**April 16, 1933**

I greet you, esteemed countrymen and countrywomen, with the words: Praised be Jesus Christ!

The night of the coming of the Child of God to earth, there appeared in the heaven a star of wonderful brilliance, a witness of God’s love, a sign of the joy and celebration of Heaven and Earth. In the day of the departure of our Savior from mankind, “It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Nature, blind and cold nature, showed its Creator more pity and compassion than all of mankind of hardened hearts and unbowed necks. The sun hid its bright face from shame, so as to not look at the earth, all spattered with the innocent blood of the Son of God: so as to not see the unjust judges, bloodthirsty executioners, false witnesses, and the ungrateful crowds! The mournful darkness on the heavens and earth shows the killers of Christ the strength, power, and majesty of the Crucified One. Christ dies.

Let us look one more time at the victim of black ingratitude, deep jealousy, and inhuman hatred of creatures toward the Creator. They are like worms, not humans. He was hung between heaven and earth. He was trampled, beaten, and executed. Above his head, wrapped in a crown of thorns, were the scornful words in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, “Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews.”[[2]](#footnote-2) At the foot of the cross was a small group of faithful and sorrowing women, fainting at the sight of the dying one. All around, as far as the human eye reaches, interested crowds shout curses and blasphemies, “ ‘You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, (and) come down from the cross!’”[[3]](#footnote-3) “‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, “I am the Son of God.” ’ ”[[4]](#footnote-4) Not far from the cross, there sat a group of drunken soldiers. The soldiers took the garments and the seamless vesture. They cast lots for it, so as to fulfill what the Scriptures said, "They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots."[[5]](#footnote-5)

The anger and duplicity of man grew; the love and pity of Jesus also grew; not revenge does Jesus seek, but with difficulty a he opens his mouth and begs, “ ‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.’ ”[[6]](#footnote-6) After three hours of suffering, “And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”[[7]](#footnote-7) and “Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit’; and when he had said this he breathed his last.”[[8]](#footnote-8) When Our Savior died on the cross, “The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.”[[9]](#footnote-9) – So ended the first bloody Good Friday, in sight, the Lord Christ died, and the victory of his enemies and human darkness covered the light of God. Was it like this? Our talk today will show us:

**The Lord of Death**

In the last three days, the earth was sunken in pain and sorrow. There is nothing strange. We stood in the shadow of the cross; we were witnesses of the humiliation, disgrace, and death of Christ. Shame overcame us, fear entered our hearts and our minds. On the cross hung Him, who was to be King and the Lord. Under the cross is Our Sorrowful Mother. Disciples, eyewitnesses of numerous miracles, are far from the Teacher. It was like that yesterday. Today it is different. Today those things repeat, of which I was a witness, while traveling in Italy. I was standing in the valley of tall mountains, hanging over the famous village Sorrento. I listen. In my ears there bounce the notes of a Neapolitan song. At first shy, quiet, humble, barely grasped by human ears, growing, becoming more powerful, growing out, until finally it changes into hundreds or thousands of echoes, which with impetus and loudness bounces off the walls of the mountains, as sea waves do over rocky coasts, as a thunderbolt does over the arches of the skies.

There on the peak of the mountain sits a shepherd, and those wonderful and loud tones he extracts from his flute or his shepherd’s horn. So today, in human ears, as the world is long and wide, there goes out a powerful echo, “Christ as risen!” It bounces off the minds of believers and unbelievers: off the ears of the bad and the good, off the ears of the learned and the simple-minded, off the ears of the wealthy and the poor, off the ears of the healthy and the sick; it squeezes into the palaces and houses; it flies through mountains and valleys, carrying on its wings the invisible joyful Alleluia, which pours into humanity a new faith, deeper trust, more affectionate and deeper love. – I return, however, to the subject matter. - Friday evening. Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Christ, has a certain influence over Pilate. He fervently asks to have the remains of Christ returned to him. Pilate agrees. Joseph commands to take him down from the cross; he wraps him in clean sheets and puts him in his own grave, carved into a cliff. He brings to the entrance of the grave a great stone and leaves. The Pharisees, learned in Scripture and leading priests are worrying. In their hearts, they agree with the multitudes, “‘Truly, this man was the Son of God’ ”[[10]](#footnote-10) They feared the anger of God and human revenge. They gathered in Pilate’s court. They said, “‘Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive said, “After three days I will be raised up.” Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and say to the people, “He has been raised from the dead.” This last imposture would be worse than the first.’ Pilate said to them, ‘The guard is yours; go secure it as best you can.’ So they went and secured the tomb by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

