

DIRECTORY OF POSTULANTS



The background features a stylized, high-contrast illustration of a man and a woman in a close embrace. The man is depicted in a dark blue silhouette, leaning towards the woman. The woman is shown in a bright yellow silhouette, her arms wrapped around the man. The overall composition is set against a dark blue background, with the text overlaid on a horizontal yellow band.

MEET THE YOUNG MEN IN INITIAL FORMATION



GERSON ALEXANDER

POOC ASIG

My name is Gerson and I am the youngest member of my family. I am 22 years old and I am from Guatemala. I enjoy exercising and going for a walk.

My family consists of my mom and dad Their names are Oscar and Macaria. I have four brothers, the oldest is named Edy, followed by Cesar, then Yessica and Emerson. I have three nephews, two of whom are named Gael and the other is named Antonio who are sons of my older brother, and I also have niece named Pamela, who is Cesar's daughter. We are a simple family but we have a great desire to work and help others.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I met the brothers through a sister of the Assumption, who participated in the REMAR youth groups. Ever since she told me about the brothers' mission, I have been interested. After that, I met my first brother who was Edgardo Lopez-Rios. After some time reflecting, I decided to begin an accompaniment process in 2017.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

The thing that I liked most and that motivated me was a spirituality centered on the person of Mary, who is an example of discipleship. As Marists who bear the name of this simple woman, of the people, is a great joy. Our main call is to set out as Mary did in the story of the visitation, to go out to the peripheries and be with the children and young people, so that they come to know the great love of Jesus.



JORGE LUIS MARTÍNEZ HERNÁNDEZ

I am originally from Nicaragua. I was born in the City of León. I am 28 years old and I am the middle child of my parents' marriage: Francisco José and Lucila del Carmen. I have two siblings; Allan Javier is my older brother and my younger sister is Marilyn del Pilar.

Among my favorite pastimes I enjoy listening to music and finding a rhythm in every sound around me and even giving a sense of rhythm to the silence. I enjoy writing and playing guitar but especially enjoy playing percussion. Likewise, as a good Nicaraguan I enjoy watching baseball as the reigning sport of the nation.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

It was in 2011 while I was studying at Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala City and I was lucky enough to be classmates and friends with several young brothers, especially with Brother René Montes (may he rest in peace). For the next two years I witnessed, firsthand, this sense of fraternity and simplicity and it invited me to take a closer look at their life and I wanted to know more about the charism. It was thanks to René, who provided me with a book of the life of our founder, entitled: "Father of Brothers". I finished my university studies and spent a few years working at a religious school. It was

during this time that I asked myself: "Do I see myself doing this and will it give me sense of happiness for the rest of my life? – Would I like to do this in community? It was after some personal reflection that I again contacted René and shared my feelings and my desire about wanting to know and live the Marist charism through the community. It was an experience of refocusing my life and although I am in discernment, I look forward to the formational process that will allow me to learn where God is calling me.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

For me, this sense of family spirit that lives in each of our Marist communities resonates with me and is a fundamental aspect for me: "where I have a brother, I also have a house there." As brothers, we immediately join in the shared life of the community in which the bonds of fraternity and service are awakened and subsequently this has motivated me to know more deeply the formative path for the life of a Marist Brother, as our formation guide states: "in the permanent formation of the brother, is a formative element that especially encompasses a human formation to be humble and free to the founding mission, which is "to make Jesus Christ known and to love."



JULIO ROBERTO SANDOVAL

My name is Julio Sandoval and I am originally from Guatemala City. I am 21 years old.

I was raised in the countryside along with my sister, my two brothers and my parents. After my father died, we moved to the city with my stepfather and began to study at the Liceo Guatemala, a Marist school. I am an avid animated movie watcher and reader of fantasy and science fiction books. I enjoy painting and sculpting, cooking, and gardening.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I first meet the brothers while I was studying at the Liceo Guatemala. It was here that I had encountered the Marist spirit. I remember with great affection an activity called the Champagnat week. This was a time where the community recognized the importance of friendship, joy and the arts.

My greatest experience was participating in the REMAR program, with is a youth group where my older brothers also participated. I also did a one-year volunteer experience in a Marist ministry.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

I was drawn by the freedom with which the brothers lived and related to one another and others. None of the brothers looked frustrated or bitter. I was inspired by this sense of joy and a mission that is without borders and which one can see from one country to another. The simplicity of the brothers, who were not afraid to make a fool of themselves to amuse the young and talk with them, was inspiring. I was struck by the way they lived their faith, it is a modern faith, not a faith that is enclosed in traditionalism but one that seeks the meanings of things.



