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FINAL



The Final Exam





Universal Brotherhood

Universal brotherhood, universal brotherhood. (...) "Let's work to make the world one family!" Even terrorists will be won over by universal brotherhood, because the real root of terrorism is the division between rich and poor countries. I always say that material goods need to be circulated in the world, but they don't move by themselves, we have to move the **hearts** of people. (...)

We have great hope that this is possible because we have a network all over the world, in 182 countries. In each of these countries the Focolare Movement is active. Once a month, we are all connected by a worldwide telephone conference call. In the way that the people receive the news from other parts of the world and the way they respond, also with emails, shows their vitality, and the presence and power of the Movement even in Tierra del Fuego (Argentina), in Alaska or in Melbourne (Australia), even in Japan.(...)

Our network is ready, and there are many other networks of other movements, who bring a showering of other graces. So we live for "universal brotherhood," to make the world one family!



Chiara

Taken from an interview to Chiara, by Erik Hendriks of Belgium - Rocca di Papa, 24 May 2004



Theresa Girard,
15 – Boston

"I feel like some people will understand me when I say that we need to pray for the attacker in Boston. Our city will only recover from this if we realize that the person who did this was one of God's children too. No, he did not do this because he's Muslim, his uncle said that he even brought shame to their family and religion. He did this because he was broken. Our country has been united through these hard times and it's actually beautiful. They played the song Sweet Caroline (which is a song played for the Boston Red Sox during their baseball games) during a Yankees' Game (the Red Sox and Yankees are rivals) to show that they are here with us and that we are rivals, but on top of that we are one nation. And during the Bruins game everyone in the stadium started singing the Anthem with the guy singing. All of this is beautiful, don't get me wrong, and it is amazing that something like this can come from a tragedy, but it should not take a tragedy for all of us to become united because by then it's kind of too late. So, yes, pray for our country and for Boston, but more importantly pray for the broken people in this world because I feel like we often forget that they are children of God and that he loves them just as much he loves you and me."



Chiara wrote this in a letter to the Gen 3 in 1971. She told them about the final exam that each of us must take at the end of our life here on earth. And it's different from any other exam we ever had because we've already been told the questions we'll be asked on that day. So we should get ready by learning the questions and preparing ourselves in time! Here are the questions that Jesus will ask us!



The Final Exam



“**DEAR GEN,
TODAY I
NEED TO**

**TALK TO YOU ABOUT
LOVE,** and whenever I speak with you, I immediately feel I can say whatever is deep in my heart and challenge you to make a commitment to live it. That's because I feel the Gen are really with me

The book he uses is the **GOSPEL**. The teacher is the **HOLY SPIRIT** whom Jesus sent to us after he ascended into heaven. (...)

THIS SCHOOL LASTS OUR WHOLE LIFE AND WE CAN ATTEND IT FAITHFULLY OR SKIP CLASSES IF WE CHOOSE TO FOLLOW OUR OWN INTERESTS. THE GEN MOVEMENT IS LIKE AN EXPERT TUTOR that helps you to understand better every lesson. AND AT THE END THERE WILL BE A TEST.

But the **TEACHER OF LIFE IS KINDER** than any other teacher of any other school. **JESUS, WHO WILL GIVE US THE EXAM AT THE END OF OUR LIFE, HAS ALREADY GIVEN US THE QUESTIONS HE WILL ASK US.**

This is the whole point, this is the beauty: **OUR TEACHER IS LOVE! HE WANTS US TO PASS THE EXAM AND ENJOY THE NEXT LIFE** which is heaven, and therefore, **ENDLESS HAPPINESS. IF WE ARE SMART, WE WILL START IMMEDIATELY TO PREPARE OURSELVES TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OF THAT FINAL EXAM.**

Now we'll take a quick look at them, and at your convention you'll get a copy of all the questions, so you can always have them with you. You can ask another gen to help you understand them, or if something still isn't clear, you can ask your gen assistant.



Chiara

[...] and **I'M NOT AFRAID TO SPEAK CLEARLY AND TELL IT LIKE IT IS. LISTEN, GEN!**

When a young person goes to school, what do they care most about? Their books? Or their backpack? Or maybe their classes or even homework?

YES, ALL THESE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT TO SOMEONE GOING TO SCHOOL, BUT THE MOST CHALLENGING MOMENT OF THE YEAR, WITHOUT A DOUBT, IS THE TIME WHEN THE EXAMS OR TESTS ARE GIVEN.

Exams come at the end of the year, and they mark the culmination of all that you learned in school that year, and, for you, school is a duty and a task weighing heavily on your shoulders.

