

# Overseas Training Program (OTP) SVD - Bolivia

## **Presentation**

The Society of the Divine Word in Bolivia (BOL) is offering an Overseas Training Program (OTP) for those SVD students in formation who would wish to avail of it.

If we take into account the current missionary situation and context, along with the recent emphasis of our congregation regarding experiences of internationality, prophetic dialogue, and the living out of the characteristic dimensions of the SVD, then from the point of view of initial formation an understanding of the Latin American situation can be important. An OTP experience is an opportunity to encourage an SVD student in these areas.

We understand and appreciate that OTP is a stage within formation that can deepen the missionary identity of a religious in formation. We commit ourselves to helping an OTP student in Bolivia to have a lived experience of God, to have a significant contact with a culture that is different, and to experience the joys and the challenges of SVD communities today sharing the same mission in the service of the Kingdom of God.

Given the common understanding of the congregation regarding the nature of an OTP experience we know that it is not a time to resolve personal problems already known, nor to test a doubtful vocation or to solve the problems in the Bolivian Region.

## **The Principle Objectives of OTP in Bolivia include the following:**

- 1) To facilitate the SVD student to have a missionary experience based on the Passover exodus and prophetic dialogue.
- 2) To have closer contact with the multicultural reality of a country from the perspective of being a disciple.
- 3) Ongoing learning, and to make ones own contribution to communities that are international and characterized by the SVD dimensions,
- 4) To be a missionary in the Bolivian Church.

To realize the above goals, we place special emphasis on the following aspects of formation:

## **Nurturing the Spiritual Life:**

We commit ourselves to providing the student with ongoing spiritual growth;

- a) Through personal and communal encounter with the Lord;

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- b) Liturgical celebrations and prayerful reading of the Word;
- c) Contact and assimilation of the spiritual values present in the various cultures of Bolivia through the many opportunities that everyday life presents and through regular spiritual direction.

## **Otherness and community life:**

We encourage sufficient space for community life in order to mature one's personal identity; to be open and willing to live and be enriched by our internationality, and to collaborate and share in the life and work of the SVD community.

## **Ongoing Formation:**

The student is encouraged through reading and ongoing formation to develop his critical faculties, and to appreciate the context and culture within which he finds himself and thus be prepared to provide a better missionary service.

## **Missionary Leadership:**

Opportunities are provided for missionary participation by which the student may consolidate his gifts and charismas for the service of mission.

## **Journeying with others:**

We try to create opportunities for developing good relationships with others, especially those in initial formation, and others undergoing similar experiences.

## **STEPS FOR CARRYING OUT THE PROCESS**

### **Before Arriving:**

We hope that before arriving in Bolivia, the student would have prepared himself sufficiently for his OTP experience. This preparation would include knowledge of the country and the Society in Bolivia, our missionary activities and the other aspects of our presence (history, missionary commitments, Missionary Projects, number of confreres, etc...).

After receiving his appointment the OTP student could send a profile which would include some personal details and a short vocation story. This would be of great help to us.

Other requirements such as documents etc could be held with officials in one or other of the Provinces and / or Region.

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## **On arrival:**

On his arrival the student will be given a fraternal and cordial welcome.

Classes in Spanish will be arranged for those who cannot communicate in this language. The duration of these classes is about four months. However it depends also on the arrangement of the classes and the student's process of learning the language.

The student who already knows Spanish will be given about three weeks to get to know the SVD missions in Bolivia and be assigned to one of them.

## **During his stay:**

1. The student will be appointed by the Regional superior and his council to one of our missions in the country. The characteristics of the community and the confrere in charge are important, as these too can define the experience for the OTP. The assigned community also has a process of preparation to welcome him and to facilitate his experience.
2. In coordination with the OTP director strategies can be identified to concretize the dimensions specified above and to assist in the realization of the experience.
3. It would be important that the student be willing to integrate himself into all the activities of the community and the Region, especially those which will enable him to enrich his experience.
4. It would be important that the OTP student would outline explicitly his ideas and personal plans in a way that is simple, sincere and feasible and which can be helpful during the time of evaluation.
5. In both formal and informal settings the student will have meetings with the confrere in-charge, and also with the OTP Director and Regional Council. These evaluations will help in the process of avoiding any problems or to correct any weakness that may arise.
6. With the consent of those who are directly in-charge of the OTP, the student may be appointed to other places or missionary situation, taking into account the multi-cultural nature of the country.

