to name a few. And one of the cute things about Charlie Raymond and Cyril Roberts, at dinner if the conversation got a little too earthy, Charlie would say to Cyril, "Cyril dessert already", and that meant change the subject of conversation.

Gus Nolan ([14:58](#)):

What about Sean? Had he arrived yet?

Bro. John Nash ([15:01](#)):

Sean arrived there, but much later and Michael Williams and I were there.

Gus Nolan ([15:06](#)):

Well you were there with Zig, Bro. Richard Rancourt?

Bro. John Nash ([15:06](#)):

At the end I was and that was very, very difficult times. Yeah. And I'm being polite.

Gus Nolan ([15:17](#)):

Yes, I understand. We won't go into details. Right. Yeah.

Bro. John Nash (15:22):

It was a great place to work because you had the Irish and the Italians who had moved out to Astoria. You had some of the Irish who never got out of hell's kitchen because somebody was a drinker in the family, some of the Italian kids, their fathers or uncles worked for the mafia. You had some of the richest kids and some of the poorest kids. I remember at that one point we had the son of the Sharjah ded fairs for the United nations. He was in Egyptian ambassador, and he has sent his son there. And we also had some rather affluent, but the vast majority of kids were lovable kids, loving kids. And many of them now I could maybe name five millionaires. They did very, very well.

Gus Nolan (16:16):

Well they got a good education.

Bro. John Nash (16:19):

and good motivation. I mean I used to stay until five o'clock every day in my bio lab, the kids would come to play with the mice to play with the frogs. I used to have little beetles that wouldn't come out under the paper. So one of the kids put his friend, they wanted to see the black roaches, like roaches don't like lights and they didn't like lights. So that'd be roaches. And then Mike Williams and I did a lot of work taking the kids away on retreats. And one year we have what we call twilight retreats. Every kid in small groups of the freshman class would come down to the brother's residence, they'd be taught by students, and then we'd have a meal. And that way we had small, we had contact in small groups with every freshmen.

Gus Nolan (17:15):

That must have been a big impact on them, to get that kind of attention, you know.

Bro. John Nash (17:15):

Although Mike and I got sick of lasagna after a while, having it every Friday.

Gus Nolan (17:21):

Alright, moving on. Let's go back to going to school. Did you go back for the masters degree?

Bro. John Nash (17:28):

Yeah. After the master's degree in theology, and I did a master's degree in pastoral counseling at Iona. That's what I was doing, personal guidance work. And I wanted to develop my skills in that area. So I went to Iona and did a master's degree in pastoral counseling, some of which went right to my PhD in clinical psychology. But that was another great experience going to Iona. Take the train every day up to New Rochelle, walk from the train station to the college and then back late at night. But it was a good program

Gus Nolan (18:09):

Was Larry Sullivan at that time in the program?

Bro. John Nash (18:12):

No, no.

Gus Nolan (18:14):

Later somewhere, he did assemble a program at Iona, so I thought it was something of the same thing.

Bro. John Nash (18:22):

I knew Larry Sullivan from St. Helenas, and he was one of the brothers who I admired and who caused me to think of the brothers. Again when I was at St. Helena's in 54, it was a powerhouse of young men. So many young brothers were there and they were full of life and they looked like they were having fun and enjoying one another's company.

Gus Nolan (18:46):

Do you remember who the director was?

Bro. John Nash (18:48):

No.

Gus Nolan (18:49):

Was it James Damien?

Bro. John Nash (18:50):

Yup, he was principal, I don't know if he was director. We never knew the inner workings of the brother's house.

Gus Nolan (18:58):

Okay. Let's fast forward because I want to get you coming to Marist. When did that happen? and how did it happen?

Bro. John Nash (19:09):

I came to Marist in 60 and I came to Marist because that's, Oh, you mean teaching at Marist?

Gus Nolan (19:18):

Yes.

Bro. John Nash (19:18):

Okay. I came to Marist, I forget the exact date, but about 25 years ago, I came to Marist to work in the counseling center. I had just been finished. I just had finished working for the house of affirmation and it was closing. So I moved down to New York and for the first year I commuted, I came up, stayed with the brothers at Lourdes and worked here at Marist. And then after that, the second year,

Gus Nolan (19:50):

How did that happen? Did you apply or were you invited to join us? Trying to go through the routine, was it Bill Eidle or who did you see, who was the director?

