



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO PARTICIPANTS IN A PILGRIMAGE SPONSORED BY
THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT
PEOPLE FOR THE YEAR OF FAITH***

*Paul VI Hall
Saturday, 1 December 2012*

[\[Video\]](#)

[Photo gallery](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am delighted to welcome all of you and I thank you for your welcome! You have gathered here today in such great numbers to meet the Successor of St Peter and to show, also on behalf of the many who work in itinerant shows, the joy of being Christian and of belonging to the Church. I greet and I thank Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, who, in collaboration with the Diocese of Rome and the Foundation *Migrantes* of the Italian Bishops' Conference, has organized this event. Thank you, Your Eminence! I am also grateful to your representatives, who have offered us their testimonies and a beautiful short performance, as well as those who helped prepare this meeting, set during the [Year of Faith](#), an important occasion to openly profess our faith in the Lord Jesus.

What especially distinguishes your big family is your capacity to use the language that is particular and specific to your art. The cheerfulness of the shows, the recreational joy of playing, the grace of the choreography, the rhythm of the music — all these create a direct line of communication and place you in dialogue with both the small and the great, stirring feelings of serenity, joy and harmony. With the diversity of your professions and the originality of your feats, you know how to amaze and to inspire wonder, to offer opportunities for celebration and healthy fun.

Dear friends, starting precisely with these characteristics and with your style, you are called to witness to those values that are part of your tradition: love for the family, kindness to children, attention to the disabled, care for the sick, respect for the elderly and for their wealth of experience. In your environment dialogue between generations, the sense of friendship, a readiness for teamwork thrive. You have warmth and hospitality, as well as attentiveness to giving a response to the most authentic longings of, above all, the young generations. Your skills require renunciation and sacrifice, responsibility and perseverance, courage and generosity: virtues that today's society does not always appreciate, but that have contributed to the forming of entire generations in your great family. I know, too, of the many problems related to your itinerancy, such as educating your children, finding suitable locations for shows, receiving authorization to perform and residence permits for foreigners. While I hope that public administrations, in acknowledging the social and cultural role of travelling shows, commit themselves to safeguarding your status, I encourage both you and civil society to overcome prejudice and always seek a healthy integration into local situations.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Church rejoices at the commitment you demonstrate and appreciates your fidelity to the traditions of which you have reason to be proud. She who is herself a pilgrim, like you, in this world, invites you to participate in her divine mission through your daily work. The dignity of every person is also expressed in the honest exercise of professional skills and in their generous practice that leaves you free from being determined only by economic gain. In this you, as you are paying attention to the quality of your achievements and performances, do not fail to ensure that, with the values of the Gospel, you continue to offer young generations the hope and encouragement they need, especially with respect to life's challenges, the temptation to distrust, to withdraw into oneself and embrace pessimism, that stop one from seeing the beauty of life.

Although the itinerant life prevents you from being permanent members of the parish community and does not facilitate regular participation in catechesis and divine worship, in your world, too, there is need for a new evangelization. I hope that you may find, in every community where you are, people who are welcoming and open, able to come and meet your spiritual needs. Do not forget, however, that the family is the primary means for transmitting the faith, that small domestic Church called to make Jesus and his Gospel known and to educate according to the law of God, so that each one of you may achieve full human and Christian maturity (cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 2). May your families always be schools of faith and love, training grounds of communion and brotherhood.

Dear artists and travelling circus performers, I repeat to you what I said at the start of my Pontificate: "There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him... Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we

experience beauty and liberation” (*Homily at the Mass for the inauguration of the Pontificate, Sunday, 24 April 2005*). In assuring you of the closeness of the Church, which shares in your journey, I entrust you all to the Holy Virgin Mary, the “guiding star”, who with her motherly presence accompanies us in every moment of our lives.

[*In French*] Dear friends, your charism consists in giving to others joy, the sense of celebration and of beauty. May your joy find its source in God and may it be strongly united with trust in him and in his love, a joy full of humility and of faith. Become then imitators of God and walk in charity (cf. Eph 5:1-2), bearing the joy of the faith to all.

[*In English*] Dear friends, you spread around you a joyful atmosphere and you ease the burden of daily work. May you also be men and women with a strong inner self, open to contemplation and dialogue with God. I pray that your faith in Christ and your devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary may sustain you in your life and work.

[*In German*] Dear friends, your world can become a laboratory in the area of the great themes of ecumenism and encounter between people of different religions. May your faith guide you to be authentic witnesses of God and of his love, a community united in brotherhood, in peace and in solidarity.

[*In Spanish*] Dear friends, travelling showmen, in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, in the passage dedicated to migrants, I expressed my wish that they would “be able to be heralds of God’s word and witnesses to the Risen Jesus, the hope of the world” (n. 105). Today, with great confidence, I repeat this wish to you and to the pastoral agents who accompany you with admirable dedication.

To each one of you and to your families and communities I impart my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing. Thank you.