**April 2, 1933**

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

None of you listeners can object to the observation that the last three years have not only been strange, but even bizarre. Things have happened that were unimaginable five years ago. Even today, after these painful and sad trials, we cannot understand and furthermore we cannot even explain what it is we have experienced. In the year 1929, we stood at the peak of a tall mountain; we looked forward with pride and confidence. Our eyes looked toward a wonderful vision which was terrifying in its greatness and size. Immense wealth that could not be grasped by human imagination, goods beyond one’s means and conditions, inventions promising human happiness, royal comforts that everyone claimed a right to, often illegally- in other words, our country was already a heaven on earth. Not everyone was fooled. Not everyone was blinded. Such people looked into the future in anxiety. They waited with fear. Suddenly, like a lightning bolt from heaven, we were covered with misfortunes. Not just misfortunes but misfortune in general!

Today, we are forced to tell ourselves: This was once a paradise after which there is no trace! It is not my intention to explain in detail the defeats that have touched us. I have said only one thing, that we have fallen from the mountain of greatness and abundance- with a terrifying crash into the bottomless abyss of scarcity- into poverty and misery. I often sat reflecting on the losses and gains of this failure, which was so terrifying in its greatness and majesty. The patience, peacefulness, resilience of the working class struck me then and strikes me now, even when the leaders had lost their cold blood and ran off panicking. In October of last year, I found myself, by accident, in Hammond, Indiana. Among others. There stood in front of me an older man, an example of the average American worker. The poor man had lost everything he had ever earned. He did not complain, however. He says, “Today, I have exactly what I had when I came from Poland. Nothing. I am fifty-years-old. I thank God for good health. As soon as work starts again, I will get to it and if God wills it, I will earn something again. It’s been stalling in the meantime but I will endure it and more.” These words pleased me so much that tears welled up in my eyes. For the consolation of all these workers, who are enduring hardships, difficulties, pain and sorrow, crosses and uncertainties with such patience and peacefulness these past three years of unemployment and unrequested vacations, I will offer today’s talk which I have called:

**The Heroic Peasant**

In the novella, “Maciek in the Uprising”, we read that: “The doctor and two medical assistants turned toward treating the wounded. They started with Maciek. The Muscovite bullets had wounded him in the breast and tore the skin from his forehead to the very tip of his head. The blood cooled and hardened in large, black chunks, while fresh, red blood came out of the wounds in small droplets. The peasant, worn out by fighting, weakened by blood draining, fell asleep. Water woke him up after being applied to the wounds, as did the searing pain. He opened his eyes and looked surprised. The doctor gave him a flask of strong vodka. He drank it and revived. The medical assistant shaved the edges off the washed wound, while the doctor was stuffing it with lint. ‘Ho,ho, Maciek, you hero,’ he said, ‘you spilled blood for your own country. You defended, with your own hands, this sacred land, whose son you are. You shielded it with your own body. Tell us, yourself’ ‘Supposedly, yes,’ replied Maciek quietly. The treatment was finished. The doctor left. Maciek lay down and closed his eyes. He was hallucinating. He was spilling blood for the country, shielding the sacred land with his own body. Something happened within him, creating new feelings. He was pleased with himself, even though he had not achieved anything against the Muscovites. Though he was sorry for having lost the means of easy earnings, the rising emotions drowned out his greediness. ‘This is the last time we will fight Moscow,’ he thought, ‘and nobody can take away from me that I shielded the country with my own body! If Kaśka had seen me spread out in the snow with a broken head, she would lament greatly but she would have to also rejoice. May it be so and if she did not want to, then I would spank her pretty badly. She’s stupid!’ He was mad at Kaśka. He felt that she lamented a lot, but did not rejoice. ‘After all, does she know what the fatherland is? And do you know? I have to know when I spilled my own blood for her. Kaśka is stupid and that’s that.’

It was getting dark for him as the black night slowly covered his world. In the distance, in the dark backdrop, cut off from the white snow, there appeared to him a shining figure with stars above her head. Maciek thought that it was the Blessed Mother, his voice died out as he reached his hand out. She did not have a child in her hand nor a crown on her head. The person sank down to Earth and said, ‘This whole land is mine. Moscow took it from me. Defend me! Maciek, open your eyes.’ He heard the voice above him and at the same time felt that he was being carried. He opened his eyes. The doctor was kneeling next to him with a flask of hot tea. ‘Drink it. It will revive you. The horse his waiting. We are leaving.’ Maciek grabbed the doctor by the neck and whispered in his ear, ‘I saw the Sacred Country. She said that Moscow has taken the whole land. She cried, “Defend me!” ’ Moved by emotions, he kissed the doctor, felt embarrassed, and fell on the snow. The doctor leaned to the ground and moved his mouth to Maciek’s, ‘Brother, only you defend her, only you all, but also all of us together.’ Maciek pulled the doctor to him, lifted himself up, grabbed the flask, blew on it, and drank. The kiss and the tea warmed his heart. ‘How beautiful that saint was,’ he whispered to himself, ‘How sad, darn it, darn it! Now I know what the Fatherland is. And Kaśka? Kaśka is a woman, stupid, and that’s that.’