Bro. John Nash (20:02):

The house of affirmation was closing. Sean Sammon was leaving the position as provincial, to become a vicar general. So we were closing the house in Watertown. So I had to move and I wanted to do counseling. I hadn't, my position at Marist college had nothing to do with Bill Eidle. No, cause he was in the academics. So I think I wrote, I forget what happened. I must have written Dennis Murray and said that I was interested in coming here as a counselor. At the time I had already had my PhD. So and so there was an opening in the counseling center. So I joined the staff there and was there for a goodly number of years. And while I was here at Marist I also taught in the graduate department. I taught early development most of the time in the graduate department. And I can't believe that I used to do this, but I was four days a week here at , teaching in the graduate school Monday and Wednesday night and teaching the pastoral counseling in the Diaconate program another night, a week. Well I was young .

Gus Nolan ([21:28](#)):

Where was that? Where was the Diaconate program?

Bro. John Nash ([21:31](#)):

It was at the, there's a couple of places, but it finally wound up being at Lourdes when Lourdes moved to the new, when Lourdes high school, moved to its new location at IBM.

Gus Nolan ([21:42](#)):

Well, I didn't realize you had that variety of things that you've done, I knew you were in the counseling center here.

Bro. John Nash ([21:47](#)):

So here at Marist I was at the counseling center, I taught at the graduate school for maybe three, four, maybe five years at the most. And

Gus Nolan ([21:56](#)):

The graduate school, wouldn't that be under Bill Eidle? At that time.

Bro. John Nash ([22:01](#)):

Yes.

Gus Nolan ([22:04](#)):

Midge Schratz, or I don't know who else was on staff here.

Bro. John Nash ([22:08](#)):

No, see as a part timer, you really didn't get involved with that. You came in, you taught your class, you didn't have a, you really didn't mix with the

Gus Nolan ([22:18](#)):

Let's get back to the counseling, how does that happen? Do you put a sign out and say the counseling we're open, or do people get recommended to come and see you?

Bro. John Nash ([22:28](#)):

At the counseling center?

Gus Nolan (22:30):

Yeah.

Bro. John Nash (22:32):

Well, I used to have outreach programs, I used to run a men's group, so that got the name out and it really just, just the word got around the campus, that's all.

Gus Nolan (22:46):

Well, I did a survey once about the students' awareness of it and you know, did they go and I go, did they know where it was? Yes it was contradictory things... Uh, yes. They knew where it was, what they couldn't tell you how to get there. It was kind of, you know, a lot of verbal stuff. And I think it was more seen as a kind of a limitation on you, you knew you needed help, so you had to go to the counseling center.

Bro. John Nash (23:11):

Well that was, that was the sign, you know, that was the spirit of the time as well. Nowadays you know, relatively recently because of a lot of important people have admitted that they have seen a therapist and a positive about it. I think going for therapy has a much more positive. It's just like being gay, same thing. So many well known and well loved people have come out of the closet and that really helped the acceptance of gay people. So I think the same thing with the counseling center or with therapy, you know, people talk well about it, very influential people, people feel better.

Gus Nolan (23:50):

Where you ever in a Marist community here? In other words...

Bro. John Nash (23:54):

Many, I was at, when I was first in the woods, I lived at Eden Terrace, where I live now. The brothers owned that building, so I lived there and came back and I lived with the brothers at Hamilton Street, across the street, across the highway from St. Mary's. That was when I first came here. And then about 24 years ago, something like that, Marist College owned Eden Terrace at the time, it was a very bad winter, 10 degrees below at night, 10 degrees above during the day for a full week. And unbeknownst, cause nobody was living there, the boiler broke and the toilet upstairs froze, and cracked and it flooded. So then Marist couldn't get it insured unless somebody lived there. And that's when Dennis invited the brothers to use it as a residence. So Mike Williams and I lived there for many years together. And then Michael finally moved here on campus and I stayed,

Gus Nolan (25:05):

He was in campus ministry here.

New Speaker (25:07):

He was in campus ministry.

Gus Nolan (25:09):

Different from counseling?

New Speaker (25:10):

Right.

Gus Nolan (25:12):

Where is he now?

