

DIRECTORY OF NOVICES





MEET THE YOUNG MEN IN INITIAL FORMATION

LA VALLA INTERPROVINCIAL NOVITIATE - MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA



CRISTHIAN ARLEY SANDOVAL URREA

My name is Cristhian and I am 22 years old. I am Colombian from the city of Villavicencio. My parents are Miriam Yanet Urrea Rodríguez and Diego Fernando Sandoval Guevara. I have three siblings, Anguiee Natalia Sandoval Urrea, Paula Viviana Sandoval Urrea and Diego Andrés Sandoval Urrea.

I enjoy playing sports, listening to music, crafting, and learning how to play instruments.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

While I was studying in 8th grade at the school, I.E Champagnat Pinares de Oriente, located in the city of Porfía. I really did not know the brothers and that made me very curious as to who they are?

In ninth grade my principal was Brother Carlos Andrés Obando, and truth be told we did not get along so well, so I was taken by surprise when he invited me to participate in a youth group. We really did

not understand the purpose of the group, but we went anyway. We would meet at 5:30 in the morning, because at 6 am school began. Carlos Andrés would always provide us some interesting reflections on some current theme or prayers, but he always left enough time for us to ask questions about the Marist Brothers (what do they do?, why become a brother?, where do they come from?, what is formation like? and many others) through the questioning and learning more about them I found their life to be very interesting and I began to think about the idea of becoming a Marist Brother.

After six months of meetings, the Brother invited the group to go to Popayan for a week to a gathering of aspirants, which I found to be exciting. Once there, we met other young people who were also interested in becoming Marist Brothers and many of the brothers shared their life story with us. After that week, I was very motivated and determined to become a Marist Brother.

For the next two years, I continued to participate in vocations group offered in school and when I graduated, I was asked if I wanted to start the formation process and obviously I said yes!

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST CHARISM MOTIVATED YOU TO LIVE THIS NEW STAGE OF FORMATION?

- For me it was the joy of being with and sharing with children and young people.
- There was a feeling of serenity when I would be with the brothers.
- There is a connection with God that comforts me and in the following Jesus who continues to encourage me, daily, to be a better brother to my brothers and a better educator for children and young people.

WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE?

- The many spaces of prayer and encounter with the Lord, a deeper understanding of myself and my connection to nature.

- The different activities that the formation team presents to us and that we are invited to live.
- The opportunity to participate in a ministry experience in a different province.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF?

- To value myself with each of my dimensions that I continue to discover.
- To find my specific path in life.
- To see Marist life in a broader sense.
- To value the diversity of the brothers, to welcome their culture, their history and to appreciate it as much as I do mine.
- Cultivate a much closer relationship with Jesus and his mission and being accompanied by Mary (being hand in hand with Jesus and Mary).

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



ERNESTO JOSÉ DA COSTA OMAÑA

I am 25 years old. I was born in the city of Cabimas in the area of Zulía in Venezuela. My mother and brother have lived in the city of Los Andes, Chile for some years. In addition, I have two half-brothers and one-half sister. Two are living in Venezuela and my brother is in Peru. I also have two nieces. I enjoy soccer, music, playing the guitar and singing.


HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I am an alumnus of a technical School named after Bro. Ildefonso Gutiérrez in Maracaibo, Venezuela. I have studied there for 6 years and it was there I met the brothers. However, my family had known the brothers because my older brother and some of my cousins had previously studied there. In addition, in my first year of high school I participated in the youth ministry programs such as “Amigos en Marcha” and REMAR.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST CHARISM MOTIVATED YOU TO LIVE THIS NEW STAGE OF FORMATION?

What motivated me to take my experience to the next level? First, it was the sense of family and the welcoming spirit that the community provided. It makes you feel free and accepted within this great family. It was also our mission to work with children and young people; it was in following Jesus in the way of Mary and doing good things quietly. It is these aspects that continue to invite me to offer my life as a Marist Brother.

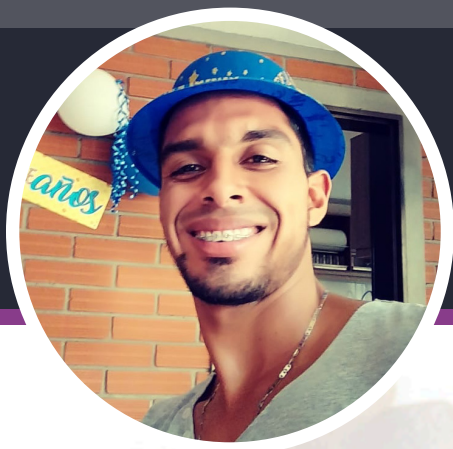
WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A MORE PROFOUND WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?



