April 7, 1935

As a preface to today's talk, in order to motivate you toward unusual dedication in the Catholic Charities Campaign which is beginning its drive and will last all week, I add the words of St. John Chrysostom: "when you give alms do not think of an earthly reward but permit your alms to be really alms and don't make it a commercial venture. Many received a reward on this earth, but more importantly it is not so that they would have more than those who did not receive. They fell to human weakness and received a thank you for their effort. They confuse earthly recompense with heavenly reward. They are similar to children who fill themselves up with junk food before dinner and do not wait for dinner therefore do not obtain the benefits of nutritious food. So those who receive an earthly reward lose the heavenly one and are to blame themselves for that.

The operating principle that is prevalent, even with good and industrious people, is: Everyone for themselves! And so we have an army of self-loving egoists who close their hearts - the poor do not interest them; they close their eyes, so as not to see the plight of the poor. They close their pockets to prevent helping the unfortunate, contrary to the dictate of the Lord: From what you have, give alms. This twentieth century displays a curious and worrisome portrait. Some in the hardness of their heart "amply use the goods of this earth while a whole army of Lazaruses in the person of orphans, displaced persons, the elderly, the unfortunate, and without work, lift their eyes and hold out emaciated and bony hands, kneel on their knees and call out with a voice of sadness and doubt: "from what you have give us a little we humbly beg... you see my situation, you see our need; soften your hearts and be merciful on me. Perhaps you also do not have much, and I have nothing; I am small, helpless, which is not my fault, except perhaps the father without a heart and a mother without a conscience. They gave me life and then threw me away. Won't you help me? Sir, have a heart. Where did we fail so that we face a mother who died and a father who threw us out of our home. We orphans do not know the motherly kiss or fatherly hug; do you not remember when growing up peacefully and happily at the side of a loving mother and under the caring eye of your father..... and I??? Like the weeping pine in the forest! - Visit the home of the elderly, which the world looks upon as human dust and hesitates to observe. Human beings, broken in body and spirit. The poor, abandoned and forgotten not only by the world but by friends, relatives, family and even by their own children. Do these thankless gravestones of forgetfulness not speak to your hearts?" They say to you: "What we are today, you will be tomorrow. And that tomorrow is not too far away! The elderly mother, who brought up a group of children, gave them everything she could in her concern for them, brought them up and cared for them and for whom in her own home there wasn't found a peaceful corner under caring hearts; has she found table, bed and rest. The elderly father who lived not for himself but for the children, in reward for his work and dedication, despite the fact that the children life peacefully and comfortably, had to look for upkeep and love. Will you, for such unfortunates and similar souls show some Christian mercy and forget to help them, to feed and give drink to these trembling elderly? Look into the homes of the jobless and abandoned. See the depravation, the poverty and the forgetfulness. Will you, from all that you have, not give alms?"

 St. Gregory, asked from the pulpit: "Do not distress yourself. When the poor begs for help, it is not for your portion but for his that he asks? He has a right to his portion. If you deny him, you deny also his right to survival. After your denial, would not you conscience be moved. Would not there come to your heart a certain sorrow, and a dissatisfaction from your lack of mercy as if you failed your obligations. It is another thing if the poor are supported.... not sadness but joy appears. The help is not only a mercy but a deed of justice. That small portion that we gave was not ours. The neighbor had a right to it if it was dispensable to us. We gave it and we are blessed with joy.

 St. Augustine writes: "Be not concerned. Giving alms is a necessary thing. Whoever capriciously denies alms or willingly denied, is always guilty in the name of the gospel. If he hoarded of carelessly spent what he had, did indeed deny the poor their need. He not only was unmerciful but did not do the right thing. The courts of the world will not find him guilty but the heavenly court will pass judge

ment. Even during his life, his conscience will not give him peace until they follow the gospel direction: "From the excess that you have, give alms."

