**December 10, 1933**

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

Listeners of the Rosary Hour, kindly forgive me in these first hours of the program that I refrain from disputing or rather discussing certain affairs that pertain the disruption of our society. Currently, I don't consider it appropriate and timely to properly asses or to fairly judge the consequences of the organization that has been started by our federal government. We need to wait a little to have a better grasp of the situation to prudently talk about the means and the purpose of the program, which the American nation never dreamed of before. I expect that I will soon share my opinion with you listeners important information in this affair. Today, without any further watering down, I put to you this one question: Do you have faith? I will answer myself with a true story of a Polish soldier, described to us by Szczepkowski.

**Today I Believe**

Before the war, Bolek Froncki belonged to the faithless people. He did not say his prayers, he did not go to church, he ate meat on the fasting Fridays, and he mocked all religions just like a Freemason or other Moscow nihilists. In other words he was not just a “lost sheep” but he was simply a headstrong ram, for whom none of the wisest nor the most moving sermons could not bring to the path of faith. There came a great war. Bolek, as an Austrian citizen and a former cavalryman of the imperial army, was taken out from Warsaw up to the Volga. Everyone back in the country thought he had died. His mother cried over him, his dad died from worrying, and meanwhile he traveled to Siberia, he entered the 5th division of the Polish armies, he served in the platoon charge, and after the war he returned whole and healthy to Poland. I saw him once in Church. I thought at first that he was there only by accident, meanwhile he pulled out a book from his pocket, he did his prayer perfectly, and during the consecration, he did not make a pretence, but made pious use of his two knees.

After leaving church he gave generous alms to the prayers of old men and women, for the souls of the dead. I met him again in the dining hall. Bolek sat down nearby in a separate table, took the card into his hands, and with a cold stare into the warm eyes of the girl demanded a fasting dinner. Such a dinner was not served that day. “Today is not Friday” noticed the “lady”, “But it is a Wednesday in Advent! There should be a fast, you godless people!” He muttered something, threw on his overcoat, and went to a vegetarian kitchen for a fast dinner. This intrigued me greatly. What could have converted this atheist? I ran him into a wall once, and having gained his trust with my war stories, I pulled his tongue. He then told me three interesting episodes, which I will repeat without embellishing. I will mention that Bolek Froncki is a man of about 30 years, strongly built, healthy and far from any kind of sentimentalism or sickly delusions.

“A certain fact always remains in my memory” said Bolek, “It happened to me in Nowo-Mikołajewski on the river Ob in 1918. Then, we had a lot to eat and little to do. In these circumstances one of our brothers would feel great were it not for homesickness for the country and loved ones, and that constant sad thought, that you are separated by a huge space of land worse than enraged snowmen, full of enemies, preying on your life and wishing, like a hungry wolf, to tear you to pieces. Such a thought causes depression, makes you lazy, and makes life difficult. We were quartered in large barracks.

One night, I woke up in the night for no reason and I looked at the clock; it was a few minutes after one. A strange anxiety and premonition filled me. I guessed that I was ill. Even the sounds of the breathing and snoring of sleeping soldiers bothered me, which never happened before. Unable to lie, I got up and began to wander around barefoot among the sleeping others in the great barrack hall. After an hour, the feinting passed, I threw myself on the bed and fell into a half slumber and half meditation. Suddenly, I see my father come to me, dressed the same as he always is, he takes out his hand, kisses me on the forehead, touches my cheek with his face, I feel him and see him as though he were alive. “Bolesiu,” he says, “Goodbye!” He kisses me again and disappears. I looked around me, no one was there. I looked at the watch, the hands stood still at half past two.

