

July & August 2011

7

8

Vol. 33

REN3



A Pact Forever

My name is Carol and I live in a city called Maracacume' in Brazil, about 185 miles from the nearest Focolare Center.

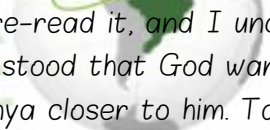
I try to live the Ideal with my parents and my brothers who are Gen 4. When I got home after a Gen 3 Congress, I decided to organize a meeting to share with my friends how I try to live as a Gen.

So one Saturday, three of them came over to my house – one of them, Tanya, had already heard about the Focolare. Together, we read the Word of Life and saw a video on Chiara Luce. Her story touched our

hearts – we promised each other that we, too, wanted to become saints together.

You won't believe it but that same night, Tanya got very sick and only a few days later, on her way to the hospital, she died. It was really tough! We hardly even had the time to say goodbye! That's when I remembered the Word of Life: **"Not what I want, Lord, but what you want."**

In her commentary, Chiara explained that we need to know how to interpret everything that happens to us as the will of God, who loves us, or as something *allowed* by God, who always loves us in everything that happens to us. I read and



re-read it, and I understood that God wanted Tanya closer to him. Tanya had believed in His love – in fact, in those few days before she died, she kept telling her mom about the **pact she had made with us to become saints**. Three of us had started, and now there are already 14 of us girls living for a united world! This growth in less than two months is surely a fruit of Tanya's offering and of our love for Jesus Forsaken, whom we embraced with all our hearts, believing in the love of God.



Throw the anchor

on the right side!



Many times we are caught up in everyday activities and we don't always manage to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit who is trying to tell us what is God's will for us in that moment. What can we do? How can we throw our anchor on the right side - together with the "Springwill" Anchor, which is underwater and holds us down in the extraordinary depths of union with God. Chiara gives us the answer when she responds to a Gen 3 in Loppiano.



Many times i find it hard to understand God's will because i have to choose among various things. Even though i'm trying to live the present moment, it's hard to choose. What would you do?

This is the same problem we focolarine had when we were your age. We were living the present moment, which is the only thing we had, and many times we didn't understand what was the best thing to do. And so every time we would make a pact with Jesus and tell him: "I am going to thrown myself on this side. If it's not the right thing to do, throw me back on the other side."

By doing this, we gradually understood, moment by moment, what the will of God really was for us.

We listened to that inner voice, which everyone has, and we understood his will. And so throw yourself on one side or the other, as long as it's not something bad. If it's something good, or if it's something neither bad nor good, just indifferent, then throw yourself on one side and tell Jesus, like we did: "If I'm going the wrong way, throw me to the other side."

The Lord is not complicated, he's very simple and direct with us!

Chiara





operation Riiing!!

PART THREE

Students should thirst for wisdom more than for knowledge. They know that the "truth" can be found in Christ who said, "I am the Truth."

You probably all know that Chiara wrote a "DECALOGUE" for us, like the Ten Commandments for youth. It helps us to go to school carrying the Ideal and not just our books! Let's take the first two points and see how the Gen 3 from various zones worked together to explain them in their own words. The Gen 3 then added their own experiences as a way to help one another and make themselves one with Gen from other countries. All this will help us to live our Gen life more fully at school.

WISDOM is the gift from the Holy Spirit that helps us to see every minute of our life "with God's eyes," and not let ourselves be influenced by the events and sufferings of this world.

It's a grace that raises our human reasoning to something greater, something that will not die, but which is eternal, incorruptible and unchangeable.

Wisdom helps us to discern the truth in everyday occurrences - and the truth is Christ.

But wisdom isn't just a flash of understanding that lasts only a moment and then goes away. It's the goal of every Christian student who is in love with the truth.

Wisdom is a step above knowledge, which it uses as a launching pad to reach God.

KNOWLEDGE encompasses everything in the world around us that we can perceive with our senses, sometimes in a confused way. Wisdom helps us to find the crystal-clear "truth" underlying all of the concrete realities we are discovering everyday in the subjects we study at school, in which the truth is sometimes disguised or mutilated.

Everyone looks for truth and once it's found, no one can deny it. Even our classmates who say they don't believe in God are sensitive to values like peace, freedom, and joy, which are part of "truth," but they don't realize it. As Christians we find these values in God, while our friends who are nonbelievers don't know the true source.

That's why we Gen 3 - more than others - have the responsibility to **ask the Holy Spirit, our protector, for the gift of the Wisdom**, so that we can always discern the truth in every culture, philosophy or ideology, and also have the courage to always choose and defend the truth.