 Without the poor no one shall enter heaven. The gate of heaven is kept by the poor and the needy. They are the Lord's gate-keepers and his friends and brothers. We need to make acquaintance with them and make certain of our eternal rest. This week give the offering you can for the Catholic Charities. Your alms will bring a hundred-fold reward! Perhaps you do not believe that. Listen: A certain rich man, having been raised in comfort, walked sad and unsatisfied. One day he went on a walk with his teacher. He was a man of good heart. As they walked through the woods, they came upon a farm plowing the field. His poverty and saving habits got him to leave his shoes in the bushes to save wear. The student of the teacher who was taught through generations that the farmer was a worthless ham and wanted to hide the farmers shoes. The teacher scolded him fiercely. He said, "instead of doing him this disservice, he should do him a good deed. Put in a couple dollars into his shoes. Then we will hide and observe what the farmer will do when he begins to put his shoes on." The student did as the teacher advised. Then they hid. Not long after, the farmer ended his work and took on the task of putting on his shoes. He put them on and rose to find some discomfort. Again he sat and felt to see what was causing the discomfort. When he saw the money he knelt raised his eyes to heaven and started to thank God, that He sent aid in his time of need and prayed for his benefactor. The student hearing the sincere prayer of the farmer, broke out in tears and said to the teacher: "I never in my life have been so happy. - When this week the collectors come to your doorstep, do not look at them as if they were going to rob you, do not send them away with promises, because they come in the stead of orphans, the poor and the abandoned. They come not for themselves but for the poor and the abandoned. Please be generous with your offering. You will be happy for your good heart and the prayers of children, innocent orphans will be added to the pleas of the elderly and the poor in a wreathe of health and blessings of God for you and yours. Let us all do our share in our diocese in the Catholic Charities appeal.

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

In just two weeks, the yearly Lent will be history. The sorrowful songs will cease: "My dear Lord, as you kneel bleeding in the Garden of Olives..." and "Jesus Christ, my Good Lord, patient lamb, you lifting the cross with your hands, for my injustices..." as well as other intensely emotional hymns. In their place joyous hymns will take their place..."Christ has risen.." and "A happy day has dawned" - Instead of meditating on the Passion of the Lord which is sad and painful, on Palm Sunday, before the resurrection we will sing about the victory of truth over lies, light over darkness, life over death and today on Passion Sunday we hesitate a while and collect our thoughts. Let every man and woman look into the depths of their hearts, into their consciences, and into their hearts, and sincerely and seriously ask themselves: Is everything in order with me? Because only that person can joyously and satisfactory observe Easter, those who spent Lent putting themselves in the good graces of God, who determined to live by God's laws! I maintain again that there are no people like the Polish people on the face of the earth. And that holds for our elderly, the youth, and our children. Piety, peace, mercy, and hard-working attitude with peacemaking are noble virtues which were always part of their character. Yet not all. We have fathers, who not from anger but from neglect, neglected to come to the Sacraments or go to church or neglect the prescribed fasts; others from doubt or despair in order to improve their livelihood, signed up to the Communist movement; others became excessive alcohol consumers; other bothered by the insecure future, fell into cynicism; others left their homes and families and went into the world living falsehoods. We have mothers and wives, who forgot they holy obligations and left husband and children and went through the wide open gate to dissatisfaction with living. There are mothers and wives, who despite their marital vows and obligations, discarded Christian living as something temporary. We have sons and daughters who discard like chains, all obligations toward God and family who were the security of their lives. We have youth and young girls who throw themselves in the merry whirl of life, living by the philosophy that you only live once and so anything goes. Step on the gas! As a result they suffer emotionally, spiritually and physically burning themselves out...and then? Rest in prison or hospital. It is to that topic that I direct today's talk:

PAUSE - OBSERVE - LISTEN

At almost every railroad crossing there is a warning which turns people's attention to be cautious because their lack of attention or carelessness, they may suffer wounds and suffering or even death. Despite this warning, thousands of people annually fall victims to their own carelessness, lack of caution, and alertness. It is a life portrait of people who have not the time to pause, observe, and listen. In a word, they do not profit from listening to others, because they think they know it all themselves. We wish to live our own lives; we wish to do as we wish. In the following portrait of an unknown author, some may find a bit of their own lives:

