April 29, 1951

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

On my desk is a pile of letters. These letters are from Catholic sources, which for various reasons came as a result of mixed marriages. The letters are replete with complaints, tears, lamentations and despair. There are also grumbling and complaints about understanding and dealing of the Church for mixed marriages. For details, please be patient. And so, I remind you that here in America neither the First World War, nor Prohibition, nor the Depression affected positively on the growth and intensification of faith, nor moralization. On the contrary. It unleashed playfulness and it did so under the slogan – freedom. Respect for the law lowered itself to zero. The laws of God, both natural and Christian. The laws of God, natural and Christian were thrown into the garbage can and trucked out to the dumps into the outskirts of the city. Freedom is a gift from God, priceless; but playfulness, accepting this and adopting it as personally your own, which is at times fickle, unstable and like that air - changing. - This is not the place to talk about the various charges brought against the Church in the strict ban on mixed religious marriages. Besides, more than once in these twenty years in the radio ministry I dismissed these accusations and so I took little time in explaining the Church’s stand in regard to such marriages. I have on mind Christian marriages, in which there should be harmony in the family. And that requires unity in the views of the origin, destination and vocation of man. Is that oneness even possible to be harmonious when the husband believes in one thing and the wife in another. Experience in life’s processes not only speaks but shouts: “No husband and wife should have mutual interest so that both pull the marriage wagon. They should share the burden of the load. Is that easily attained in the mixed marriage and here experience again takes a negative stance? The children even eventually take a separate stance. Some of the children will take the part with the mother; the others with the father –and that’s the tragedy, which is the tragedy to God, Faith, Family and Society. Therefore the Church, ignoring the accusations of backwardness and one-sidedness, ignoring those who claim that the Church is opposed the marriage in the development of humanity. I point out that they think that people are like cattle and the house a stable. I beg pardon that I use such a comparison but I think it logical and of necessity. And so, to today’s talk under the title:

LISTEN TO ME, SON

Under the title: “in what way did Szpitzfinder become a Calvenist” from the gazette: “Our Friend” this true story which is a bit joyous and more sad and painful. “On the day of September eleventh, I was in the Metropolitan Curia in Warsaw, where I happened to be waiting for some time for certain documents which I needed to have! In the meantime, I was witness to the following scene. This young man, let’s call him Szpitzfinder walks into the waiting room unceremoniously, walks up to the Porter, grabs him by the arms and says loudly, “Sir, do you know if I am able to marry my stepmother? The Porter who has a knowledge of marriage law, after a long pause, said, “Probably not!” “Why don’t you go to your Pastor,” the reply.” “?What! to my Pastor Szpitzfinder cries out load angrily! That’s not a properly informed man. More like the Bishop, said the Porter. But I don’t think the Bishop will be of any help. What good is that, Szpizfiner says; so that means that I can’t get married. After all, my father died, and he had no children with her. Besides there were three of us, each having our own. Hey, man, retorted another man in the waiting room, that’s something you cannot do. “What do mean I can’t do it, Szpitzfinder, says! Everything goes forward nowadays; people get rid of their governments, tradition is thrown out the window, contracts are broken etc. The culture enfolds; Catholic clergy do not change the rules at all as if it were the middle ages. – Yes indeed- If they do not permit marriage vows in the Catholic church, they permit it among the Calvinists and so I neither believe in the one or the other, except I’m a bit ashamed. The porter paced up and back in the room and was silent. Mr. Szpitzfinder asks the Porter why he is so irritated? He responds, “Because they deal lightly with such an important matter.” I will go to the Calvinists; it will not drill a hole in the heavens; without a soldier in heaven, it will not matter. Today, more and more people do not believe, the hour of problems now comes to the Catholic clergy. The door to the chancery opens – please come in; the chancellor welcomes you. The Porter says to Szpitzfinder, please come in. What will the chancellor say; what will those present think. Will he get a dispensation? A long pause – does he think rightly or not. After all she was his mother, why couldn’t she be his wife? The Chancellor says absolutely not; even the Pope could not give a dispensation. What therefore is left to do? The chancellor denied permission; I will go to the Calvinists. There lacks any kind of response to conscience, admonition from parents, no question of going to another faith, the Calvinists. And so the repercussions end in a catastrophe. I give another example from an article in the Polish London Daily. “The previously planned marriage in the Catholic Church did not pan out. Mixed marriages have been around for quite a while. We promised that we would bring up the Children in the Catholic faith. Besides the Church’s not looking upon the marriage with satisfaction. The Catholic church never looks upon as fraught with difficulties. It permits it but does not tolerate it in certain instances. But back to the letter, “In the cottage on the borderlands, a Polish wife, before Christmas, sitting on the bench sad wife of a farmer. She is deeply pensive! Wife and a Catholic. Husband is an Orthodox Russian. At this moment, reveries take he back to her family of days ago and her youthful days, when at Christmas was a delight for everyone in the family as well as in the whole village. The hustle and bustle of preparation for the holidays contributed to the joy of the family. Everyone felt united during the holiday season. Everyone went to confession during the Season of Advent. Everyone knew that one could not celebrate with anger in their heart. Even the brother, Anthony, who came from the army and waged war with his father. He was so wise – a corporal – had to obey the family when he came back from military where he was not a subordinate and gave orders. Anthony’s mother called him to her and with a word reminded him that he has to kiss the hand of his father before he broke the opłatek with him and thank him for everything that he has and ask forgiveness for anything bad he did to his father. Anthony murmured something to himself. And mother reminded the father too, to forgive Anthony at least during the happy time of Christmas. These and similar pleasant scenes of yore moved themselves through her memory. The celebration of the birth of Christ – days in which Christmas carols were sung, and visit to relatives, acquaintances, neighbors on Christmas Eve. We wished each other special greetings and broke the Christmas wafer…. And now… She broke into tender tears. Now, things were different. Now, in her own home, holidays were different; not as joyful but in the heavy chains of sadness, accusations, quarrels. In her home were celebrated two different kinds of Christmas under one roof – Polish and Russian. The first on December 25; the other on January 7th. The sharp, loud voice of her husband reminded her and the Catholic tradition only her daughters went with her to church and the sons went with the father to his church. Before taking the marriage vows both her husband and she agreed on everything. He signed the prenuptial agreement and vowed that there be unity and agreements but after the marriage he forgot about his promises. He repeated the same sentence over and over: “Bring up your daughters as papists.” You can go to Rome with them. Thus went our holidays. If I had the foresight – she sighed. But then again, one was young and foolish; one did not listen to the elders and life experienced. It is true when they say that mixed marriages are bad luck!!” I am reminded of the author who wrote: “It seems to the young that when their hearts flutter, like roosters flutter with their wings, that there will no longer be troubles, and, when together, everything will be good and bright, and smooth as butter. Sometimes carefulness, rarely fear, that no one will expect things of her and shuts her maiden ears to the words of elders, to the words of experience, until the troubles looms over their young heads and they understand but, alas, it is too late. The Catholic church has the experience of ages which it gathers from the whole world! It collects in from all the peoples of the earth. The family, which God himself gave the care and rearing of children, never carries out its responsibilities without unity and agreement. It does not in the love of God people automatically having virtues, does not give the nations citizens with correct and hearty characteristics. The family union comes with the unity of fait h. True God is One. But He wishes to tie the family to the hearts of people with true faith and that faith is found in the Catholic Church. And so, in matters of faith it does not know and cannot know compromises, concessions to other denominations that are not of Christ. The Church defends human souls, and must address the faithful that they protect their souls and the souls of their children. The Church recognizes that the family wishes that the spirit of Christ uphold the family. The Church wishes that the school, to which the youth attends, was also the school with a Catholic faith and with a Catholic Spirit. The divided spirit of the two different faiths makes the rearing of the children very difficult with the conflict of religious belief. The difference is a grave danger even as the salvation of the child is concerned. This is the reason the Church for ages warned against marriages between spouses of differing faiths, when a Christian heresy is present whether in the protestant or other non-Catholic faiths. For example one party is baptized and the other is not, as in Muslims or Pagans. The bishop of archbishop may dispense in certain cases; in others it is the Apostolic See that is needed for the dispensation. In both of these cases, if there was a danger of loss of faith from the Catholic partners side and the eventual loss on the part of the children of the marriage, then this kind of marriage would prohibitive not only from the part of the Church but it would be against the law of God as well. No one has the right to place their faith in a danger of loss, and very much more so to expose children to dangers of great spiritual loss. - The Church, in certain instances, gives a dispensation in mixed faiths, have been assured in each individual reason when there is a possibility of no imminent danger of large marriage problems because of the differences. Certain conditions have to be present if there is to be a dispensation. First, the reasons for dispensation must be weighty and important; the intention must be sincere and such that the truth with no lies or expectation of insincerity. Secondly, that there is reasonable assurance that the promises made by the parties will be kept, especially that the non-Catholic party will permit the Catholic party to carry out its responsibilities; that the children will be baptized Catholic and will be brought up in the Catholic Faith; and that the spouses will not go to a spiritual director of another faith. Thirdly, the assurance that the promises will be kept. It should be noted that the Catholic party ought to conscientiously strive to bring the non-Catholic faith to the spouse. The priest obtaining the dispensation from the bishop should make the Bishopric confident that the marriage is morally constituted with the promises made. The priest takes on the responsibilities that the marriage is constituted canonically. All should be taken in good will. Previously, mixed married occurred in the parish chancery (in the office). However, a course taking teaching the responsibilities of the non-Catholic about the responsibilities of the married couple in a mixed marriage is required. Canon law in article 1600: “The Catholic Church strongly prohibits the marriage between baptized spouses but one non Catholic and the other atheist or of a different faith if the is a danger of loss of faith there is a breaking of divine law. Pope Pius XI, in an encyclical on marriage adds a further clarification on December 31, 1930: “Although the Church at times, dealing with the times and the disposition of the spouses, seeks the ability to permit marriage and under certain condition that there is no harm to the Catholic party. There is also the sad concern that the children of such marriages are faced with dangers of loss of faith. Considering all, in mixed marriages, the spiritual life is made difficult because of differing views on faith, which ought to echo Christ’s union with the Church. In such marriages, the union of souls in married life is lacking as far as married life is the pride of the Christian way. The bonds break or at least loosen the interior nodes there in matters of spirituality which ae the ultimate and the highest aspects that man loves, namely faith and religious life, and dismantled and make them difficult to exist. The result is a more threatening danger. The mutual love, which is the heart of the matter of the spouses, disappears. Centuries ago the Roman law held: “Marriage is the tying of a man and woman is the center of life and the carrying out of the laws of God and man!”

