April 30, 1950

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

On February 12, 1929, the smallest country was born in the world. On that day, on the strength of the Lateran treaty, the Vatican City was born. The area of the Vatican covers 108.7 acres and is home to 1025 citizens. On this small terrain stands the largest temple of the world and the immense Vatican Palace comprised of more than a thousand chambers, halls, and galleries. In addition, located there are mint for printing money, a post office, a printery in which many publications in various languages are printed including Hebrew, Chinese, Japanese, Syrian, Coptic. There is a short network V H J which is on day and night. The Vatican has its own telephone and telegraph network established in 1930, gifted by a New York firm, and a railway. There is no dearth of astronomical and geodesic observatories. It is a marvel to see. Newspapers, periodicals, political, illustrated, special, etc. Learned authors write tomes about this and that, worth of historic value. The Vatican museum is filled with the history of the church. Not much is written about the mosaic factory in which artists create miraculously beautiful portraits from multicolored pieces of marble, precious stones, porcelain and stones. From all of this work comes and unearthly beauty. The factory has a long time history, since 1576. In various shelves and drawers exist countless precious stones in a multicolored collection. Among these, the two most beautiful colors are scarlet red and Madonna blue. There are a thousand two hundred. The factory held me in awe. The precious stones reminded me of individual nation. I saw in the precious stones the life of mankind bright, rosy, happy, or dark, sober, cloudy, hurting, and sad. Taken as a whole, they portray the miraculous wholeness of human life. It all inspired me to write today’s talk:

LEAVES FROM THE GARDEN OF LIFE

Dear Father Justin:

I am eighteen year sold and don’t plan to be any king of a preacher or counselor, neither a unbaked lawyer, but I have my eyes on what is happening around me and I noticed that parents care little for their children or care nothing at all and as a result they are not cared for. Parents do not raise or watch their children growing up. They don’t care where their children are going, whom they are associating with and where they hang out. I go to high school and I know what I am talking about. Young people plan their evening activities, plan private parties, don’t return home before midnight and if the parents are asked if they allow them to do that they always refer to their parents as “the old folks” don’t care because they go out themselves and return home in the morning drunk or they say “my old man doesn’t care what I do! – I know of instances when parents sign papers for their underage daughters to falsify their age and get married so they could get rid of them. The children live together for a while. Some marry secretly. Then they get divorced and seek another partner. There are parents, who know that such things are going on, but do not care. They think that marriage is only an entertainment. What do we know about the obligations of marriage? I thank God that I have caring parents although they are too strict. I am obliged to be home before ten. I was taught to report to them as to where I am going, where I’m going and with whom. Father, don’t think that I want to be a religious or stay single all my life, but when I look at the behavior of the young and hear their conversations, I feel sick. Father Justin, please give a talk about the behavior of some of the young people who do as they please.”

My dear young man: how many times have I reminded parents of their responsibility in raising their children properly and care about what they are doing and how they are behaving. How often I have reminded parents to be interested in what their sons and daughters are reading, where and with him they are going out, with whom they are partying etc. But what good is that. Unless the parents and children understand the meaning of family and its relationship to God, we will go the way of France and we will be bankrupt physically and morally. In these modern times there are few homes that you may term fortresses in which the father is king and the mother, queen. Today the house is a hotel, restaurant, and a so-called guest house. All members have their own keys to get into the house. In the evening, no one sits at home. Everyone goes somewhere, the father, the mother, the son and the daughter. The pet dog and cat go their ways. Need I talk any more about this matter?

“Dear Father:

I am a regular listener of the Rosary Hour, but why don’t you, Father, say something about discarding of devotion in the Polish language and encouraging to devotions in English. Father, you talk about careless mothers and priests or nuns who do not speak to us in Polish? Not so long ago we were taught to read, write in Polish, study grammar, history, and catechism. Every child had to have a English devotional pamphlet or book. Now schools have scrapped Polish books. Everything is cold and done in haste. Once upon a time children were encouraged to learn Polish; now they are discouraged. Now they don’t speak in Polish at all. They follow the path and speak in French. God probably didn’t understand Polish talk because the French elite didn’t talk Polish. Perhaps the modern priest and modern Nuns do not understand me. They do not understand my passion for the Polish language. However, we cannot blame the nuns or the spiritual directors for the situation. There are other forces at work here. Some people say that the Polish language is not really necessary in America.