He lifted himself up, grabbed a rifle, his feet were wobbling, his head was spinning, but he went to where the horses stood. The peasants from Mirca lifted Maciek up and immediately put him on the saddle. The drums sounded off, the solders got in line: the shooters, recruits with leftover scythes and scythiers and behind them the wounded on the captured horses. Maciek shifted in the comfortable saddle. The trained horse went straight, following the shoe traces in the snow. From the height of the horse, he saw the whole regiment, walking among the trees. In the large spaces, it seemed to him to be small, insignificant, tiny. He compared it with the long rows of Muscovites and he felt sad. ‘They came from the corner of the world and took our land; us, who have a lot of people in our land and have great potential. If all the peasants followed the peasants from Mirca to fight there would be a lot of us, and then shudders would take care of the Muscovites. They would surround Szydłowce, then they would take Radom, and from Warsaw they would escape by themselves. We went, but why did others stay in their huts?’ He could not explain that, but only amazed himself with the peasant’s stupidity. ‘As for us,’ he repeated, ‘we are together, in a group, down to the last one!’

The doctor’s expression stuck in his head. He took to them, he felt the warm kiss on his lips, and he began to understand brotherhood. He closed his eyes, trying to recall the sad, shining figure with stars above her head. She did not return. ‘Oh, how you would rejoice, rejoice that the peasants went to Szydłowce and Kielce and then onto Radom and Warsaw.’ ‘Maciek is still hallucinating because he is still talking to himself,’ said the scythier, walking the path by the horse. The doctor approached him on horseback.

The wounded Maciek was sent off on a cart and at midnight he knocked on the window of his hut. Kaśka sat on the bed and trembled, ‘Either these are the Cossacks, the soul of Maciek, or he himself.’ ‘Kaśka, it’s me, open up!’ She leapt up and looked through the window. ‘Maciek!’ she jumped to the door. The door creaked, the peasant entered, and she jumped onto his neck. ‘You’re alive and today all the cannons sounded off and clouds of smoke went from Wachocki. People ran by, shouting that the Muscovites are plundering and burning. You’re alive, fear God, and how I lamented over you! Maciek, you are poor, pale, skin and bones.’ She hugged him, grabbed him by the neck, and kissed him. ‘I almost cried my eyes out for you. You have some sheepskin, shoes, a rifle, and a red kerchief. Is that all yours?’ ‘Go with God! Look at what the Muscovites gave me!’ He unbuttoned the sheepskin. His shirt was soiled with blood as the flames from the fireplace danced off of it. He took his hat off. ‘Mother Most Holy! They cut up my man into pieces!’ She tore at her hair from sorrow and despair. ‘Thank God that that’s it. Many of ours died out in the snow! And did a lot of Muscovites? By my own hand, I put down thirty. I would settle, aim, and shoot- a Muscovite falls to the ground! But what a horrible lot. You shoot one and you lose ten. We made orphans all night, fought all day, I lost a lot of blood, I weakened horribly, the creeps came over me, and my head burned! Woman, carry me.’

He grabbed onto the woman’s neck, went over to the bed where she undressed him and lay him down. The warmth of the feather-blanket felt pleasant. The woman added wood to the chimney as the merry flames shot up. ‘Kaśka, you know that you have an unusual man, who spilled blood for his country! Fatherland is a great word.’ Kaśka was silent, ‘Fatherland goes as far as patrimony in that we are all brought into one! So we should all defend it together. Fatherland goes as far as the mother and man of this land!...Do you understand?’ ‘I understand,’ she whispered. ‘The Muscovite invaded it and rules it like a gray goose: scorning, stealing, and killing. There is not recourse, for it to be free we have to chase him off. But when it is the patrimony of everyone then everyone should go. And when everyone goes, they suffocate the Muscovite with hats. When it is everyone’s’, then everyone should go!’ he cried and fell back on the pillow. ‘Maciej,’ shouted Kaśka, running to the bed, ‘you’re pale and your eyes shine like a cat’s!’ ‘Quiet, quiet,’ he whispered, leaving his strained stare on one spot, ‘Do you see her? She is coming, coming to me. Pale, the glow seems to reflect off of here, lovely and sad, so much that it tears up me heart. She let her hair down, the stars above her head are flaming… She’s burned out,’ he whispered quietly. ‘You’re imagining things,’ yelped Kaśka, covered in tears. ‘The queen, without a crown, but I will forge her one from gold while you hide my rifle! Kaśka, and you will see her, that saint, pale, and sad… My sight is darkening, a coldness is coming over me…The drums are beating from happiness, age is pressing me… Make sure you hide the rifle well…’ And he fell asleep.

Dear Radio Listeners, I don’t need to explain that the country, which was a new opportunity for our ancestors, which welcomed our ancestors with hospitality and friendliness, which gave them a way to earn an honest piece of bread, which gave us the ability to both worship God and to raise ourselves up to equal levels in all fields, is our country! For three years, this country has been overrun by Muscovites. Not hordes of old-country, bloodthirsty Cossacks, but conscienceless American Muscovites. Heartless magnates, financiers without any instinct of justice, officials without a conscience: are all drunkards in human bodies. It is not the fault of the Fatherland, America, that the whole nation, especially the American farmer, has in the past few years gone through not only purgatory, but a real hell of suffering. The fault and the entire fault falls on the shoulders of neglectful directors and leaders: on the shoulders of merchants blinded by gold: on the shoulders of a small group of wealthy people, who control the wealth, the trade, and the industry of our fatherland.

