



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE CIRCUS AND FAIRGROUND ARTISTS
TAKING PART IN THEIR SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS**

Thursday, 16 December 2004

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. I am pleased to greet with affection all of you who are taking part in the Seventh International Pastoral Congress for Circus and Fairground People, organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. I greet in particular the President and Secretary of the Pontifical Council, as well as the Bishops and Chaplains present here.

The theme of your Congress: *Accepting Circus and Fairground Artists: from diversity to the friendly coexistence of differences*, is inspired by the Message for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees which you will be studying in these days.

2. Dear Circus and Fairground Artists, you live among people from every social class, working and performing in your shows. You thus provide concrete opportunities for bringing the different generations together in a joyful atmosphere. Your profession, far from easy and certainly special, can be a privileged opportunity to proclaim authentic human values in the world's squares. In an age in which nothing seems to count but the frenzy of production and the accumulation of wealth, the gifts of joy and festivity are a real witness to those non-material values essential to a life of brotherhood and gratuitousness. You can set a unique example of a travelling Church that prays, listens, proclaims and cultivates brotherhood.

3. Dear friends, your world, the world of the Circus and Fairground, can also serve to spearhead the great themes of pastoral care, ecumenism and meetings between members of other religions

and the common commitment to build up a universal brotherhood. I pray the Lord that he will help you in your difficult work.

I gladly take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful Christmas, and I accompany my good wishes with a special Apostolic Blessing.