**April 17, 1932**

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

“Arise, set out for the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it; their wickedness has come up before me.” Such a command God gave to Jonah His servant. He, nevertheless, discouraged by the stubbornness and persistence of his countrymen, justified himself before his Master saying, ‘Lord, I have stood before your chosen people and they didn’t listen to me. Your chosen nation took stones into their hands and with them murdered Jeremiah, because he reproached them for their sins and crimes and called them to do penance; they cut Isaiah into pieces with a wooden saw, for a few words of truth, and for warnings; therefore, how can you, O God, demand from me, whom they do not know, to walk and proclaim your decisions and call them to do penance which they shun.” Just was the fear and excuse of the prophet.

These same feelings as if bitter complaints fill my heart at the present moment and as a stream floods my mouth, for I understand sufficiently that it is my duty to say the truth to the people, and tell that in indifference, negligence and transgression they surpass some pagan nations. Nevertheless, they do not want to listen about the return to God, their kindest Father. Is it due to the learning of that progressive twentieth century that they do not wish to know the God, the Light, and loathe the truth? And when one proclaims to them the truth about God, the duties of human life, the dignity of human soul, and the hideousness of transgression, a hailstorm of slander, mockery and blasphemy strokes the admonisher. They send forth insults and revenge; but I do not wish to speak about this.

Who has eyes and wants to see, will have to admit that the present condition of humanity is sad and sorrowful. Humanity today resembles a leper, dressed in rich and the most stylish clothes, under which numerous offensive and loathsome ulcers are hidden; or it resembles a tall tree, bending under the weight of blossoms, and in whose roots there are worms which eat and destroy it, so that branch after branch withers, the tree losses its strength and vitality, until at the end the giant which nearly touched the sky withers, lowers itself to the ground and dies. The outward appearance doesn’t seem so bad yet, but if we could look into the human minds and discover what is hidden in the human hearts and souls, fright, dread and terror would take possession of us. Perhaps it is much better that Providence has mercifully concealed it all before our eyes. Let us observe, however, the home life or family life. You will hear there many complaints, wails, and curses. The fathers and mothers despair more than once over their disobedient and stubborn son, they cry over their self conceited degenerate and ungrateful daughter. The children more frankly and more often complain of their not exemplary and scandalizing parents. Husbands curse at their negligent wives; the wives and mothers shed bitter tears and promise to take revenge upon the husbands and fathers, and at the same time the greatest scandalizing person under the sun. The first reason for theses complaints is lack of faith, which darkens the human intellect, weakens the will, causes quarrels and misunderstandings and increases suicides and murders. The second reason is the infamous and detestable monster, which here in the United States especially since the year 1920, opens the gates of prisons and insane asylums to thousands; brings about physical an spiritual blindness; threatens a complete moral and physical downfall, causes quarrels, lawsuits and disputes, embitters the family life and breaks the homes. That hydra, emitting baseness, corruption and scandal is- drunkenness. The title of today’ talk

**Father and Mother Drunkards**

It happened about nineteen years ago, during a severe winter. Clouds of snow driven by the sharp and cold wind, which made the passersby shudder, were striking on the windows of a small one story cottage, situated in a side street, on the eastern side of one of greatest American cities. Wind and drifts of snow seemed to increase with every moment; darkness followed; the heavy black and the ill foreboding clouds, covered with a thick shroud the already sad and gloomy heavens; only here and there a star was peeping, and with wonder and as if with shame looked sorrowfully at this valley of tears, where there are so many sufferings, misery and human troubles. But let us look into the room of this little house. There we shall see a sad picture, walls bare, the floor clean but uncarpeted, the stove cold, on a chair at an uncovered table, a young mother sitting on whose wretchedly and shuddering from cold. The little children stretch out their hands imploringly and call to her sadly, “Mother, give us something to eat, at least just a small piece of bread, Mother, won’t we get something to eat today?” Hearing the weeping children’s pleadings the mother tosses her brain. How difficult it is for her to tell them that, alas, there isn’t even a crumb in the house, that she gave them the last piece for dinner. She quiets and consoles them although she herself weeps bitterly and asks them to wait for the father’s return, who will come home soon, and bring them money and bead, for today is his pay day. She says this although she feels differently in her heart, for today’s scene repeats itself from years back. A drunkard’s wife knows better. The children calmed themselves, rested their heads on their arms and forgot for a while that they were sad, cold and hungry. The poor children - to have for a father a drunkard. Fruitless is your vigil for your brutal father. He feels warm and comfortable. He received his weekly pay and at the same moment forgot his wife, children and home, and sits comfortably in a chair in a room filled with smoke, dust and stench. Before him on the table few glasses and an empty whiskey bottle are standing. He is surrounded by a group of drunken rogues. Sharp jokes and dirty talk fall from the drunken lips of those Judases, who for a glass of brandy sell their wives, children, property, health of body and soul. Whiskey rendered our hero’s heart insensible and drowned his memory. He does not feel his patient and honest wife’s sorrow, who embracing her weeping children put them to bed; he does not hear that fervent prayer, which from the dark and cold room, was sent through the innocent lips to the throne of the Most High, for the father, asking God to bring him back to his senses, to soften his heart, and strengthen his will. “Pray children begged the weeping mother, and ask God to let your father see that he is doing wrong, to let him to correct his life and to give up drunkenness,” The children prayed with folded hands and with that prayer on their lips went to sleep. Tears and hunger closed their eyes, and prevented them from seeing the sad picture of their drunken father, who returned home early in the morning. Tears and entreaties of the mother were of no avail. Few months later on his return home one day, after spending his weekly pay, he fell into a ditch, filled with water and was suffocated. He was found, with his mouth and throat filled with mud and filth. A pitiful end of a husband and father drunkard.