"When she was a child, her father named her his morning star, and her mother, her joy. She was beloved by all because God gave her early emotional growth. She would not let a pauper leave the doorstep of her home without giving them a good word, and on the farm they went to the young lady, complained to her, plead with her...in other words, she was able to be her parents proxy. Everyone blessed this fair haired girl, and she stood under these blessings as a flower is blessed by the sun, as a saintly soul, whose love went out to all. She loved the old servants of her parents, and the children of the area, and the cripples in their disheveled clothes and the old man with the white beard and the wooden leg, who at all times of the day murmured his prayers before the street shrines passing the beads of his rosary between his fingers. She loved her mother and father very much but most of all her little brother with the black hair and the piercing eyes. They were both very happy. The only sought that tomorrow would be as happy as today. To the distant future, they sensed their eyes there, far behind, in the clouds of mist, and with unconscious hands they brought forth with hope and confidence those unknown but happy. Did they know anything of the tribulations of life? About God and about people and about how it was from ages past? They devoured the books given them. And so the years of childhood passed by for the two of them. Later, they took her brother to a far away city, and she grew further under the protection of her good mother and father, who cared for her and still called her his "morning dew" for such she was in his sight and the sight of others. Her brother came to visit three times a year. She waited for him as one waits for happiness; she cried for the loss of that happiness when he left after his visit. What was it that they did together in those days of visitation: they build many castles of which only the two of them knew. There came a time when everything was to change in the old homestead, but the change occurred suddenly to the parents. They felt things and spoke about them but it were as if the ideas were of a different age. And the children? For them all came as new. The musings of the childhood disappeared. Her brother spoke to her differently because people, according to his own words, enlightened his mind and he wished to share these things with his sister. His sister looked upon him as before and believed him but it was difficult for her to understand and later felt that the measure with which she began to understand him now was the measure that her happiness and peace waned. She held on to her past musings and dreams and wanted to keep her brother there so she cried and prayed but with lesser strength. She went with her brother but with hesitation, pausing, looking about but following him. The worlds were sunless where he took with himself the fair haired girl and instead of temples they encountered raw buildings, and instead of clouds of blue, fogs and fumes upon the earth. It was increasingly gloomy in their former forest glen. His soul,

wisdom's eye, like a wounded bird, stopped writing lyrics to the happy songs surrounding him. In this life's place it was not permitted. Neither to his soul or those around it. His parents returned some kind of fake words of joy to themselves, that this is the way it was in life, when the young bird prepares to fly. But each internally admitted that their younger joys had escaped forever. In a while their soon with fly into that far world. He left bent over elder parents, bent over from age and here the young girl with sadness in her heart, maturing with sadness in my heart, experienced a great divide between thought and thought and significant mark of frowning took place on a previously, until recently, serene forehead. How confined and breathless it was now between these walls.... everything cheered yesterday, today it ebbs away. Letters came from her some counsel telling of great goals to be achieved, and more and more, he used the word "people" with more brazen disregard of old superstitions. He hurt for his sister, felt sorry for her, that such a spirit as hers, would perish, sentenced to death if she did not feel the strength needed to rid herself of the former superstitions. She fought emotionally to remain faithful to his positions. She thought about his words, she read into them and reserved a peaceful smile of a martyr for her parents. Meanwhile, she received more frequent and urgent letters, the greater portion of which she now did not show her parents because of the emotional battle within her which was more fierce by the day. It was so until the day, terrible for her mother and father, when she told both of them the secrets of her heart. She said she needed to go the way of her brother, because her fulfillment was out in the world, it's light becoming her, while her the tomb, nothingness, and death await her. They asked her in return how she would leave them aged, alone. She said that she had an obligation to fulfill that the human in her awakened. She said a variety of such things that her parents did not understand...

They only felt forsaken, that pain tears apart their hearts, because she said that death is present there for her unless they let her go. The let her go. She left.

She received a few words written in an unknown hand after two years in exile, from the daughter whom her father once called his morning star. A strange breeze brought with him a letter, and in a special moment there was a breakthrough accomplished in her soul, and he thought he should attend to it . As he read it, a nervousness overcame him. She did not want to admit to the sacrifice, even though the sacrifice was evident. He brother had enlightened her in place of the old altars of childhood. A new food for the soul. He advised her to visit their parents. She went. She nears their home of vague memory in her mind. Now she lets them know that she is coming feeling that a surprise visit would not be the right thing to do; then she felt sorry because it was the wrong moment for a visit. In two days it would be Easter. How would she be able to observe the old traditions again with her parents? She thought of those traditions as laughable now, but how could she go through them when her parents held on to the previous traditions she celebrated with them. How could she manage the situation? If only her brother was with her for the visit, but he probably would never return, even if he wanted to do so. How would she greet them? What should she say to them? How could she tell them that she would shortly leave them? She had began what she thought was the work of her life which she took very seriously. She needed to keep her honor.

