December 13, 1942

I greet you all, noble countrymen and countrywomen, with the words: Let Jesus Christ be praised.

Not too long ago we welcomed into friary, a famous doctor, Colonel J. He is currently the head doctor of one of the Polish hospitals in Scotland. Despite the fact that he is a famous surgeon, looked upon and respected by medical people on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the fact that he wears the testimony of several nations, despite his service to international institutions, he gives the impression of a modesty and humility. It is a mark of true greatness and human wisdom. At coffee, he relates some of his personal experiences in the month of August, 1939. A quietness pervades the table. The eyes of all are riveted to the sober face which exudes kindness. Suddenly, he responds with the following words, "People tend not to believe in miracles; they say there are no miracles these days. I believe because I have seen a few myself." "Here's one of them: I found myself in prayer after I miraculously after certain events. A town was surrounded by an iron ring of the German army. For several days, the Germans were bombarding the town with heavy artillery. Constantly the occupants of the town were bombarded. Pilots flew their planes low, strafing at a hundred feet anything that moved. Even at night, one could hear the distant noise. Not a building remained untouched. The townspeople only surrendered after they had no means of livelihood, water or ammunition. In these days of blood and bravery they were given shelter in a temporary hospital which was part of a six story building. The operating room was located in the basement. What a scene! They were scenes which one can never forget. When a bomb happened to hit the building the wounded jumped from their beds, scurried on their knees on the floor or hopped along the stairways to save themselves. I operated and amputated days on end. I lacked the proper surgical instruments. A used other utensils - knives and scissors, hammers and saws. I tried to rescue them as best I could. In the hospital, a young nurse from Poznan, belonging to the scouts was helping. In spite of the horrific sound and chaos, she carried out her Samaritan aid. With a serene countenance, she wove herself between the wounded. One day, in one of the small wards, she was taking care of 30 wounded. For the tenth time, the planes came by. The bombs fell frequently and thickly. The building shuttered back and forth. At one time a bomb came through the roof of the ward where she was with her 30 wounded. In a few second there was an explosion which could be felt even in the basement of the building. The explosion even overwhelmed the screaming of the wounded. From the 30 patients in the ward there were left body parts. In the midst of all the chaos and hubbub and dust appeared the image of the young scout nurse. Only she came out unscathed without a scratch. When asked by what miracle she survived, she replied in a calm voice, "God and Faith". The professor had tears in his eyes when he finished his moving happening. He added, "and some people say that there are no miracles. Today I do not aim to talk about miracles. I will talk about the supernatural might and strength which holds heaven and earth and wisely governs the whole of creation:

BELIEF IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Sooner or later in his or her life, each human being comes to the realization that the Providence of God exists in reality. It doesn't make a difference if the person is evil or good. It doesn't matter whether a believer or non-believer. The time comes when a person feels helpless and abandoned. Fruitlessly he or she seeks escape from his or her troubles. Knowledge nor intellect helps until suddenly something unusual happens. In a moment, in a second, difficulties and hindrances disappear. the believer sees in this the providence of God. The non-believer calls it a coincidence. To salve conscience and pacify soul he thinks: Nothing is left except God.

The first world war has taught us this: It comes from the mouth of a soldier: "I lost my faith in my youth," the wounded soldier claims. It wasn't until I found myself on the field of battle that I started thinking about God. One time I was in the company of a friend on a particularly dangerous mission. Granades were falling among us. "What are you doing?" my friend asked. "I'm praying," I replied. "It would be better that you would be shooting." I gave him an impatient look. No sooner had I responded to him, a grenade tore him apart. I felt a sharp dull pain in my arm. I lost consciousness and came to in a hospital. I suffered the pains from the wounds. In a few weeks I began to see the merciful hand of God.

We all remember times when we were without a job - when millions walked the streets of our city with sad faces. There was no work for us. Poverty was everywhere. Is it possible that God had his own reason to permit these dire circumstances for us. The difficulties perhaps did more good for people than sermons from the pulpit. A certain woman said to a religious sister: "Sister, from the beginnings of the depression, I and my husband attended Mass daily. Earlier, when there was plenty for survival, we didn't have time for Church. Work, work - our goal was to earn as much as we could. Now, when there is no work, we learned to pray and live in a more Christian way.

A certain worker in Saint Louis, Missouri, came to the sisters and took out of his pocket an old wrinkled dollar banknote and said: "This is my last dollar. Please pray for me that I may find work, because I can only see relief in getting a job. Another woman publically observed, "the year 1932 was a prayerful year for me. Some time ago I was working a 60 hour week. A had no interest or time for prayer. Now I go to Mass daily.