My excellent watch stood still, even though it had been wound up the evening before and nobody had touched it. When I had returned from my walk to the hall, I could clearly hear it still ticking by the bed. I wrote down the date and hour, and when I returned to the country, I found out that my father had died that same day. The hour, if we calculate the astronomical difference, was also the same. A second fact moved me to the depths of my soul and influenced the change in my view on religion. It was the year 1919. We fought with the Kołczaks and the Czechs. The Bolsheviks, when they could, gave opposition. In the day, the shooting was very lively, at night it got quiet. The Bolsheviks were evidently resting, we did not fire too generously as we had to bring the ammunition from as far as Japan. About thirty paces from me, two soldiers took their position whose names I don't remember. Their foxhole was smaller than mine and I could hear how they would complain about it. I did not sleep and thought about Poland, my parents, the stars, and whatever else I could. Finally, it was dawn. I am a level-headed person, yet I will admit that that sight excited me. Caught up with emotion, I wanted to celebrate the miracle of nature with a hymn to Apollin or some sort of ode to the rising sun, but I could not remember any of the rhymes. Suddenly, I was reminded of a song which I often sang as a child and I started to then involuntarily hum it:

        When the morning lights come up,

        To you Earth, to you Sea,

        To you all the elements sing.

I sang in half-tone. It melted me even more, my eyes were filled with tears and I will sincerely say that I cried like a child. Apparently, under the influence of the emotions and the exhaustion of the nightly watch, as soon as I calmed down, my eyes glued together and I slept a little. And here I am dreaming that behind the rays of the morning light, some bright figure comes out, approaches me, extends a hand and says, "Don't sit here, get out of this foxhole!" The figure disappears as machine gun fire wakes me up. Apparently, I slept very little, as the whole solar sphere did not manage to rise above the forest into the sky, and meanwhile the shooting intensified; the bullets buzzed like bees above. "Well, boys, we have to give them a good lead portion to say good morning!" I yelled to my fiends and I set up the machine gun in the direction of the Bolshevik position. For several minutes, we fired on them, after which I commanded my soldiers to rest and think of breakfast. Suddenly, without any initiative from my side, I hear this proposition from two neighbors from the closest hole, "Captain, maybe we can exchange foxholes. Ours is meant for one. Is that all right?" "Good!" I reply without thinking as I reminded myself of the apparition.

Our positions were excellently hidden, so there was no fear that they would notice our switch. We went stealthily along the ditch, beyond small bushes and we calmly took care of breakfast in our new locales. The bullets whistled by continuously above us. Then the artillery shoot sounded. The shot, snapping with a thick bass, flew over not far from me and exploded a few hundred feet beyond our line. It was apparent that the enemy was feeling around but did not know where to look. A few minutes passed by. Sitting comfortably in the hole, I calmly emptied the can of conserves; suddenly a terrible bang and whirl of air almost knocked me to the ground, and sand covered my eyes. I looked out, wondering where it fell. I look, my old hole is not there, only a great hole, and next to it lie the terribly torn bodies of two soldiers. I froze. After a while, I crossed myself and said my first prayer in years. For the end, I will tell you, sir, one more hard to believe real fact that has nothing to do with visions, but yet convinced me finally that higher powers direct what happens, and that God often clearly measures out his justice. This happened during our catastrophe. In a small group which was quickly fighting through the bushes had five of us; the sergeant, me and three soldiers.

Misfortune wanted that one of the soldiers was wounded in the thigh during the shooting. He limped along; with the sheer effort of will he followed us, until he finally could not, turned pale, and weakened. Apparently, he was bleeding and there was no time to dress the wound. He started to movingly beg to the depth of his voice to not leave him there as he would either freeze or be killed off by the Bolsheviks! One of the soldiers and I took him under our shoulder and carried him for some time, but even this did not help much. It was essential to dress the wound. The sergeant protested, "That is impossible. The Bolsheviks are looking for us. It is better for one to die than five. Leave him here and let's go!" "Brothers, if you believe in God than do not leave me alone!" he begged with tears. "If you believe in God than God will not let you die, meanwhile we believe in our legs. Further, boys, after me, march!" He went forward and the two soldiers went after him. After a while, even the creak of snow could not be heard. Not thinking of the consequences, I stayed by the wounded soldier. After baring the leg, it turned out that his thigh muscle was shot through, with every movement the blood trickled out. I cleaned the leg with snow, made a bandage from a piece of torn shirt, I somewhat clogged the wound and we pulled after the snow steps of our companions.