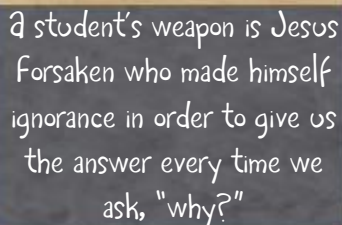
FROM THE GEN 3 OF TURIN:



Lucky me!

For about a week, I was constantly arguing with my parents! It seemed like our house was a battlefield, because we were taking shots at each other over every single thing, and in particular, my grades at school. I'm one of those kids who studies just enough to get by. I like to go out and have fun every day after school, while my parents want me to do my homework.

Finally my parents grounded me. Since I had no other choice, I opened up my books and I actually learned something! About that time, a friend told me that his parents were always out of the house, so he could easily play on the computer, watch TV and never do any homework. "Lucky you!" I told him.



A student's weapon is Jesus
Forsaken who made himself
ignorance in order to give us
the answer every time we
ask, "why?"

FROM THE GEN FROM LITHUANIA AND MILAN:

Even when we're at school we can entrust ourselves to **JESUS FORSAKEN** who made himself human like us, and took upon himself all our questions.

Because he is God, he has the answers to all our "whys." Jesus came down to our level and understands our doubts and our difficulties.

We have to take advantage of every chance God gives and always recognize Jesus Forsaken in our neighbors and in their difficulties.

WEAPON: Chiara uses this word that usually has a negative connotation to describe a real revolution, a revolution of love! And to start a revolution we need artillery!! Jesus Forsaken is the best weapon we could ever have for our revolution!

That same day, our teacher gives us a pop quiz. I passed while my friend failed miserably.

On my way home, I started thinking and I understood that my parents didn't want to punish me, but rather encourage me to study. What they tell me might seem ridiculous at the time, but now I realize that often it's something that will benefit me in the future. When I got home my mom was in the kitchen getting our dinner ready. I gave her a big hug, and right away we started talking. It was my way to say, "Thank you!"

Luca from Italy

Even before studies

My dad doesn't live with us and my mom sells small things at the local market to support us. Since I was little, I learned to work to make a living. Until two years ago, my tuition was paid for by a donation, but when that finished, I had to go live with my brother who helped pay for me. However, I soon realized that he had become part of a sect, and he wouldn't let me go to catechism classes in preparation for my confirmation. One day he asked me to choose - he would pay my tuition only if I entered the sect he was part of. I was totally shocked! Was this my brother speaking?! I tried to keep on loving him, but nothing changed and the moment came when he stopped paying for my school. So I went back to live



with my mom, and dropped out of school. A few days later, one of the gen invited me to a Gen school. I hadn't been to a Gen meeting in at least two years and when I heard about Chiara Luce and how much she had suffered, I got the courage to love Jesus Forsaken in not being able to attend school. I asked Chiara and Chiara Luce to help me do the will of God always, like they did, without being concerned about anything else.

Chizoba Ede from Nigeria

There was no doubt that Pope John Paul II loved young people. We realized that even better on the morning of June 2, 1992 when a group of us, Gen 3, met him at the Vatican. In view of the Supercongress that would have been held only 10 days later, the Pope had invited us to meet him so that he could record a message for the Gen 3 and the Young for Unity from all over the world. We were so excited when we went through the huge doors of the Vatican, up the stairs and through all the checkpoints to finally reach a beautiful hall, where we sat down on the carpet and started to rehearse what we would say.



John Paul II and us

Then a Bishop announced, "The Holy Father has left his apartment and is on his way to meet you!" We started to sing the Supercongress theme song with all our hearts as cameras began flashing, and John Paul II entered the room. We immediately felt he was one of us! During the whole meeting, he was like a Gen 3! He answered our questions and

clarified any doubts we had, and also told us about his trips, his thoughts and what it was like when he was growing up. He also spoke about the new evangelization and the path towards a united world. He encouraged us to continue with courage in living for a more united world, using all the talents we have as young people.

Nineteen years have passed since that meeting and now John Paul II has been beatified. On May 1, 2011, many of us were in St. Peter's Square and experienced the same excitement when a huge curtain was removed, revealing the photo of John Paul II exactly as we saw him when we were Gen 3. What a great friend and guide we have in heaven!



Hi everyone!

How was everyone's summer? We hope you had a nice relaxing vacation! Now that we're at the start of a new school year, we wanted to pass on some news from Teens 4 Unity from all around the world. Read, enjoy -- and get inspired!