I have learned to value myself and accept myself more. I have had to reconcile with myself first so that I can deepen my discernment process. Learning from our charism, our constitutions, and from

the witness of my brothers, I have come to understand that this life choice, first and foremost, is a process. We are not perfect, but we try to deepen our lives by following Jesus, who invites us to give ourselves and to help construct a more just and dignified society, especially for the children of his kingdom. I believe that a wonderful way for me to share my life is by following Jesus and to live it out in the Marist charism, as a religious brother. This is what I am discovering during my novitiate time.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



HERNÁN DARÍO

CASANOVA ORTIZ

I am Hernán Darío Casanova Ortiz. I was born in the city of Popayán on February 10, 1988. Since the age of 15 I have been raised in the city of Cali, Valle del Cauca.

I did my elementary studies at La Escuela Mixta Urbana Junín and my secondary studies at the Champagnat School in Popayán. I did my university studies as a Technologist in Pre-Hospital Care at La Universidad del Valle, in the city of Cali.

I like to sing, exercise, do dance therapy, paint, read and write. I also enjoy everything that has to do with mission, helping others, youth, and vocation ministry. Lastly, I enjoy being in nature.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

When I started high school at the Champagnat school in Popayán, I became involved in the youth ministry program, specifically the Amigos en Marcha youth group, which was led by my teacher Jorge Goyes at the time and it was through that program that I began to draw closer to the Marist Brothers.

WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?

Since I can remember, I have always been motivated to work with children and young people; to understand their realities and to be able to accompany them, while at the same time allowing them to accompany me. I feel that I have the availability to help those who are most in need; to become one family and to bring to life the gospel. This humanizing perspective, in light of the Gospel, helps me to understand the extent that we can be, as a community within the world, in regard to our mission, ministry, and community life. I am passionate about being a part of this process, knowing I am being formed to serve.

The things that I value from this stage of formation are interiority, the importance of community life and interculturality. They are aspects that help me to see the relevance of an active life, both spiritually and apostolically.

This time has allowed me to discover many things and discover myself, both internally and externally. I have learned that in life it does not

take much to feel fulfilled. That prayer must become an important part of my life and that the most important thing is to put myself in the shoes of others and put aside my ego. I need to see the greatness of God in the smallest details of life and recognize that every day of my life is a good time to start over.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



KEVIN ANDRÉS QUEZADA ROJAS

I am Kevin Andrés Quezada Rojas and I am 21 years old. I was born on April 3, 1999 in the city of Loja, Ecuador. My family consists of 5 members, my mother, Nela, my father, Alcides, my sister, Karol, and my brother, José, and me, who is the youngest in the family.

I admire and enjoy staring into the night sky, especially when it is full of stars. I like to write poetry and short stories, although many poems remain in my head but some I do write down. I also enjoy sharing time and laughing with those around me.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I come from a Marist school in Loja, it was there that I first meet the Marists. I began to experience the charism through my youth group, REMAR. It was through the program that I learned more about the Marist Brothers and I began to meet some of the brothers and postulants who participated in the groups. It was through this experience that I was able to know the Marists in depth and it was

here, that my sense of vocation began. My vocation grew even more when I became a leader in the REMAR program, and it served as the impetus to delve deeper into the Marist Brothers.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST CHARISM MOTIVATED YOU TO ENTER THIS NEW STAGE OF FORMATION?

From the beginning, this sense of fraternity is something I could see and experience as part of the charism of the Marist Brothers. This served as my initial motivation and as a member, living in community, it further motivated me to live my life with this sense of family spirit. The aspects of simplicity and humility, that go hand in hand with Mary, Our Good Mother, were additional qualities that continued to deepen within me and invited me to live this charism. The love of wanting to teach children and young people about the person of Jesus, as a brother, was a greater invitation to continue moving forward on this vocational journey.