VÍCTOR HUGO FRANCO MÉNDEZ

I was born in the city of Chihuahua, in Chihuahua Mexico. I am in my second year of postulancy. I am the third son of three children in the family. My mother is Gloria Mendez and my father is Victor Franco. I enjoy listening to music and doing manual work. I also like to play sports and build community.

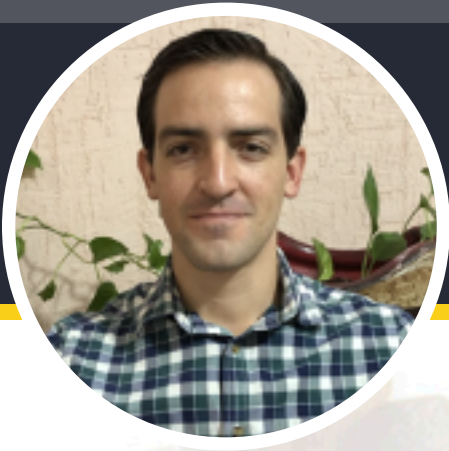
HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I met the Marist Brothers thanks to the school I attended since it was a Marist School. Throughout my high school years, I was invited to participate in many activities such as mission trips, apostolic groups,

youth gatherings, etc. It was through these events that I was able to meet many of the brothers who motivated me to begin formation.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

What motivated me most to begin the process of formation was primarily community life, the spirit of fraternity is so strong and alive among the brothers. They live with joy and total dedication to service to those who need it most.



MOISÉS IVÁN GONZÁLEZ MANZO

I am originally from Mexico. I grew up in a large family, being the fifth son of seven children. I have 3 sisters and 3 brothers. My parents are Efraín González and Ophelia Manzo.

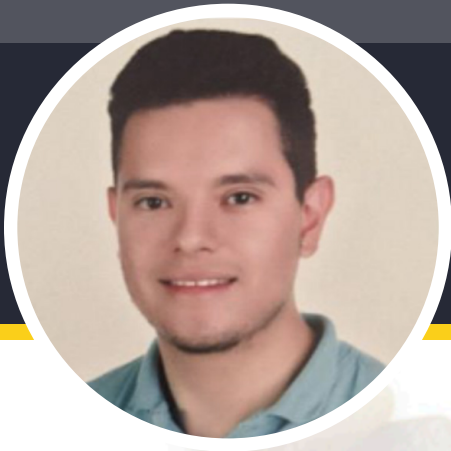
I enjoy quality time with my family and friends. I like to dance, swim and travel to experience new cultures.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I met the Marist Brothers in 2002, at the age of 12, when I entered Jacona High School as a student in Michoacán, Mexico. Alfonso Ayala, Antonio García, Willy Guerrero and Gaspar Ceja were the first brothers I met. I quickly became involved in the youth groups, first as a participant and then as an advisor. I also participated in the Holy Week mission project as well as many other formational and local gatherings.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

I am particularly moved by this sense of fraternity and equality which is associated with Mary, our Good Mother, who is the source of its simplicity. Similarly, I have also experienced a welcoming and strong family spirit, in which Jesus is felt, as our friend and brother. Finally, I am attracted to our mission of working with children and young people, especially those who are considered to be the least favored in today's world.



CRISTÓBAL SEBASTIÁN

TOVIAS FRAGA

I am Cristóbal Sebastián Tovias Fraga. I am 23 years old and I am from San Luis Potosí, in Mexico. My mom's name is Alejandrina Fraga Rangel and she is an accountant. My dad's name is José de Jesús Tovias Rodríguez and he is retired. I studied Molecular Biology at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico City. I currently live in the Marist community of Irapuato at the Pedro Martínez Vázquez school and work in the high school.

I really enjoy watching Netflix, especially tv shows and documentaries. I also enjoy reading, going to the movies and going out with my friends. I believe that I am a very responsible individual and I enjoy teaching and sharing with young people what I know and what I have learned in the area of natural sciences.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

When I was 6 years old (starting primary school) I entered the Instituto Potosino Marista in San Luis Potosí as a student. For 12 years (Primary, Middle, and High School) I studied with the Marist Brothers and was struck by the way they lived their lives, especially my school principal when I was 16 years old. Subsequently, I volunteered for a year in a province project called "Youth for Service" located in the

Marist community of Potoichan in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. This community supported several programs such as the Bachillerato Champagnat de la Montaña and the student housing named Saint Marcellin. I really enjoyed the lives of the brothers and their commitment to the poorest of the indigenous communities in Mexico. Through this experience, I came in contact with the dual realities of the brothers, through a project of solidarity and assistance with the less favored and through their work in a school similar to the one where I was a student.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

One of Brother Basilio Rueda's sayings summarizes many of my motivations for starting and continuing my formation to be a brother: "It is worth living for an ideal, and there is no ideal more exciting than living for Jesus Christ." I believe that one of the most exciting things is to come to know the values of the Kingdom of God and what better way than doing this by following in the way of Mary. For me, it is important to remember and do what Father Champagnat said: "to make Jesus Christ known and loved". This is something that I believe is fundamental in Marist spirituality. For me, Mary is an ordinary resource and a model for us to come to know Jesus.



