

GET



OUR GREAT DISCOVERY

Vol. 32
2010

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GOD IS LOVE!



Like a blinding light, or a strike of lightning that suddenly lights up everything around it, Chiara understood that God is Love. From then on, a new life began, totally new, because, as she said, **“We have God as our Father! God who is Love!”** As we listen to Chiara’s story, each one of us can remember that particular moment when God showed us his personal love, and in this way we can renew our conviction that underlying all that happens to us is God, who loves us.

The Holy Spirit manifested Himself. I don’t remember exactly when, but His subtle light entered in and enlightened my soul on many truths of our Christian faith.

I’ll tell you about one episode. I was teaching at the time. One day when I was in the classroom, someone knocked on the door. It was a priest who had probably noticed that I went to church. He asked if he could speak to me for a moment.

He asked me if I could offer an hour of my day for his intentions.

I replied: “An hour? I’ll offer the entire day!”

Struck by such youthful generosity, he asked me to kneel down, blessed me, and told me, **“Remember that God loves you immensely!”** Those words struck my soul like a blinding light. **God loves me immensely!** God loves me immensely! I repeated it to myself and I told my friends, **“God loves you immensely! God loves us immensely!”**

From the moment on, I discovered God present everywhere with his love: in my days, during the night, in my enthusiasm, in my proposals,





in events that were joyful and comforting as well as in situations that were sad, awkward or difficult. He was always there, he was present everywhere, and he explained things to me. What did he explain? **That everything is love: all that I am and all that happens to me, all that we are and all that happens to us, that I am his daughter and he is my Father**, that nothing escapes his love, not even my mistakes because he permits them, that his love envelops all Christians like us, that it embraces the Church, the world, and the entire universe.

He opened my eyes to see everything and everyone as expressions of his love. The conversion had come about.

The “novelty” brought by Jesus flashed brightly through my mind: **I know who God is! God is Love, God is Love.**

We knew it, we were convinced of it in the depths of our hearts. Everything in our life changed. **We always had a smile on our faces, even in the painful situations of the war,**

even the separations, even in the bombardments, even when we were close to death – everything, everything is an expression of the love of God. And he put into our hearts this very new faith in his Love, as if it were a seed planted in the ground.

This is our great, enormous discovery. However, the world around us doesn’t know it. I shared this news with as many people as I could – with my

mother, my father, my sisters, my brother, my friends.

We believed in love. This was our new life. For this reason we had the desire, that if we were to die in the war, we would be buried in just one tomb and, instead of our names, just the words, “We have believed in love.”

Chiara

(Chiara to the Bishops, February 1979)



In the last issue of the Gen magazine (Nov-Dec 2009), we learned from Graziella, Chiara's companion who embodied the "orange," some ideas on how to live this aspect of our revolution. We continue with more pointers from Graziella.

From Jesus to Jesus

"Chiara said that when we feel a difference between what we *are* and our desire to *be* love, the important thing is to continue loving as Jesus would have done in our place, and then approach our neighbor so as to build a relationship of Jesus (in me) to Jesus (in that person). This is the secret: He—

not a saint, but the Saint of saints—will be among us, and

everything will be accomplished! So it's not about establishing relationships based on human friendship, but building

supernatural relationships, treating everyone as if we were meeting Jesus in them. Even though we might speak to crowds about the Ideal, the basis of our whole life has to be the relationship of love we have with each and every person we meet. It's true that we love

everyone, but to do so, we have to love one person at a time, as if he or she were the only person to be loved on earth, without thinking about anyone else while we are loving that one person in front of us. We can't do two things at once. And plus it's not even productive! We can't

keep thinking about the person we aren't with anymore, because we won't be able to love others for God. Just think, we too were won over like that, by being loved one at a time. Chiara didn't win us over as a crowd!"



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The cluster

"I remember that as soon as I changed my lifestyle and started living the Ideal, Chiara immediately entrusted me with a small group of people. She didn't worry about whether I was too small, she knew the Ideal had invaded my soul, and she immediately wanted to make good use of this treasure. You, too, have this treasure in your heart. You can't keep it for yourself, it has to be given away. It's logical then that you will have many people entrusted to you in your 'cluster.' This is the point: either we are apostles (and we become so as soon as we meet the Ideal and feel we have to give it to others), or we are not Christians. It's like when a fire burns – it reaches everything around it. None of the people who have embarked on this holy journey can have the luxury of being a simple railroad car in the train—we all have to be locomotives! No one should pass by us in vain."