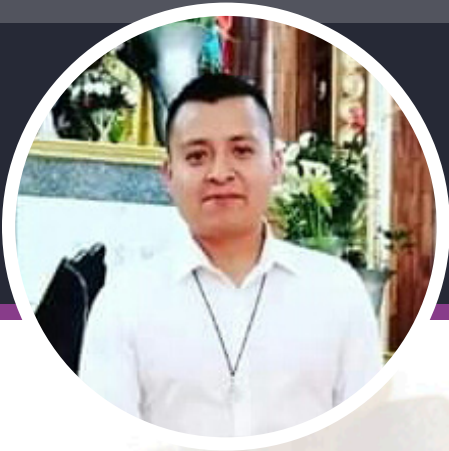
WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?

I value being able to connect more deeply with our spirituality because we can take our time to carefully study it and enrich ourselves. It is a time to learn our history as so many of the brothers who have walked this path before us and now for those of us who follow the journey it is our turn.

I value being able to see the gospel through the eyes of a Marist Brother, as we live out our constitutions. I value opportunities where I can have direct contact with this merciful God and being able to respond to him and approach him more intimately. I appreciate seeing my personal story as a story of salvation and love, and see it through the eyes of compassion and to take responsibility for what I have lived and continue to live. This has been something significant in my personal growth.

On December 8th, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Bro. Kevin Andrés Quezada Rojas, professed his first vows as a Marist Brother in Medellín, Colombia. To see the video and pictures of his first profession of vows, as well as a reflection done by Kevin, please visit the Facebook page Novicado Marista “La Valla”.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



NICOLÁS PEDRO PINZÓN MARTÍNEZ

Greetings! my name is Nicolás Pedro Pinzón Martínez and I am a first-year novice. I am 26 years old. I am Mexican, and I come from the State of Guerrero, Mexico. I studied law at the Marist University of Querétaro. My favorite hobby is yoga, reading, and watching movies. I come from a large family, we are 8 brothers in total, I have 3 brothers and 4 sisters.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I met the Marist Brothers when I went to high school in Potoichan, Copanatoyac a municipality of Guerrero. My going to this high school was because of my sister Virginia who is a teacher at the school. She invited me to study there because she wanted me to do well in a school that is both academically strong and promotes human and Christian values.

WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?

I have been motivated by the spirit of work; in being of service to others, especially since I experienced the charism in high school. It kindled within me a spirit to go into the communities near Potoichan and offer my time to the them; to be with people and to help them learn how to read, to teach catechesis to children, and do manual work in areas that were needed within the community.

All this has motivated me to continue my process of discernment, to discover my vocation. The truth is that spending the past year in the novitiate has helped me to discover more about myself and has helped my faith to grow. It has allowed me to deepen my spirituality, to discover, more intensely the origin of the institute, to know more about our founder, to live the virtues in community, and to enjoy fraternity.

During this stage, what I have valued most is the knowledge that the brothers have passed on to me about the history of the institute and our founder; to develop a devotion to Our Good Mother, and to acquire and live the Marist virtues daily. I have learned to value my relationship with Jesus and to always turn to Our Good Mother. I have learned to pray for others, and to better understand my beliefs and abilities, especially when it comes to my spiritual growth.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



JOSÉ GERARDO

RIVERA HERNÁNDEZ

My name is José Gerardo Rivera Hernández, I am 28 years old. I was born in San Salvador, El Salvador, on August 24, 1991. I enjoy sports, watching TV series, and listening to music. Recently, I have started learning how to draw. I also enjoy studying languages. I can speak English, French and I am learning Portuguese.

As for my family, I can share with you that my dad's name is Rafael Rivera, my mom is Carolina Hernandez, and my older brother's name is Moses Rafael. They live in Mexico, a municipality in the capital of San Salvador. My dad and brother are automotive mechanics, they have their own business with a good number of customers. My mother is dedicated to school transportation and she works exclusively with the Marist school, San Alfonso.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I met the Brothers as a student. I studied at the San Alfonso school, now known as Colegio Marista San Alfonso, located in Mexico, San Salvador. During my school years I felt a closeness to many of the brothers through the classes and extracurricular activities, which increased my affection and curiosity. Before becoming a brother, I had

known several men who were my catechists for my first communion and confirmation classes, and who opted to live their lives as Marist Brothers.

WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?