Depression and unemployment convinced more than one person to turn their thoughts to God. People were reminded that one needs to rely on the Providence of God to find help, support, and protection. A certain progressive minded tailor in French Lyon made fun of a worker who often mentioned that there is a need to ask God for daily bread, because we are helped in the prayer. The tailor sarcastically replied waving his hands in the air, " If I don't earn my bread, God will not give me even a crumb." Why be bothered with this pious platitude." It seemed like the tailor had some logic in his words. He had been successful and needed nothing. He continually sifted his head in his pride. He kept up his progressive stance. A few years went by. He forgot his mortality. Suddenly he got sick. He developed a stomach ailment, which prevented him from feeding himself. Day and night he felt hunger and depravation. His tongue stuck to his palate. He began to remember his worker and her counsel to pray for you daily bread. He had never asked for his daily bread. And now, although he had all the material things he wanted, he had to die of starvation. He wished not to pray and so he died of hunger. There is such a thing as the Providence of God.

And now, a portrait from WW1. A large number of wounded were brought to one of the many field hospitals in France. Among them, there was a young soldier who had be shot. He was the usual type of French youth. He was educated in one of the public schools. There he learned to spurn the thought of God, divest himself of religion, and poke fun at those who still were not ashamed of their religion. Now that he stood on the brink of death and eternity, it occurred to him that he ought to change his ways. Luckily, he was under the care of religious women in this hospital. One of them stood near the badly wounded body of a soldier and looked into his twisted face. Giving him a glass of water, she saw how he gazed at her with his eyes as if he wanted to ask her something. She noticed how the blood seeped through the bandages on his neck. Evidently his throat had been shot up. Delicately, she lowered his head on the pillow and bent over to him. He had whispered, "A priest! a priest! Her face whitened. Where was she going to get a priest in these circumstances. They were all at the front lines and about to come to rest for the night. He might die before they came. She could not hold back her tears. She cried out, crossing her hands and sadly cried out, "Dear God, is there not even a priest for these poor dying men. One of the wounded who was nearby with difficulty raised himself and said: "Sister...there...on the other side of the ward...is a priest! But he is sick...so sick...he has moth of his legs smashed, and wounded in his chest and arm. We fell together beside each other almost touching each other...he gave me absolution. With one finger which was left on his hand, he pointed out where the priest lay. The Sister went to the location he had pointed out. There lay the young chaplain since the early morning when he came in. Could she impose on this wounded priest? True he still was alive but close to death. A doctor had looked at him just a while ago. He said, "There is nothing else we can do for him." The words stick in the mind of the Sister-nurse: "There is nothing else we can do for him" All is over. She is still faced with the needs of the wounded soldier who needs a priest. Faced with this great dilemma, she leans her head closer to the ear of the wounded priest and says "father, please, father!" How God gives supernatural aid to this strong belief". The eyes of the priest open. The sister tells the great need of the wounded soldier. Quietly, very quietly, so quietly that one barely could hear, the soldier-priest says, "Take me to him". Four aides put him on a gurney and take him to the penitent that awaits. The young priest's eyes are closed so the Sister does not know if the priest is still alive. They arrive at the scene. The priest asks to be brought closer to the penitent. The sister moves away from the scene. Words come from lips dried by a fever. The priest cannot raise his hand in absolution so the Sister raises it for him. They other wounded soldiers lift themselves to observe the scene. The aides kneel observing overcome by the work of God. All look upon those two figures in the dramatic scene involving heaven and earth. The words of absolution accomplished there is a great hush. In the distance the machines of war make a statement. The two wounded men, priest and soldier, take their journey to eternity.