One Question

How can we have the courage and fire of the early times?

“During the early times, we weren’t afraid to speak. Instead, we were afraid of *not* giving to others what God had given us. Because of the war, we could have died from one moment to the next, so we felt we had to share this great treasure that heaven had given us... And we were in a hurry to give it to others! It was the charisma that was pushing us. The same charisma is present today, too, and it’s even greater in a certain sense, because we have the experience of many years. Let’s not worry about talking or not talking. Let’s be concerned with *loving* and with listening to the voice of God within us. Only in this way will we know when to shout from the rooftops and when to remain silent.”

THE GEN TACTIC - CHIARA TO THE GEN

Have we found the precious pearl? Have we chosen what gives meaning to and transforms our life?

Let’s thank the Lord and let’s ardently ask him before the tabernacle or in the depths of our heart to make us true apostles of his Ideal.

Then, let put actions before words, which means to love. Let’s look around us and see Jesus in every neighbor. Let’s love each one.

Are they suffering? Suffer with them. Are they happy? Then be happy with them. Do they have worries? Let’s gently console them.

Are they burdened? Let’s share it with them. So they want to play? Play with them. Do they like music? Then you, too, should like it. Do they want to go for a walk? Accompany them. Do they need to study? Help them. Does your mom need some help? Be at her side. Does your little brother need to be watched? Then you should become his guardian angel.

In other words, let’s love always, even when it costs us most, making ourselves one with everyone in everything, except in things that are evil, which we always must avoid. Make yourself one with the others: that is the “Gen tactic.” Then love will melt people’s hearts and they’ll ask why we act like this. That will be the moment to speak and our words will be understood because the others will have seen how we live. And they will follow us. Soon enough, Jesus will be there where two or more of us are united... and we’ll let him take over. He is the Almighty, and he will cause a blaze!



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Invading the world with:

We know that the Orange coincides with the Focolare Movement’s goal of bringing about Jesus’ prayer, “Father, may they all be one.” But how can we accomplish this?

- 1st: Building unity** in the Catholic Church, and with other movements within the Church
- 2nd: Strengthening relationships** with Christians of different churches
- 3rd: Dialoguing with the faithful** of other religions by living the Golden Rule
- 4th: Dialoguing with people** who, like us, believe in the values of social justice, freedom and solidarity, and who do not profess a religious belief
- 5th: Dialoguing with modern culture** so as to bring the wisdom of God to the various sectors of life

These are the five steps that Chiara indicated in the General Statutes of the Work of Mary. By following them, we will be able to dialogue with every person in the world at 360°!

360° Dialogue

Many people take so much care of their body that they even overdo it. It almost becomes an object of worship. At the same time there are others who mistreat their body so much that they risk losing their life. The media and advertisements often take advantage of this and reduce the body to an object for consumerism. *But what is the true value of our body?* For us Christians, it is a gift of God and as such should be safeguarded. The green in our Rainbow Revolution is the aspect of love that nourishes and heals our physical body, and also the wider body, which is the Church formed by all Christians together. *This Body is healthy if life circulates, if mutual love binds all the members among themselves and with their Head who is Christ.* Aletta will tell us about the green, and in fact she is the one that Chiara saw as the living example of this particular aspect.

An extraordinary life

Life is really a great opportunity. It's a unique chance (one that we shouldn't lose) to accomplish something great and beautiful and holy.

How? (...) Jesus said of himself, "I am the Life" (John

14:6). Jesus was speaking about the supernatural Life which he came of earth to share with us. It's an extraordinary life that doesn't die, that lasts forever. And with that Life we can transform our earthly life into something wonderful, divine and great. (...) To take good advantage of this life that we have, we have to live it in such a way that we insert *our* life into this supernatural Life which is Jesus himself.



Aletta

One day in 1947 Chiara told Victoria, who she then re-named "Aletta," to come and live with her. She said, "I need you to be here all day long." "And so," Aletta said, "I started to prepare the meals. Before I came, Chiara used to do it, but she was giving the Ideal to everyone, and winning over many people, and there was a procession of people coming in and out of that little house. So seeing all these people, many of them poor, she told me, "You take my place in the kitchen." So I started cooking, but it wasn't as if I was in the kitchen and Chiara was giving the Ideal to the people – we did everything together! It wasn't like being a cook, it was living for God! This is what life was like with Chiara – it was so simple, but also extraordinary! Chiara helped us to fall in love with God."

