



**MARIANIST VOLUNTEERS of LATIN AMERICA**  
By José Luis Pérez



In the first days of May 2021, this new program was born in the Marianist Family of Latin America. It was being brewed in the middle of the pandemic during 2020, with virtual meetings, text messages, e-mails, and finally, it was completed this year!

The VLM is made up of the 6 countries of the Marianist Region of Latin America, and each one has a local leader or animator, whose mission is to accompany volunteers during their prior discernment and concrete preparations, and especially, during their ministry at the site itself.

The local coordinators and their placements are:

- ARGENTINA: Marisa Nuñez (Lay Marianist)
- BRAZIL: Gustavo Pollón SM (Marianist brother)
- CHILE: Magaly Retama (Lay Marianist),
- COLOMBIA: Jair Romero SM (Marianist priest)
- ECUADOR: Roberto Bordignon SM (Marianist brother)
- PERU: Carlos Rivera (lay Marianist).

The team is coordinated by José Luis Pérez (Perico) virtually but from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Our spiritual advisor and liaison with the SM of the region is Father Luis Casalá SM.

The team has a rich variety of members from the different branches of the Marianist Family in each of our countries.

As of 2022, God willing and hopefully with the pandemic weakened, advanced vaccination, etc., we hope to start hosting volunteers in our Marianist works in these countries, and applications to the program can be sent ... from this very moment!

- **Recommended duration:** from 6 months to a year.
- **Travel expenses to/ from the placement and health insurance:** covered by the volunteer.
- **Living expenses, meals and housing:** covered by the Marianist work that hosts the volunteer.
- **Origin:** from any country, as long as the candidate deeply knows the language and culture of our region. Although we prefer members of the Marianist Family, other candidates are also welcome as long as they are highly recommended by a local lay or religious Marianist in leadership.
- **Previous experience:** some type of shorter volunteer service or similar ministry in the volunteers' place of origin.
- **Age:** minimum 21, maximum, NONE !!! (Health permitting!).
- **Ministry:** they vary from place to place, but in general they are either **ministries in formal and non-formal educational Marianist works**, or around the area of **social justice** in marginal places, in the "peripheries" referred to by Pope Francis, where in today's world, it is imperative to go.

And the most important characteristic of the **VLM** is that we want it to be a **MISSIONARY** experience, deeply **SPIRITUAL**, the candidate who chooses to be part of the VLM will be open to human and spiritual development within the Marianist Charism. We are not looking for people of good will without spiritual and missionary interest, in fact, there are many very good secular volunteer programs out there or run by NGOs that do a great job too.

Now that the program has been launched, the invitation is for each of you to help us **SPREAD** this info about the VLM among your contacts. To learn more about the program in general, and the volunteer opportunities of each country in particular, you can contact me with the info that I leave at the foot of this article.

Our Founder, Father William Joseph Chaminade, would say that “We are all missionaries”. The VLM is a new opportunity, and we hope that it will contribute to make a difference in this world, in other words, to build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

José Luis Pérez (Perico)

VLM Coordinator

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