Best words 4 Teens!



Athlete:

Day after day, for hours and hours, athletes train by repeating their routines over and over without ever giving up. We should do the same. When? In the present moment. Loving always, without ever stopping!

Training:

We train so that we never give up! We must bring ahead our revolution of love every day. Let's train, then, without losing precious minutes!

Champions:

We become champions of unity by making ourselves one with every neighbor we meet during the day.

We give the microphone to . . .

Ciao!

We are the Young for Unity from Incarnate Word Academy in Houston, Texas. All 30 of us and our two teachers meet every week to discuss issues and talk about how we can become better people, in the hopes that we can inspire others with our lives! We want to tell everyone about universal brotherhood. We learn about the art of loving – love everyone, make yourself one, love your enemy, and so on -- by rolling the Cube of Love, and we try to put it into practice. When we meet, we tell each other how it went.

Houston - Texas

One of the girls, for example, shared how during a volleyball game, she continued to love and not answer back, despite being taunted by the opposing team. During the summer, we try and visit the “gray areas of our city” to color them with our concrete love. Last year, we went further than our own city and ten of us visited the Dominican Republic, to help



8

NEWS

from around the world



From Ambatondrazaka, Madagascar

“Taking part in this school was a really special gift because I learned so many things that will help me in life. I was especially touched by the

talk on the will of God and the story of many saints.” These are the words of William, one of the 20 Young for Unity who participated in the school of formation held in northeastern Mada-

gascar. A wonderful contribution to this school was the help of some of the older youth who took care of many of the practical tasks, like cooking and organizing the program. It was really a

the Schoolmates project at the *Café y Leche* (meaning “coffee and milk” in Spanish) School.”

We had an incredible experience preparing English lessons and doing hands-on activities for the children. So much so that on our return, we looked at the world around us with new eyes and we were more grateful for what we have. We learned a lot from the children at the school, most importantly that happiness can't be bought! The children at *Café y Leche* School come from poor families, but by living the art of loving, they are happy and they give others everything they have.

We also have fundraisers in Houston to help those suffering from natural disasters. For example, every year we sponsor a



Talent Show that is open to kids from different schools. We also prepare a number ourselves, something with a message, like a dance called “Color Our City with Love,” which we also performed for

the Cardinal of Houston, or the dance

entitled, “Light in the Darkness,” which speaks about God who is Love. This year our theme is “going toward the sun,” on our own particular “ray.” And we want to tell everyone about Chiara Luce.

We were recently surprised when we were awarded two prizes at the national level! In fact, last year, we received an award at the Catholic Basilica in Washington, DC, for our work to help others.

9

NEWS

celebration! These special days helped the Young for Unity rediscover the beauty of doing God's will in all that He asks of us. Tiavina had this to say: “I'll share with

you an experience: when they asked us to clean the hall, I immediately understood I had to love. Along with other kids, we cleaned it, and I felt great joy.”



A Special Vacation

Unity: Stairway to heaven, Los Angeles, CA

June 18th to 24th

On June 18th, 16 Gen 3 boys from different parts of California gathered for 9:30 a.m. Mass at Visitation Parish near the Focolare. It was the start of 6 days of formation in the Gen life and many fun activities!

A nearby park was the next stop after Mass. There we took time out for a picnic lunch and a mini-session listening to the story of how Chiara and her friends started to live the gospel and how they understood they were called to live for unity. Then we formed two teams and played soccer. We got up very early the next morning and by 7:00 we were already on the road east toward the San Bernardino mountains. As we got close to a small city, we stopped at Mary's Mercy Center, a soup kitchen that serves the local community. We offered our day to serve the needy.

We packaged food, served lunch to the homeless and cleaned the surrounding garden of the Center. Everyone worked hard to give of themselves and help in every way they could. Whether it was bagging rice or bringing juice to the table, the Gen were happy to be able to love in concrete ways the neighbor they had in



front of them. Nathaniel described one of his tasks: "At Mary's Mercy Center I wiped the dirty cans as a way to love God."

At 3:00 we hopped in the vans and headed 5000 feet up the mountains to Lake Arrowhead. It was a splendid ride that took us along curvy roads around the mountains. 45 minutes later we arrived.

The days that followed were filled with a variety of activities, from playing to praying, cooking to cleaning. It was our house for a few days so we had to cook every meal. We divided into three teams, each of which would handle a meal and clean up. This retreat had something to offer to each one when it came to being in the kitchen: learning how to make toast, turn on the oven, grill burgers or make lemonade. Each moment was a chance to learn something new while doing an act of love for the others.

