



Fellow Lasallians,

With the launch of *El Otro Lado El Paso*, Cathedral High School's objective for the 5-day immersion program is to provide our Young Lasallians with an opportunity to experience and explore the El Paso and *Ciudad Juarez* borderland. Through this exposure our youth are able to learn the many sides of the border issues relevant to our bi-national communities: youth at risk, unaccompanied minors, political asylum seekers, and human trafficking. *El Otro Lado* participants learn about the unique culture of El Paso and *Ciudad Juarez*, interact with the people of the borderland, listen to their stories and share in the experiences of their day-to-day lives.

We hosted our first Lasallian school; St. Mary's College High School from Berkeley, CA this past March. Our Young Lasallians from Cathedral High and St. Mary's were able to come together, create a community founded on their faith, and build upon their commitment to the Lasallian mission, and feeling called to be of assistance to the local migrant community by expanding on their knowledge in the borderland.

"Everyday there is something to be thankful for. Seeing a border separate two human beings is difficult. I have hope that one day a better plan of action can be taken. Seeing such little kids who have so much faith gives me faith." - St. Mary's College High student

During this 5-day immersion:

- we began each morning with a session surrounding Catholic Social teaching
- we visited the Juarez Juvenile Center where we met and spoke with detainees about their stories
- Centro Catalina a women's cooperative dedicated to the empowerment of women and to giving back to the community in this all female initiative where they not only tutor but they also make goods to sell
- Centro Derechos Humanos where we learned about the work the center is doing to accompany families in missing person cases
- Border Patrol on their work along the border and current demographics and walking along the U.S./Mexico fence line
- activities at St. Pius' Rico Ministry with unaccompanied children
- Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
- Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services on the unaccompanied children population they serve
- Salesiano Oratorio to learn how young adults are creating an outreach program to provide sanctuary to youth at risk
- Annunciation House to learn how they are assisting with the migrant population

As we move forward with the program, we encourage our Lasallian schools to explore venturing here to the El Paso and Ciudad Juarez borderland to gain a different perspective surrounding border issues. We would like to give our Young Lasallians' the opportunity to build a new sense of consciousness on the grim border realities as well as the hope being created in response. It is our hope that through our Young Lasallians' individual and collective experiences, they will be able to engage with others in a more truthful dialogue on the



realities along the border. With the spotlight in the media on our politicians, our focus is to give Young Lasallians the time and space to learn first hand the many sides of the border through a Catholic and Lasallian lens.

Through this initiative we hope to empower our youth to be advocates for change. To be able to see the same hope Pope Francis saw during his visit to *Ciudad Juarez*.

“The night can seem vast and very dark, but in these days I have been able to observe that in this people [in Juarez] there are many lights who proclaim hope; I have been able to see in many of their testimonies, in their face, the presence of God who carries on walking in this land, guiding you, sustaining hope; many men and women, with their everyday efforts, make it possible for this Mexican society not to be left in darkness. Many men and women lining the streets as I went by, lifted up their children, showing them to me: they are the future of Mexico, let us look after them, let us love them. These children are tomorrow’s prophets, they are the sign of a new dawn. And I assure you that on some occasions, as I passed by, I felt I wanted to cry on seeing so much hope among people who suffer so much.”

- Pope Francis’ closing remarks from the Papal Mass in Ciudad Juarez
February 2016

As we call to mind Pope Francis’ remarks from his past visit to *Ciudad Juarez*, we are calling you and our Young Lasallians to stand in solidarity with these communities and to witness a new vision of hope and strength.

We will have three sessions in the fall and three sessions in the spring for the 2016-2017 academic year. For more information and/or to reserve your spot to participate, please contact Ms. Sheila Garcia at (sgarcia@cathedral-elpaso.org).

Sincerely,

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