JESÚS ANDRÉS

MORALES REYES

My name is Jesús Andrés Morales Reyes. I am 19 years old and I am from the city of Juárez in Chihuahua, Mexico. My favorite pastime is playing sports.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I have known the Marist Brothers since I was a student at Isabel C. De Talamás elementary school. Afterwards, I attended a high school owned by the Marist Brothers and met several other brothers while I was there.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

To me, what has impressed me most about the Marist Brothers, ever since I was a child, was that I found them to be men full of life and always joyful, even though they were adults. They always had a good connection to the students. When I was in high school, I met some younger brothers and we formed a friendship, we played games, I worked in the Marist communities and gradually became interested in their life. The brothers invited me to participate in a vocational mission program and it was there, I began to know more about the Marist charism and their love to be of service to children and young people.



JHONATHAN ALEXANDER CRUZ HURTADO

I am Jhonathan Alexander Cruz Hurtado. I am a postulant looking to become a part of the Marist Brothers community. I am 22 years old and Colombian. I am currently living in Loja, Ecuador, where I am in the middle of my formation as a postulant. I am a very cheerful person. I always try to keep busy with different activities like sports, especially soccer. I am passionate about having fun and exploring nature, whether it is a short walk or a bicycle ride, I look for places where I can relax and where I can be myself. I like to interact with others and make friends, see new places and meet new people. Among other things I enjoy experiencing different traditions. I am a person extremely dedicated to solidarity. I like to give of my time and be present in places where help is needed, and I do so with a smile on my face and a sense of hope that encourages change.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I am a graduate of the Marist School in Manizales, Colombia, which is called Colegio de Cristo. For a long time, I was part of the Marist Youth Ministry Movement at the school. It was during this time that I began

to learn about the Marist Brothers. I assisted in the youth ministry program and had contact with many Brothers who were in the community. Through this experience I felt called to live community and begin formation.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

The Marist community has always provided me with opportunities to reflect on who am I and in the same way, do so with other people to create a more rewarding experience. As I was a graduate of a Marist school, I learned how to live this family spirit; to be a good person and a good citizen; and to live by a set of values reflective of my family and others. It was these aspects that caught my attention. Of course, as a young man I doubted a lot about the decision I made, as I had planned and envisioned my life differently, but through MYM I could feel that the Marist charism, that love of family, that global love and connection that invades me, even still today. It is these aspects, that I hope to continue to enjoy and spread within the Marist family.



SAUL ISAÍAS CONZA SALAZAR

I am Saúl Isaías Conza Salazar. I am 22 years old and Ecuadorian from the city of Catacocha in the province of Loja. I was born in the neighborhood of Tacoranga. I come from a simple, humble, and hardworking family. My parents had ten children but only six of us are still alive. I am the fourth oldest. I studied from first to tenth grade in Tacoranga. During that time, I also did house chores and worked on the farm. At the end of tenth grade, I spoke to my parents and told them that I did not want to study the following year. I worked along the countryside, farming, to help provide financial assistance to my family and allow my siblings to study. The following year, I returned to school and studied at a Marist vocational school in Catacocha. During my second year there, I began accompaniment sessions and in my third year I did my community experience in the city of Loja, in the postulancy house. I then continued my experience in Macará, with the brothers and children in a ministry called el Colegio de Jornadas para la Vida. I did my candidacy in Quevedo, Provincia de Ríos, and assisted in a ministry called Proyecto Casas Familia, also with children and young people. I taught religion classes and organized youth gatherings. Now, as a postulant, I continue to work with children and young people.

I enjoy having fun with my fellow postulants and with the Brothers. I also enjoy reading, writing, drawing, listening to music, chatting on Facebook with friends and family. Now, because of the pandemic, I have not been able to see my parents for Mother's Day or Father's Day. Although, I have not been able to leave Loja during these important days, I have been able to be with them spiritually and I continue to do so daily.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I got to know them when I entered the Marist School. What struck me the most was how they interacted with young people, teachers, parents, and all those around them, I got to know them better when I lived with them. Community; through manual labor and the different ministries they directed. Similarly, when there are challenges in the community or elsewhere, I have been impressed by how they are solved in different ways and with patience.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

I have been motivated by the experience of community as a family, moments of prayer, responsibility, manual work, sharing at the table, our ministry with children and young people, how the brothers relate to others, problem solving, especially in times of difficulty, etc. Similarly, in day-to-day formation classes such as music and English and the encouragement from my fellow Marist Brothers has been a great motivation.



