April 22, 1951

Dear Countrymen and Countrywomen, I greet you with the words: Praised be Our Lord, Jesus Christ!

In January of the current year, there was a gathering of the Catholic League in Chicago. There, in a plenary session it was decided to have a collection in the Parishes of the United States on the first Sunday of May. What was the reason to pick the first Sunday of May and not some other Sunday of the year? Because it is the closest to the Celebration of our Heavenly Mother, Protectress of Jasna Gora and the Feast of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Queen of Poland. The American Episcopate graciously approved of the Catholic League’s effort on behalf of the Polish people as His Eminence Cardinal Stritch “behind the Iron Curtain especially who are with no schools, no churches, and with meager subsistence. Pope Pius XII wishes the Catholic League to continue its works of mercy “with great fervor and dedication.” The Polish Primate begs and encourages us in the great work and maintains that there are many years ahead to accomplish the task. Cardinal Spellman from New York writes: “We pray Thee Almighty God, look with compassion on the suffering people of Poland, afflicted with cruel injustice, miseries and sorrows. Grant that we of America may be like unto Simon of Cyrene assisting the Redeemer in carrying the Cross of humanities sins and that by our generous help we may assist martyred Poland in bearing the burden of woes that now oppress her!” Do the words of the Primate about the martyrdom and heroism, and begging the American Episcopate with the Cardinals concern and begging the American people to help the Polish people in their terrible crisis. I intensely hope and believe heartily that when “week of mercy” beginning with Sunday, the sixth of May, our people will demonstrate their faith, their sacrificial Christianity, by almsgiving... So, to the title of our talk:

 “Blessed Are the Merciful!”

The principal basis for today's miserable conditions on earth, the main reason for the very long procession of injustice calling to heaven for vengeance, without the slightest doubt ever is saturated with greed, always joined with desire and the desire to use, which again ends up with thick abuse! Along with that, add the self-aggrandizing and dirty egoism, which propels man’s weakness to possess everything and anything for personal interest and personal possession, and you have a murderous and slaying of the Christian love of neighbor? Can this symptom of the meanness and wickedness of man historically? No way! True, it may seem generally and pops up occasionally but it’s an old aphorism, as old as humanity itself. Listen to what our Lord warned the hordes about selfishness and overuse in living: He told the gathering about a rich miser, who cheated his workers, garnered more and more possession. He was self-satisfied at his ability to amass his goods and he wanted to insure what he had for fear of losing it before he could retire. Then he thought, I shall eat, drink, and be happy. But God said to him, “Fool, this day your soul will reprimand you, and what have you prepared for yourself. And so it is for material things are making him rich but he is not rich in the eyes of God. Probably, the Savior was not kidding when he criticized people who are self-loving, not merciful. Do not think that these qualities of character only signify the rich. Not at all. This moral disease has infiltrated not only the rich but middle class people, even the poor. The wise of this world suggest various ways to avoid this wantonness and occupation with self, this egoism but without avail, since the measures proposed by them and served not reach the source of the malady, so naturally they are not able to come in conflict with their negativity. One definitive and effective cure on these vices of people is found in the teachings of Christ, the Lord sin his teaching touches the heart and soul of the person; truly one can say that this teaching touches the heart and soul in order to heal them. And so the savior simply and without boundries reminds us with these words: ““Do not **store** **up** for yourselves **treasure**s on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But **store** **up** for yourselves **treasure**s in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your **treasure** is, there your heart will be also.” Christ the Lord, teacher of eternal and divine truths, wishing to free men’s hearts and souls of the chains and knots of wantonness, over indulgence and self-love; wishing to turn people away from seeking and chasing after material goods which chain us to the earth – senselessly and without good reason. The Savior knew well the perversity and weakness of human nature. He understood that man was a flip-flopping and stubborn entity. He knew that to some reward for goodness would not keep man away from selfishness; instead some loftier ideal noble in its greatness would move his heart and soul to be reward in itself. And so selfish, wanton ways of those in love with self and material things would show the way to Christian perfection. “If you wish to be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have a treasure in heaven; come and follow me!” Using these words, the Savior battles the weakness of mankind. It has served the Catholic Church for two thousand years. Notice how the Son of God slowly and in steps teaches people, heals human souls from wantonness and the propensity toward