We went well for three hours, always a certain distance from the train line so as not to lose it from sight. Our strength increasingly left us; the wounded soldier as a result of the loss of blood, and I from supporting him and carrying two backpacks. An overpowering sleep filled me. I doubted if I would prevail in the cruelly difficult path through the snowdrifts. There was a time that I wanted to throw myself on the snow and sleep at all costs. But my wounded companion would not allow me to. After a while, a rage took hold of me at both myself and him, I wanted to toss him along with the backpacks and continue on myself. Then he said to me: "You sacrificed a lot for me; I cannot demand that you lose your life because of me. If you want to, go on. Of course, I grabbed him more firmly under my shoulder and we struggled on. He then started to ardently pray for our common well-being.

Suddenly, from a small hill, I saw a wagon moving along on the train tracks from the side to which we were going. Hidden behind a group of trees, I observed this wagon. A few Bolsheviks sat and stood there with machine guns, while two soldiers with hats similar to ours were pushing it on foot. I was almost certain that they were our companions. When the wagon disappeared at the turn of the line, we went on and in half an hour we found ourselves next to the junction buildings. We had to first check if Bolsheviks were there. I went alone to scout it out, and from a woman I met by the well, I found out that the Bolsheviks went on and that no one was there except for the commander of the post and the guard. I went back to the wounded companion. He kept himself on his feet through willpower but it was clear that he was approaching the last of his efforts, and if we had to go a few wiorsts (Editor's note: Russian measure for distance. It is about one kilometer) more, he would collapse for sure. With this we would probably be lost since the winter day was approaching the end and the unmerciful Siberian night is able to put one to sleep forever.

The setting sun amidst the naked tree trunks, threw sharp red flashes on the sparkling white snow crystals, or laid dark violet lights beyond every dam laying on the road of the beautiful but cold light. Going to the station building, dressed in a snowcap, from which the cloudy gray smoke rose into the freezing sky. We passed a universal hospitable building built out of round stones "saraj." I was intrigued by the multiple footprints in the snow and by something lying under the "saraj," something resembling a dead body. I hurried to the spot and froze on the spot. Our sergeant's corpse was quietly lying on the white snow in his blue uniform. He was bare-footed, his sheepskin coat and his shoes were clearly taken off from him. The blood, freshly cooled on the hard snow surface next to the corpse, made huge stains and shimmered with a bright redness in the rest of the rays of the dying sun. He was lying with his face in the air with crossed hands and glassed eyes, looking into the heavens, as if begging pity for his and for our faults. I covered my hand with my palm and, disturbed, I dragged the wounded soldier into the hut. The post commander was half-illiterate, a typical train serviceman who always passionately serves either the white or red powers as long as that power shows a tough hand. His Russian hospitality had nothing to do with the political changes; he thus invited us to sit down and served us some hot tea. I was especially interested in the fate of my companions. "Tell me, comrade," I asked him, "What happened with the three soldiers who came here?" "Nothing significant, they came, they fell onto a Bolshevik patrol and fell.” "And why was that one killed?" "Well, he was the one with the badges, that is older, so he was put under the wall. You would also go under the wall. You are lucky that you did not hurry in sooner." "And those two?" "They are soles in the plenty, they are working honestly. They pushed the wagon with the patrol on the line. They were useful for our companions.

This information shook me to the very depths of my soul. And so those two were in hard slavery, and this one who believed more in his legs than in God lies dead on the snow! What to say about this? From a few pieces of birch wood, I made a Catholic cross and asked the railroad man to bury the deceased one decently in a peaceful spot. In less than an hour a train came with Czechs. Thanks to the fact that I could speak Czech, they took me on the train and the medic treated my wounded companion. After a long and heavy trip we got to Irkutsk and then, through Vladivostok, to Poland!" "Yes, sir," Bolek finished, "I used to not believe in God and the immortality of the soul, and today I believe."