Bro. John Nash (25:16):

He's down in Texas, he couldn't stay, take the winters anymore. It's too much for him. It's cute, when he decided to move on campus, because we had spent so many years together in juniorate, novitiate and scholasticate, he said, John and I had a very amicable divorce, he got the house and I got the kids.

Gus Nolan (25:40):

Moving on, did you stop doing counseling here to give him point?

Bro. John Nash (25:50):

Yes, I did. When, I don't want to name names, but I think things changed and it was my time to move.

Speaker 3 (26:02):

Okay. well, moving to Eden Terrace, did you move there alone or did you move with a small community?

Bro. John Nash (26:10):

No, there was a small group of people there. There was, Bro. Henry Sawiki, he taught at Our Lady of Lourdes high school. And for a number of years now we've had one or two brothers, Marist brothers from other countries.

Gus Nolan (26:22):

Yes. Yeah. That was my vision of it, that I used to see them at St. Mary's in the morning.

Bro. John Nash (26:29):

Yeah. And then this year, one of them, I don't think he's going to get his paperwork in on time, the other one has. So I think at least for the fall semester, we're only gonna have one brother from Cameroon coming and hopefully, around maybe October or as late as November, we'll have a second one and they'll live at Eden Terrace. So this year I have been by myself, which is not what I signed up for, but it's okay. I'm good company.

Gus Nolan (27:05):

Yes you can complain with the other guy about some of your mistakes, but he'll correct them. What about the Gatehouse, is that not a Marist Brothers

Bro. John Nash (27:18):

The Gatehouse, campus ministry uses it now. Brother Sean moved out to the Novitiate building. Brother Frank Kelly kind of manages that building, but I don't know anything more than that.

Gus Nolan (27:31):

Do we have, are there any foreign students there?

Bro. John Nash (27:35):

No. No one lives in the Gatehouse here on campus.

Gus Nolan (27:39):

Right. Okay. All right.

Bro. John Nash (27:41):

They use it for meetings, I think stuff like that.

Gus Nolan (27:45):

Okay. Moving on, post Marist, starting with when would you say you retired from Marist?

Bro. John Nash (27:55):

I retired from Marist, I would say maybe three or four years ago, maybe four years ago.

Gus Nolan (28:02):

It was just, were you on an annual contract throughout the years here and one year, then that year you didn't get, you just separated yourself from.

Bro. John Nash (28:13):

Well, you know, being a psychotherapist, you just don't sit there and say, yeah, umhmmm, you have to look for where the person needs to go and you need to time a movement and it's a lot of work. Uh, and after a while I just didn't have the energy to wrestle with people's unconscious. If you're going to be a good therapist, it takes a lot of work. There are therapists out there who aren't good therapists and they're just pleasant listeners. But, yeah, so after a while I just got tired. I didn't have the energy. I mean I'm 79 now going on 80, so around 75, I just ran out of steam.

Gus Nolan (29:02):

Yeah. Understandable. But in other way, you just changed gears too or change direction and you now are involved in another project we'll talk about the archive

Bro. John Nash (29:13):

Well two and a half, three years ago, when I retired I wanted something to do. There's more to retirement than watching television, cause that's a killer. So I volunteered over in the archives and the Brother that was there was looking to move.

Gus Nolan (29:35):

Who was there?

New Speaker (29:35):

Bryce Pasinski.

Gus Nolan (29:35):

Oh yes. Okay.

New Speaker (29:37):

And so I was a volunteer for a year. Well, I'm still a volunteer, but I mean I was there for a year and I sort of just moved into.

Gus Nolan (29:49):

the activities involved and

Bro. John Nash (29:50):

the director. Yeah.

Gus Nolan (29:52):

Now, is it an active role, do you gather stuff or how would you describe that?

Bro. John Nash (29:58):

Primarily the last three years I've been digitizing all the stuff that I can digitize, primarily photographs. So we have tens of thousands of images now on every living brother we have a folder on every living brother.

Gus Nolan (30:18):

Do you have the data along with the image? I mean, other words,

Bro. John Nash (30:22):

some of the data, some of the data, like if we have like a birth certificate and stuff like that, but a lot of times we don't get that until the person dies. So we have electronic folders on every living brother, every deceased brother and that may, and that'll have Memorial cards, death certificate, stuff like that. A lot of photography, a lot of photographs, every withdrawn brother. So we have a folder on you with whatever pictures we've picked up on you. And then we have for the, for all the ministries and communities, a folder on Father Champanet the founder. So all the photographs we have of his beatification, Cannonization, Holy cards, et cetera.