Selfishness and material wantonness. How gradually and patiently He heals these unprofitable weaknesses. First he removes the roots of wantonness that is its deepest root cause

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and for them, but to no avail, since the measures proposed by them and served do not reach source of moral error, and so naturally they are not able to pause and counter the effects. The only real cure for these ailments and claudication of humanity is found in Christ alone teaching you because teaching of the Savior covers and affects the heart and soul of man; we can really say that that teaching affects the soul and heart of people in order to heal them. And so with boundless help it reminds us of the Lord’s words: “Do not save up for yourselves earthly treasures where rust and mold take hold or thieves can steal. But store up treasures in heaven where neither rust nor mold destroy and where there is no thievery. Wherever you treasure is, there is your heart! Christ the Lord the teacher of divine and eternal truths, in the desire to unchain the chains of wantonness excessive materialism and self-love; wishing to put a stop to man’s incessant craving of acquisition of earthly goods – the senseless actions of greed. The Savior as the Son of God, knew well the weakness and the contrariness of humanity. He understood that man’s character is wavering and has a contrariness in character. He knew that some are not swayed with rewards; instead, some kind of ideal of reason, honorable, and affecting the soul had a power of its own. For this reason, for self-loving souls, wanton, and surrounded by the idea of usage and acquisition of material goods, He paints the picture of Christian perfection: “I your wish to be perfect, go, sell all the you have and give to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven, then, come and follow me.” With these words, the Savior contradicts the insatiable appetite of mankind by the idea of poverty. This ideal has shown its adherence to be effective over two thousand years of its existence. Note how step by step the Son of God has revealed its healing power. Step by step, the first inclinations of this wantonness are substituted by the seeds of love of neighbor and of brotherly love. “You shall love your neighbor like yourself!” And when in doubt, when we ask, “But Lord, who is my neighbor?” He leads us by the hand to the roadside to a man who is with wounds and skin eruptions on the road to Jerusalem and Jericho and shows us that anyone even a beggar along our road is our neighbor, our brother needing our assistance and mercy when suffering or in trouble and support. To urge people to love and mercy he makes the promise:
Amen, amen is say to you whatever you have done to the least of my brothers, you have done to me. Whoever has given a drink to the least of my brethren will not go unrewarded.” - But as I have already indicated, Christ the Lord, knowing our weakness and contrariness, he saw and knew how deeply and powerfully wantonness controlled decision and how senselessly it occupied man’s actions. His words take on a frightening characteristic. This time the Lord portrays the last judgement. He comes then as the ultimate Judge in all his majesty in lasting judgement. He comes not as the patient, merciful, peaceful, and as counselor but as a stern and just judge. There will be no appeal. There will be no time for appeal. No time. It will be too late for justification. Humanity will be divided at the right hand and the left hand. On the left will be the self-lovers, unmerciful, according to the Church Fathers. Besides, in case there is doubt, listen what Christ had to say: “then He will say to those on his left: Go away cursed into the eternal fire, which has be prepared by Satan and his horde. “Although I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was your guest and you did not receive me; naked and you did not clothe me or in jail and you did not liberate me; then they will ask Him, Lord when did we see you in need and refused you? Then the Judge will reply: Amen I say to you: What you did not do to the least of my brethren, you did not do to me. And so those who did not, will go to eternal punishment, and the just to eternal life. And that’s not only all. And in case this did not soften the hearts of the self-lovers and stone hearted who put their hands over their ears and closed their eyes, God’s Teacher, scatters the shadows of eternity and opens the doors to eternal happiness – to Heaven, and to the places of eternal suffering –Hell and paints this portrait: He tells of the rich man who clothed his aging flesh in royal purple. He basked in the goods of this world. He was sated with the goods of the world. . At home, day after day he arranged parties and sent out invitations while at his doorstep lie a suffering and hungry leper. He stretched out his bony hands for a crumb of bread to eat. He would happily have had some of the crumbs which fell of the table. But he called out in vain. Now, when it came to the last judgement. The rich man closed his eyes at the plight of the leper. Both died. Lazarus, the leper, went into the lap of Abraham that is to eternal happiness, while the rich man’s soul was buried in hell. Trembling in his suffering, the rich man turned his gaze to the status of Lazarus who was once impoverished and begging covered with sores and now in eternal happiness. He said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, give me a drop of water on my finger to relieve my thirst and suffering.” Abraham said to him: My son, remember that you had good fortune in your taste for the world; and Lazarus suffered as a leper and was reduced to begging. Now you go to the place of suffering while Lazarus to eternal happiness.” In all of scripture, in which I quoted to you, you can see how Our Lord took many means to teach his listeners and to build the idea of love of nature in the hearts of people which is nothing else but the idea of Christian mercy for the poor, and the hungry who hold their hands out to us. – Listen to the words of St. Basil the Great: “Though not a thief, that what God has given you to stewardship, you deemed your own! The bread which you hold is the hungry man’s; your shirt in your closet is the naked man’s, the money that you have in your miserliness is the poor man’s bread. St. John Chrysostom writes: ”Is it the very difficult that God demands of us? – He asks us to give what we have to the poor? You don’t beg alms from the Church to spend lavishly on personal things. Is what you have, really yours! God has given you so that you may help your neighbor who has not, whether you have a job or not. St. Augustine: “Keep what you need to self and house hold. Give the rest to Christ.

