



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE II INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
ON THE PASTORAL CARE OF GYPSIES
AND TRAVELING SHOW PEOPLE***

Castel Gandolfo, September 16, 1980

I wish to thank Cardinals Baggio and Duval, the Bishops and all members of the Congress organized by the Commission of Migration and Tourism under the guidance of Mgr. Clarizio. Thank you for your work. I would further like to thank all those present for their visit. They have come to express their attachment to the Church and to the person of Peter's successor. I am well aware, however, that you wanted this meeting to be held last Sunday, and that some were disappointed not to find me here then, because of my visit to Siena. I am glad at any rate to have this opportunity today to meet you, to be together with you, and to listen to you voices, your music, which is so famous, and especially your hearts, which are certainly open and sincere. A sign of this openness of your hearts is the presence of your families, especially your children who immediately found their way towards the Pope. I am always happy to have them close to me.

I am delighted by your meeting which was, as your chaplain said, one of prayer. You meet together to pray. To get to know better Jesus Christ, his words and his work, and to participate in them. For these words of Christ are living: they form our life. And also, to be sure, your religious meetings serve to form your life, your personal, family and Christian life. You were told so by various representatives of your group, especially those living in Italy, but also some by from abroad, particularly those from Yugoslavia, who find a support in the Church and meet together with the priests and sisters who share their life and who, by thus drawing close to them, seek to form a Christian community together with them. This is a special mission which the Church tries to fulfill among her various other missions.

As one of you mentioned, the late Paul VI had this mission of the Church among your communities very close at heart and tried to inspire it. I wish to tell you that, as his successor, I too want to

continue this brotherly service, with the help of the special Commission of Migration and Tourism and with the help of the Bishops of various dioceses, and especially the priests engaged in this task. I hope that today's meeting will be the first of many, and that in future we will keep a better appointment and meet each other more promptly.

I wish now to conclude, together with the Cardinals and Bishops here present, by imparting my blessing on all those present, on your families, and on all the members of your communities in Italy, Europe and throughout the world.