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## **Young people united by their faith!**

“The trip to Rome during UNIV was powerful and meaningful! I might sometimes feel lonely, but I am never alone.”

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### **Surpassing our expectations**

"I went to UNIV, happy to take a break from my work and studies. I wanted to learn more about happiness (UNIV's central theme this year). But it was so much more than that! I met young people from all

over the world, and it opened my eyes to faith, culture, and the reality of the whole world," exclaims Guada. Paolina says something similar: "I arrived in Rome without too many expectations. I didn't realize that I was going to participate in something so powerful and meaningful. Not only did I learn a lot through touching stories and discussions, but I also met young women who are like me."

### **Faith and unity: we are not alone!**

Yes, there was a force uniting all these young people, a similarity under all their cultural differences: their shared faith and the desire to cultivate and strengthen it, their thirst for God, and their feeling of loneliness or powerlessness on their own, in their little corner of the world, which might seem far from God.

"We all have similar experiences," Guada goes on. "I learned that there are only 8 Catholic churches in the whole country of Finland. This made me realize that the situation in Quebec is not so bad... The size and beauty of the churches also really impressed me."

Alicia adds: "In a secularized country like ours, it is important to have this kind of encounter that encourages us to continue to fight for our faith and not to be influenced by - and to face - the surrounding atmosphere, as normalized as it may be. It has also been very meaningful to be able to see the spirit of the Work beyond the centre where I receive my formation."

"As for me," Paolina says, "UNIV has stimulated me to know my faith more deeply and to know how to live it."

**Pope Francis: contagious youth**

The meeting with the Pope strengthened the impulse that energized and lifted the young people's spirits. *"Although still clearly recovering, the Pope had an air of youth and joy that was quite contagious,"* Maximiliano observed. *"Thousands of people attended the audience in St. Peter's Square. They listened to Pope Francis speak about the importance of the cross, a cross that we all carry, but that becomes a gift to our Lord when we carry it with Christ. Rome: what a poetic city! It holds so much beauty!"* he continued. *And yet, this beauty refers to so much more!*

What is this "so much more"? For these young people, it was the opportunity to live Holy Week more deeply, in the heart of Christianity, all together, with the Pope.

"Viva UNIV [long live UNIV]," the young people gathered in Rome

shouted, and then, even louder:  
"Long live the Pope!"

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