

Community of Sant'Egidio



European Youth pilgrimage to Auschwitz – Birkenau, 14-18 July 2012

European youth from Spain, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the U.K., we are gathered here today with the community of Sant'Egidio in Auschwitz to commemorate the horror of the Shoah. In front of the monument in memory of the victims of the Nazi extermination of millions of men and women – Jews, gypsies and others, members of unwanted groups, we want to halt today, 16th of July, to reflect and to remember.

Although we were born many years after this Great Evil, we realize this is not an event of a distant past that does not concern or affect us. No, we believe this tragedy concerns us very closely, for it all happened in Europe. "It happened, therefore it can happen again", Primo Levi warned us.

Every time a foreigner suffers violence in our cities, every time a person encounters contempt due to his descent, religion or being different, a road of hatred and violence is prepared in the hearts of people.

Therefore we want to testify of all we have seen and heard these days and we want to tell our peers and the following generation of the importance of excluding any form of racism, discrimination or contempt against man and against life.

We halted and laid wreaths on this symbolic place where the journey of life of so many ended abruptly. We walked across the tracks of their final journey to salute the victims of blind violence, deprived of any human dignity and even of life.

We are convinced of the absolute value of life and of the triumph of forgiveness over revenge. We want to defeat the evil with the good. Therefore we actively want to contribute to a Europe where everybody can live together: a world without racism. A world without racism!

We leave Auschwitz more united, determined to convince our peers with the force of love to do better and to turn our countries into a Europe of peace.