

Fr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ

For the last “Conversations at the Center” for this semester, the community, residents and guests of the Assumptionist Center invited Fr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ to share his experiences of the Rwanda genocide and how it has shaped his faith journey and self-understanding as a priest.

He began by presenting a brief history of his country, the reality of the ethnic tribes living in peace before the advent of colonialism, the subsequent divisions that developed and the complexities that led up to the rebellion in 1990. The genocide of 1994 saw close to one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu die.

During his presentation, Fr. Marcel described the fear and brutalities he experienced and witnessed, including the killing of family members and friends. He also explained the dark moments and involvement of the Church.

The need for healing of wounds and reconciliation remains a priority of the Church, along with the passing on of the faith and love of the Church to the young and youth of the country. When asked what had sustained him throughout the horror, pain and suffering of his experiences, Fr. Marcel responded, “Forgiveness, for it frees the forgiver.”

Father is currently completing his licentiate in Systematic Theology at Boston College’s School of Theology and Ministry. He has published several articles and book reviews on reconciliation in Rwanda, as well as on issues around enculturation in the Church of Africa.