

DECEMBER

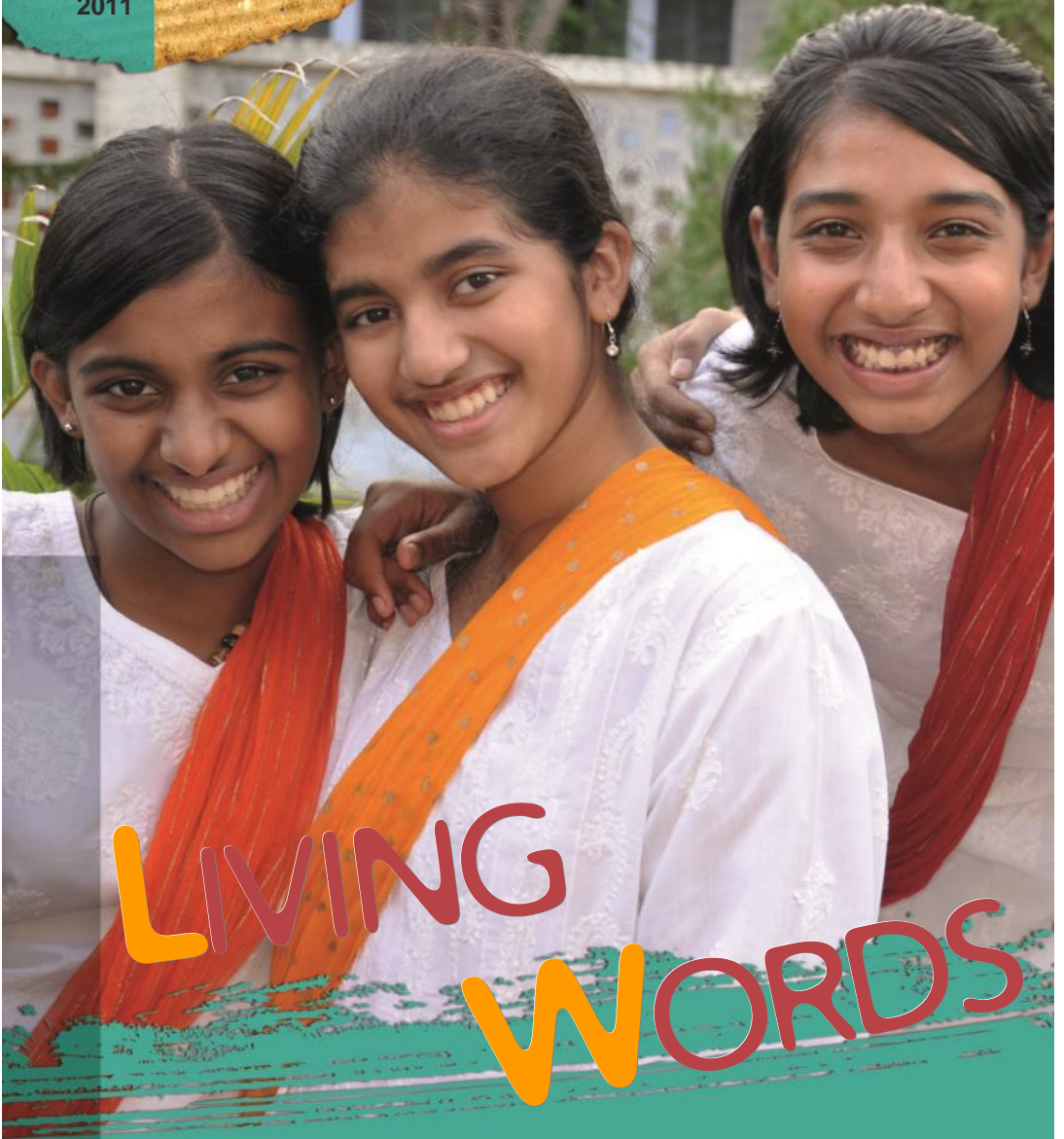
NOVEMBER

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AFMS



LIVING
WORDS

My dear young friends,
All day I have been looking forward to this evening, and
to this opportunity to be with you again!