The second picture; there is a house, dirty inside and out. On the floor sweepings and dust, clothes not washed, dirty dishes, children in torn clothes. A women sits at the tale, her hair is disheveled, her cheeks crimson, and her eyes flashing with anger. Before her stands a bottle. Her own children point at her and say, “Our mother is drunk again.” This is one who should be the helper and comforter of the husband, the guardian angel of her children and home. Dirt and filth at home, in the heart and in a drunken mind. There is no time to do the work, to go to church, but there is time for drinking and scandal. This is a mother- a drunkard.

During the present times especially we ought to blush with shame that pictures as the above mentioned are on the daily program. The percent of drunken fathers and mothers has increased tenfold. Let us throw a veil over the incidents of drunken sons and daughters. What a sad and dreadful sight our young people present, attending parties and dances, when not only the boys but also the girls, bring with them bottles of poisonous and detestable moonshine. Today, a drunken young man a drunken girl, boast of their courage and power by showing their heroism. They drink to the utmost at card-parties, hard times parties, stork parties (baby showers), birthday parties, engagement parties, weddings, christenings, funerals, every where and always under the least pretext. Drunkenness is carried on not only by the elders but also by the young and often by children, and it hurts for it poisons not only the body but also the soul, which is the worst pain of all.

Let me be understood. I am not a fanatic. You are allowed to use it, but never and not ever to an excess. I do not condemn a person, who uses drinks moderately, a bottle or two of good beer, a few glasses of wine, even a glass of pure good whiskey from time to time will not harm anybody. But when we speak about the drinking habit, and drunkards, “Whose God is their belly,” I speak in the words of Jesus Christ. “Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness” (Lk 21,34). Speaking about the drunkard we can literally quote the words of the Psalmist.”And man when he was in honor did not understand, he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.”

Even the pagans hated drunkenness, and abhorred drunkards to such extent, that who would lose his property by drunkenness he was not buried on a public cemetery but on a dung-hill. The Spartans purposely made their slaves drunk, in order to show their children how loathsome drunkenness was. The Romans removed drunkards from public offices. The poet Horatius called a drunkard, “a self bloody tyrant.” Seneca branded him, “a decayed grave of the intellect,” Aristoteles wrote, “that more people perished from drunkenness than from sword.” According to statistics of the “The American Medical Association” drunkenness is the cause of a great percent of murders, suicides, insanity, idiocy, accidents on ships, railroads, in mines and factories, collisions and automobiles accidents, impoverished depending on public charity, consumptives, “certain infections diseases and other crimes.”

Holy Scriptures tell us that king Nebuchadnezzar reaching the temple of Jerusalem by an underground tunnel, completely destroyed it. Far worse is the deed of the drunkard for he ruins his own temple of body and soul, also the temples of his wife and children. Late in the evening the door opens and the father comes in from work and a bout of drinking. He greets them with curses; the wife trembles, the children run away, even the cat and dog retreat under the stove. Our drunken hero is very brave. Blasphemies pour forth from his mouth like the lava from a volcano, for him there is no God. He is dissatisfied with everything. He is a powerful lord. The wife weeps and the children cry but he does not mind it. And thus he lives from day to day, and year to year until he ends his miserable life unrepentant. From the many letters sent to me I shall read you three.

Cleveland, Ohio March 26

Dear Father Justin,

“I am a married woman. I have three children and my husband is a drunkard. He wasn’t like that before the prohibition. He was industrious and sober; he gave me his pay regularly. We bought a home and have it paid out. But since prohibition as if the evil one entered him he started to drink and gamble; he neither goes to church nor receives the Sacraments. He gives me a dollar from his weekly pay and the rest he spends for drinking and playing cards. When he comes home he curses the children, treats me contemptibly, and beats me so that I am all bruised. Please Father add your prayers to mine and my children’s so that the good Lord would convert our husband and father, and that he would stop drinking.

A.T.