Gus Nolan (31:11):

Now, how is it accessed? If you wanted to look up Brother Richard Rancourt and you wanted something about his teaching career?

Bro. John Nash (31:21):

Well, this is something recent that I've been working on for the last two years. We finally have all this stuff in the cloud wherever that is.

Gus Nolan (31:33):

Yeah I was in there.

Bro. John Nash (31:33):

What you would do would be, you would email me and say, I'd like to see what pictures you have of Richard Rancourt and then I have to make a judgment. I mean like if you were to request pictures of me, you know, that's a bad example because I'm in there. But let's say if you were to request the pictures of Michael Williams still alive. Well I think Michael might be a little ticked off if he found out that you had access to his pictures and they might be some of them that he may not want. So what I have to do that is contact Michael, say Michael, here are the pictures we have, you know, so and so has asked to see your pictures. Is that okay with you?

Gus Nolan (32:16):

If i wanted to see my brothers?

Bro. John Nash (32:17):

Yeah. If you would ask for your brother's pictures, I would contact your brother.

Gus Nolan (32:26):

Oh Yeah I asked for it. He reports to me. [laughter]

Bro. John Nash (32:26):

But I, I would.

Gus Nolan (32:27):

As courtesy of it.

Bro. John Nash (32:27):

Yeah I don't want, I don't want brothers annoyed that somebodies got their pictures and they didn't have a say in it. A person should have control over.

Gus Nolan (32:37):

Yeah. Well it seemed to be on the photographs, but what about the lined, pictures of their placements where they taught, you know, number of years at the various schools and so forth

Bro. John Nash (32:49):

It hasn't been digitized yet. And this stuff isn't open to the public, like Marist College's. Really, our archives would be only open up to, it's more like family.

Gus Nolan (33:02):

Okay. So what about on a bigger scale nomination lists? They used to come out, they

Bro. John Nash (33:10):

Yeah, the directors they have, they have not been digitized yet.

Gus Nolan (33:13):

But are they there?

Bro. John Nash (33:15):

Oh yeah. We have all the directories back to the 1900's. So we're looking for some volunteer who wants to empty them into them into a spreadsheet so you can enter brother's name, find out where he's been or you can enter a school like St. Agnes and find out what brothers were there in 1930, 1931, et cetera. But that hasn't been done yet. I'm really only a one man show. I have one assistant, and the previous assistant work for eight hours a week. The present assistant works for three, six hours a week. So we're a very small operation. Nothing like at Marist college.

Gus Nolan (33:56):

No. Okay. Is this a Marist brother who is working as an assistant or is it?

Bro. John Nash (34:02):

No, no no, it's a graduate of Marist college. And she worked in the archives here for awhile and she also worked at the help desk at Marist college. So she's really good as far as archival work goes. And computer stuff. And the previous person had the same background, but he's gone over to Florence, Italy to do the Marist college Graduate program in museum studies.

Gus Nolan (34:32):

Are you in touch with Marist Archives from other provinces or do they have them ?

Bro. John Nash (34:40):

Yeah, well I don't know which ones have them, and which ones don't. I know Canada does because the Canadian, archivist was a layman and has come down to visit on two occasions. One time he came with his wife and their child and they stayed at Eden Terrace and they here for a week. He did some research and then it used Eden Terrace as a center to see other things in the area. And I've been in contact with our archives in Rome to get information for what we call the heritage project. Every day we pray for the brothers who died that day. And especially with our younger brothers, they don't know who these people were. I mean, there are a few people that I didn't even know who they were. So every day I put out my monthly, I put out every month. And for the day it has a picture of the brother, up to three pictures of the brother and then a short biography. And so in most, many, if not most communities, they read that at prayer

Gus Nolan (35:50):

Where does the biography come from? Does somebody write it at the time of their death?

Bro. John Nash (35:54):

No, see we weren't into that so people didn't like it. So what I do is I usually will contact a brother who might be a close friend and ask them to write a biography and then I edit it and Sean Sammon, he does the final editing. Sometimes I'll write it myself when I can't get anybody to write the biography. And usually we take it from eulogies and stuff like that.