This is what the Pope said at the beginning of his speech to the youth and teens at the prayer vigil in Germany. Here below are some excerpts from his talk to us.

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

While all around us there may be darkness and gloom, yet we see a light: a small, tiny flame that is stronger than the seemingly powerful and invincible darkness. Christ, risen from the dead, shines in this world and he does so most brightly in those places where, in human terms, everything is somber and hopeless. He has conquered death – he is alive – and faith in him, like a small light, cuts through what is dark and threatening. To be sure, those who believe in Jesus do not lead lives of perpetual sunshine, as though they are spared suffering and hardship, but there is always a bright glimmer there, lighting up the path that leads to the fullness of life. **The eyes of those who believe in Christ see light even amid the darkest night.** (...)

Light does not remain alone. All around, other lights flare up. (...) We do not live alone in this world. And it is for the important things of life that we have to rely on other people. Particularly in our faith, then, we do not stand alone, we are links in the great chain of believers. Nobody can believe unless he is supported by the faith of others, and conversely, through my faith, I help to strengthen others in their faith. (...)

2 At this point we cannot remain

silent about the existence of evil. We see it in so many places in this world; but we also see it – and this scares us – in our own lives. Truly, within our hearts there is a tendency towards evil, there is selfishness, envy, aggression. (...) Saint Paul in many of his letters does not shrink from calling the members of the local communities, “saints.” (...) In baptism the Lord sets our life alight with what the catechism calls sanctifying grace. Those who watch over this light, who live by grace, are holy. Often the very notion of saints is distorted, as if to be holy means to be remote from the world, naive and joyless. Often it is thought that a saint has to be someone (...) who could never be imitated in our own lives. How false and discouraging this opinion is! There is no saint, apart from the Blessed Virgin Mary, who has not known sin, who has never fallen. Dear friends, **Christ is not so much interested in how often in our lives we stumble and fall, as in how often with his help we pick ourselves up again.** (...) He does not call you because you are good and perfect, but because *he* is good and he wants to make you his friends. **Yes, you are the light of the world because Jesus is your light. You are**

Christians not because you do special and extraordinary things, but because *he*, Christ, is your life. You are holy if we allow his grace to work in us.

Dear friends, this gathering shines in more ways than one – in the glow of innumerable lights, in the radiance of so many young people who believe in Christ. A candle can only give light if it lets itself be consumed by the flame. It would remain useless if its wax failed to nourish the fire.

Allow Christ to burn in you, even at the cost of sacrifice and renunciation. (...) **Have the courage to apply your talents and gifts for God's kingdom and to give yourselves – like candle wax – so that the Lord can light up the darkness through you.** Dare to be glowing saints, in whose eyes and hearts the love of Christ beams and who thus bring light to the world. I am confident that you (...) are lamps of hope that do not remain hidden. “You are the light of the world.” God is your future!

Benedict XVI

Maybe you already know that this year, in the whole movement, we want to live the Gospel with new energy. The Word of Jesus was very important for Chiara!

Let's remember the story about how she took only one thing with her into the air raid shelters during the war. She took the Gospel! She and her first companions didn't just read it, they lived it and they discovered that the Gospel is true. Every promise that Jesus made came true in front of their eyes. Everyone who joined their group had the same experience and a community came to life which grew bigger and bigger until it reached each one of us.

Emmaus told us what she wishes for us during this new year.

She said: "If each one of us, from this moment on, starts to live the Word of God with the same intensity that Chiara and her first companions had, we can already imagine thousands of lights being lit on earth, and their rays will illuminate all the streets of the world! These rays will certainly bring light into all the dark corners of this world of ours that sometimes seems like a dark cellar!"

ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE!

TREASURE
CHEST



In the early days of the Ideal we lived the Word so intensely that a community grew up around us. We have to do the same thing now! We knew that we had to live the Word on earth, to be *only* the Word, to *be* the Word. All the rest had meaning only within the Word, in being the Word.