LIFE IS ALSO A SCHOOL In fact we have a Teacher and you know him well. **HE HAS TAUGHT YOU MANY THINGS AND HE WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLAIN TO YOU MANY MORE THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE.**



Listening

Because of allergies and some other illness, I had to go to the doctor often and usually had to wait. After 3-4 hours of waiting, you start to become irritated, nervous and don't want to talk to anyone.

One day, while I waited for my turn, an elderly lady sat down next to me. It was enough to look at her to know that shortly thereafter she would start a conversation.

I had already come up with a plan: my cell phone would ring, and I would have to get up to answer it. No, I really did not want to listen to her.

A second later, however, I changed my plan! In fact, I remembered a phrase of the Gospel: "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me." If Jesus were sitting next to me, I don't think I would have ignored him! So I started talking with the lady. Not only did I learn many things, but time went by so quickly and you won't believe it - I was surprised, too! - but, when it was my turn to see the doctor, I was sorry to leave her. **Adriana - Romania**



Visiting & Comforting

Although sometimes loving can be really difficult, once in a while it just feels natural. We Gen 3 have had this experience many times, like when we tried to live the works of mercy, VISIT THE SICK and COMFORT THE AFFLICTED, while keeping Jesus in our midst. This past year we visited a group of retired nuns and also some patients at a local Alzheimer's residence. We prepared Christmas carols and tried to make the show really lively so as to bring them happiness and also entertainment. We also shared our special talents with them, like playing the cello or violin or writing a short Christmas skit. But beyond just entertainment or performances, we tried to get to know the Sisters and the residents, played games with them and socialized. We had thought this part would be hard because they were all quite elderly, but then we realized that we enjoyed the "socializing" part the best! The residents were such a joy! They told us about their families, and the Sisters told us about when they were young and teaching kids like us. We laughed, rode their scooters with them, and became friends. It was a great experience for everyone, and we didn't want our time together to end. We can really see how the works of mercy bring joy in two ways, for both sides.

The Gen 3 boys & girls of the Chicago area (USA)

Giving Food

Alan: On February 16, 2013, the Gen 3 with some Young for Unity went to Madera, California, to volunteer at a community garden called "Inspirational Roots." We prepared the soil and planted strawberries, carrots, lettuce, and onions. Everyone met my parents, Lourdes and Artemio Herrera, who tend the community garden during the year. They explained to us how the community garden works and how it serves low-income families. When the fruit or vegetables are ready, people come and get what they need for their families. I had a lot of fun

because we all worked together, like one big family, to help the

community of Madera. This experience allowed us to put into practice the theme "A Heart in Action."

Mina: "I enjoyed my time planting"

Alex: "I enjoyed working at the garden because my planting will help the poor people."

Christopher: The weekend at Madera was great!

We had time to love concretely and learn about planting. I'm glad I helped and can't wait to see the plants fully grown.

I was looking forward to spending this weekend together with the other gen 3 for quite some time and I couldn't wait to go! This time around I was an older kid and I had the responsibility to look after the younger kids. It was a very faith-filled weekend/retreat because whenever one of us got "hurt" we would help him and care for him.

This is a great group of gen 3 guys that are willing to love everyone and make a positive impact. I am ready for the future retreats!

The Gen 3 boys - California (USA)





We really had quite a surprise on December 23, when Emmaus called us to say, "I'm coming over to see you!" Teresa of Catania reports: "I was racing down the corridor at the Mariapolis Center when I saw Emmaus, smiling, heading for the hall where we would have our meeting. It was a major event, because she was there to greet us, and to thank us simply for our being there! The opportunity to meet her was a surprise for everyone!"

This is what she told us:

Emmaus: You say that I am a Christmas gift for you, but I feel that YOU are a Christmas gift for me and for the entire Movement! The whole movement looks over you with love, and you can see that because here are the first men and women focolarini, the Gen assistants, the members of the Center of the Movement.

The Work of Mary wants to take special care of the branch of the Gen 3 boys and girls, as well as the Young for Unity Movement, which includes all those teenagers who look out on this dark and problematic world with all its difficulties. You are familiar with difficulties. Maybe even in your own families there are financial problems or difficulties in relationships... You feel the burden of these situations, because you feel you can't do anything about them. But I think **there's a lot you can do, by spreading love every-**

where, to everyone, not only to your schoolmates or friends and other boys and girls, but also to your mom and dad, who perhaps don't get along anymore because their problems have made them harsh with each other, or they're worried because they don't know how to pay for your school and they want you to have a good education. And your teachers too because they no longer know how to convey good values to you. So there's a lot you can do for everyone, because **you are part of the whole Movement.**

I want to emphasize this and tell you that this was precisely the reason I wanted to come and see you! I was thinking: I went to see the men and women focolarini, and the Gen 2 will be coming, and I will see them. But what about the Gen 3? Aren't they part of the Movement?