Gus Nolan (36:26):

Alright. Now changing direction again, or raising the telescope, looking out, the of Marist, looking into the crystal ball that you see, where do you see Marist in the next 10 to 20 years? Is it going to still be here?

Bro. John Nash (36:43):

Oh, of course it'll be here. Institutions takes, it takes a lot to kill an institution. So, even if Marist wasn't the great institution that it is, it would still be around. But colleges do go by, College of New Rochelle.

Gus Nolan (36:57):

We absorbed one or two already.

Bro. John Nash (36:57):

The College of New Rochelle just recently closed. I think Marist next move and opening up the medical school will really put it on the map, as being one of the big educational institutions between Albany and New York. And its cooperation with the new Marist, the new Vassar hospital, it will be very, very impressive.

Gus Nolan (37:28):

Alright. That's a little bit, not too far in the distance that should be opening in two or three years. If things stay on record. Okay, tell me about Marist now, from the, you might say a history and development of it. We were pretty much a program dedicated to the liberal arts and there was a core program and you had to take philosophy and theology and so forth, and some history and some math. So the Renaissance man as it were, was put on the table as an objective. And now it's pretty much, a lot of it is a pre-professional, we have a lot of the computer science texts that we have a lot of people in med tech going into any of those three areas that we have. What's your view of it? Are we getting too a job conscious? Are we losing some of the integrity of the liberal arts?

Bro. John Nash (38:26):

Yeah. I don't think I'd be qualified to comment on that, you know?

Gus Nolan (38:33):

Well you're not in actual teaching those courses

Bro. John Nash (38:38):

Yeah, I taught, I taught a few courses in the night school, so I really never got involved in the academic dimensions of, and also I'm not familiar with where colleges going. One of the nice things, nice but good things about Marist it still tries to keep a focus on the individual student. So there are tremendous programs for incoming freshmen to be supportive of them. And also campus ministry tries to keep, and the chaplain program tries to keep nurturing the spiritual development of students. Brother Michael Flanigan runs a couple of men's groups and women's groups. I don't know if any of his groups are coed, but in any event, it really tries to focus on the individual person and to nurture them and to nurture the humanity.

Gus Nolan (39:42):

Have you noticed in your time here though dealing with the individual students, has there been a change in the student that comes to Marist? Why students?

Bro. John Nash (39:54):

Yeah, I think the students that come here, are certainly, or often enough, I think from affluent families. I mean the family sacrifices to pay the tuition. But the tuition here at Marist is not like Dutchess Community College.

Gus Nolan (40:14):

Right. 50,000 a year.

Bro. John Nash (40:16):

Yeah. So you have to, his family has to have some money or sadly, some of the kids go into tremendous debt to come here. When I was in the counseling center, I knew some students there came from single families and the mother was putting the tuition on a credit card and then paying it off over the course of the year. That's not, that's not good. So a lot of the students here, I would say like post in college, cause I wrote my dissertation in the library at Boston college and many of those kids have come from affluent families. But those are the only ones. Now there are programs here for the poor kids.

Gus Nolan (40:58):

Yes. Well you hit the point at the beginning. There are some affluence, I think 7% of the freshman class are in the 1%. Their parents are at \$300,000 or more. So I mean in our a day coming here, most of them were children of firemen, fire department, police

Bro. John Nash (41:25):

There's a large number. I'm sure that come from upper middle class. They're not

Gus Nolan (41:35):

There's a diversity too, you walk along campus and you can see a, go to the parking lot and see the various cars

Bro. John Nash (41:38):

And I think the college tries to work at that.

Gus Nolan (41:41):

Yeah. About the international students, you're probably not dealing with too many when you were counseling here, or did you?

Bro. John Nash (41:51):

Well I, there was a point where we were asked to reach out to different groups and I reached out to the Indian students, students from India, so I was familiar with them. I'm certainly familiar with all the Marist brothers who come and have to deal with the graduate division in education. Most of them come and get a master's degree in education with psychology. So I'm familiar with programs that assist them.

Gus Nolan (42:28):

Alright. What about this tendency now for online learning, using not coming to campus, doing your whole coursework this summer, I think most of the summer courses were given online.