For example, if we were living a Word of Life about the will of God, like "My food is to do the will of my Father" (Jn 4:34), we were only *that* Word of God. The rest didn't matter. What was important was to *be* the Word of God. We were under the influence of the first great discoveries of the Ideal. The will of God was not something we had to resign ourselves to, it was something we could hold onto! It was a divine adventure, and this adventure gave rise to the whole movement.

We were so taken up with these "inspirations" that nothing else touched us. (...) Whether there was a war going on or not, whether we studied or ate, whether we were healthy or sick, whether we slept or took a walk, everything was the same for us. It had value if it was the will of God. (...)

That's how we lived then and that's how we have to live now, too. Nothing else is important, nothing.

Or if we lived another word of God, like "This is my beloved Son, listen to him," then we *listened* to all his words. The important thing was to listen to every word he told us. Then whether we went to school or work, to do manual labor or serve in the Senate, it made no difference. What was important was to live the Word. (...)

We must really convince ourselves of this and consider everything else as secondary. (...) If you do this, you will work miracles, real miracles! (...) Because the contact with the Word is not just *any* word. It's a presence of God, it's God! (...) If you love the Word, you love Christ; if you make yourself one with the Word, you make yourself one with Christ; if you live the Word, you live Christ. And Christ is a real person, not just a word, and He lives within you!

Chiara to the married focalarine, January 18, 1991

operation Riiing!!

PART FIVE

Prepare yourself for your exams as if it were the dress rehearsal for the final exam.

All of us have dreams that we would like to fulfill. That's why we need to study well for every quiz, for every exam, because they "train" us, and without them we won't be prepared. **Our schoolwork is the will of God for us now – it's our "job" right now and so it needs to be done well.** By living well, we will be fulfilled in the future, not only as men and women who will give a contribution to society, but also as children of God who walk along the way of true happiness.

At the "final exam" of our life, God will ask us if **we loved and if we did His Will even in the little things.** Everything that God asks of us is important - our schoolwork, our family life, our friendships and sports events, and so we need to do everything well. For example, we have to study with consistency, love concretely, use every opportunity to love others moment by moment. These are the "exams," the "training" we need, so we can measure ourselves and see if we are ready for that final exam with Jesus.

FROM THE GEN 3 OF TRENT:

Me in the first place?

I was doing my homework for a history class and I couldn't concentrate very well. There were so many pages to cover and I thought it would be really hard to get through it. What made the situation worse is that I got a text from my friends asking for my help with our math homework. I re-read the message, thought about all the pages of history I still had to read, and was just about ready to tell them I couldn't possibly help them. After a few seconds though, something inside of me made me understand that *I was losing this chance to love my friends who were having a hard time.* Unconsciously, I had been putting *myself* in the first place without thinking how important it is to help others. So I closed my history book and went over to one of my friends' houses where they were studying together. I immersed myself totally into the math and helped them until late that evening. When I got back home, there was no more time to study history. How could I finish that homework? I entrusted everything to God, believing that He will find a solution. The following day, a few of my classmates asked the teacher if it would be possible to have more time to finish the assignment. It was obvious that I wasn't the only one who hadn't studied it enough. The teacher, who isn't usually flexible at all, decided to extend the deadline to give us more time to study. *Was it just good luck? I don't think so!* Instead, I'm sure that my act of trust in God the night before was rewarded by His providential love.

Enzo > Italy

TEENS

www.teens4unity.net

READY TO PASS ON THE TORCH!

Hi everyone!

