Pope John Paul II Issues Diverse Apologies on Behalf of the Catholic Church

The Catholic Pope included the indigenous people of the area known as Oceania (south Pacific, including Australia) in a series of apologies issued from 1998 through 2001. In the 1998 Synod of Oceania he said, “Whenever the truth has been suppressed by governments and their agencies or even by Christian communities, the wrongs done to the indigenous peoples need to be honestly acknowledged. …The Church expresses deep regret and asks forgiveness where her children have been or still are party to these wrongs. …The past cannot be undone, but honest recognition of past injustices can lead to measures and attitudes that will help to rectify the damaging effects for both the indigenous community and the wider society.” His apology also included overtures to women, Jews and the Roma people (Gypsies), a European indigenous people.