

A SATURDAY MORNING AT “MIER Y PESADO” (MEXICO)

I. A Saturday Morning.

“Mier y Pesado” is a school in the picturesque, colonial style district of Coyoacan in Mexico City. It is one of the schools run by the Brothers and, as in most other schools in the world, school activities do not come to a halt once the school day is over: they simply broaden their scope and encompass the whole person.

There is no school on Saturday, and so that is the day when pupils from the infant, primary and secondary classes turn the sports fields into a hive of activity organised by their teachers or, in the case of the youngest children, by a group of enthusiastic parents. These same parents in addition to their marshalling duties also train teams, referee matches, mark out pitches and involve themselves in all varieties of sport like football, basketball, athletics... The atmosphere on these occasions is very lively.

For the school Saturday is also a “family day”, when the educational community opens its doors wide to one and all and offers all kinds of courses and activities. Thanks to its staff (parents, teachers and former students), the educational community is able to run free courses for all who want, whether they are connected with the school or not.

If you strolled around the school you would come across a group of charming ladies in the main corridor, keeping fit with all the vigour and grace of aerobic exercises; elsewhere, other ladies are doing art appreciation. From somewhere you would be able to hear folk melodies being strummed on guitars; and out in the garden, in the shade of a tree a painting class would be under way. Further along you would find a first aid class going on for those who want to be able to help others in case of accident in the home or outside. And this would not be all: in other corners of the school could be found groups of studious looking people, worried by the present economic crisis, following courses in general administration, stenography, typing, electricity, weaving and macrame. What these good people learn at the Brothers' school helps them in many cases to increase their income as well as provide them with a pastime.

II. Lasallian Integration Courses.

Running side by side with all these other courses there is also a “community integration workshop” meant for the parents of pupils who have recently joined the infant school, and which consists of 10 talks on educational guidelines. From January to March there are organised also Lasallian Integration courses (cf. Lasalliana N. 12).

1. Origin and Aims.

The idea of running these Lasallian Integration courses first came up in the District of South Mexico after the 2nd National Lasallian Assembly held from August 3rd - 5th 1979. During the course of that year, a great many lay people spoke to the Brothers about their need for a solid grounding in the Christian Faith, and a wish to know more about the work of St. John Baptist de La Salle so as to be able to share more closely in the educational apostolate of the Brothers and to help to build up an educational community.

The first session began on November 17th 1979 in the Casa La Salle, a retreat house and house of formation (novitiate and scholasticate), and there took part young couples, Brothers, teachers and former students from a number of Brothers' schools.

2. Organisation.

The course is run every school year in the various educational communities of Mexico. It is spread over 10 Saturdays, the official weekly day off. On each of these 10 days the session lasts 2 1/2 hours and consists of two talks. In all, then, there are 20 talks.

3. Those who run the course.

In general, those who give the talks are either Brothers or lay people who themselves have already followed such a course; or even other people who have some expertise in the topic being treated. As long as speakers follow the guidelines laid down by the Mexican Lasallian Federation, they can choose any method they like to deal with their topic.

4. For whom is the course intended?

It is meant for all those who share in the educational work of the Brothers: parents, teachers, former students and anyone else who feels he would like to be involved. For example, in the “Mier y Pesado” school, the course is really intended for parents of new pupils, but that is only one example. In practice, anyone can join in.

5. Results so far.

The most important result is that lay people have been able to share in the educational work of the Brothers, and that there has been formed an “educational community”, an idea raised in the Rule produced by the last General Chapter which expressed so much interest in the Lasallian Family.

The courses which have been run at the “Mier y Pedado” school since 1980 are a good example of what such sharing can bring about.

Conclusion.

In a friendly, family-like atmosphere, fathers, mothers, children, former students and friends of the Brothers can benefit from the lead given by the Brothers working closely with their lay colleagues and inspired by the spirit of the Founder – a spirit of service, brotherly love and faith.

Brother Javier Hurtado