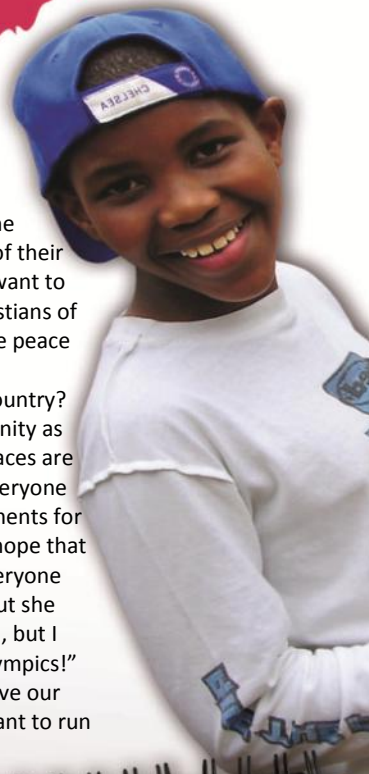
What's happening in the next few months??!!

RUN4UNITY!

Are you ready? Have you made plans?

In Europe it will be very special because all the Christian movements will participate as part of their program called "Together for Europe." They want to give a "soul" back to their society and so Christians of many churches will meet together to promote peace and brotherhood throughout their continent.

What are you doing in your city or state or country? Some dioceses have already taken the Run4Unity as part of their plan for evangelization. Other places are sponsoring a concert on Chiara Luce to tell everyone about the Young for Unity. In their advertisements for the event they say, "Chiara Luce gave us the hope that we can become saints and we want to tell everyone about her!" In fact when Chiara Luce found out she could not walk anymore, she said, "I can't run, but I am passing the torch on to you, like in the Olympics!" So let's take her challenge and get ready to give our witness, passing the torch to all those who want to run with us towards the united world!!



Best words4Teens!



ADJUST: take care of small or big disagreements that make your day bitter. Don't allow the sun to set on your anger, don't give up until the relationships that have been broken, often because of a very little thing, are mended and re-established.

ENOUGH: To remain in love, it's enough to start over again always.

OPEN: There is so much suffering in the world! Open your heart and your hands to people who are alone, or in pain, or hungry, or in doubt. You will feel your heart fill up with happiness.

BARRIER: It's love that makes us one people, one big family, destroying all divisions and removing all barriers. What belongs to one belongs to everyone!

My good or the good of everyone?

Who does the common good belong to?

Probably most people understand what our “personal good” means. But what is the *common* good and who does it belong to? The common good is not mine, it’s not yours or his or hers, it’s everyone’s. It’s “in common” precisely because no one can say, “It’s only mine!”

This is its first characteristic: the common good is **“indivisible.”** What’s more, it’s “common” because **“only together is it possible to attain it, increase it, and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard also to the future”¹.**

Let’s give some examples

Examples of the “common good” are the school where I prepare myself for the future, the sidewalk I walk on, the bus I take every day, the school desk that I use every day, the pharmacy that supplies my medicines so I can stay healthy, all the natural resources in the world, and so on.

The **common good**, therefore, is not something abstract. It’s something that I depend on every day. **It’s all those things that can be used by everyone so that each person will be able to fulfill his or her own personal good.**

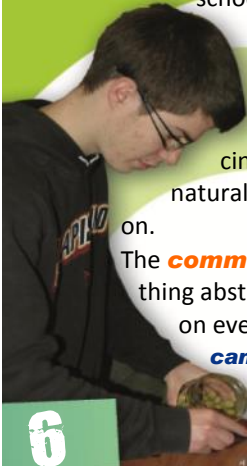


It teaches us to choose what is good

The common good also has a very precise ethical aspect, because it teaches us to choose what is good. It tells me that I can’t just choose any “good” that is offered to me, but only what is *truly* good.

So, what is “truly” good? It’s what leads to the fulfillment of each individual and underlines the dignity of each human person. Therefore, we can tell the person who steals from another or does acts of vandalism to reach what he thinks is *his* good, we can tell him, “No one can consider slavery as something good.” Therefore, to be a slave to material things to the extent that you resort to stealing them, or to be a slave to violence – are not a “good” that will fulfill a person.

