

MY CREATION AND MY DESTINY

José Luis “Perico” Pérez

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Perico Perez

My name is José Luis Pérez, but I’m internationally known as “Perico,” a nice nickname I received many years ago when I was a sophomore at the “Colegio Marianista de Buenos Aires.” I’ve considered myself a fully lay Marianist since then. In these many years, I’ve been a Marianist missionary in the north of Argentina, I accompanied Marianist youth groups and 2 young MLCs (many years ago!), I volunteered with the Marianist volunteer program in Dayton, OH in the mid/late 90s, I ran the Marianist International Volunteers program (VIM) for almost 10 years, I coordinated more than 10 UD study-abroad programs in Buenos Aires, and since 2001 I’ve been a translator for many SM and MLC international meetings, from Rome to Paris, Bordeaux, Nairobi, Lima and Seoul!

One new ministry I assumed last year is participation on the Marianist LGBT Initiative Team. I heard about this prophetic movement in Lima, where I travelled as a translator for an MLC International Assembly. It was a true blessing for my “outing” process, which was taking place precisely in those months. The idea of an existing LGBT Team in the Marianist Family, with its obvious recognition and acceptance, was the sole reason why I decided back then to STAY in my Marianist Family, and not to leave, because of who I am.

Today I feel very fulfilled with our initiatives as a Team in general, but in particular, with a Zoom presentation we will conduct in early August, for MY Colegio Marianista in Buenos Aires, the cradle of my Marianist identity. It will be the first time our Team will conduct a presentation in Spanish and outside of the US! It will basically be about inclusion of LGBT people in the Church and in the Marianist Family. My school is very supportive and enthusiastic about this project. Our next step, after the summer break, hopefully this year, is to do the same in Marianist high schools in the Marianist Province of Spain!

I believe one of the most important blessings of the members of our Team is that this is one more of our diverse ministries in the Marianist Family, wherever we are. We are not just the “queer” lay Marianists, we are so much more than that, without denying our identity. In my particular case, the SM’s of Latin America appointed me a few months ago as Coordinator of a new Marianist Volunteer’s Program for Latin America! It’s a program that does not exist yet, and we are creating it from scratch. So let me take this opportunity to “spill the beans” about this new program, in case you know of someone interested in joining us in the future! Just like me, all the members of this Team live out our Marianist Charism in different ministries in our local communities, which is a wonderful gift!

Things happen for a reason, and my Marianist life that began in 1982 when I entered the “Colegio Marianista de Buenos Aires” led me from missionary and youth groups to MLCs, international volunteer programs, translations for the Marianist Family all over the world,

and that is how I “landed” on this Team. I am totally confident that it has all been God’s providential plan for my life, which gives me a true direction. Bert Hellinger, the creator of Family Constellations, said that homosexuality is a “Destiny.” As a Catholic, I also believe it’s my “Creation.” Knowing that my sexual identity and orientation is both my *Creation* and my *Destiny* makes my life totally meaningful just as it is.