2nd Chicago, Il Apr. 2, 1932

Reverend Father,

I am a girl eleven years old. I am to receive my first Communion this year, but I have no prayer book or rosary because my father is drinking. He doesn’t give us anything. He spends everything on drinking. Mother works a day or two a week but she doesn’t earn much, for there are seven children. Mother is ashamed to ask for help because she doesn’t want the people to know that we have a bad father. I shall offer my first Communion for my father, so that he stops drinking and treat mother better.

Little B. L.

3rd Detroit, Mich. April 5, 1932

Reverend Father Justin,

I earnestly beg you to say a few words to the drunkards. My husband is one of their number. He was not in Church for the last eighteen years, but he listens to your radio talks. We receive financial aid from the city. If from that money I do not give him at least two dollars for moonshine he beats me mercilessly. We have seven children and many times they ask me, “Mother why is father so bad and why doesn’t he go to church?” If you will help to convert my husband, I shall never forget you, father.

M. L.

A drunkard is the most unfortunate creature under the sun, for at the same time he is a criminal, murdered, burglar, and scandalizer. A drunkard violates boldly the laws of God and those of the Church and Nature, and finally ruins himself. This is what the famous Dr. Rufeland wrote once. “Go to the cemeteries and ask the dead lying in the graves for the reason why they left the world living only half their days and all will unanimously reply, ‘Intoxication, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and in one word, pulmonary diseases and diseases of the chest and head are the children of drunkenness.

Drunkenness is a snake which chokes its victim and poisons it with his venom. In Italy people know about a certain poison, which is very often used by some against their personal enemies. An Italian who wants revenge on his enemy, puts in a few drops of that poisonous liquid which is sweet and has a delicious taste into wine. The one who drinks it at first feels stronger and more lively, his face becomes rosy and his eyes shine. This however does not last long for as soon as the poison begins to act the unfortunate victim trembles from weakness, perspires profusely, and the luster of his eyes disappears. Then the victim becomes very thin, blood chills in his veins and he dies suffering greatly. The results of drunkenness are similar. A drunkard is not a bit better than a man committing suicide by shooting, drowning or hanging himself. The only difference is that it takes him a longer time to kill himself. Can a healthy soul live in a body broken and worn out by drinking? It is no wonder then that one cannot talk to the drunkard about God, Church and Sacraments. The things that he is interested in are the bottle and a wine glass, his only treasures. A father who drinks excessively is the Judas of his family’s happiness. If the father drinks the hearts of the poor mother and innocent children are filled with sorrow, and they weep bitterly over their sad fate. A father who is a drunkard brings into his home abuse, curses, scolding and cruel treatment while anger and madness slowly eat him away. The mother trying to provide for the needs of her family, worn out with hard work, losses her health and dies before her time, the children under the care of strangers, in orphan asylums weep bitterly. All of this misery and being tormented with frightful memories they lose their physical and mental health. His old friends avoid his presence and mock him, and so forsaken by his friends and relatives, he dies miserably in some public hospital or asylum for the insane. The effects of a father who drinks live after his death as we read in Book of Exodus 34, 7: “but punishing children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for their fathers' wickedness!"

Is it possible for a drunkard to break the habit of drinking? Yes he can, if he has a strong will and firm desire to do so. He must pray and mortify himself. The frequent receivings of the Holy Sacraments is one of the most effective means of getting rid of the drinking habit. In conclusion I cite the following incident. A certain nine year old girl, the only child in the family, was obliged to look for her father almost every night in the saloons and bring him home, in a semiconscious state to the weeping mother, One wintry night, the little guardian angel of the old drunkard, while trying to find him as usual caught a cold and contracted pneumonia. Her usually pale face is rosy with fever, her big black eyes are fearful, her lips burnt with fever murmured softly, “Daddy dear, I am dying, so that you may not drink nor beat mother more. I said prayers so fervently every morning and night that you would not drink and that mother would not cry. The sister in school told me to sacrifice my life for you. I did that and God is taking me to Himself. Daddy dear, promise me that you will not drink and that you will be good to mother. And the old drunkard realizing the evil of his habit knelt down near the bed of his dying daughter kissing the hand of the dying child, said with a despairing voice.”I promise not to drink as long as I live. I will begin to live soberly and lead an exemplary life. A smile of peace and contentment became visible on the child’s face- one more breath and the soul of the martyr passed away in order to pray before the throne of the Savior for her converted father.

And now my dear radio listeners, if among you there is a type of such a father and husband, for the love of God, do not postpone the reform of self and your conversion for the future, don’t wait until tomorrow. Who knows whether God will not demand a similar sacrifice from you? Perhaps the Divine Providence has marked out your wife or your child as a ransom for your conversion. At this moment say to yourself: “I have erred but I will reform my life and I will get rid of the habit of drinking.” Go to confession, pray fervently, avoid bad companions and you will have peace of conscience and God’s blessing will be bestowed upon you and your family.