Bolek used to not believe, and today he believes. How many do we have amongst us who once believed and who today do not believe any longer! It is not surprising that those who are born here and raised here do so. An American of Polish descent, even though he has discarded everything that smells of Polish spirit, is still faithful to some principles which he nursed from his mother's breast, especially the principle that he praises foreign customs and adopts them, not knowing his own and not knowing what kind of treasures he has. It is surprising when those, who came over from Poland years ago, and here have lost their faith, and abandoned the customs and traditions associated with the faith; and have changed into the apostles of strange enlightenment and even stranger progress. Here are pieces from a letter written to me by Witold Skierniewski who, pretending to be a man of learning and progress, spreads nonsense, and tosses blasphemies as though from the horn of plenty. Here are excerpts from the letter dated from the twelfth of October from Detroit: "The basis of the Church teachings is Sacred Scripture, not the proclamations of the Councils of Trent and others. The fathers of the Church wrote their whims, just as today people write them. The measure of faith is the Word of God revealed by Christ and not what others reveal. Images are fetishes and as such should be ornaments and not some sort of relic or object of the saints or sacredness.

The Catholic Church that is loyal to the pope is crumbling and falling. Spain, Mexico, Czechoslovakia, Peru, Russia, are all proof of how the porticoes of Catholicism are falling. When I was in Poland, I saw very limited percentages of people who were still loyal to the Roman Church. We need a slogan so that a people's revolt will arise and we need the liberation of the soul from slavery! If the Church claims to be the only institution which can form the person properly, why do the Catholics make up the greatest percentage of criminal people; the largest in proportion to other faiths? Why is fornication, thievery, and divorce a general characteristic of the believers of the Catholic Church? Why does this Church not bring happiness? What opinion does the Catholic priest and monk have in a civilized society?

Mr. Witold Skierniewski dares to call this slew of false perceptions and unjustified accusations a "modest letter." His poor grasp of the issues and arrogant critique proves the French saying: “More self-confidence than knowledge of the issue and Latin: 'The donkey can dispute more than the philosopher can prove." And so, the basic teachings of the Catholic Church depends not only on the Sacred Scripture but also on the oral transmission, that means the tradition which we find in the writings of the Church fathers, in the declarations of the councils, in the declarations of faith and prayers of the Church. This constitutes the difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant sects. Other accusations are invented out of thin air and do not deserve attention. "When I was in Poland, I saw very limited percentages of people who were still loyal to the Roman Church." I am surprised that you even saw these limited percentages! The government statistics tell us something different! Whom should we believe? Article 114 of the Constitutions tells us: "The Roman Catholic faith, being the leading religion of the country's majority, takes the supreme position among the legal faiths." Go to Poland yourself and try to throw out that slogan to raise the people's revolt, for many have gone there many times, and as soon as grandpa moves his moustache, they leave as though a bee bit them under their praying bone. You talk nonsense about the slavery of the soul; neither ours in Poland, nor we here in America, want or demand a Savior such as you. The Catholic Church, and the whole world admits this, is the only one that gives full happiness, as it not only cares for the soul and eternity but also defends the temporal affairs of every person.

Second letter:

Detroit, Mich. October 26, 1933.

Dearest Father,

I am originally from Poland. I have been in America for thirty years! I had good and pious parents. I myself believed in God and went to Church. I worked hard in various factories where I met various people. Some made fun of me for fasting, others because I went to Church. Slowly, I stopped praying, fasting, and going to Church. For years, I believed in nothing. Three years ago I was laid off from work; two years ago, I lost every cent of my saved money; last year, the mortgage holder took my house and on top of it all, I got sick; they took me to the hospital and I started to think. I saw that I had done wrong; I started to pray; slowly I recovered my health; today, thanks to God, I not only say prayers but I also go to church. I barely make enough to survive, but I do not complain because I see others have even less than I do. I am peaceful and happy!

