



ROMAN TIMES

THE WEEK AT SIEL

International Lasallian Studies Session 2012-2013
LaSalle
SIEL

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Week Four: Chills

Greetings to all! After four extraordinary weeks, this will be the last of my reports to you. A month of study, of community, of deep professional and personal awakening is over. SIEL 2012 has ended and I have returned home. As I search for how best to describe the final week, one of its moments comes back to me and I feel again what I felt then. And there I find my description for the week. For all four of them. Chills.

Week four began routinely. It would not remain so. We started by focusing on the nuts and bolts of doing scholarly research, hammering out what we would do, what we would need, how we would organize ourselves. Then, for two days, we listened to each other's research proposals. And that is when the routineness disappeared and the power of the Lasallian family took over. Pictures of schools. Pictures of children. Pictures of teachers. Stories of pain. Stories of need. Stories of hope. Questions and ideas and plans and passion and vision, all linked by images of a French priest and the words, "Together and By Association". *Our* charism. *Our* mission. *Our* heritage. One after another, men and women who I had only just met and still barely knew were speaking not only from their hearts but from mine as well. Chills.

Friday, our final day, had been set aside for reflection. We talked about our experiences and what they had meant to us. We shared with one another what we would carry back with us in our minds and hearts, and we asked what might be the impact of these days on the Institute and the Lasallian mission. Someone in the room had an answer. Brother Diego Munoz, the program's director and the person who first envisioned the concept of a SIEL program designed to create an intentional community of Lasallian researchers, sat calmly at the front of the room. He folded his hands, looked intently at us, and said: "You are the first Lasallian researchers ever to be gathered this way. You are the first of the



21st century and the first of the digital age. What you are doing here will lay the groundwork for those who come after. But do not worry. You are not alone. You will always have each other." Chills.

Later, at our closing evaluation session, we were joined by Vicar General Brother Tom Johnson. He spoke of our responsibility as researchers to respond to the challenges of today by

building on the scholarship of the past. He reminded us of the Lasallian tradition's historic and revolutionary contributions to education and ministry, and that for generations Lasallian pedagogy and school management have been at the vanguard of formal teaching and learning around the world. He mused that, in recent years, new movements, most of which are built on theory and practices that originated with Lasallian schools, have dominated the spotlight. Then, he paused and said very simply and very clearly, "That's gone on long enough. It is time for us to be educational leaders again." Reclaiming our legacy. Asserting our identity. Affirming our future. Chills.

Soon, the day ended, and with it week four and SIEL. I chose to end my stay at the Generalate just as I began it. I sat in a wooden pew, the outline of St. John Baptist de La Salle's reliquary visible in the soft light of the Chapel. The ghosts and the echoes of the past that I had first encountered there emerged again, except now they had been joined by many more. I found myself surrounded by our entire story, and every word had a face and every face was a gift and every gift gave the story life. So now I know. No single person ever tells the story. Only all of us together can tell the story. Because all of us together are the story. I walked out with my bag to begin my journey home. I was by myself, but I was not alone. Lasallians never are. Thank you, SIEL.

*Live Jesus in our hearts forever.
Bob Carrejo*