The elderly John who is taking her to the station wishes to strike up a conversation for the hundredth time. It was curious to him that the girl who carried his two daughters to be baptized and had a good work for everyone was.. She was now deaf to his words. Now she listens to him graciously even though he is old. She felt it curious. She now had been away from the family home for quite a while. Her return to the old home and traditions now were darkened by her educated mind. Nevertheless, she went for the visit. They greeted her like a retrieved treasure; she felt touched in the heart. Some sort of sadness overwhelmed her. Of God, how old they are and bent over. They ask about her brother. Tearfully her parent begin to understand that they will never see him again. How did her parents sleep after the night of her new visit. Her parents didn't sleep at all. Something was deeply bothering her. It didn't mean that she didn't want to visit them, or God help her, that her ties to them were less binding. But they were so old, so unfortunate. When she thought of these things, she rises from the bed and sits with feverishness. She cannot explain her feelings; this was something new. O, Morning Star, if you had not forgotten these plain teachings which mother infused you with, you would know what to call the feeling. But you don't know because you do not know the worth of the riches of that knowledge of your youth. Her next day was spent in shadows. She would rather help her elderly mother, wandering with difficult feet, relieve her somehow, but the mother would not let herself be touched. She hugs her and kisses her but she often turns away and wipes her eyes from tears. In this encounter with her mother, there is some wistful complaint from her mother about what her childhood days were with the family. It is so hurtful to the daughter to experience this encounter with her mother. If only her mother were healthy and looked differently. Her father comes into the room and looks at her and then his countenance changes and he quietly moves away. He should know that she is leaving soon and should understand that...but how to tell him that. If she knew ahead of time of the painful experience with the visit home, she would have saved them the pain of her visit. In a little while, she will rest. Perhaps sleep will help her forget her dilemma. But the old traditions about which she spoke with her brother while they were still at home came to mind. But all things must come to an end. The Easter traditions have sapped her strength. She apologizes to her parents. She says she was weary after her journey and that they let her not stay in her old room. They would not go against it and they don't know how to make her comfortable. They feel like such small people in her presence. They fear about her health. She seems so pale to them and so unlike the light she used to be with others as a child. She threw herself in her clothes on the bed of her room. Maybe in that way she will fall asleep more easily. Last night was terrible with nightmares. Even she, a serious woman of the world, is beset with nightmares under this moldy roof. Far from her family home, she was devoid of these bad dreams entirely. Here she was unsettled with some kind of general fear. She finally fell asleep. But evidently there was no respite. Is it a fire? The windows seemed fiery and some kind of curious voices are sounding. Some kind of familiar voices. From the depths of her memory of the past a specific hymn comes to mind. The words come to her more plainly now: Jesus Christ is risen. It is given to us as an example - we are to rise from the dead She does not know what is happening to her. She goes forward among a throng of kneeling, humble, sung-out masses of people. And in the forefront, the grey-headed elder woman... At the mother's side is her father bent over with a cane and tears flowing from his eyes over his white beard. She herself thought that they were bitter tears. The room was May-clothed, with decorations with which her brother and she decorated during the spring feast of Easter. Lord, where did the time go?

The visiting girl grew ill. The two elder parents with concern are by her side and lead her to her room and asked what had happened that she had not notified them of her visit. The would be close to her so she would be safe. She does not respond. She simply answers her own mental questions...and utters: I will remain here...remain here...remain here. Close to these two poor ones, she rests like in days before, on white pillows and sleeps, breathing peacefully, as if guarded by a host of good spirits. Not far away sits the father in vigilance. The old man cries but they were not the same tears that he shed when he complained to God about his daughter. In an adjacent room, a woman kneels at the foot of Christ, who in the day of his resurrection permitted the his youthful visitor to rise from the grave of forgetfulness and coldness...to rise to a life a faith...to a life of good deeds, and to peace and satisfaction.

My Dear Radio Listeners, before I leave you with your thoughts on the previous story, I have a plea to all, especially those who have neglected their spiritual duties. Remember days of old? Remember your serene conscience and calmed heart? What is today's difference? Is it impossible to regain the health of mind, heart and spirit? It is possible and for very little cost! Humble yourself and seek reconciliation, confession. You father, who are asked by your own child: "Daddy, why do you not go to church with us and to confession? Give up your excessive drinking or gambling. Get rid of friends who in sincerity laugh at the commandments of God and blaspheme. You will be surprised how God will reward you. You will become a model husband and father; your children will bless you. You, wife and mother, remember what you ought to be? Perhaps suffering, crosses and the weight of living got you tired of life and you became angry and crabby. Remember day of yore which were happy and fortunate. Now is the appropriate time to return to that happiness and good fortune. Go to confession. Sons and daughters who are still with your parents in security and you who left the family doorsteps to your dismay, remember the family days you left behind. The peace, happiness, and satisfaction which you left behind. It is possible to regain it as it was. Go to confession, first asking God for reinstitution and reunion with him. Later ask pardon from your parents and unite yourself to them again. Then, Easter, the Resurrection of the Lord will by your resurrection; and with the help of God, you will move away the tombstone of carelessness, you will resurrect from the grave of coldness, restlessness, and despair to a true life of light, faith and happiness. The phrase, "alleluia" will not only be on your lips but in your soul, all of you life long.