

Northeastern Jurisdiction Episcopacy Committee
 Episcopal Candidate Information Form 2016



General Information

Name	Irving Cotto
Conference Membership	Eastern Pennsylvania Conference
Nominated by	M.A.R.C.H.A.
Years able to serve if elected	8 years

Work Experience

<i>List all appointments</i>	<p>1976-1977: Student Pastor Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico: _New church start among rural families.</p> <p>1977-1982: Associate Pastor for Hispanic Ministries, Central UMC: Reading, Pa. (within a Anglo congregation)</p> <p>1982-1983: Pastor of Emanuel UMC: Reading, PA (newly chartered)</p> <p>1983-1999: El Redentor UMC: Lancaster, PA (served for 16 years) <i>Latino congregation</i></p> <p>1999-2008: Asbury UMC: Camden, PA</p> <p>2008-2012: Director of Congregational Development/Director of Latino Ministries, Eastern PA Conference, Valley Forge, Pa.</p> <p>2012 – 2016: Northeast District Superintendent, Eastern PA Conference.</p>
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Personal Development

<i>Influential Books & Renewal Study</i>	<p><i>The Upper Room's 2 Year Academy for Spiritual Formation</i></p> <p>Valerie M. De Marinis <i>Critical Caring: A Feminist Model for Pastoral Psychology</i></p> <p>Leonardo Boff, <i>The Life of the Sacrament, the Sacrament of Life</i></p> <p>Orlando E. Costas, <i>Christ Outside the Gate</i></p> <p>Gustavo Gutierrez – <i>Teología de la Liberación</i></p> <p>James Cones – <i>God of the Oppressed</i></p> <p>Dietrich Bonhoeffer - <i>Life Together, The Cost of Discipleship</i></p>
<i>Racial Diversity Training</i>	Primarily through GCORR events; Training for 2012 GC monitoring; at Conference level Healing the Wounds of Racism required of all Clergy
<i>Language Facility Special Interests</i>	Fully bilingual (Spanish-English) Theology, Music, Psychology, Leadership, Evangelization, Pastoral Care, Social Justice
<i>Self-Care</i>	Days Off/Sabbaths/Vacation Time/ walks on treadmill/Time with family

Personal Assessment

<i>Gifts & Evidence of God's Grace</i>	In listening to and affirming others, in influencing others through preaching, teaching, counseling, and developing new ideas.
<i>Indication of Effectiveness</i>	<p>-Growth in every local church I have pastored</p> <p>-Six new church starts under my time and supervision as Director of Congregational Development and Director of Latino Ministries</p> <p>-Positive reports and high marks for teaching in Course of Studies both at Perkins School of Theology and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary</p>
<i>Area for Further Development</i>	<p>Further expand knowledge on finance and administration</p> <p>Continue to learn to how to minister effectively to and with younger generations, and other constituencies poorly represented in the church</p>
<i>Style of Leadership</i>	flexible, contextual, collaborative

Questions

Briefly describe the process which leads you to discern the call to the office bishop.

- Through many conversations with trusted friends and colleagues and through personal time in prayer, study and reflection.

The Role of the Bishop in The United Methodist Church is delineated in paragraph 403 of The Book of Discipline. After reading this paragraph, please share how you are called and equipped to fulfill the responsibilities. Please elaborate on ¶ 403.1 and e-f.

- Through 32 of ministry as parish pastor and 8 on extension ministry (Conference Staff and Cabinet) my awareness of and appreciation for our traditions, our way of governing ourselves and engaging in theological reflection has been greatly enriched and tested.

Concerning ¶403.1 e-f, Early in my life I was exposed to different Christian traditions. Thus, I developed a special appreciation for the ecumenical community and the unity of all Christians. As a bishop I would work hard to find creative and pastoral ways to promote the unity of the church without sacrificing prophetic and justice issues. The bishop's role involves leading the connection toward a place of greater love and respect among our parishioners.

It is extremely important that the bishop is intentional about fostering a healthy environment of communication, affirmation, excellence in leadership at all levels: conference staff, cabinet, clergy, and lay volunteers. A resident bishop has the opportunity to offer insight, concerns, and prophetic wisdom in order to help the Church be more inclusive, welcoming, and relevant before in our present society.

How would you as a new bishop collaborate with your colleagues on the College of Bishops to be spiritual and missional leaders for the whole jurisdiction so that NEJ better fulfills the mission and ministry of Christ Jesus?

- By actively participating in discussions with my colleagues, sharing ideas and concerns even if some of these might be out of the box or somewhat uncomfortable.
- By supporting my colleagues through prayer, being transparent, and holding them in confidence and in confidentiality.

How would you as a new bishop share the good news of Christ Jesus inviting, engaging, connecting with persons in your assigned area who are not currently active in a faith community so that you might become a leader and model for making disciples?

- By continuing a practice I learned in my teens: share my faith at every opportunity with people. As bishop through pastoral visits, conversations with candidates for ministry, conference staff and cabinet, casting a vision for intentional faith sharing. Work with key leaders develop creatives was to effectively communicate our faith in Christ and our particular Wesleyan/Methodist view concerning the gospel.

Describe how you would equip the United Methodists of your area for ministry and evangelism in our culture context?

- By providing training that is tailored after the specific contextual realities of the jurisdiction (languages, cultures, constituencies, political, socio-religious)
- By developing a cadre of conference lay evangelists/evangelizers (along with CLM, LSM, Lay Missioner training, encourage and support extension ministries in the area of evangelization)
- By supporting and hold pastors accountable-expect effective performance in this area, and adequate tooling and retooling to meet today's evangelism challenges.