**December 15, 1957**

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

 In the year nineteen hundred twenty-four, during my journey to Poland, I spent two days in Częstochowa. These two days I spent in the famous convent of the Pauline Fathers at Jasna Góra! On the first day of my stay, I had the honor and the pleasure of celebrating Holy Mass on the main altar before the miraculous painting of the Queen of the Polish nation, the Lady of Jasna Góra. I am not capable of describing my emotions, of what was happening in my soul, when I stood by the altar to begin Mass; when the organ sounded forth among the music of the military band, the singing and tears of those present, and the screen was lifted, I stopped dead, as if paralyzed. I was left speechless, I forgot the Introit Prayer. My eyes filled with tears, I was afraid of looking at this miraculous painting, because in the blink of an eye, my sins, my imperfections and my defects stood before my imagination. I simply quailed! Different thoughts came to my mind. Above all others, the most insistent was this: “I must begin living a new life, a fresh life, a better life!”

By a providential coincidence, after Consecration, the brother sacristan came to me and whispered into my ear that some famous professor would be receiving Holy Communion. He would come to the altar. When the time came, I saw before me a man with intelligent facial features, with hoary hair! His arms were crossed on his breast, and from his eyes tears flew! – It was one of the professors of the Jagiellonian University. For over forty years, he had not taken part in religious observances, because science had gone to his head. In a word, he had lost his faith. But looking at what happened during the First World War, he noticed a difference in the behavior of those who believed and prayed, and those who did not believe! His conscience started to pester him, did not leave him alone. He decided to return to the faith. He came to Częstochowa. This morning he had made a general Confession. He told me the long story of his experiences and ended with these words: “Dear father, since yesterday I have begun living, because for forty long years I was not living, but merely existing.” Hence the talk entitled:

**Start Living!**

In a few serious German and French newspapers there appeared lately an interesting news item about the famous Russian monastery in Zagorsk. This monastery, located only a hundred kilometers north of Moscow, is up until today the main destination of countless pilgrimages, a place of Marian worship, and a center in which, under the supervision of Orthodox priests, two hundred twenty seminarians are now being formed. Among the future servants of the altar, one can find also late vocations, especially among engineers and doctors. – “God did not die in Russia yet!” claim foreign reporters who bring up the history of Zagorsk. The communist slogan that “religion is opium for the masses” is contradicted by the truth which claims that in the territorially enormous Soviet Union there still live thousands of people who believe either openly or clandestinely in God!

A year after the war in the then renewed and today no longer existent in Poland “Knight of the Immaculate”, I read this moving appeal: “I am the mother of seven children. I work as a teacher. Only God knows how many worries, cares and distress I have undergone in bringing up my little brood. The hardest interior battle, the most distress was caused by the public opinion and obliging advice as well as admonitions proffered by good friends. How many insults and malicious comments addressed to me and my noble husband, it is hard to keep track of them now! That I brought up all my children, for this I am indebted only to the protection and aid of the Virgin Mother, to whom I offered all my children, still unborn. Likewise I offered her my life and that of my youngest son, when before his birth, I suffered from heart problems and everyone advised me to have an abortion! I said then that the soldier is also endangered by war, and yet to desert is an offence. I entrusted the matter to our Holy Mother. And this Mother wrought a miracle! Because, in spite of the doctors’ opinion, a healthy boy was born and God still gives me health.

When the war began in one thousand nine hundred thirty nine, my husband was imprisoned; the oldest son disappeared without a trace, - and I and my six children and the seventh, a frail, adopted 4-year old girl, suffered a lot. It is hard to even describe. We survived everything for six long years. Every day, we prayed the Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Each Sunday we read the Gospel which fell on that day. And God did not abandon us. We did not die. Yet today cares do not leave us. Even hunger, and lack of clothing and shoes jeopardize us. But I trust in the protection of the Virgin Mary, that she will help my children gain everything, - even learning. With all my heart I would like to speak to weak and small hearts, that Our Lady will support each of us women, will help bring up our children, if we do not grow frightened and back out of our duties!” These are two telling examples taken from life, which remind us of a truth as old as the hills. Faith, claims this truth, accompanies man especially in his moments of cares and battles. The more Christ and His disciples are persecuted, the closer the human heart comes to the cross.

The twentieth century also fights the cross. However, the methods of war are different now. Today, the Church’s enemy stays away from catacombs and martyrs. The poison of spiritual shallowness, religious indifference, which is the foretaste of lack of faith, trickles into immortal souls by small, unnoticeable doses, administered to us frequently by the fraternal, lukewarm and comfortable hands of those close to us, the most dangerous opportunists of this century. This was the road which lead countless crowds into a state of sleep, of spiritual lethargy. I am speaking of the apathy of the children of the Church! This process lead to the great loss of all values of human life, which we look at with the greatest terror and growing fear. It is often said that fear of death is the driving force behind each religion. That religion is based on looking for the meaning of life in the face of death. That spiritual life, often for many years is insipid, weak and as if dormant in man, or even totally foreign to him, only to awaken suddenly, develop and beat more strongly in the face of death or of some other tragedy which suddenly stands before him.

When meditating on this truth, I remember the parable of the young man of Nain. St. Luke the Evangelist writes: “Soon afterward he journeyed to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.” [[1]](#footnote-1) - And maybe at this moment to one of you the Savior is crying: “Wake up and arise! Wake up and arise! Begin living at last as is proper for a child of God, a child of Heaven! This earthly comfort has hardened your heart, dazed your mind, weakened your will, put your soul to sleep.