¹ Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 164



NEWS

Hamburg (Germany)

A brochure with the title, “In search of God,” was distributed throughout the city. It said: “In the city of Hamburg, in places you least expect, there are people who are searching for God

and are working to help others. We want to get to know these people and exchange ideas with them and share our experiences. We will put an article on the web as the activity of the day unfolds.” What was the plan? A visit to the Sisters of Mother Teresa; a music workshop called

“One-Sound;” the city arcade where there are lots of stores, and a priest who is trying to bring people closer to God by offering a place to pray; the



Harmony between the good of the individual and the common good

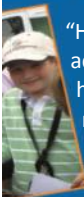
None of us would probably ever think that it's good to do an act of vandalism or to steal. Yet just *knowing* that is not enough to insure that our personal good is in harmony with the common good. What's also needed is that I try to be a good student, in other words, that I try to acquire all the basic elements I need to be able to contribute one day to the growth of our culture as a diligent, expert worker. One also needs to be a respectable son or daughter, a friend to everyone, an honest citizen who contributes to the good of society. From these examples, it's clear that **the common good does not refer only to "material" goods**, but rather it comes from the choices we make. We can't have two switches - one for our personal good and one for the common good. In that case, if we turn one on, the other turns off, and so they are at odds with one another. Instead, if I am a good student, I will obtain my *personal good* and at the same time the *common good* increases, too. In fact, according to **many men and women who have left a positive impact on history, the only good is the common good**. With their lives, they demonstrated that their personal good coincided with the common good because great people have always reasoned this way, saying: "I don't agree that I should have a high salary and be happy because I have a beautiful home, a nice car, or that my favorite team wins every Sunday. I cannot be happy while people still live in poverty, or suffer without having even the strength to tell others about their suffering." For great people who think this way, there is only one "switch" which is, **"My personal good coincides with healing the wounds of humanity."** We remember them even now because they have become models for us, giving us an example, while those who only think of themselves are not remembered by anybody.



<< The common good does not consist in the simple sum of the particular goods of each subject of the social entity. Belonging to everyone and to each person, it is and remains "common", because it is indivisible, and because only together is it possible to attain it, increase it, and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard also to the future. >>

(from *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*)

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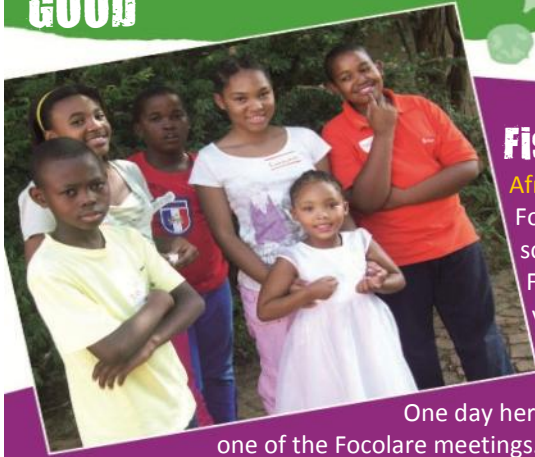


"Hope House" where Christians work to help ex-drug addicts return to society; and also an interview with a homeless person. Our friends arrived on time that morning and we explained to them the purpose of the day, emphasizing the needs of the people we would meet. In the end, we created an article with photos, which will be inserted in an active blog: www.gottaufderspur.blogspot.com

The idea from Hamburg has now "infected" the city of Hannover (<http://gottaufderspurinhanover.blogspot.com>) and since this isn't a real disease, we hope that this will spread everywhere!!



BUILDERS OF THE COMMON GOOD



Fiso, from South Africa

For four years at her school in Soweto, Fiso has been involved in our project, "Education for a United World."

One day her mom showed up at one of the Focolare meetings. She explained why she had come. "I was with my daughter at the supermarket. I was checking out, and the clerk made a mistake and didn't ring up one item. My daughter whispered to me, 'Mom, did you see she forgot one thing?' I whispered back, 'I guess it's our lucky day!' But as we were leaving the store, she insisted, saying, 'Mom, don't you think this is stealing?' I thought for a second: 'If I tell her, "Let it go," she will never believe me again when I tell her, "You can't do these things." **She's right and I'll tell her.**' So we went back in and showed the receipt to the clerk, who fixed it right away since she was obviously afraid she would be fired for it. We happily paid and left. In my heart I was convinced that I absolutely had to participate in the meetings where my daughter learns these things. Thank you for inviting me today. I'd be happy to have the next meeting at my house, **so I can invite my friends, too!**" And that's what happened!

