

Spirituality, key to leadership in Lasallian universities

In the context of the Year of Lasallian Spirituality, one of the themes explored in depth during the International Program of University Leadership proposed this year by the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU) was precisely “Lasallian Spirituality as a different way of looking at things”.

“The invitation was to begin with the awareness of the presence of God. But not just as an abstract idea, but actually to grow in awareness that the living God is here, is present”, explains Brother William Mann, who was part of the organising team for the programme, detailing that “when we recall the presence of God it’s really a recalling at awareness of this divine transcendent being; a lovely high power, who wants us to become part of loveliness”.

For the Lasallian religious Brother, who was Vicar General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools between 2000 and 2007, Lasallian spirituality “is not just to do good things, but also to be good in our educational situation, to be virtuous. To show the young people with whom we are engaged how to accept and to enter into a relationship with God who seeks to be one with us”.

In this sense, witness is one of the most effective means of sharing the spirituality we have inherited from Saint John Baptist de La Salle, recalling that “the Founder says often enough that example makes a greater impression on the mind and heart than words”, with a special invitation to “make no distinction between the work of your perfection and the work of your profession”.

The International Program of University Leadership brought together 50 Lasallians from 22 Lasallian universities from around the world for two weeks (May 18-31) at the Generalate in Rome.

Aimed at professors, researchers and administrative collaborators, this program has positioned itself as a space for comprehensive and ongoing training for those who animate the Lasallian Mission in the field of higher education.

This year, the programme offered a formative itinerary in which, in addition to

Lasallian Spirituality, topics related to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, the educational perspective of integral ecology and the sharing of “best practices” by the participants were addressed.

In fact, according to the organisers, “during the last few days we reflected on Lasallian experiences and how participants could connect to extend these meaningful practices in their daily work when they return to their universities”.

“Through the activities designed to encourage the reflections of the different groups, we wanted to highlight the importance of listening among the participants, who shared their personal, regional and international commitments”, explains Diana Loera, on behalf of the IALU Team.

What have you learnt the most? “I have a better understanding of the Lasallian Mission, which has delivered me to rediscover my vocation, and I return home with the hope of giving back to our community a quality and caring education”, says Ms Marga Marty, from De La Salle-College of St. Benilde (Philippines).

In the case of Mr Ulises Montes, from La Salle Bajío University (Mexico), “Lasallian leadership must have a global and committed vision (...). We are called to the formation of Lasallian leaders who have this global vision with local action, with local impact”.

“The final celebration and spiritual experience at the Sanctuary of St. John Baptist de La Salle, as well as the pilgrimage for the Jubilee Year, marked the end of a two-week program in which we learned to ‘walk together’”, concludes Diana.