

# Appointment of Brother Visitor of the District of Centromérica - Panamá

Brother Armin Luistro, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, has appointed **Brother Francisco Velásquez Simón** as **Visitor of the District of Centromérica-Panamá** for a period of four years, from 30 December 2025 to 29 December 2029.

Of Guatemalan origin, Brother Francisco completed his primary education at *Colegio Parroquial San Juan Bosco* in Aguacatán, and then **continued his basic and secondary education at the Colegio De La Salle in Huehuetenango**, Guatemala, where he earned a degree in Urban Primary Education.

His vocation as a Brother of the Christian Schools emerged in this context. “I received a comprehensive education that had a profound impact on me”, he says, recalling that during those years he lived at the *Casa Indígena Hno. Santiago Miller*, “a Lasallian boarding school that offered human and Christian education and support to young Mayans from low-income families”.

It was there that he learned about the Lasallian charism and mission. **“I discovered the fraternal and approachable nature of several Brothers, whose simple lives and generous dedication had such an impact on me** that they awakened in me the desire to follow in their footsteps as a Brother of the Christian Schools”, shares Brother Francisco.

Throughout his formative journey as a Brother, he has pursued university and religious studies at the *Instituto Centroamericano de Ciencias Religiosas* affiliated with *Universidad La Salle*, Mexico, and at *Universidad Rafael Landívar* in Guatemala, obtaining degrees **in Secondary Education in Religious Sciences and a Bachelor’s Degree in Religious Sciences**.

Brother Francisco also holds **a degree in Educational Psychology with an academic degree in Educational Psychology** from *Universidad Mariano Gálvez* in Guatemala, and earned a **Higher Bachelor’s Degree in Educational**

**Innovations** from *Universidad La Salle*, Costa Rica.

He has complemented his initial formation and consecration as a Brother of the Christian Schools with various **courses for formators and pastoral studies in Latin America**. He also completed the course for formators at the Lasallian International Centre (CIL) in Rome and obtained a diploma in educational management from the *Centro Superior de Estudios Universitarios de La Salle* in Madrid.

Throughout more than 32 years as a Brother, since he made his first religious profession

on 31 December 1992 and, subsequently, his perpetual vows on 19 March 2000, he has served in various ministries in his District, both in the formation houses for Brothers and in various schools and educational works. “Although these missions demanded dedication and professionalism, I always carried in my heart the ideal that inspired my vocation: to **serve poor children and young people, the most vulnerable, those who often have no voice and no opportunities**”, he states.

Between 1994 and 1997, he taught religious education – and other humanities and science subjects – first at the *Colegio De La Salle* in Huehuetenango, and then at the *Colegio La Salle* in León (Nicaragua).

He has alternated his service as a formator of young people preparing for consecrated life and as **director of the Casa de Formación San José in Guatemala City** with teaching in the teacher-training programme at the *Instituto Indígena de Varones Santiago* in two periods: between 1999 and 2003, and between 2008 and 2011.

He has also served as director in several educational institutions in the District of Centroamérica-Panamá: **Casa Indígena Hno. Santiago Miller** (2005); **Colegio La Salle in León** (2006-2007); **Colegio La Salle** in **San José**, Costa Rica (2012-2016); **Instituto Experimental No Gubernamental La Salle de San Pedro Sula**, Honduras (2017-2021); and **Colegio La Salle in Panama** (2022-2023).

In 2024, the Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education (CIEC) awarded him the **Jesús Maestro Prize** “for his educational and evangelising work of special significance in the Central American region”.

“Over the years, and after an enriching experience in educational management, **I felt an inner calling to return to my roots**”, declares Brother Francisco. “Therefore, I asked the Brother Visitor for the opportunity to live a direct experience in a context of poverty and marginalisation, where I could more closely accompany the children and young people who, like me in my adolescence, dream of a better future through education”.

In 2024, he took over the management of the *Colegio Católico San Juan Bautista* in San Juan La Laguna, in the middle of the Tz’utujil Mayan village, while also serving as director of the Brothers’ community in Santa María Visitación. “**Here I have rediscovered the transforming power of fraternity and the power of the Gospel lived out in daily life**. Life is simple, resources are limited, but love, faith and dedication make everything possible. This experience has helped me to renew my vocation and to understand more deeply what it means to be a Brother in a world that cries out for justice, solidarity, compassion and presence”, concludes Brother Francisco.

We express our best wishes and congratulations to Brother Francisco for the new mission and responsibility entrusted to him, and we thank **Brother Manuel Antonio Orozco Calderón** for his generous service to the District of Centroamérica-Panamá as he nears the end of his term as Brother Visitor.