“Dear Justin:

Father, you always praise the mothers in Poland. It seems to me that here in America our mothers have their worth also. Not all, after all, spend their time at entertainments in a variety of places. American-Polish mothers are also caring, hard workers, and frugal and need to receive great credit.” This letter consists of four pages full of praises for American mothers. I am glad to receive this letter, but I would like to ask when and on which occasion I always praised only mothers from Poland, and did not mention the worth of American mothers? Perhaps your reference was to some other Justin, not this one talking to you now! This I will guarantee. How many times did I say that there are no better mothers than ours? How many times have I spoken to children to thank God for their mothers who are pious, caring, economical, good house keepers, and dedicated to their families? I told them that their mothers deserve praise for these Polish time-honored traits. Here is an article with the title, “Lady-Mother,” found in the publication, “Nowy Świat”. Those two seemingly modest words are in reality pillars to what we call family, society, and nation! The arch-thief, Hitler, had a hellish hatred for Poles, observing their fidelity to the life of the nation and their rejection of his oppression of the Polish people. Hitler, along with the whole bunch of Nazi thugs, decided to murder the entire Polish nation. In one of his talks, Hitler warned that “One Polish woman is most dangerous to me that a hundred armed soldiers. – The enemy knew that unless he didn’t destroy the strong women, he never will be able to dominate the country of Poland. It is said that similar to Hitler’s view, the gauleiter of Poznan, Greiser said once publically that Polish women should be set to work and when they were not able to work, they could be buried alive. Stained with the blood of Polish children, the German criminals tried to assassinate Polish women. The Nazi criminals were lost in shame but the Polish lady lives on, not in a halo of glory but as a silent hero. One can add that hundreds, even thousands of examples of bravery and dedication of Polish mothers, wives, and daughters. Thanks to the Polish nation did not break apart, did not lose heart, but fought with the German evil doer, and now fights with the Soviet occupier. The Polish ladies left us many, many beautiful examples. They stand as models of perfection, of manhood, of sacrifices. It is our duty to honor the Polish ladies and care to protect them so that never will dare to deny how they were victorious against the dying enemy.

And now someone writes: “Often I have to work on Sunday. Once in a while I get to listen to the Rosary Hour, the broadcasts of which are worthwhile for elderly listeners as well as for the young. I heard one of the broadcasts on February 22nd when the title of the program was: “MAKE UP YOUR MIND.” That phrase, in my opinion, was the most beautiful and learned of my path in life. It has brought me satisfaction and happiness in over forty years. When I was eighteen years old, I left my parents in Poland and came to America to seek a better piece of bread. I had a big head, but empty and playful. Seeing what was going on here, I came to the conclusion that only fools work hard, but I have a head on my shoulders and I know better. I knew that you don’t have to work hard and still live well. I tried to live that kind of a life. So what happened when I proceeded to live a life according to that principle? I soon became an old man and a drifter. I hung out with other “bums” My paradise became a flop house. One day something bothered me: that I would visit a Polish girl where I had previously lived. I came across a dance hall where there was entertainment. I went there. No one there was willing to give me a hand, no one wanted to talk to me, because who would want to talk with such a Madison Avenue bum. At last everyone left, each to his home to his or her family. I left to sleep under a bridge. Then the road led me to Seventh Avenue to St. Adalbert’s Church where I used to attend when I first came to America. When I entered through the main doors of the church some unseen force stopped me in my tracks. I stood riveted to the floor without moving. Some hidden inner voice shouted at me. “MAKE UP YOUR MIND.” I began to think about that! It seemed to me that some hand kept me riveted to the church floor. I took off my hat and said, My God! What happened to me? When I had attended this church years, I prayed, I had a job, I had good health, I had some worth, people had a good opinion of me, and I had money in my pocket. And now, here am I and what do I possess? I blessed myself and breathed deeply to God: “Lord, help me return to a simple and honest way of life.” At that time I made up my mind to begin a new life. So that was my conversion to a new way of life. That was the last night in my useless and Gypsy life style. I started to go to church. I went to a dive in the Polish district. I found a job. I stopped drinking. From that moment of decision, I was happy, because God gave me health and after health, the passion for work. Since then, in thirty eight years, I missed only two weeks. I never was in need, I always had food. I reared my children and clothed them well and gave them a proper education. An asset in my life is my good wife. I have enough money stashed away for my retirement. If I hadn’t made that decision and asked for God’s help, I would have died long ago. A man without God can do nothing and accomplish nothing. A man with God’s help can accomplish anything.” – Enough of the letter.