XAVIER SEBASTIÁN

MALES ARMAS

I am Xavier Sebastián Males Armas. I am 20 years old and I am from Quito, Ecuador. I currently reside in Loja, Ecuador in the postulant community where I am in formation with Jhonathan Cruz and Saul Conza. Brothers Giovanni and Saturnino are our formators. I enjoy drawing and music. Currently I am learning how to play the guitar and train my voice with the help of Brother Giovanni. I come from a family of 5 people: my father, Diego Rubén Males Armas, my mother, Silvia América Armas Armijos, my two younger brothers, Genesis Emilia Males Armas and Martín Zahir Males Armas and me.

My elementary studies were done in Quito, Ecuador at a school formerly known as Pensionado Pedro Pablo Borja Number Two - Hermanos Maristas, and now it is known as Unidad Educativa Marista. I also did my secondary studies in a Marist Brothers' high school with the same name, Unidad Educativa Marista.

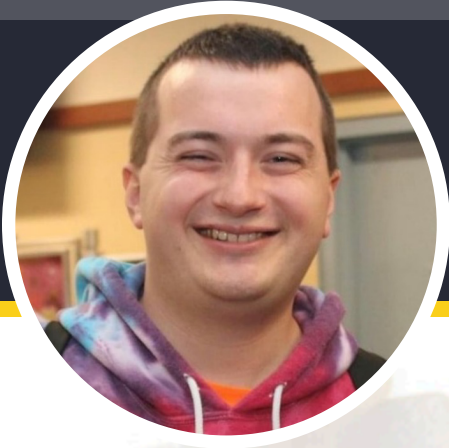
HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I got to know the Brothers through stories told by my schoolteachers, and when the youth movements began in Quito, Ecuador, it was then

that my curiosity grew. While I was in school, I was presented with opportunities to participate and gradually I became connected with the Brothers. My first significant experience was in Loja, Ecuador. My process of accompaniment was done by Ms. Mariana Moreno. From there, I went to the community in Quevedo, Ecuador where I began candidacy and then returned to Loja for my postulant year in the formation house.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

What motivated me to begin my process of formation in religious life, as a Brother, was the work that is being done with children and the humanitarian aid that is going on with various sectors of the population. In the postulancy program, in Quevedo, I loved the way they relate to God and their deep study of the gospels. Above all, I love the beautiful way they make it practical in daily life, as if it were normal and natural as breathing.



ROBERT DITTUS

Hello! I am Robert Dittus, known to many as simply “Dittus”. I am 23 years old and I am from New York City in the USA. I grew up with my mother, father, sister, and grandmother. Many in my family have worked in Catholic education and it is something that I hope to continue. I enjoy reading, hiking, and baking.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

I first met the Marist Brothers as a student at Archbishop Molloy High School. But I truly learned about the brothers at the Marist Brothers’ Center in Esopus, located 100 miles north of New York City. The Mid-Hudson Valley Camp, which helps people with special needs is

a welcoming place for children and young people to be themselves. This is what I think of when I think of “Marist”. I look forward to the laughter and joy of camp all year.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

What I love about Marist spirituality is the emphasis on love and care of the vulnerable in our communities. It was significant to my life as a Marist student, and something I strive to live every day. I hope that as I learn and work this year, I can better serve those on the margins and wherever my path may take me.



RYAN M. RICHTER

I am 22 years old and I am from a small town called Burkburnett, Texas. I went to college at the University of Texas at Austin and graduated last year. In my spare time I enjoy writing, hiking, and travelling – especially to the National Parks. Right now, I'm learning how to play the fiddle and I've recently started practicing yoga. I have two brothers, two sisters, a nephew, and three nieces. I'm thankful for any time we get together and it's been pure joy watching my nieces and nephew grow up.

HOW DID YOU COME TO KNOW THE MARIST BROTHERS?

The first brother I met was a campus minister at the college I attended. I admired this brother for his constant joy, compassion, and presence in welcoming all peoples. Together we planned different events at

the university's Catholic center, and he invited me to go on a vocation pilgrimage where I met a few different Marist Brothers communities. At all of these communities one thing that was constant was the joy, compassion, and presence that the first brother had exhibited so well.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE MARIST SPIRITUALITY MOTIVATED YOU TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION AS A RELIGIOUS BROTHER?

As I enter into the postulancy with the Marist Brothers, I'm overjoyed at the opportunity to begin formation. Particularly, the mission of ministering to young people, especially those who have been marginalized or disenfranchised, is what inspired me to enter formation with the brothers. I'm also excited to receive the joys and wisdoms that come from living in the family spirit of community.

