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CWIL Reflection Paper

My Time in Rome

When reflecting over all of the interesting and new things I learned in Rome, I do not know where to begin. There were so many experiences that showed me what a wonderful country Italy really is and these experiences changed my life forever. While living in Rome I was able to interact with the locals and learn their customs. I found that many of the customs of Italy were similar to ours here in the States, but on the other hand I also learned how different the Italian culture is from the American culture. I learned just how important calcio (soccer), is to the Italians, and how all Italians insist on putting their best foot forward with all they do. They also showed me what immense pride they have for their country.

The city of Rome was so beautiful and the architecture was breathtaking. On walks around the city I was overwhelmed with its beauty. The cobblestone streets, images of the Madonna on corners of buildings, and the ancient ruins were all truly magnificent. One of my favorite views of Rome was looking out of my fourth floor window at the Hotel Tiziano and seeing the sky line of the Roman buildings along with the sun off in the distance.

During my semester in Rome I met so many new people. From the workers at Pascucci's Bar to the desk workers at the Hotel Tiziano, the relationships that I had with these people helped make living in a foreign country a little bit easier. While entering or leaving the hotel the workers of the front desk were always there to greet us students with

a smile and strike up conversation. Day after day of interacting with the hotel employees made everyone become closer and develop memorable friendships with them. One friendship that I will always remember was the one that I made with desk worker, Giancarlo. Giancarlo and I quickly became friends as he would help explain the Italian culture and help me with my Italian homework. My friends and I would sit at the front desk with him and when he allowed us, help hand out room keys or help him with other small tasks. At the end of the semester I was very sad to say good-bye to him and I hope that when I return to Rome I will be able to stop by the Tiziano and see him again.

One exceptional night I had in Rome was when my two roommates and I accompanied our friend Giovanni, to the Roma-Lazio calcio match. With Lazio being the region that Rome is found in, it made the rivalry even more intense. A similar example would be if the Chicago Bears played Illinois in football. The calcio match was unlike any other sporting event I had ever been attended. With fireworks and different objects being thrown onto the field and at the opposite team's players, I knew I was at an event different from any in the States. The look of pride and excitement in all of the Italians eyes was incredible. With people rooting and chanting for their team's victory, their voices echoed throughout the stadium. Fans ran with flags supporting their team and everyone at the match was decked out in their team's attire. Luckily I happened to be wearing a light blue sweater, the color of the Lazio side, so I fit in with the other fans. The Lazio-Roma match was a night that I am surely not going to forget.

While thinking about my semester in Rome I can not believe how quickly it all past. It feels like yesterday that I was packing up for my departure and saying good-bye to my family. Often I catch myself thinking about what I would be doing right then if I

were back in Rome. I consider myself blessed to have been able to live in Rome and I am very fortunate for the time I spent there. My fellow students and I were very privileged to have taken part in such a well organized abroad program. The Saint Mary's Rome Program went above and beyond to make us students enjoy our time in Rome and that is something of which I will always be grateful.