

Anna Maria College hosts 'Illuminate' for students' adoration experience

By Laura Lambert
CFP intern

PAXTON – Hands waved in the air, light-up bracelets glowing in the semi-darkness as the band, Illuminate, took the stage of Zecco Auditorium at Anna Maria College on the night of Feb. 16.

Kenny Graff, member of Illuminate, music minister, guitarist and vocalist announced during the event that the band began three years ago as a response to the suicide of Kim Perron. He said, "She had lost all hope in her life. She had lost all truth in her life. She had lost touch with the supernatural." Illuminate began as a way of bringing spiritual support to youth through song.

"We decided to invite Illuminate to Anna Maria, to bring it out of Charlton, and make it so more people could come. We wanted to offer more people the opportunity to experience Jesus Christ through adoration," stated Maria G. Bari, director of campus ministry.

The evening included praise and worship music, an inspirational talk given by Oscar Rivera, youth minister at St. Joseph Parish in Charlton, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the sacrament of reconciliation.

The event was coupled with a free-will offering for reconstruction in Haiti following the Jan. 12, 2010 earthquake. Sister Rollande Quintal, SSA, dean of mission effectiveness explained that the Sisters of St. Anne as founders of Anna Maria act as a connection for the college to support the rebuilding of schools in Haiti lost during the natural disaster.

Several of Anna Maria's students enthusiastically expressed their reasons for coming. Alicia Bull, class of 2012, said, "I chose to come because I like to participate in Campus Ministry. I come for the fun of it and to learn different aspects of religion."

Paulette Friedman, class of 2012, spoke of excitement for the speaker. She said, "I came because the speaker (Oscar Rivera) sounded interesting. This is a new experience for me."

Oscar Rivera captured the audience's attention when he walked onto the stage wearing a black and silver cape decorated with the "Superman" emblem. From his opening statement, "I am faster than a flushing toilet," Mr. Rivera spoke with humor, humility, and honesty and called his listeners to rely on God's grace rather than human strength.

"I took the Superman cape because I sometimes think that I am Superman," he said. "I had this mentality that we run life, but I soon found out in my life, that I am not Superman. I can be broken."

He went on to say, "The chains in my life that I had since I was 12 had gotten bigger and heavier. These chains ruined my life. I remember telling the Lord, I'm tired of doing this by myself. Help me." Rivera said that Christ responded with the message "My grace is enough."

Rivera encapsulated the evening dedicated to letting Jesus into our lives by saying, "Miraculous things happen when you let (the) Superman — ... 'S' stands for 'Savior' — come into your life."