Bro. John Nash (42:43):

I mean that would be very, I would find that very difficult. One of the students in my, graduate class for early development, she did her whole BA online bachelor's degree online.

Gus Nolan (43:00):

I didn't think that was possible.

Bro. John Nash (43:03):

Or at least a good chunk of it. You had to be very, very highly motivated to do something online. You don't have the support of other students. You don't have the commradery.

Gus Nolan (43:14):

Yes. I'm going to say, you know, the socialization of going to college and the group work and interaction with other students, really things. On that same point, what's your take on the use of telephones, i phones, the youth of today lives on this, pretty much so. Would you try to put a brake on that if you had the occasion to do so?

Bro. John Nash (43:41):

You can't, you can't put a brake on something like that. I mean, it's just a phenomenon. I don't think our customs of civility or politeness has developed, has kept track, has kept up with the technology. So, I mean, there are some things you do, and I remember being on the train and a guy on the phone cursing, cursing, you shouldn't do that, but I know you can't put a stop on it. But I remember when I would have meetings of students because for a couple of years you were, I ran a help desk, um, for people with psychological issues. So we had students, it was a peer support. So we had students on the phone from like one o'clock in the morning till three and they would get the sometimes calls from other students who wanted to talk to a peer. But when I would have meetings, cause I would do training with these kids on developing their listening skills and their skill as a online therapist. And I was always on call in case they had an emergency. But when I would have a meeting, they would, they would come with their cell phones and they'd be on the cell phones. You know, almost like a, I don't want to be lonely, so I have a friend.

Gus Nolan (45:12):

Yeah, necessary. That's a very good point. Loneliness, one of the biggest difficulties of the youth of today as much as there's interaction. Even here on campus I've heard of, no sooner they come out of a class and they're not talking to the students they're in class with but their phone talking to another world, you know. Okay. All right. General observations. If you had a chance to talk to the board of trustees, what would you say Marist College needs now as you saw the college generally? Is there a particular kind of need that we have?

Bro. John Nash (45:52):

Well, as I have said this on a few occasions, while, it keeps you as a city in many ways it's still a small town. People know one another's business and stuff like that. And while Marist College is a very big college now, it's still a small little college, so it likes the hands on approach. So while the president has to be able to handle fundraising, big business deals, Marist College also needs a president that's very, very hands on. And we've been blessed Dennis Murray has been that for so many years. I just had a workman over the house a few, a week ago, he's been working here at Marist college. He said he loves the energy and if he counted how Dennis Murray stopped was passing him to stop, introduced himself to this

workman and had a conversation maybe about eight minutes, 10 minutes with this guy. And I think Dennis fit right in with the Marist Brothers careism of people being important. That's why when they have the celebration for persons celebrating 25 years here at Marist College, you have some of the top professors, you have people who make beds, housekeeping, maintenance, security, and I think that that is coming from the Marist Brothers tradition, that everyone is important and everyone is important equally.

Gus Nolan (47:44):

I've had the fortune of interviewing security and staff members and faculty and finished grads. It's an amazing, from a different perspective, while you will hear as they sense this, you know, security talks about student disregarding, you know, parking regulations so that they run up a number of parking tickets and they don't realize that all this is recorded. So we talk about an instance where it was several hundred dollars and the mother says, what am I gonna do? So they said, well, we'll make a deal with you, you pay 10% of it and we'll keep the other 90% in the drawer. He gets one more ticket, you know, those 90 well, it's a motivation, you know. He's a psychologist down there motivating a kid. Whereas you just see him. That kind of story gives you that heart that you're saying

Bro. John Nash (48:41):

That students, that students and faculty and staff are not just numbers and names of real people. Yeah. And I, and I think that that flows, especially here, it flows from the Marist Brothers tradition.

Gus Nolan (48:54):

Yeah. Well there's not, I don't think, maybe there's one Marist Brother teaching now, in the whole, but there's a certain spirit.

Bro. John Nash (49:05):

Oh, absolutely. No doubt about it. And while Marist College is no longer officially a Catholic college, it has a religious tradition and in some areas a Catholic tradition. So I think the spirit of the brothers is alive and well here at Marist.

