

1719 Rome Trip

We started our journey at 4am in Manchester Airport T3, ready for our flight at 7am. When we landed in Rome in the glorious sun, we got collected by minibus and taken to our accommodation at, where we were welcomed by Nina to Istituto Paritario Pio IX and shown to our rooms.



After unpacking, we took the metro to visit the Generalate (the Lasallian headquarters), where we were greeted with open arms by our guide Brother Chris Patiño. Brother Chris is originally from Los Angeles in America but moved to Rome and was quickly and warmly welcomed to be part of the Lasallian headquarters. He greeted us with the very words 'welcome home' which gave us all a strong sense of connection to the Generalate. He taught us all about the history of the generalate, the brothers and Lasallians. He gave us a tour of the headquarters where we had the opportunity to ask him questions about his experiences in the Lasallian family and being a brother.



The whole experience gave us all a stronger and better understanding of our Lasallian devotion. While at the generalate we got to see the relics of St John Baptist De La Salle which included his coat and many of his writings and teaching. The day allowed us to fully grasp what we are apart of in living out John Baptist's legacy, by having a shared mission. On the way home we explored the area we were staying in and finished the day with formation and having dinner in a local restaurant.

Every night we had formation with Sam the Chaplin, this helped us to grow stronger as a team, as well as showing our appreciation for each other and allowed us to grow as individuals. The quiet time acted as moments for reflection and bonding.

On the second day we visited a Lasallian school where we got to experience what school life is like for Italian students. This consisted of sitting in two lessons with some students our age where we could ask them questions and see what their learning environment was like. Later students gave us a tour of the school and a guided experience of the Spanish steps, Trevi fountain and Pantheon and finished the tour with ice cream! Our guides were very helpful students who were very equipped in knowledge of the school and the sites, The students were under the guidance of Nina a teacher who was very helpful and made us feel a part of the school from the moment we stepped foot in the school.



On our last full day some of the students started the morning early to watch the sunrise before breakfast. A truly special experience that we will never forget. After breakfast we walked to Saint Maximus to get on the "hop on-hop-off" bus ready to explore the city. The first stop was St Peter's square in Vatican City. The students separated into two groups, one decided to spend their free time going shopping, eating and buy souvenirs for friends and family at home. The others queued to go into St Peter's Basilica, where we saw a statue of St John Baptist De La Salle, relics of various Saints and the altars and relics of



previous Popes. After time apart, the two groups met up and got back on the bus to the Colosseum. This was a fantastic chance to witness the architecture and it was a fabulous photo opportunity. We finished our day with an affirmation formation session and a delicious meal recommended to us by the local residents.

On the 4th day we had breakfast and headed to the airport ready for the journey home. We met with our parents and headed home after a fantastic experience. The whole experience was one that individually and collectively helped us to grow, and we will never forget. Special thank you to Mrs Rooney, Chaplain Sam, and Mr A Fletcher – they were great Company as well as had put a lot of effort into planning the trip to make the 4 days so special.

At Home in Rome Formation

Since their appointment in May, our 1719 cohort have been having monthly formation. This is their opportunity to stop, reflect on the work they have done/are doing, and get to know themselves and each other on a deeper level. This helps them to not only understand the importance of their role, but to understand the importance of team and community within tasks that they do.

Before heading to Rome, we had a *'Reims to Rome'* session, learning more about what commitment is and how our "doorstep moments" in life can often call on us committing to a challenge. The group considered their intentions for the trip, and it was an opportunity to share expectations and wishes for our time together. When in Rome, the students took part in formation sessions each day, all linked by the theme "called to be...", Called to be Happy, called to be Virtuous, called to be Inspired. We took inspiration from the words of our founder. The first day being "your face should be happy; it should be open and gentle to all. It should manifest your respect or at least your affection and good will", this helped us to reflect on how we appear to others, are we welcoming, are we respectful and if the answer is 'yes', do we show that?

Having formation in this way helps us to hold ourselves accountable along the way, it helps us to develop as we challenge the way we live, work, and interact with others as Lasallians. Our students were given an opportunity for this reflection as the next day we sat in groups and thought about what we could be doing to improve our team.

Taking all the gifts and qualities that we have but seeing how they could be perhaps better used or utilised within the 1719 society. Acknowledging this helped to gel the team even further as the results were similar across the board despite being in separate groups – we had a common goal to work towards to ensure we're doing all we can to keep our school running well! Although looking at those areas of improvement, it was not doom and gloom, we spent time exploring the "twelve virtues of a good teacher" and celebrated some examples of the virtues taking place all around us, all the time!

Finally, we took time to be inspired by one another. We took time to reflect on the time spent together on our trip and all the positive things that we may have noticed about each other. Each starting with a blank book, we ended the session with a book full of affirmations and shared thoughts and feelings about one another. These affirmations were shared during our final evening prayer, which took place on the roof, wrapped up in blankets under the stars.

Our students enter formation at different levels, each opening in a way that is suitable and appropriate for them. They reflect, pray, share ideas, play, and think together whilst developing and deepening their awareness of self, others, and the person of God in their lives.