I also wanted you to know that the project: "Global-Person" which means to be a person with global-awareness, is certainly yours, since you are developing it, but you are the Movement, and so the project is ours too, not just yours, and we will develop it together. **You should feel that you are really one body with the whole Movement. You are not alone, and you need to tell us when you have any problems. Ask for help when you need it! And know that the whole movement is behind you, like one body. (...)**

And then, I urge you to have real, concrete love for the poor, for everyone. The culture of giving should be open to all. Bishop Acácio from Brazil always used to tell this story:

One day Jesus said to a family, "If you want, I will come to dinner with you tonight." They immediately prepared a beautiful table and in a spirit of love they waited for him. Meanwhile, a poor man knocked on the door and asked, "Do you have anything to eat?" "We have everything set aside for Jesus," they said, "but we can give you the dessert." A little later someone else knocked, and they gave away another part of the dinner. Poor people kept knocking and they kept giving, until nothing was left on the table except the tablecloth. When Jesus arrived they said, "We are so sorry, but there's nothing left to eat!"

Jesus replied, "But I came here to thank you!"

So let's continue having a big heart open to everyone, and not be preoccupied with our own needs. The more our hearts are open, the more we will build the rainbow units, and the more we will bring about true unity.

I wish you a most blessed Christmas, full of joy, light and love for you, your families, and everyone you love. And since you love everyone, may this wish include everyone!



Summas



Teens4Unity Club
of Houston @
Café con Leche
School



Mission Trip 2013

This past March the Teens4Unity Club went on its **second Mission Trip during spring break to Santo Domingo to work at Café con Leche School**, one of the GIVING PROJECTS, in a poor neighborhood. 15 of us went: twelve students, two alumnae, one teacher and our school principal. Even though there were great expectations for these days and we had been fundraising and preparing the trip for more than a year, the whole experience was much more than what any of the participants expected!

All the students who went on the trip are active members of the Teens4Unity Club and are committed to living the Golden Rule. Being out of their comfort zone, they found themselves more than ever **in a position of self-giving, and that filled them with deep joy and happiness.** It was great to see

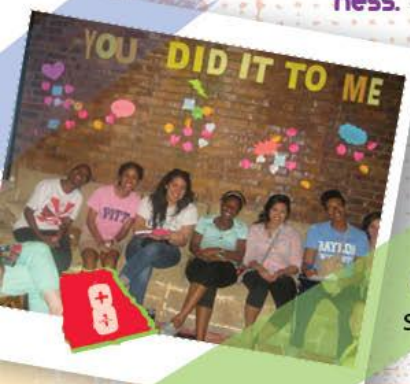
that everyone lived the same way whether working at the school or eating meals together, doing dishes, sharing bedrooms,

or playing volleyball – it was the same love that circulated!

We got inspiration and strength from daily Mass, readings and meditations, and moments of sharing.

Kaitlin later wrote: **"The deepest experience of this trip was my spiritual growth. Going to church every day and asking God for help made life a lot lighter and happier!"**

We knew that all the children came from situations of extreme poverty and many of them suffer the consequences of violence in their



homes or neighborhoods. Kay, one of the girls commented: **"Seeing the area around the school was hard, and yet inspiring. It was strong for me to realize that the same kids I was working with -full of joy and energy- lived in the concrete houses I could see from the balcony of the school."**

Every day, the Mission Trippers left early for a full day of school to bring all their love to their new friends! **They were teaching and directing workshops, serving lunch, washing cups and playing with the kids.** Even though it was not always easy they found the way to get through the challenges. This is how Natalie later described this: **"I felt that acts of love were more easily understood than my awkward Spanish. Love helped me communicate with the kids through my actions."** Katherine added: **"Love helped me to move past the language barrier so that I would be able to give my efforts fully to the kids. I realized that all that I needed to do was to be present."**

The most difficult part of the trip was leaving, but everyone felt so lucky and grateful for the experience. Mariam told us: **"It**

made me think: will complaining do anything? You should think about other people!" Cindy said: **"The children taught me more about loving than I would have ever learned if I hadn't come on this trip. It's so easy to take things for granted when you have everything, but seeing how happy these kids are with so little makes me grateful for everything that I have."**

Teens 4 Unity from Houston, Texas (USA)





“Out of the BOX” Adventure

Three hundred young people from all over the Philippines chose to spend their summer vacation exploring life outside their own personal “boxes!” The Youth Camp from April 4-7, had participants from 12 major cities who all gathered in Tagaytay City

for a different kind of adventure. As they left the comfort of their hometowns and distanced themselves from technology, they braved the challenges of facing diversity and opted to be in touch with nature, while making new friendships from across the islands. With the theme “The other, another me,” they were exposed to four full days of discovering what it means to live in unity by putting love into practice.