Gus Nolan (49:26):

Just first of all, I'm saying, I interviewed Father LaMorte and I asked is Marist a Catholic college? So he said, well, if 80% of it was a African, would you say we're a black college? You know, and he said there's a 55% Jewish, would you say it was a Jewish college? So he says, we're more Catholic then Notre Dame, because we have more Catholic students then Notre Dame has, you know,

Bro. John Nash (49:57):

But also there's Catholic services, I mean we have two full time chaplains.

Gus Nolan (50:02):

Right, we're a Catholic chapel. Well, it's denominational in many ways, but the sacraments is there from our perspective.

Bro. John Nash (50:10):

And also a very active campus ministry program.

Gus Nolan (50:13):

Yeah. Let me just direct that to now if you were to say to that same board of trustees, this is what we need. What are some of the things we have that you know, you, I think you're touching on it already, is that Marist awareness of spirit. Although it's not in the terms of Marist, a little hidden and unknown to the world, that's not us. But we have to be out there letting people know we're here before they can come. So we have to go to California and bring the team out so they can go.

Bro. John Nash (50:48):

And India, people go to India, recruiting

Gus Nolan (50:50):

Alright, well we could reason we have good Indian students here who are smart and do well in computer science for one area for sure. You talk, talk about Marist in that sense, the things that are sacred that we have to have.

Bro. John Nash (51:09):

Well, I think from my religious background and care for people, I think to have an active campus ministry program is essential. I think, and I don't know what the name of the program is, but when freshmen come in, there's almost a whole week of orientation to help kids make that transition. Cause they're all floundering, even the ones who don't look like they're floundering inside, they are. They're trying to make friends, they try and these programs help that. And then I then I think the medical support, psychological counseling center, I think, really very, very helpful to people and they treat the kids cause I was on that staff and they treat the kids as important people, not just my two o'clock, Oh yeah, here's my four o'clock. No, no, no, they're real people. Yeah. So those are the two things. But then also the spirit among the faculty and among the staff, tremendous, care and concern that people are important. It's more than just a job for most people. They love being here at Marist. They love the kids and they go out of their way. To create that in your staff primarily, naturally, they're always a couple of people who are just doing a job and you create that in the faculty is really, really remarkable because faculty members can be very stuck on them, stuck on themselves.

Gus Nolan (52:51):

Yes, I've been here for a number of years and I have another observation

Bro. John Nash (52:55):

As I said, when, when some of these family members sing, they go "Do, re, me, me, me, me, me" But yet here at Marist college, I would say the vast majority of faculty members, I think, I've never taken a poll, but from my experience I think really care for the students.

Gus Nolan (53:16):

Yeah. it's not quite.

Bro. John Nash (53:17):

And that's done by so many programs. Even this 25 year celebration, celebrates the individual, as I said, from the top professor down to the person who's making beds and emptying trash. That's, that is

unique. I don't, I don't know where other places that have that. They may have 25 years, yeah, but it's not the whole spectrum.

Gus Nolan ([53:43](#)):

Yeah. IBM has a 20 year club and they give you a medal, well that's about it.

Bro. John Nash ([53:48](#)):

Yeah, but at IBM, everybody's of a certain educational caliber. What does that apply to even the people who are sweeping the floors at midnight?

Gus Nolan ([53:59](#)):

Oh, I dunno.

Bro. John Nash ([54:01](#)):

If you are at Marist, it does.

Gus Nolan ([54:02](#)):

Yes. Alright. I've covered about everything that I have in my five points. Is there something that you would just like to add a closing comment about, your experience here or your thrush to the future?

Bro. John Nash ([54:19](#)):

Well, at 79 going on 80, the future is limited.

Gus Nolan ([54:24](#)):

The college might not be

Bro. John Nash ([54:27](#)):

No, no the college may not be. Oh, you mean as far as the future of the college? I think it's on a great track. The board of trustees though has to, hire a president that I think has the gifts that Dennis has, both the ability to run a multi-million dollar corporation and also be very, very human and personable.

Gus Nolan ([55:01](#)):

Wonderful. That's a good point to end on, and I hope they can get another Dennis Murray. I'm sure they will make every effort to do that. We just pray that they're successful. Okay John.

Bro. John Nash ([55:12](#)):

Okay Gus, thank you Gus, so now I get the big check?

Gus Nolan ([55:20](#)):

You will get it's in the mail.

Gus Nolan ([55:22](#)):

You'll get a thank you. Yeah. We're so grateful.