Third Letter:

Chicago, October 15, 1933

Dear Fr. Justin;

Eighteen years ago I lost my faith. I got into bad company; I drank, stole, and gambled. Twice, I sat in jail. What I saw there and heard cannot be described. Three years ago, my mother died. Before her death, she asked me to improve myself. I promised, but I procrastinated. I almost forgot about my promise. Last year, I went with my friend to a party on the other side of town. I don't know what happened. My Friend was found murdered on the spot and I was taken unconscious to the hospital. I was there close to two months. None of my friends visited me during that time. They all forgot about me. Abandoned by people, forgotten by all, I heard one Sunday as Fr. Justin spoke of one, who at the request of his mother, after many years went to the Confession of Easter. I remembered the promise I had made to my dying mother! I went to Confession. As soon as I left the hospital, I got work. Now, I go to Church, I say my prayers, I stay away from old friends, and everything is going well. At the end, I will ask everyone: Do you believe? If not, why not? Believe, as you will find temporal peace and eternal happiness with faith!!

As you listeners already know for some time I have been accused of disfavoring the National Association of Scouting and of attacking the leaders of these scouts. The reason for this was such, that on the program of the Rosary Hour, on the Sunday of the 19th of October, at the hour of 3:40, I answered the follow question:

Question: Last year, we organized the National Association of Polish Scouting. I am an instructor. The local priests and monks do not seem to like it. Is it a sin to belong to the Scouts?

Signed, a certain Scout

 I Answer: Scouting, if it is conducted on the principles on which it was founded, under the cautious eyes of the conscientious leaders, is a very effective means of keeping our youth in the faith and nationality. As far as I know, the Scouting Constitution obliges the following oath: "I have a sincere will to dedicate my whole life to the service of God, Country, and Polish Nation, to carry help to my neighbor, etc." Scouts are not allowed to smoke or drink; they are to learn good manners, frugality, and so on. These are beautiful ambitions, worthy of support from all sides without exception. There is no surprise that under the watch of the Catholic Church there are sections of Catholic Girl and Boy Scouts. A few weeks ago, the apostolic delegate himself Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, spoke to the Scouts in the New York St. Patrick's cathedral. Here in Buffalo, a few years ago, when the Catholic sections of the scouts were having a vacation, one of our Fathers said Holy Mass for them every Sunday and praised their piety and good manners. In one word, scouting in of itself is an organization that is food for the soul and body of scouts. However, a great deal depends on the scoutmasters, such as the understanding of the responsibilities and a conscientious fulfillment of duties. As a good example, let me offer two occurrences: A few years ago, a commission of scouts came to me to allow them to hold their weekly gathering in our old youth club. I willingly agreed to this. After a few months, I threw them out; they knocked out the windows, broke the chairs, took the library books; this was not a section of scouts but a group of unfortunate hooligans. It is true that it is not the fault of the scout principles, but the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the officials. Two years ago I was at a large "pow-wow" of the scouts in the Broadway Auditorium. I left the hall after 11. Entire groups of scouts were returning home; almost every youngster. Some as tall as a forest mushroom, with a cigarette on his lips, even though it is strictly forbidden for them.

By accident, on the third of October of the past year, I picked up a letter from a Polish priest from a tiny Polish settlement in New England; he writes this way: "I would ask for some information in regards to Associated Scouts. I have them here in the parish, but I don't know if they behave elsewhere the same way they behave here. Firstly, every Sunday, the scoutmasters go out somewhere far at the crack of dawn so that the boy and girl scouts don't go to Holy Mass. I reminded them that children have to be at Holy Mass every Sunday; the leaders answered that the Pastor has no say whether the child should go to Church or not, that all depends on the parents. It seems to me that this is an important issues which should be examined and it should be checked if the Association Government permits this. The leaders are only waiting to introduce misunderstandings." This list states almost exactly what I have said, that scouting is a noble affair, if it is conducted conscientiously according to principles and under the watchful eyes of conscientious scoutmasters. I advice you not to be discouraged by the lack of enthusiasm from priests in this issue. You are and instructor, keep an eye on your section, work passionately in a Catholic and national spirit. With time, the lack of enthusiasm will disappear and you will find support and sincere regard for your work and your sacrifice!