During the “Let’s Color Our City” activity, the young campers visited various social institutions like orphanages and a local prison. They also went to remote villages around the city of Tagaytay, where they planted about a hundred trees in cooperation with local village leaders. The whole exercise

was a concretization of the very theme of the Youth Camp, especially in living the Gospel phrase, “Whatever you do to the least of My brothers, you do it to me” (Mt. 25:40).

This project left an indelible mark on the campers. For example, after one of them served some of the people with cerebral palsy at the San Rafael Hospital for the Disabled, he said, “I understood how much I take for granted the privileges and gifts I have received.” After spending a few hours with the orphaned children who live with the Augustinian Sisters, a camper commented: “In the short time I spent with these children, I felt that I had become a father to a child who has no parents”.

At the Tagaytay City Jail, those who visited the prisoners were very touched by the testimonies of the inmates who are striving to pick up their broken lives - they even advised the campers to lead a moral life and avoid major mistakes, so as not to end up in jail and destroy other people’s lives. Workshops were provided as campers engaged in arts, theatre, dancing, music, journalism and sports. Beautiful experiences were also



shared like one family in which the mother is very sick, and the father and one daughter try to face all the difficulties with great love, using the art of loving to keep the unity of the family strong. The girl said she feels that hard times act like filters to bring a stronger and deeper bond of love to the family.

An Amazing Race also took place during the camp. Actually, it was a race to test the unity and teamwork of the 15 groups as they played various games. The most challenging was the mudslide which proved to be a great lesson in trust and courage, and also the obstacle course which was a real test in perseverance.

The last day was dedicated to prayer, reflection, and to the sacrament of confession. It was a **moment to reflect on the four-day camp**, as well as to integrate all the learning experiences of those meaningful and adventurous days. It's always hard to say goodbye to one another but everyone left with the desire to color the dark corners of their own cities. Facebook was full of pictures, stories, and experiences to describe **"the most unforgettable summer of our lives!"** Now, 300 young Filipinos will transfer the experience of unity lived at the Youth Camp to their own homes and cities.

GEN 3 WEEKEND IN OHIO

"THE OTHER, ANOTHER ME!" was the title of the Gen 3 Girls Weekend in Columbus, Ohio on April 19-20. Through experiences, songs and a "Gen-pardy" game on the Works of Mercy, we learned more about the theme of love of neighbor ... and right away, we got the chance to put it into practice by cooking, cleaning and even decorating the house. Outside we played capture the flag, one of our favorite games, three times! There too, we were all working together, and it was so much fun! We finished the weekend by watching a beautiful video of the story of Chiara, "the very first Gen," who reminded us about loving our neighbor and about God who always gives back. At the very end no one wanted to leave, because we felt that we had grown so close to one another in a strong unity. We can't wait till next time!

- The Gen 3 Girls from Columbus, Ohio (USA)

LET'S LEARN A NEW SONG TOGETHER

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

WATCH IT & SING
ALONG!

<http://youtu.be/4uOxnfu5DYQ>



When you go searching for your neighbor,
look around you and you'll see he's standing near
you.
It may be that he's not kind or even pleasant -
doesn't matter, you should never disappoint him.

Give love to every neighbor! Serve him as yourself
and the love that you will show him will be
yours! Give love to every neighbor
sharing without measure
and the love that you have given will remain.

Does it happen that you never get invited?
Others seem to just ignore you — don't be worried!
Keep on loving every person, it is Jesus
and you'll see,
there'll come a time when they will change!

Give love to every neighbor! ...

Don't give up! And don't make up excuses!
Give to everyone around you & it's your neighbor.
Give by loving every person, and be patient!
It's the secret! And you'll see that you'll be happy!

Give love to every neighbor! ...

In the end these will be the questions:
"Have you given food to all those who are hungry?"
Then He'll ask you if you've given consolation
and remembered to be loving in each moment.
Give love to every neighbor! ...

Song & Lyrics: Nick Cianfarani/Valerio Cipri

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