The Green *Love that makes the family*

Gen 3 Formula

- * So that our body can be useful to us in loving God and loving our neighbor, the Gen 3 boys and girls take care of their health by eating good meals, practicing good hygiene, participating in sports, playing games, and resting enough.
- * They also learn to cook so that they can serve others, and how to take care of the sick so they can do it if needed, as an expression of love.
- * They respect their body as the temple of God and they are committed to living in purity, showing many other young people to discover the beauty of living purity.
- * If they are sick they offer their suffering, seeing the face of Jesus Forsaken in it.
- * If they are faced with death, they see it as their most beautiful meeting with Jesus.
- * They feel that the bond of love continues to be alive with all those who have left for heaven.
- * They see the imprint of the love of God in nature and they are committed to respect and safeguard it.
- * When possible, they spend vacation time together, or other moments of relaxation with Jesus in their midst.

Chiara

How did the green come about?

Aletta told us the story. She said, "In 1954 there were only a few focolarini and we were only present in Italy. We were all young and full of zeal in spreading this Ideal. We gave of ourselves without counting the cost, undaunted by anything, whether it was travelling all night by train, skipping meals...after all, we were out to conquer the world!"

"One day Chiara told me: 'I'm worried about the focolarini...Are they eating properly? Do they get enough sleep? Who looks after them when they get sick?' And so she sent me to visit all the focolare centers that existed then, telling me to go and see how they were. I was already on the train going to Milan when I



asked myself, 'But what am I going to say to the focolarini? Chiara didn't even give me a letter full of her wisdom for me to take!' Then suddenly I understood what I had to do. I had to go to the focolarini only to take this love of a mother, this concrete and human love shown by Chiara... So I told everyone that spreading the ideal and taking care of our health are both expressions of God's will. It would be very bad if we got sick because we didn't take care of ourselves! It would be our own fault and so it might mean, in that case, that being sick was not the will of God, because it's his will that we respect our health and our life. It could happen that we get worn out because we put so much effort into loving, but this is our life. St. John says: 'Those who don't love are dead.' And we can rightly say, 'Those who love remain in life.' Therefore, the life that comes from true love, which means giving our lives for our neighbors, is our true health, it's the 'green.'"

Concrete love

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are also part of the green and teach us to love our neighbor by giving them something to eat or drink, or giving some advice, or teaching them something, or visiting the sick... Another aspect of living the green together with your gen unit is to visit the elderly, for example, or to work on some project to safeguard nature, and since you do it together, you have Jesus in the midst to give to others.

At the beginning of the green

"The movement was growing, the focolare centers were multiplying. And in this new life sweeping through Italy, Chiara was like the ship's bow, forging the way ahead amidst the surging waves of the difficulties which a rapidly growing movement might expect to encounter, especially in the beginning.

These circumstances, together with the typically painful trials permitted by God for those called to a particular task, meant that Chiara went through a period of physical exhaustion and affliction and at times we felt that death was close at hand and that she was soon to leave us for heaven. She often repeated these words which none of us understood, 'I'm going to the One whom I know.' Chiara thought she was going to heaven to see Jesus.

I would spend the nights sitting by her bedside. One night, my suffering at the thought of losing Chiara was so intense it seemed impossible to bear. I told Jesus: 'You have given us Chiara, but she doesn't have another Chiara (she only has you, Jesus Forsaken). If I really want to live this Ideal, I have to live like her and have only Jesus forsaken.' And with all my strength I managed to say my yes.

At that moment I felt someone telling me from within: 'Why don't you ask me for that grace?' I believe it was Our Lady. I ran out of the room, and saw Natalia in the hall. I told her, 'If we pray, Chiara will get well. All we have to do is ask for this grace.' And Natalia looked at me as if to say, 'Of course, let's do it!' So I prayed all night long. I was so convinced we would obtain the grace that I no longer felt burdened or sad.

This happened on January 25, 1954. In the morning I told Chiara, 'I'm sure you're not going to die because Our Lady doesn't want you to.' She gave me a beautiful smile, but said nothing. After receiving Holy Communion, as she did every morning, Chiara called all of us who were in the house and said, 'I want to tell you something: I will remain with you.' Then she wrote a letter to all the focolarini starting with a phrase from the liturgy of those days: 'I will not die, but I shall live to narrate the works of the Lord!' (Ps 118:17). And then she also said, 'I feel I have come back to you, and my coming back has only one aim: to live in order to love you!