## **At the end of the experience:**

There will be a final evaluation, which will be enriched by the results of the evaluations both at community level and taking into account the experience as a whole. This will enable the local superior, the OTP director in Bolivia and the Regional council to prepare and send the report to

The Sending Province.

The sending Province will be responsible for the re-insertion of the student back into his own culture and community.

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## Confreres involved:

1. The **student himself will be responsible for his experience**, taking into account the formation he has received in his previous years of preparation, as well as the objectives of OTP.
2. In principle, **all the confreres in the region are responsible** to make the student feel at home and have a positive experience.
3. **The OTP Director in the Region:** He is the person who is directly in-charge of the OTP. He carries out this service in collaboration with other confreres. The OTP Director also equips the student with all that is necessary to have a positive experience. He also has to be attentive to anything that might distort the experience.
4. Responsibilities of the **OTP Director** include the following:
  - Be familiar with the OTP programme offered by the Region.
  - Be responsible for the community, material and financial means necessary to carry out the experience in accordance with the outlined objectives.
  - Suggest and carry out the dimensions agreed on to be implemented.
  - Assist in resolving any conflicts that may arise.
  - Keep in touch with the province of origin and inform it on a regular basis on the development of the experience.
  - Arrange meetings to evaluate the experience.
  - Prepare reports and submit them to the Regional Council.
  - Encourage participation in the specialized activities of the Region.
  - Collaborate with the OTP.
5. **The confrere in-charge** is the one in the community where the OTP is assigned, who is chosen by the community with the consent of the OTP Director. He also enters into the dynamics of the OTP and has to see that the OTP has variety of healthy experiences and commitments which may be evaluated periodically.
6. Main responsibilities of the **confrere in-charge:**
  - Be familiar with the OTP programme offered by the Region.
  - Facilitate coordination between the student and the director of OTP.
  - Accompany the student closely and effectively.
7. **The Local Superiors, Regional and His council:** Anyone who has any service at the district where the OTP is assigned and at the Regional level functions according to the norms stipulated by the Society.

## **Dimensions to be provided, Strategies and Indicators for Accompaniment and Evaluating**

These indicators will be used by the OTP Director and the confrere in-charge for periodic evaluations and as a reference point for the final evaluation of the experience.

<b>Nurturing the spiritual life</b>	
<b>Headings</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
Participation in liturgical celebrations.	
Personal and community prayer.	

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Prayerful reading of the Word.	
Regular spiritual direction.	
Spirituality of adaptation to the culture.	
Encounter with the culture, feelings and emotions.	
Ability to face hard times and difficulties that are lived on the mission.	

<b>Community Living</b>	
<b>Headings</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
Insertion in community life.	
Ability to communicate and relate.	
Service.	
Skills and gifts.	
Others:	

<b>Ongoing Formation</b>	
<b>Headings</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
Participation in workshops and seminars on culture.	
Reading and information gathering on lived experiences .	
Dialogue and conversation. Views.	
Others:	

<b>Missionary Leadership</b>	
<b>Headings</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
Initial process of enculturation.	
Missionary and pastoral commitment.	
Significant contributions to the mission.	
Growth in the characteristic dimensions of the SVD	
Others:	

<b>Journeying with others</b>	
<b>Headings</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
Ability to learn and communicate the language.	
Encounter with others in formation.	
The experience of socializing with ease.	
Sharing the experience with the Province of origin.	
Communication with other OTP's	

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## PROPOSAL FOR MEETINGS AND ASSESSMENTS

*a) At the SVD community level:* once a month or when required by the student, members of the community, or the confrere in-charge. These evaluations may be done informally, but they should be carried out. During this dialogue assessment will be made of the student's integration into community life and service to the community. It may also include other aspects. The OTP Director sees to it that these evaluations are done regularly.

*b) With the OTP Director: Every three months.*

Here the evaluations at the community level and the journey of the student are carried out at a more personal level. Areas might include achievements and challenges, progress and difficulties, perspectives and desires. An important part of this evaluation will be the monitoring of the personal plan written by the OTP student. It is desirable that the OTP Director shares the outcome of the evaluation with the confrere in-charge.

*c) With the Regional Council: Every six months.*

The Regional Council must know and evaluate the experience. At this meeting the inclusion of the OTP Director and the confrere in-charge will be of special importance.

### References:

The OTP Director: Josimar Ferreira de Souza, SVD.  
E-mail: josimarsvd@hotmail.com

Missionary Situations: Pastoral Apostolate (rural and urban).  
Higher Education.  
Characteristic Dimensions of the SVD.  
Publishing House (Editorial Verbo Divino) and bookstores.