Another example: “Dear Father: I belong to the Rosary Hour for years, and I still listen to the programs that I listened to when I was with my parents. Father, you succinctly and effectively described family life and its workings, and the issues of youth that it made a great impression upon me. At the age of twenty, I courted a man who was four years older than I was. He was a Catholic and a Pole. We both sang on the church choir and we went out together for two years. Before we married, we had the same outlooks on life and on our future. I wanted children but he wanted none of that. He laughed and made fun of me. Later he quit going to church and forbad me to do so also. I had two abortions. I did not wish this murder, but he forced me to do so. To protect my third child from an abortion, I left this horrible man and divorced him four years later, since I feared him. I lived by myself and decided to remain single. I did not want him to raise the children with his attitudes. I decided to raise them Catholic. I ask you, Father Justin, to speak to this issue on the radio to such men about abortion, about forcing their wives to abort their children. Also not to condemn widows such as I. Am I to be blamed for devorcing him in order to save my child? Since my divorce I have not done anything which I ought to be ashamed of. I work and practice my Catholic religion. People who do not know my past criticize me and spread rumors about me. Despite my striving in conscience to lead a good life, I’ve come to the end of the line, I ask myself, if like other devorcees, I lead a happy and uncaring life. Two things they criticize me. My conscience and by religious upbringing at home, keeps me on the right path, even though my life is filled with troubles. May it not be apropos to cite Christ’s words: “Who of you is without sin, let this be the first to raise a rock?” And none could answer that question, they all walked away.” Truly, people’s tongues poison and kill without mercy and without any mercy, not knowing another human being’s status of mind and experiences and they set themselves up as judges. They forget: “Do not judge and you shall not be judged.” - Suspicion, slander, gossip, insults, slander are "snake venom on the lips of people" - And these God punishes!

Again, a few events from a long and sad letter in the English language: Dear Father Justin: I am a young married woman with a daughter three years of age! My husband has left me eleven weeks ago, and hasn’t seen his child at all for five weeks, although he lives only a few homes away with his mother and sisters. When I first got married, I lived with my in-laws because we couldn’t find a separate home. From the very first day, they tried to come between us. They never got along with anyone. We had it very hard. What we used for a kitchen had no pantry or sink, so I had to wash dishes in the bathroom. His mother would bring up some food and say: “Don’t eat here because mine is better!” When I was pregnant, she would bring up all kinds of food, pies, cakes and candy to my husband, admonishing him, not to pass any to me, because I was unworthy of anything! Things were getting worse and worse, and finally we found a tenement. That didn’t like that, because for the two rooms, which they roamed over at pleasure, we paid them fifteen dollar a month and paid half of the gas and electric bills. At this time my husband had an accident and broke his leg. So I cleaned, painted and papered the three rooms, and finally we started on our own. It was heaven, but it didn’t last long. Things didn’t turn out as they should have. They kept writing notes that they wanted to see him. Well, it started right there and then. He would get up in the morning, have his breakfast, away he would go. He would return for dinner and off again. His travelling visits would depend on the various shifts he worked in the mill. Sometimes he would return from his mother and sisters at one and two o’clock in the morning. What he did there, I don’t know until this day. He only came to eat and sleep. Isn’t it strange that his mother didn’t offer him his meals, as long as she did when we lived at her house? I had to do all the meals, as she did when we lived at her house: I had to do all the hard work around the house, because he wouldn’t do a thing. When I asked him to chop some wood, he simply mumbled: “You’re no cripple; do it yourself!” Well, I couldn’t take it any longer. So I told him: “You either treat me like your wife, or go where all the trouble comes from.” So he went to his mother! I have been shocked hearing things about my husband’s behavior. Even his own relatives claim that he walks the streets like a bum! I myself am a complete nervous wreck under a doctor’s care! Father, please speak to the in-laws and tell them not to break up the homes of young couples, who want to be left alone to lead a normal, happy family life!” There are certain fathers, and what is worse, some mothers feel very offended when their child, an only child, has left them for another. It is not a good attitude on the parents’ part. Such parents have a selfish motive in terms of parental love. They run their lives only thinking of themselves and not the marriage of their son or daughter. The parents of the son or daughter feel the hurt of losing their progeny to someone else. It leads to quarreling and puts the newlyweds in awkward situations. The parents feel that everything the newlyweds do is wrong and feel hurt that they didn’t ask for their advice and so it creates ill will, misunderstanding – the young couple should understand that they can’t hang on to their mother’s apron strings forever. It is their life to start a family and do as they want and not be governed by their in-laws.