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UNIV 2026: Young People in Rome Rediscover the Art of Listening

Close to 2,500 students from 26 countries, including Nigeria, are in Rome to live Holy Week with the Pope and meet the Prelate of Opus Dei. The theme of UNIV this year is "Building bridges: the art of dialogue."

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This year, close to 2,500 students from more than 26 countries,

including Nigeria, are in Rome to participate in UNIV 2026, an international meeting of university students who wish to experience Holy Week with the Pope. In addition to the liturgical celebrations, participants will be able to attend several encounters with the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr Fernando Ocáriz, and two academic forums (UNIV Forum and UNIV Lab) which will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, to explore and debate the theme, "Building bridges: the art of dialogue."

The challenge of truly listening to one another

This year's reflection begins with a paradox that many will recognise. Pedro Lima (Brazil), one of the organisers, puts it this way: "We live in an era of hyperconnection and,

paradoxically, of loneliness: we've never had so many voices around us and yet so little ability to truly listen to one another. That's why our generation's most urgent challenge is learning to dialogue, listening and being open to change, seeking the truth together, and seeing others not as adversaries but as fellow travellers on the journey."

Pili Fernández (Guatemala), another one of the organisers, adds: "UNIV is a time to pause and reflect on how we want to continue building the world and our relationships with others. There will be a lot of discussion about dialogue and truth. Truth is the driving force of a healthy curiosity that allows us to adjust our gaze to reality and open ourselves, with wonder, to dialogue with others."

Speakers, masterclasses and culture in Rome

The programme includes conferences, artistic exhibitions and masterclasses with speakers from very different backgrounds: Hope Kean, cognitive neuroscientist at MIT (USA); Santiago Martínez, director of Inter-Cultur; Jack Valero, co-founder of *Catholic Voices*; Caitlin West, creator of the *Crash Course Catholicism* podcast; and Juana Acosta, professor at the University of La Sabana (Colombia) and expert in strategic litigation for the defence of human rights, amongst others.

Youth: the encounter continues beyond Rome

Being in Rome means immersing oneself the heart of the Church and the cultural, spiritual and artistic heritage of the city. But the

encounter doesn't end when you go back home. **Youth** is a digital space on opusdei.org by young people and for young people, and it supports the journey back with text resources, audiovisual material for prayer, and content for a deeper understanding of the faith and tools to grow as a person. It is meant to help young people be builders of dialogue and peace, as Pope Leo XIV encourages them to be.

With our sights set on peace

The UNIV gatherings began in 1968 under the inspiration of Saint Josemaría, founder of Opus Dei, as an experience of the universality of the Church and union with the Pope. Over the past 58 years, more than 100,000 university students have taken part. As a token of gratitude, participants customarily visit his remains in the prelatic church, Our Lady of Peace.

This edition also has a charitable dimension marked by the Holy Father's call for peace and the situation of so many countries immersed in conflicts, persecution or natural disasters. UNIV 2026 participants will promote initiatives connected to the **Be Do Care** project, which supports social, professional, and ecological projects throughout the world.

More information at **univforum.org** and **univinspire.org**.

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