That's why Jesus wants me to stay here on earth. If you only knew what this means! On the threshold of the next life you feel that only Love counts, infinite Love! ...

This was the moment the green was born. Chiara generated it with her life."

Jesus in the midst and Jesus in the Eucharist

“Another time when I asked Chiara for a definition of the green, she answered, ‘It’s the health of the Mystical Body of Christ.’ And then she explained that the Mystical Body is made up of all Christians bound together by the love among them and bound to Christ who is their Head. If even one member is not healthy, then the whole body feels it, and instead if one part is healthy, the whole body benefits. The health of the Mystical Body is the mutual love that binds together its members, making us, like the first Christians, one heart and one soul. We nourish the health of the Mystical Body if we have Jesus in our midst, which is the knot that holds us together, and if we nourish ourselves with Jesus in the Eucharist, which is food for every member of this Body.”



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Suffering and illness

“When I got a serious illness in my lungs, I immediately thought to myself: ‘Before this I loved as a healthy person, now I will live the Ideal as a sick person.’ This sickness was my Jesus Forsaken to be loved. It was the coin that made me feel rich because I could offer it to pay for whatever was needed in the Movement. For many years I had to be isolated from everyone, passing the days just resting, without being able to do anything. You might think that was very monotonous, and instead I felt those days were full! I was living in the will of God and therefore I was ‘alive,’ not sick, and in fact I was even in the front lines with Chiara to bring ahead the Ideal. That’s how it was for several years. Then when I was still convalescing, I went back to live in a focolare close to Chiara, and every night, until very late, we would all be together with Chiara and she would speak to us words of wisdom and light – it was very beautiful! But it was the will of God for me to go to bed at 10:00 and so I had to leave that ‘heaven’ to go to sleep in the other house. I remember that one night I was walking along with my pillow under my arm, and I asked Jesus: ‘Jesus, please explain to me this situation. Chiara gave me a task which is the green, and what am I doing to bring it ahead? I’m not doing anything, I’m just like an old rag that’s useless.’ And then a voice from within gave me a very clear answer: ‘What are you talking about? A plan of God cannot be preached, it is not ‘brought ahead,’ it has to be *generated*.’ And what does that mean? It means that you give life to it through suffering, just like mothers bring children into this life through the pains of the birth. We have to do the same with every person that God entrusts to us, you have to do with the other Gen 3, and the Gen 4. Chiara told us: ‘It’s useless to kid yourself. There’s one indispensable condition to bring about something good in the spiritual life, and it’s to die like the grain of wheat. And yet, there is a wonderful result: it bears much fruit!’ And so we gave value to all the situations that appeared to be negative, knowing that it is by suffering that one bears real fruit. And who knows how much suffering you have at home or with your friends, but that doesn’t mean that God has abandoned you. He is actually right here, next to us, bringing his life and his fruits from these sufferings.”

The humanity of Jesus

“On another occasion, Chiara told me: ‘Do you know what the green is? It’s all the humanity of Jesus, the life of Jesus as a human being!’ Then she went on to explain to me that Jesus was born of a woman, and like all of us, he felt the cold, he got hungry, he cried, he experienced human affection. He healed the sick, but he especially loved every person and sympathized with everyone’s suffering. And the thirty years he lived on this earth culminated in the suffering of his passion and death. Chiara added: ‘The thing we remember most, more than any other episode in Jesus’ physical existence, was his passion, his sacrifice on the cross.’ And suffering, death and resurrection are also expressions of the green.”



The Heavenly Mariapolis

“The Heavenly Mariapolis is the most beautiful treasure of the green. Those people who have ended their life on earth are not dead, they have only passed to another ‘room.’ What should be our relationship with them? The exact same as when they were on earth and even more! In fact charity has remained in them, the love that they had for us has remained, but it is even bigger, because now it is perfect. So we need to return their love, loving them by praying for them. This is how the relationship of mutual love continues.”

BE A FAMILY

Chiara once wrote to us: “If I were to leave the earth today and you were to ask me for a final word, I would say, ‘Be a family.’”

- ✱ Is there anyone among you who is suffering? (...) Understand them like a mother and more than a mother. (...) Surround them with the warmth of the family (...) May they be our very favorite brothers and sisters. (...)
- ✱ Share with them the fruits of your apostolic activities, so that they know that, more than anyone else, they have contributed to them.
- ✱ Are any among you approaching the final moments of their life? Imagine you are in their place and do for them what you would want done for yourself, until their very last breath.
- ✱ Is anyone among you rejoicing (...) because of a success, or for any other reason? Rejoice with them, so that their consolation may not fade and their hearts not close, so that their joy may be shared by everyone.
- ✱ Is anyone moving to another place? Don't let them leave without filling their hearts with just one inheritance – the sense of the family, so they take it with them wherever they go.