Elia, from Slovenia

Some of the things I do every day don't seem very important, but then I realized they had an effect on my friends. For example, people often throw their litter everywhere and that started to really bother me. So at school every time I saw some paper or bottles or other things on the ground, I started to pick them up and put them in the garbage can. My classmates noticed and started making fun of me saying, "**What? Are you the garbage lady now?**" They weren't really mean, just making a joke of it. But then, little by little, they got "contaminated" and now I'm not the only one with a feeling for ecology! Something similar happened with the collection of bottle caps. If you get a big enough quantity, you can buy a wheel chair for someone in need.

We started collecting and it became a daily game to see if we could get a few more. Just one classmate rejected our efforts – he made a point of throwing trash on the ground. We invited him to help in the project, but he didn't want to, so I started picking up after him... and after a while he stopped! Now, if by



8

NEWS

ORURO (Bolivia)

Oruro is about 4000 feet above sea level and four hours from Cochabamba and that's where we had our first Young for Unity day. 80 teenagers from various schools and neighborhoods participated in our project to "Color the City with



Love" and promote Run4Unity 2012! We had only expected 30 kids to participate so we had to change our plans on the spot to accommodate everyone. One of them wrote at the end: "I had already been attracted by this ideal of a United World, but

Marta from Rome

I am at a special high school for graphic design and recently I was the one to organize an educational tour for the class. There are 22 of us, but 5 are physically challenged. One of them said at first that he would go, but then as the day got closer, he said he wouldn't, because the bus and hotel were not handicapped accessible. My friend and I immediately went to the

chance he lets something fall, I smile and pick it up.

Often people tell me that you won't get anywhere by being nice and kind to others, that in life things can't be beautiful all the time and so I will suffer a lot because people will walk all over me. But **these small changes are a good enough sign for me** to say that if you smile and try to always listen to others and help them, even though you might have to give in on some things, you will always be happy. Even though you will certainly feel the pain when someone disappoints you, and even though there is a lot of evil in the world, it's worth it to live like this. **I believe that it's important to do the good things that you are convinced about.**

I never imagined it was such a big thing! I haven't been coming for the past year and I always felt empty. Now that I've come back, I don't want to leave you again!"

principal who was surprised at our concern

crimination, and to

But as soon as he heard that we would lose all the money we had deposited for the trip, he thanked us for our kindness and urged us to go without him. However, our protest had the effect of influencing public opinion, and the directors of the school approved another tour that was accessible for everyone.

and

said, "Why is *he* coming?" We went back to our class and talked about it and everyone agreed that **we would give up the whole trip as a protest against this kind of discrimination, and to support our classmate.**





What happens when you get to know the Ideal? It's like a light in your heart that gives you so much joy that you want to tell others around you about it. That's why, ever since the beginning, everyone had a little group of people to share the Ideal with and to nourish with their own experiences of living the Gospel.

We Gen 3 have our own people to follow, too, both in the Young for Unity groups, or with the younger Gen 3 or Gen 4. Those who have had the experience of helping Jesus to be born in another person's heart receive so much themselves that they feel it's a great treasure! Luca wrote a diary about his meetings with the Gen 4 and Maria Laura tells us about her unity with the younger Gen 3.

4 the others



October 9, 2000 - first meeting

(...) Paolo is with me as the Gen 4 assistant. We are in the same Gen 3 unit and we both did the school for Gen 4 assistants. We really enjoy being with the little kids and I immediately got the hundredfold when one of them, for no reason, came to me and said, "I love you!" (...) I think the first meeting went really well and I hope the others will be the same.

