



Missionary Fraternity of Mary **Newsletter**

OUR NOVITIATE IN BELIZE

**Fraternity's Novices at
St. Mary Mother of God
Novitiate in San Jose
Sucotz, Cayo District,
Belize**

From right to left:
Seminarians Jordano,
Luis Jose, Carlos, Fr. Julio,
Rolando, Herber, Gabriel
and Deacon Victor



We are excited to report on the newly established Novitiate in Belize, Central America. However, Novitiate is only one small journey on the road toward ordination. Therefore, in this newsletter we will also describe the entire journey toward ordination which takes anywhere from 11 to 12 years total in the Missionary Fraternity of Mary formation program.

A new candidate to the Fraternity begins his formation in our Aspirancy program for one year which is a period of discernment to the religious life with vocational orientation. The candidates are taught to understand the style of life of the Fraternity as a Society of Religious Life and receive spiritual guidance through liturgical activities and introduction to sacred scriptures and some of the documents of the Catholic Church.

After Aspirancy, the students begin three years of Philosophy studies. During these three years the students grow and mature in their intellectual life, in communication skills, and critical and creative thinking. The guidance that they receive from their formators helps them to discern more of their vocation and their relationship with God as members of the Missionary Fraternity of Mary.

Upon completion of Philosophical studies and in accordance with recommendations of the Catholic Church for candidates to the priesthood in a Society of Apostolic life, our seminarians begin a one year process in the Novitiate. Novitiate is a period of training and preparation that a member of a religious order undergoes prior to taking vows in order to discern whether he is called to a vowed religious life. The period of Novitiate includes times of intense prayer, living in community, and deepening one's relationship with God. In the Missionary Fraternity of Mary this is a full year experience. Since our founding in 1985 the Novitiate was located in Guatemala. Through discernment and after much prayer our general council decided to move the Novitiate to another country. The motivating factors were to further develop our seminarians' experience of what it means to be a "missionary" by spending time in another country as well as immerse them in a different culture where they must learn a new language. Although Belize and Guatemala are neighboring countries, the difference in culture and language is sufficient enough to justify a move there. English is the main language of Belize and this requires all of our Novitiates to learn and become immersed in this second language as part of their studies and daily life.

A family in Belize donated to the Fraternity some land with an existing building in San Jose Sucotz. Through the generosity of additional benefactors the building was renovated to include six private rooms, a chapel, dining room, sitting rooms and classrooms for our seminarians. In 2018 we will complete our first year of training in the Novitiate in this new facility.

Concluding our explanation on the total timeframe of formation for our seminarians – upon completion of Novitiate our seminarians begin 4 years of Theology at our main seminary in Guatemala City. Upon successful completion of these studies our seminarians undertake one year of pastoral ministry assisting in one of our many missions worldwide. When complete the candidates await ordination to the Diaconate after a waiting period of 6-12 months and then to the priesthood after 6-12 months ministry as a Deacon. Total formation time on the road to ordination then amounts to anywhere from 11-12 years.



On the words of Fr. Julio Rodriguez, Master of Novices

After ordination I continued to be active in the Exodos Juvineles youth movement which is the Fraternity's work in evangelizing the youth. I was then given my first major assignment as a priest, Master of Novices. Although newly ordained I undertook this new assignment with great joy along with Deacon Victor Manuel Hernandez Herrera to serve and help form our brother novices deepen their spirituality and charisms. Although a challenging task, we feel God's grace in strengthening us for the task.

We strongly believe that it is the Holy Spirit who guided our General Council during the 2016 General Chapter meeting to issue the decree establishing the move of the Novitiate to Belize. For me personally there is some additional motivation in that I spent most of my formative years as a youth growing up in Belize with my parents after we had emigrated from El Salvador during a period of persecution. I really feel that Belize is a good fit for our Novitiate and I am very thankful to all of our benefactors for their spiritual and financial support which made this vision possible.



Fr. Julio with two Novices on a pastoral Experience in Belize



Novitiate my daily pilgrimage

Novice Helber Alexander Cos Cos

I thank God for my life, for my parents who instilled in me the values which are the pillars of my daily life, and also for the many people who mutually give me their love, respect and unconditional support. I want to express my gratitude to the Church and particularly to the Missionary Fraternity of Mary for the privilege to mold myself as a future priest. I have experienced many moments of solitude with my best friend, Jesus. Indeed, the presence of God in my life is very evident as I experience my year of Novitiate in Belize. I see the richness of this year which allows me to internalize my life by discerning those qualities and characteristics that makes me unique.

It allows me to become closer, to know my brothers more deeply, and to experience the joy of having them as fellow sojourners on the road to priesthood.

The Novitiate is the ideal time to meditate on and to come to better understand the founding principles and constitution of the Missionary Fraternity of Mary as I prepare to commit my life as a missionary priest. It is a time to better know and relate to my brothers who will become partners in the missionary work of the Fraternity. This period has been really helpful in establishing my true identity as a missionary in the Fraternity by adopting its lifestyle in my daily life.

Novices with their formators in their Chapel.

Daily prayers and daily Mass are the pillars that make our vocation to priesthood to be full of life and joy.

We do pray not just for ourselves but for the needs of the entire world, we do pray for vocations to religious life, for the missions of the Church, for our friends and benefactors.



Our happiness is to share the gift of our vocation with the little ones of God.

Novices Jordanio Segundo
and Helber Cos Cos

Other News

Belize - A new group of seminarians will begin their year experience as Novices, beginning from November this year to November next year.

Guatemala - 8 of our seminarians at the Major Seminary finished their Theological studies they will begin their pastoral year experience in a parish before Diaconate.

Venezuela – We remain committed to this mission and have 15 priests working in pastoral ministry in Venezuela. They are united with the people and are suffering the same shortages and difficulties as the people. Please pray for them.

**Thank you for your prayers and your support to the
Missionary Fraternity of Mary**

All contributions are tax deductible and are used exclusively for the work of the Fraternity in Guatemala and its missions worldwide. For more information or to mail contributions, please send to:
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