Could this happening be ascribed to blind chance? Stan. Lubomirski rightly wrote: "Whatever is, is from God." That you live, have, rejoice, suffer; that you are glad....all comes from God. Be aware, how much you owe for everything you are, for all that you have, and for all that you await. A writer, (I can't remember the name), observed, "what is Providence? Providence is that concerned, fatherly care which God gives to the whole world in general and each individual creature. We can explain that in a simple comparison. Take, for example, a good father of a family and a good provider. Look at what care he gives to his household and his family. Look how carefully his duties are carried out. Children, income, needs of the house, order and comforts, at all that his obligations enfold. It is as if he had a thousand eyes, he looks everywhere, he cares for all. He gives to all what belongs to them - all encompasses his memory and heart. We can assign these qualities to our God. As God and Creator, He holds everything in existence, cares for it as it unfolds, and though His hand is hidden, it is evidenced everywhere: everywhere one can detect it in care, goodness which testify to the Heavenly provider's wisdom and heart. Such care, such concern, shows forth generally on mankind as the crown of his creation, as a child of God. Nothing is more certain as the law of God's oversight and his care of the world. The psalmist wonderfully points this Providence: "Lord, my God, you have shown yourself as all powerful, you have established the earth with its enduring qualities, for the ages. You who set forth the streams that flow through the low lands and from them all the animals have drink. You who give hay to the cattle, and give the donkey for man's use. Everything await s for you to provide in due time, while you give they shall reap, when you open your hand, you give all life sustenance." All of scripture is testament to your truth, is a song to your glory, which extends from end to end and rules everything. Our own eyes are testimony if we only look around on our earth. Daily we learn that nothing is ever the same, that nothing can sustain itself by itself. If we build the most fabulous edifice and leave it to care for itself, in no time it will fall into disrepair and ultimately in ruin. Our efforts unsupported by the divine soon fall into ruin. It holds the same for the planet earth. Look at the times and seasons of the year in their order, night after day to give us rest, day again for work. Mother earth, unless it is abused, gives us livelihood and plenty, and continues to support us. The fruits ripen in due time, the seeds provide for the continuum. The earth is revived through the greening of the land through dew and rains, which fall like pearls from the heavens. Take a look at the animals, even the smallest, who is it that gives them a livelihood, provides food in every season, who teaches them to store up for the winter? If we were to comprehend all these marvelous ways of the earth, who would not bow his head before the Providence of God. Wisdom says, "you love everything that is, and make nothing of dislike for what you did! The poet, Słowacki, understood clearly when he wrote this beautiful sentence: "All the birds of the air are counted and none of them falls from the sky without his knowledge." Kraszewski humbly admitted, "There are things of this earth, which cannot be explained except through the will and providential care of God which is in opposition to evil and has at its goal the ultimate Good.

Is not our own life filled with instances, which give firm witness to the Providence of God. If we searched the experiences of our lives, would we not find an instance when the Providence of God hovered over us. Did we not in more than one difficulty, find help? Would we not find an instance when in an unexpected trouble we found help? Would we not find in some unexpected danger, find protection. We ought to admit with humility, that not one difficulty and not on suffering was a sign of God/ Providence because it prevented us from a danger. The constant providential care imposes on us certain obligation. Every person ought to hope for that Providential care. He should put great hope in the events of our life. Having hope in God's care, can you lack peace, can you doubt, can you not expect the essential needs of your life. Because God cares, is it possible to be unsettled, to doubt, that the needs of our life well not be there. Again, let me quote Kochanowski, who wrote: "God alone knows the things of the future, and smiles from heaven, when Man is worried more than is needed.

All this does not mean that we should throw up our hands that things are totally out of our hands and wait for the Providence of God thinks about our needs. That would be illogical and a sign of laziness. But it also means that we ought not despair even in the most troubling situation and give up hope. Today, the hand of God did not weaken. Today the heart of the Lord does not beat weakly for us as did the Lords heart as the Son of God hung on a cross. That is why we ought trust in the Providence of God and say as did David of the scriptures: "I have put my trust in you, and I will not be ashamed for eternity."

The second obligation in regard to Providence, is gratitude. But we take the gifts of Providential care, but fail to say thank you. We partake of the food, but fail to open our mouths in thanks. We benefit from the fruits and treasures of the earth, but fail to thank him who gives them to us for our use. We look with askance at the child who is not grateful for the care that parents give, and forget the gratitude due our Heavenly Father.

The third obligation regarding Providential care is the humble and total agreement with the dictates of providential care. We are, of course, only people. How do we dare to equate our weakened reason to the unbounded wisdom of the Creator? Was there eve a being that did not encounter difficulty and hurt? Are we forgetting that the earth brings forth thorns for all and all have to walk on them. When we encounter some kind of hurt, some bad fortune, when we meet hindrances, we are not allowed to lose heart. We are not allowed despair. We should not complain. Never. It is not allowed. It is our duty to remember that we are in the hands of Providence which will give us the capacity and the strength to persevere and overcome. We ought to say with the patient Job: "God gave; Good took, praised be the name of the Lord." If we have received the good from the Lord, why should we not accept the evil that comes our way." In this prayer is the surrender to Providence; in this prayer is found the feeling of relief; in this prayers is the hope of a better future, which usual ends in happiness, good fortune, and satisfaction. These are the obligations put upon us by Providence. We owe hope, gratitude and humility. Our cares and troubles and all our thoughts should turn to the words of the Savior: "first seek the kingdom of God and HIs justice..."

Today we marvel at the achievements of the human mind. Do we marvel at the wisdom and the operations of Providence which gave this mind. The more we look a creation, the more we meet that leads us to acknowledge the Providence of God which through thousands of years cares for the earth. I conclude with a verse from Mickiewicz:

"O Eternal One, who through thousands of year

Daily lights and shuts off the sun's rays,

Lord, of you I love to think,

But I always think and get lost in my thoughts!