There are many aspects of the Marist charism that speak and encourage me, but those that motivate me to continue my discernment and in following my vocation is this sense of authentic family spirit that is born from the community and extends to others through our apostolic mission and in following Jesus, who is at the center of our life as brothers. I continue to follow Him and to do so in the way of Mary, who is the first disciple, and a faithful reflection of many of our Marist virtues.

I highly value the depth of studies about our Marist history, both from the institute and from our sources inspired by Marcellin and the first brothers. I enjoy our way of life as expressed in our Constitutions and the Rule of Life, they are fundamental at this stage of formation.

Knowing them and putting them into practice is something that captivates me.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



MESVIN ANTONIO

MARROQUÍN LEÓN

My name is Mesvin Antonio Marroquín León and I am 23 years old. I was born on January 11, 1997 in Petén, Guatemala, C.A. My parent's names are Antonio Marroquín and Miriam León. My parents separated and migrated to the United States and I have lived with my grandmother since I was 9. My dad currently lives in Guatemala and my mom still resides in the United States. Since their separation, each one found another spouse and as a result I have a half-sister from my dad and a half-brother and half-sister from my mom. I do not know any of my siblings because all three of them live in America. I enjoy listening to music and reading.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?


Where my family lives there is no Marist presence, I met the brothers through a friend who is a religious of the Assumption. While in her youth, she had been involved in the youth groups offered by the brothers in the capital. I contacted the brothers through social media. I was impressed by the videos, found on the platform To2

Hermanos, especially of two of the Brothers of the province and how they recounted their vocational story and what they did. Much of my involvement in the congregation I owe to these two brothers who were especially significant to me when I started to know them, Brothers Edgardo from Puerto Rico and Omar from Guatemala.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST CHARISM MOTIVATED YOU TO ENTER INTO THIS NEW STAGE OF FORMATION?

While I was in postulancy, I was very motivated by the educational work done with children and young people, especially in the social outreach ministries of the brothers in Guatemala. I think that working with young people was especially important for me and it helped me to understand that a lot of good can be done. In addition, community life, sharing our lives together, and being with the brothers at work and at home has motivated me and because of them I have truly found brothers.

WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?



These past six months that I have lived in the novitiate, I have come to value community life, with its highs and lows. I also appreciate the approach used to learning our constitutions and about Father Champagnat, in our classes. The times for prayer, the workshops and the retreats are all aspects that I value very much at this stage. I have learned to value myself, and to face the challenges of life in the best possible way. Above all, I have learned to encounter myself while I encounter God.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org



RICARDO ALFREDO

MUNDO DUEÑAS

My name is Ricardo and I am 22 years old. I was born in Santa Ana, El Salvador on May 11, 1998. My family consists of my father, Alexander de Jesús Mundo, my mother, Irma Mundo Dueñas and my brothers, Manuel Alejandro, Rodrigo José, Jorge Humberto, and me. I am the third oldest of the children.

I enjoy sports, both playing and watching them. I enjoy playing instruments and singing, I especially like to play the guitar and several percussion instruments. I am also fascinated by the cinema, so I enjoy watching a lot of movies and TV series.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

My brothers and I did our elementary studies at a public school, close to our house, that was administered by the parish. After elementary school, since there was no middle school in the parish, we went on to study at a Marist school. Thankfully, we received a scholarship, provided by the brothers, for our good academic performance. It was from this moment onward that we entered into a relationship with the brothers.

WE KNOW THAT THE NOVITIATE IS A PERIOD OF TIME, WHERE THE NOVICE REFLECTS AND STUDIES, IN A DEEPER WAY, THE HISTORY, CHARISM, SPIRITUALITY AND VOWS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. WHAT ASPECTS DO YOU VALUE FROM THIS STAGE OF FORMATION? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME?

The aspects that I have come to appreciate during this time is our sense of fraternity, my search to encounter God, and being attentive to the children and young people who are most in need. In addition, I have appreciated the richness found in our Constitutions and the Rule of Life, as well as learning about the life of Champagnat and some of the brothers who were close to Jesus. I value tremendously the time given to us to properly discern our vocation, and the opportunities provided for personal growth and self-knowledge is an immeasurable gift.

On December 8th, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Bro. Ricardo Mundo, professed his first vows as a Marist Brother

in El Salvador. To see the video and pictures of his first profession of vows please visit the Facebook page Maristas América Central.

If you would like to write a letter of support and encouragement to this Brother in initial formation, you can send an email to his formator at haherrera@fmsnor.org