They understood too well that if Christ was to break the chains of death and free himself from a guarded tomb…return to life…the whole nation would believe in the power of God of the crucified. Who knows? Maybe the whole nation would raise up crosses for them and hang them on those crosses. Oh, they feared the consequences of the risen Christ! In spite of there efforts and precautions, something is happening. On the third day, right at dawn, the fiery rays of the rising son are barely starting to golden the above-earth peak of the cross on the mount of Calvary, Christ rises, leaves the tomb, goes full of sweet majesty and unlimited power. He leaves the bed of death, lives, in a glorious body. He has won over death, because he is the Lord of Death. The soldier guards, at the sight of Christ, throw down their weapons and escape to the city to be the first to proclaim that He, who died on the cross…now from the dark and cold grave has gloriously risen. “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow.”[[12]](#footnote-12) “But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him.’

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?’ She thought it was the gardener and said to him, ‘Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni,’ which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, ‘Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, “I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’ Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord,’ and what he told her.”[[13]](#footnote-13) What did, in the meantime, did the enemies of Christ do? “Some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had happened. They assembled with the elders and took counsel; then they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, ‘You are to say, “His disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep.” And if this gets to the ears of the governor, we will satisfy (him) and keep you out of trouble.’ The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has circulated among the Jews to the present (day).”[[14]](#footnote-14)

Soon the risen Christ shows himself to the apostles, finally he convinces even the doubting Thomas. They believe that by defeating death, he is the master of death, and so the Son of God, Savior of the world, Redeemer of the human race! – The resurrection of Christ, is the charcoal stone of our holy faith as the apostle writes, “And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith.”[[15]](#footnote-15) The resurrection of our Lord solves all of life’s mysteries; it indicates to us the point of human life; it proves the immortality of the human soul; it verifies the eternity of the afterlife. The resurrection of Our Lord strengthens belief in the nobility and worthiness of human life. It strengthens hope that in spite of temporary suffering, God will reward our crosses. It holds up love towards God and towards our neighbor. It disposes one to good deeds...in one word, it changes our weaknesses and inconstancy into soldiers and knights of Christ. The world has reason, when today, among the sounds of resounding bells, it joyfully sings:

Christ is resurrected,

He gives us example,

That we are to rise,

With God to rule. Alleluia!

He laid three days in the tomb,

He allowed his sides to be pierced,

His side, hands, and both feet,

For your human salvation. Alleluia!

I put before you in today’s celebration this short question: Do you in today’s day feel the joy of the Great Night? The Resurrected Christ holds a banner. On it in golden letters are written: love, forgiveness, unity, victory, resurrection, eternal happiness! Let us make a short examination of conscience. Let us not hide the truth from ourselves!