Don't ever put any activity of any kind (...) before the spirit of being a family with the brothers or sisters with whom you are living. (...)

It is a humble spirit; it wishes the best for everyone; it is not proud...to sum up, it is true, total charity.”

From *Essential Writings*, “A Legacy: Be a Family,” pg. 48

Invading the world with:

Chiara always told us that sport is very important, because it is the way to have a healthy body, able to sustain our soul in its development, thus making it more worthy to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. SportMeet, which is the inundation of the Ideal into the world of sport, considers physical activity not as an end in itself, but as an important, positive way to challenge ourselves and others. Athletes of different kinds meet with trainers, sports doctors, journalists, teachers and others in the field of sports, and work together to develop a new type of sports that will increase universal brotherhood and bring about a more united world. To know more about it go to www.sportmeet.org

SPORTMEET

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CUBA



Even in Cuba, which is an island in the Caribbean, we gen 3 boys and girls living the Ideal in several cities. You probably know that there has been an embargo on our country for many years and this has been a big burden on our economy. And yet nothing has ever stopped real love from changing things around us, as the following experiences show us.

In our parish many people come to Mass dressed inappropriately, with low-cut blouses, mini-skirts and the like. We felt that Jesus was asking us to “color” our community by helping the other girls **to discover the joy of being more like Mary, also in the way they dress.** We wanted to “preach” this not so much with words, but through our example, so that they could see in us a reflection of Mary, in every aspect. Only a short while afterwards, we saw the fruits of our efforts: girls, and also adult women, began to change their way of dressing. Some of them even decided to join us in the challenge of communicating to many others the idea of a different, but fashionable, way of dressing.

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**The gen 3 of
San Nicolas**



My classmate wasn't too prepared on the day set for our individual presentations, and when he was called on, the teacher wouldn't listen to his excuse, which was that he had been sick. He said he would give him an F – no question asked! I felt I had to do something in front of this injustice. I suddenly had a daring idea: I asked the teacher if, after finishing my presentation, I could also speak about the work my classmate had done, so that he wouldn't fail. My teacher surprised me by saying he would give my classmate whatever grade I would earn. However, he tried to trick me by constantly interrupting my presentation with difficult questions, but after half an hour, both of us got an A! My classmate was so happy and thanked me over and over, and I was happy, too, because in some way I had given my life for him.



Maroly (13 yrs old): In one of our gen meetings we talked about how to “color our city” with love. I liked it a lot because it seemed so easy to do. But where could we start? We brainstormed and one of the ideas was to go to the park next door and clean up the litter. We didn’t waste any time! We went that very day. We filled lots of bags with all kinds of things that ruined the beauty of the park. I liked this project a lot because it gave me the impression of doing something concrete to love my city and its citizens.

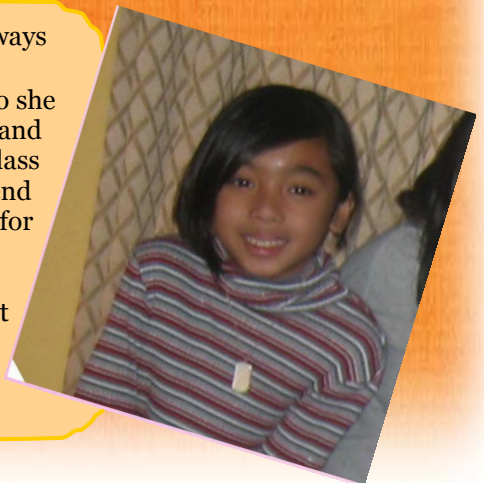
Jasmin (12 yrs old) Today at our gen meeting we talked about “giving.” It’s not so important to receive, but it’s very important to know how to give something good to others. Now when I give things, I feel good because I know that I gave it to Jesus. It also makes me think of heaven.



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We also went to a home for the elderly to visit with them and bring them only Love! They were very happy! We are trying to bring love everywhere – at home, in our families, at school with our friends – everywhere!