There were times for meditation where we went into depth in the Will of God.

We had workshops, discussions, a game on the colors, and sports in a nearby field. There was time to play music, sing songs, play games and even have a talent show on the last evening.

One afternoon we visited the famous Lake Arrowhead. It was a large, calm, deep blue lake with tall evergreens and pine trees in the distant background. We had lunch and walked around the area near the water. For the afternoon, the older Gen (teenagers) had a task: to choose two of the smaller Gen and become buddies with them. This meant getting to know them better, hanging out with them, asking questions and then introducing their "buddies" to everyone else that evening. It was a novelty to see them walk around in pairs talking to each other, as many of our activities were in

groups. Each one really took interest in the other, whether they were asking the questions or answering them.

A special moment for the younger Gen 3 was when we read a letter written to them by an inmate who tries to live the Word of Life in prison. This inmate shared a piece of her life and how she is trying her best to put it together with the help of God. Her story was a great chance for the Gen to reflect on God's mercy and how he always gives us opportunities to start over again, as the *Springwill Reset* program well explains. After reading her story and sharing some thoughts on it, the Gen themselves wrote a few letters to this woman encouraging her to not give up and to keep on living the Word of Life always.

The retreat concluded with a visit to the nearby Children's Forest where the Gen learned how to plant seeds, care for the gift of nature and go on

Luis Quintero is from Chowchilla, California. He is 16 years old and in year 10 at Union High School. His newest hobby is playing the guitar which he started 3 years ago.

Someone from his church taught him to play Gospel songs. It wasn't his favorite type of music, but he went ahead just the same. He told us: "I remember once when I was little I looked up to the sky and told God that if he let me learn to play the guitar, I would teach everyone for free. And that's what I have been doing. I am a musician. I make my own music and play songs that teens like. I have often been tempted to join bands of the 'world' but I refused them all, with the help of God. Now I only listen to Christian songs. People get mad when I tell them what they are listening to and of course they don't listen. But I know God will reach them like he reached me."

Luis is a Gen 3 and lives the Gen life by listening to his teachers at school even though "school can get boring sometimes." He lives the colors such as the blue by keeping his room clean and tidying up the backyard. He is very generous, ready to help when you need it.

At our

last retreat, the older Gen 3 each became buddies with two younger Gen and Luis put a lot of effort in getting to know his two Gen. He also enjoyed sharing stories with them at the end of the day.

Luis plays soccer and football and hopes to become an automotive mechanic in the future and specialize in custom design. In his Gen unit he has the yellow.



a 3-mile guided hike.

Toward the end of our stay some of the Gen shared what they had learned and their impression of the retreat.

Nicky: "I learned about what unity is (...). When I would get mad while playing games, I tried to love the others and have good sportsmanship."

Andrew: "I learned about doing your will or God's will. You should always follow God's."

Nate: "I learned more about the colors. The game on the colors helped me understand more. I can live the red by giving to others instead of being selfish."

Andre: "I learned how to know what the will of God is. You can ask God and he will tell you."

Christopher: "Whenever I have a hard time I think about God's will and I try to love. At bedtime the others may be talking and I might prefer to go to sleep, but I let them talk for a while and then we all go to sleep."

Andre M.: "I found out that the key to unity is mutuality, having mutual respect and understanding with another person."

Mark: "We grew closer to each other through talks, sports and other activities, all while having fun."

Victor shared what he was taking home with him: "I gained motivation and a desire to pass on the Gen life to those who don't know it. I also learned how important putting all the colors in action is and what an impact it can and will have on the world."



Victor Espinoza

is a Gen 3 from the town of Madera, central California. He goes to Madera high school and will start the 10th grade this year. He plays soccer, volleyball, and



looks forward to joining the Associated Student Body at school.

He writes: "I was born and raised a Catholic, and I was fortunate enough to have started learning the church's teachings at an early age. I got through some very tough times in school because of all the knowledge and faith I had gained. I met the Focolare Movement when I was four years old, and so I grew up with the Ideal guiding me on the greater path that God has chosen. I consider myself to be fortunate that I was born in this loving environment of unity and encouragement. My hope in life has always been to find the correct path God wants for me and I want to be able to follow it without question."

Victor has been a Gen for many years. He is very generous when it comes to helping others or sharing what he has. Whenever there are tough moments in his life, you still find him loving others and smiling. He accepts those moments, trying to see the positive, and then loves in the next present moment.

12

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