

**LASALLIAN HOLISTIC
FORMATION CENTER
Tijuana, Mexico**

**DETAILS CONCERNING AN IMPORTANT
LASALLIAN EXPERIMENT OF JOINT
RESPONSIBILITY AND INTERDEPENDENCE
FOR THE POOR.**

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1. LOCALE DESCRIPTION

– Location:

Tijuana is located in the northwest corner of Mexico on the border with the United States. It is “the busiest border crossing in the world” (one million people daily).

– Origin: since 1889 (106 years of history in 1995).

– Facts:

Demographics: 1.8 million inhabitants. 520 neighborhoods. Sixty-five per cent of the population is under the age of 25. There is a strong migration movement that seeks a better economic situation and, if possible, relocation in the United States.

Politics: currently governed by the opposition party.

Religion: It is a diocesan seat with 66 parishes, 180 priests (115 diocesan, 55 religious), 500 religious (55 Brothers, 445 Sisters).

– Religious ignorance: there is a predominance of uninstructed religiosity with a strong influence by Protestant sects.

– Education: below school level; the difficulty is compounded by the migration movement, although there is an average of 8 years of schooling.

– Social: There is much underemployment, drug addiction, common law marriages, single mothers, gangs... There are 630 “assembly plants” or product factories for large companies.

II. THE BROTHERS’ PRESENCE

– Origin:

During the summer of 1978 the Brothers from California (specifically Brother Armando García) came up with the idea of establishing a Popular Educational Center on a permanent basis.

– Conditions:

There were two basic contracts signed: one between the Diocese and the Brothers and the other between the Districts of North Mexico and San Francisco.

– Community:

The community is composed of Brothers from both

Districts and receives interdistrict support.

– Goal:

To create an educational center for the poor.

III. MINISTRY:

“LASALLIAN HOLISTIC FORMATION CENTER”

– It is:

An open, informal school for young people and adults, under the direction of Lasallian Brothers who are assisted by a group of lay volunteers; it is recognized as an Educational Institution by the Secretary of Public Education and as a lay School of Formation by the Diocese.

– Objectives:

1. To provide opportunities for human and Christian enrichment, especially for people with few resources. These people in turn will commit themselves to helping others in their own parishes and neighborhoods.

2. To create an atmosphere that fosters leaders for the service of the Church and assures their proper formation.

– Strategies. It offers:

1. Quarterly courses, each one lasting for 30 hours in four annual sessions. These are grouped according to programs (120 hours).

2. Meetings.

3. Retreats for: Students, teachers (“Animators”), catechists, boards.

4. Apostolates:

Saturday catechism lessons in local neighborhoods.

Holy week missions.

The “Ven a ver” (come and see) program (United States): Small groups of students accompanied and directed by an advisor visit Tijuana as part of a social service program.

Summer camp (USA).

Postulants (USA)

5. Preparation for and reception of the sacraments for adults.

6. First communion preparation for children.

– Facilities:

In the beginning there were none, but presently they are rudimentary, simple yet insufficient but easily accessible by all.

– Characteristics:

Joint responsibility

District interdependence

Completely gratuitous

– Admission requirements for students:

Minimum age of 16 years.

Acknowledgment of the Center’s goals.

Presentation of completed registration form and other documents.

– Operation:

Staff: 4 Brothers, 60 volunteer teachers, 12 catechists, 25 volunteers who compose the “Board” in order to cover the Center’s operating expenses. An average of 650 students attend every quarter.

Schedule: from Monday afternoon to Saturday.

Mornings from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and afternoons from 3:00 PM to 9:30 PM.

– Support:

The Center is supported by the Board; the Community is supported by the Districts.

– Evaluation:

At the end of each quarter there is a Mass of Thanksgiving and the Bishop delivers the corresponding diplomas to those who are completing a program.

There is a small exposition and a closing gathering is held.

The Center, in addition to its own internal evaluations, is visited once per semester by an interdistrict commission.

– Accreditation:

Diplomas are awarded: one for each completed course and another for each program.

– Promotion (how the word is spread about the Center):

By means of the students and the teachers themselves.

Posters are hung near Churches before registration and occasionally there is press and radio coverage.

– Projection and results:

Other centers or Diocesan and parish schools have appeared on the scene.

There is a noteworthy participation of students and former students in their respective parishes and this is verified in the annual evaluation week of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.

There have been requests for the Center's expansion and for off campus branches.

COURSES

RELIGIOUS COURSES

Basic Religion Program

- (Required for the Major Diploma)
- Basic elements of the Faith (Creed)
- Elements of Christian Morality (Commandments)
- Sacraments
- Introduction to the Bible

Religious Growth Program

- Beatitudes
- Christology
- Mariology
- Prayer Workshop

Bible Programs:

- General Bible Course (4 sessions)
- New Testament Studies (4 sessions)
- Old Testament Studies (4 sessions)

Church Programs:

- History of the Church
- Ecclesiology
- Catholic Social Doctrine
- Protestant Sects

Catechetical Programs:

- Catechetical Motivation

- Catechism preparation
- How to be a better catechist
- Lasallian Pedagogy and Spirituality

ACADEMIC COURSES

- Literacy (Official certification)
- Open primary (Official certification)
- Open secondary
- Open preparatory

- English
- Basic secretarial skills
- Computers

SKILL COURSES

- First Aid
- Nurse's Aid
- Sculpturing
- Modeling
- Woodworking

- Cosmetology
- Sewing
- Weaving
- Pottery
- Interior Decorating

- Vegetarian Cooking
- Pastry decoration
- French pastries
- Artistic Jell-O making

- Guitar
- Chorus
- Aerobics
- Folkloric Dance
- Popular theater
- Personal defense
- Yoga

COURSES WHICH FOSTER GROWTH

The human person

- How to know oneself
- Encounter with the "I"
- How to get ahead
- Psychology of the adolescent

Value clarification

- Group dynamics
- Organization of youth groups
- Spirituality groups
- Holy Week Mission
- Community Development
- Public speaking

Family human relationships

- Marriage preparation
- Right to life
- School for parents
- Family spirituality
- An integrated approach to the advancement of women. •