Chiara (10 yrs old): I don’t like to do my homework and I always do it as fast as I can. The other day my friend called me and asked if I could help her. I took as much time as necessary so she could get her work done. The next day I went to my teacher and gave her the cube of love. She was very interested and as a class we started to roll the cube every day. To my surprise at the end of the year I got the prize for the person who did something for others. Now I am very happy because even though I’m in a different class, my little brother has that teacher and he told me that they still roll the cube every day. I really like the part about “To be the first to love” because when I fight with my brother, I realize that I have to be the first to say I’m sorry.





Gen 3 live

HI FROM THE GEN 3 AND
YOUNG FOR UNITY FROM

CUBA

A double pair of... Friends!!

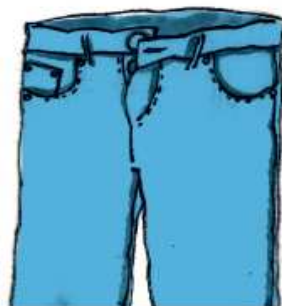
RECENTLY, WE FOUND OUT THAT ONE OF THE GEN BOYS DIDN'T HAVE PERMISSION TO GO TO HAVANA WHERE WE WERE ALL GOING TO MEET. THE REASON? HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY SHOES AND HIS JEANS WERE VERY OLD AND SHABBY, SO HIS FAMILY DIDN'T WANT HIM TO BE SEEN IN THE CAPITAL CITY DRESSED LIKE THAT.

WE KNEW HOW THIS WAS A SUFFERING FOR HIM AND WE FELT WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

SO WE ALL WENT HOME AND LOOKED INTO OUR CLOSETS, WITH THE GOAL OF MEETING HIS NEEDS. THE NEXT TIME WE MET TOGETHER, ONE OF THE GEN BROUGHT A PAIR OF NEW SHOES HE HAD UNEXPECTEDLY RECEIVED AS A GIFT!

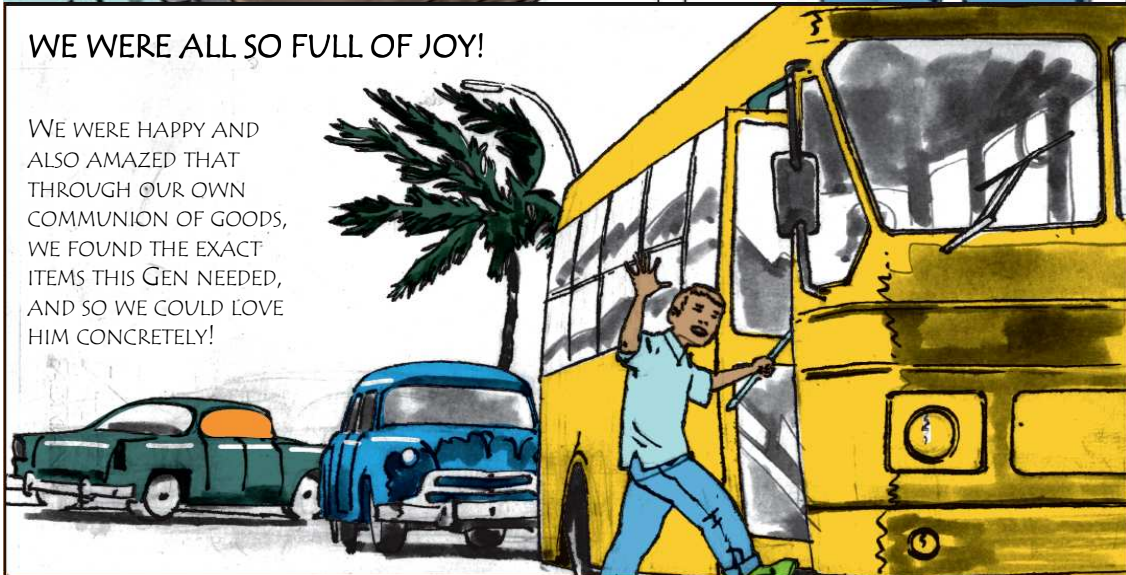


A FEW MINUTES LATER,
ANOTHER GEN ARRIVED WITH
A PAIR OF NICE JEANS!



WE WERE ALL SO FULL OF JOY!

WE WERE HAPPY AND ALSO AMAZED THAT THROUGH OUR OWN COMMUNION OF GOODS, WE FOUND THE EXACT ITEMS THIS GEN NEEDED, AND SO WE COULD LOVE HIM CONCRETELY!



NESTOR, PEPIN, VLADIMIR, ERNESTO, MARIO, JAVIER, UMBERTO

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