 The mission of the Catholic Church is essentially the continued and uninterrupted string mission of Christ. The Catholic Church builds the same Kingdom of God which Christ established. To that mission, among other principles, of love, of justice and of mercy! And in the words of Polish Primate, Cardinal Hloni: “The missions of the Church are as common as is common Christ’s redemption. His mission, is not only temporary but organized geographically; it encompasses all peoples, and is for all the future. It is not against any nationality. In its external operation it does not seek embraces any peoples, all corners of the world, all the centuries. It apostolizes through difficulty, humility, poverty and mercy! It battles for the truth, for spiritual worth for the goodness of mankind. It battles with evil and sin, not with mankind” The Church leads humanity toward the road of truth, the road of love, and the road of Mercy. It cannot do otherwise because it would go against its Founder, who is the way, the truth, and the life and who was Love and reminded mankind:
“Be merciful and you shall obtain mercy!” After all that, permit me to remind you as a sad fact, namely that among us, many believe that we can do whatever we want with what we have. How many times do we hear the spoken word: “It’s mine; I can do with it as I please, and no one has any right to tell me what to do with it!” The proud, selfish, self-sufficient man can speak this way but not the faithful, believing, loving, merciful man. Because, what do you have that has not been given to you. Besides God has borrowed you things for a temporary time, for fifty or sixty years and after that, “What?” You are the steward and holder of what you have while you have it and someday you will be judged on how you use it and then pay the rental fee. Others talk themselves out of mercy maintaining that though their things are borrowed, they are not told what to do with them or considered them our obligation to be stewards of. May I remind you all that a law of nature is extant and preternatural there is born an innate and which reminds us all: “Everything that you wish to be done for you, you must do unto others. Besides, in reality in the eyes of God, we are all beggars. In Sacred Scripture we have many commands to give alms. For example, God uses the voice of Moses to cry out to the people: “I command you to reach out your hand to your brother in need and who is poor, living with you on this **earth.” The wise man says without boundaries: “Do not turn your face away from the** poor man; do not deny him alms. The Lord often said, “Give alms.” St. John the Baptist writes: “Whoever has treasures on this earth and would see his brother in need, ought to share his treasures with him. To this advice to share, these are words from the sermons of the Pope, St. Leo the Great and St. John the Golden Tongued. The former spoke as if by inspiration: “Mercy is a virtue so great that without it, the other virtues are as nothing. If you have faith, are sober and pure; if you have a lack of mercy, you cannot come close to God. To quote the latter: “You garnered a treasure not only to consume yourself; no one took the property, you do not mass up a treasure only for yourself but to share with Christ’s household what you can spare. Remember the week of mercy, when the Catholic League collects the national drive for funds to further help the Polish Countrymen torn from their country and from their close and dear ones. As long as you have time, have mercy in order that mercy will be also given you.