As I understand it, in some Catholic Churches in England, every first Sunday of the month, the following announcement is made: “Since the

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Church has always banned mixed marriages, and advises to convince young people from entering into intimate relationship with non-Catholics. If such a relationship exists already from the non-Catholic side, the catholic should inform the non-Catholic the laws of the Church on mixed marriages. The Pastor should inform the non-Catholic the need to get acquainted with the laws of the Catholic Church in order that in the love of God and loyalty to the laws of the church of God and the good of their eternal souls remember and abide by the laws of Mother Church. The parents of the spouses are to be reminded of their obligations in order that the couple may be informed on the difficulties to be encountered by them and their children. Mixed marriages bring about many pitfalls, because where there should be love but there is hatred, instead of agreement there is conflict, instead of peace there is war; they are on the road to a civil divorce in court. Sad scenes of life’s road, real and daily are the fare. The Church law writes: “In the parish rectory we see the tragic results of mixed marriages.” There, the entire life of the couple is in the hands of the priest and it is there that the priest strives to make sure of the action which they are undertaking. They open their hearts to his words. They know well to be open to the priest because they put confidence in the priest. – What can I do, asks the young man – the wife isn’t polish and non-Catholic, and she throws this sectarian stuff at me about my children that I can’t take living with her. I do not wish to surrender my children to her for how will she bring them up? The Catholic views the promises are as any promises you make which could be broken on some pretext.

May these observations serve to convince people who are defending mixed marriages? And those, who wish to change the opinion of the Catholic Church on mixed marriages.The experiences taken from real life situations protects the souls of the spouses and the children. Every priest examines the plans of the couple. Their salvation and happy marriage comes from proven cases of mixed marriage. He knows that marriages contrary to the love and God and neighbor come to naught.

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