Really, whoever God wants to punish will be stripped of their minds. No other people sold out our country and nation! How can one talk of Fatherland to such people? Their Fatherland is the stomach and pocket: their Fatherland is gold, more gold, and the most gold: their Fatherland is the satisfaction of desires and needs that bring down the noble instincts of the human minds and hearts! I will state one more time that the gray mass of workers, in this time of crisis and unemployment, has understood the meaning of Fatherland and patriotism. Now, thanks be to God, when under a new leader, filled with the fear of God and a feeling of justice for everyone, our country is beginning to lift itself up from the heavy cross of unemployment and distrust. The ravens of misfortune are appearing, seeking prey in the ruins of the remaining unhappiness, amidst the burn-outs of despair and sadness, and they are proclaiming to you persistently, with an endurance that should be used to better affairs, godless teachings and perverted principles. Don’t listen to them and do not believe them. They are the paid agents of red propaganda. What banner they gather under is less important as are the slogans they use. They are Judases, who for several pieces of money are selling freedom and happiness, especially that of the workers. Your fortune or misfortune does not interest them and they care about it even less. They proclaim that they are fighting capitalism: that they are standing in your defense. Those are naked words and empty phrases.

I will be the first to admit that the capitalist system is unjust and defective. This system brought about defeat and suffering. But this system has to be washed, laundered, cleaned, renewed, and bettered. It is true that it has its mistakes and defects but it also contains, at the same time, certain virtues and merits! This system could be compared to an enormous steam machine, which for reasons of the machinist’s neglect, has broken down and stopped! We only need to turn a screw here and there, strengthen the springs, grease the wheel, and the giant will move and carry human happiness to its goals! The apostles of sandy principles and godless teachings, hang or lure the simple-minded or the mindless with the banner of communism or bolshevism.

As an example, I point to the Soviet monster which has already changed into a bolshevist demon. They have quite an example to point to. Over there, communism has changed the rational man into a mindless instrument of the government machine. The country of hardworking and peaceful peasants has changed into the country of slaves where the horse and cattle are valued more than the peasant-worker! The dignity of man is being drowned in suffering and pain! The commissioner tyranny has surpassed the cruelty of all Roman emperors. In the hands of a few red leaders, there rests greater wealth than was ever lorded over by the Moscow Tsar and his whole family! What do the other millions of peasants do? They feed on tree bark and die of hunger. The current capitalist set-up is defective; the communist system is even worse and even more base because it causes both material and moral collapse: because it crushes the body and the soul: because it breaks the conscience and the heart: because it steals everything and gives nothing in return!

Already in 1922, so ten years ago, the Holy Father Pius XI indicated to the world what the means were of avoiding the greed and desire of power. In the past year, as in 1932, he wrote and harshly rebuked a certain class of the wealthy, “The current financial and market crisis has squeezed all of humanity to such an extent that the more hopeless the entanglement, the more it tries to force its way out. Even the handful of the wealthy, who control enormous amounts of money and almost rule the world- they, and they are few in number, who with an unrestrained appetite of enriching themselves, have contributed and continue to contribute to such unfortunate circumstances. Even they, we repeat, very often are the first to fall victims to this crisis, carrying with their own ruin the resources and wealth of the wide masses.” The Pope often also repeats that the only medicine for the material and moral sickness is a return to Christ’s principles. Whole nations and the whole world are to return to them, not just individuals. At that time, the wealthy man will see the poor as his fellow brother: the employer will treat his workers like his close ones: the official will see that he is a public servant, not an all-powerful lord of the life and property of citizens.

We are currently on the road to these principles; to these principles we are going and we approach them! The road is blocked with various obstacles; it will have to be cleaned and cleared. This is work that cannot be executed in a few weeks or even in a few months. It requires a little more time than that. From the time of installing the new president, from the road to well-being, two giant obstacles have been removed: the witch-prohibition, which instead of on a broom rode on the barrels of poisonous moonshine, and the witch who stood in the financial palaces and changed the dollars, drenched in your sweat and blood, into worthless papers of other countries! It is not surprising that our country looks at the president with trust at the calm and rationally practical look of the new presidency, and sees a twentieth century Moses, who will tear out our country from the plagues of unemployment, suffering and will point to order, well-being, and peaceful happiness. You workers, who in these past few years have showed so much stamina and endurance, do not listen to those who now want to take you under their wing. Your answer to their attempts should be the answer of Ferdynand Karaś to the partitioning Prussians:

When the peasant shouts- it’s like thunder!

When he waves- it’s like a great crash!

He squeezes in his fist- it grinds!

Hardship is foreign to him.

March then, German- Who to pleasure

Pastured the bread of Polish farming-

The open world! These are not jokes,

When the people’s brows are wrinkled!