The German poet Goethe, in the poem “Faust” describes his hero thus, “He lived in affluence. He used everything that his heart desired. He drank from the chalice of sweetness, to the bottom, and on the bottom he found bitterness. His satiated life disgusted him. He decided to take his own life. The decision fell on Easter morning, He stands in thought, in his mind he is bidding farewell to the world, until suddenly the voice of bells bounces off his ears…he hears the joyful Easter songs…joyful Alleluias tear out of the hearts of the singing people, lifting up majestically to the heavens, and bounce of the clouds! The unsuccessful suicider stands rooted to the ground. He listens, helplessly dropping his hands. He leans his head, his eyes tear up, his knees buckle under him. He kneels. In front of the eyes of his soul are moving images from his childhood years. He sees how kneeling by the bed, with folded hands, he is reverently repeating the prayers after his mother. He sees how focused, with almost angelic disposition, he goes to his first Holy Communion. He sees how slowly, surrounded by mindless friends, he came off the path of holiness until finally, disregarding the cries of his conscience, he drowns in the puddle of material life and forgets about his soul. Before him stand blissful and happy years: and today? Discouraged, embittered, he intends to pull on his life, which was given to him by him who resurrected…so that someday others would resurrect. He wants to take away his life right in the moment when the world is rejoicing that the Creator and Redeemer has risen from the dead. Bitter tears of regret run down his face. He gets up, discards his suicidal thoughts, and decides to live anew according to the principles and teachings of Christ.

It is true, everyone today sings Alleluia! We sing with mouths and hearts…or with only mouths? What is happening in our hearts? Are they filled with hatred, greed, the various dirt of everyday life? Years ago, we were not like that. We had faith…a faith that is real, live, strong, and practical. Where is it today? In a deep and cold grave, closed off by a massive and heavy stone. Why?...Because maybe someone has treated us unfairly. Because we have been persecuted. Because we have been slandered and gossiped. Because Providence has brought poverty or disease. Then, instead of going forward with greater and more resilient faith, we cried out obtrusively and proudly, “Hey you, if you are the Son of God, why do you allow such things?” We tore out this supernatural gift from our hearts, faith…we threw into the grave of oblivion. We live as if we were to live forever. We pretend to be exemplary and just…just like actors on stage. Poor we! We do not have peace, because somewhere on the bottom of our hearts there smolders still a spark of our former faith; because our conscience sometimes whispers quietly, and sometimes shouts out loudly: you will die, and later you will resurrect, and then?... Apprehension and fear scourge us more than once. Why, in today’s day, when the whole world sings joyfully Alleluia; why don’t we not tell ourselves: I will resurrect from the grave of sluggishness, carelessness so that in today’s day believe anew as I once did: I will resurrect to temporal happiness, so as to resurrect to eternal happiness. Really, then whole-heartedly you will sing, “Happy for us today’s day when he has risen!” Above the vices stands, as a reward, the Savior, and from his mouth there pours to us the blissful blessing, “Peace be with you!”

The Easter Holidays are a chance to give each other wishes. So, may I enjoin mine. They are turned to all Poles, without exception, and to Slovaks, Lithuanians, and Russians- all of our Slavic brethren. May the Lord Christ pour into your hearts heavenly peace and supernatural happiness, because these are graces which the world does not have, so it cannot give them to you. May the Redeemer grant you and your loved ones with good health, in both the soul and body. May Christ grant you patience and good will, so that you may live in agreement like brothers of one enormous family. Would that God would grant us get up from the grave of jealousy and suspicion, so that we would disregard squabbles and disagreements; that we could say to each other with our hand on our hearts: Peace to you and us! - These and similar wishes, from the depths of my heart, I send to you esteemed countrymen and countrywomen in this celebration of Our Lord’s Resurrection!

1. Luke 23: 7. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John 19: 8. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Matthew 27: 24. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Matthew 27: 24-26. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. John 19: 9. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Luke 23: 4 New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Matthew 27: 27-28. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Luke 23: 7. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Matthew 27: 31. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Mark 15: 17. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Matthew 27: 36-38. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Matthew 28: 2-3. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. John 20: 8-10. New American Bible. Annotation added by PKC [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Matthew 28: 7. New American Bible. Annotation added by PKC [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 1 Corinthian 15: 5. New American Bible. Annotation added by PKC [↑](#footnote-ref-15)