October 23 - second meeting

I realized that I was getting worried about nothing. I thought I wouldn't know how to make the Gen 4 happy, that I wouldn't know what to say to them. Instead I understood that if something is part of God's plan, it will always go very well. We explained to them about the will of God, telling them to listen to that "little voice" inside our hearts that tells us what to do, and also to listen to the person next to us, especially if that person asks for our help. If it takes an effort on our part to help them, we can do it with joy out of love for Jesus. (...)

November 20 - third meeting

I had two things that I could do this Saturday: go to a home for the elderly with the Young for Unity or have the meeting with the Gen 4. I thought it over and couldn't decide until God gave me the solution. The Gen 4 assistants said it would be a great opportunity to bring the Gen 4 to the nursing home so that they could do something with the Gen 3 and get to know them a little, since next year they will already be Gen 3. I thought it was a good idea, and it also solved my problem of what to do!! The Gen 4 were so happy to see me and I was happy to see them. When we were at the nursing home, they stayed with me because I'm the only Gen 3 they know. We went to the rooms of the elderly to help them come out with their wheelchairs and then we had some games, songs and everything else that could create the sense of a big family. At the end of the day I asked the Gen 4 how they felt. They were very happy, and said it had been a really beautiful day, and they thanked me. These gen really make me very happy!



December 18 – fifth meeting

Today was a really beautiful experience, different from the others. I went with the Gen 4 to offer the little figurines of Baby Jesus to the people. It had been a month since we had been together and to tell the truth, I missed them! The problem was that at first I just stayed on the side, thinking that I had only to "assist" them, but then I remembered what they told us at the school for the assistants – that I would become a good assistant by becoming totally one with them in everything.

So when I saw that Angelo, the youngest, was almost lost in the crowd, I went to him and together we offered the Baby Jesus to the people passing by. (...) The last surprise I had was during Mass that day. I thought that the little ones wouldn't listen, and instead, not only were they very silent, but also paid attention to the whole Mass! (...)



February 26 – ninth meeting

(...) Diego, a new boy, who is four years old, joined us. I tried to help him feel at home with the other Gen 4, and so when they had to build the cube of love (...), I went over to him and said I could build it with him. He felt important doing it with me, and started right away. When it was time to go home, he ran over to me and thanked me because today he had made a lot of friends. He mother was very happy, too, and said she will bring him to the next meeting. I really hope he comes because I am very happy when new people get to know the movement. At the end of every meeting I always think, "Thank you, Jesus, for choosing me to do this job for you!"

When my gen assistant asked me to help with the younger Gen 3, I was super-enthusiastic! There is a group of five of them who live near my house. Later, as I thought about it, I realized that if I wanted to give them the Ideal, I had to live it very well myself! The first time I had to call them for the meeting, since I didn't know the parents, I wasn't so sure of what to say! I sat there for 10 minutes trying to decide how to introduce myself! Then before making every phone call, I said an "Our Father." That meeting and all the others that followed were just great! We went over Chiara's story, and remembered how she had told the gen 3 to keep the flame always burning in their hearts. We talked about Chiara Luce, also with games, which, to tell you the truth, I totally enjoyed! Every meeting did me a lot of good, because it helped me understand new aspects of the Ideal and how much I still had to learn about the message of Jesus. Each time it's like putting a new tile in the design - I think I have about a million left to put! It wasn't always easy, because, as you know, the younger gen 3 always tell you the truth, and they realize right away if I am not really loving them.



And yet every time it's like an invitation to put myself into the Will of God and start over. An important moment was when four of them made their First Communion, which we lived all together. (...) Two came to the Gen Congress even though their parents didn't know much about the Focolare. On the phone they seemed very interested in the movement, so I asked my Gen assistant to contact them. This is just a quick summary of what our meetings are like. We really hope that we all keep growing and that there will always be Jesus in our midst!

Maria Laura

In 2012, a worldwide event will show once again that nothing can stop us from running towards our goal...



More information will follow in the next issues of your Gen 3 Magazine and in the official website: www.run4unity.net

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