Excellent positions, high earnings, modern houses, garages, wonderful cars, comforts that people could hardly have dreamt of fifty years ago, all this went to your head, set you off balance, threw you to earthly delusions. And you rest on these delusions. And behind you walks the weeping, holy Mother-Church and weeps bitter tears, and laments! She weeps, because her child changed its faith, forgot about God in comfort, because in an anti-Catholic environment, he is unable to distinguish which faith is true, where the truth is! – The truth is one, and it is in the Catholic Church. Affluence and material comfort will not bring you happiness when you lose the faith of your fathers, when you neglect the praiseworthy traditions and customs of your ancestors, when you forget your mother tongue! Awake and start living as a Catholic and a Pole!

Permit me to present you a few images of events from sixty and more years ago! Then, Poles were massively emigrating to the United States. What I most remember are the descriptions of the last days spent under their parents’ roof. How they went to Confession and Holy Communion; how they went to the cemetery to pray for the souls of their ancestors; how they bid farewell to the pastor, how the parents blessed them for the long journey ahead, to a far-away and little-known country. Almost every single one of the new-comers repeated the warnings of their parents when saying goodbye: “Remember about God and the Blessed Mother! Be pious and honest! Keep your faith, and God will help you!” These words, or similar ones, I heard not once, but a few hundred times! And these simple, frequently crude people did not betray God, or faith, or even Polish tradition! There were exceptions, but only insignificant ones; there were those who as long as they suffered poverty would go to church, receive the Holy Sacraments, kneel down to pray. However when they shook off poverty and started to earn more, all of their success they laid down to their own intelligence, their own cleverness and talents! The more success they had, the colder they became in regard to God, the more oblivious they became to God’s commandments. They turned away from God. They looked suspiciously at faith! And finally, they lost their faith, and looked down on those who believed!

Well, says one of you, that happened among the pioneers, but doesn’t concern us, who were born here and brought up in this country! You don’t expect me to believe your claim is true! Please try to understand that I also was born in this country, and from the year thousand nine hundred eleven I have been working with our people! I think you can admit that throughout these years I have met people with different opinions and world-views! I have met people with heroic virtues; and beings who were people in name only! And today, more than one is cause for tears. I know such people who had deeply devout parents, and who once themselves believed. However something happened, and they stopped believing. Maybe they listened to the conversations of their co-workers, who made fun of God and Faith, and of those, who prayed – went to Church, received the Holy Sacraments! And you, what did you do? You kept silent! You hadn’t the courage to stand in defense of your God and your Faith! They told you: You, such a sensible person, rattle off your prayers. That’s good for women and children! You’re so naïve! You go to Church? What does the Church give you in return? All of the things you have, you worked for with your own ten fingers! And you are so stupid to kneel before a priest and confess your errors! Or you fast; who has the right to make you fast on certain days or abstain from drinking? The more you listen to such tirades, the lesser grows your faith, so that it cools off! What more, maybe one of those co-workers who wanted to enlighten you more gave you some scrap of paper in which some self-proclaimed wise man, burning with hatred of God, his Church and Faith spat on these sacred things. And so you read that God does not exist, - that the Church is some mysterious Babylon, which fights with science, education and progress; that it is the enemy of mankind and civilization, - that religion is superstition and a human invention. Under the influence of the conversations of your co-workers and reading the products of deranged minds, you stopped praying, going to Church, in a word you neglected to fulfill the duties of a Catholic!

True, at that time your conscience did not give you peace! It admonished you while sleeping and at night, but to no avail! You convinced yourself that up until then you had been a slave, and only now did you break the ties that bind, you became a man of progress, enlightened by the light of 20th century education. You are not aware that the rays of this so-called enlightenment have blinded your soul to the degree that you no longer see God or God’s commandments! – Here hang around various apostles, missionaries and teachers who look for victims among our own. Someone called them human ravens! These people, with different pretexts, look for new supporters, converts, disciples! They explain that there is no heaven nor hell, nor purgatory. That the human soul does not exist, because nobody has ever seen it. That the Catholic Church is a purely human institution, not Christ’s. That Christ’s faith is no longer the one expressed in his Catholic Church.

You listened to such a wise man and you started to doubt. And how did it all end? You cast the cross, the statue of the Blessed Mother and pictures of the saints out of your house! Maybe you feel better now? Maybe you are happy? Maybe you are happy and at peace? Far from it. Because this can only be given by faith in Christ, the faith that you abandoned, because the Founder of this faith stated solemnly to his followers: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”[[2]](#footnote-2) - Maybe out of curiosity you listened to some radio program where some Christian preacher corrected, perfected the teachings of Christ and spat on everything with is dear and sacred to us Catholics! For instance, Christ said to the Apostles: “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." [[3]](#footnote-3); but the preacher proves that Christ did not institute the Sacrament of Confession, but that it is the invention of priests and the whim of theologians! – The apostle of nations wrote to the Ephesians in this way: “This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church!”[[4]](#footnote-4) In spite of this, this wise man claims that marriage is only a human agreement, a simple and normal contract. The Redeemer reminded the Jews about spouses: “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." [[5]](#footnote-5) And he [the preacher] teaches that you can promise something in the morning, and divorce in the afternoon, that you can contract trial matrimony, or conditional matrimony, or you can even take the wife of another, because free love has its demands and even rights! And these arguments are much to your taste, you like them! You threw off of your shoulders the yoke of God’s commandments and Church teachings. You, whose ancestors died for their faith, in dungeons or died of starvation in Siberia!

A dozen years ago in Saint Louis, the Lutheran Convention took place. There were a thousand four hundred delegates who participated in the Convention. The main speaker was Walter A. Meier, professor of the Lutheran seminary in Concordia! He took to task the “pirate preachers” who exert themselves to the detriment of the Cross and cause human damage! Among other things, he divided the newfangled sects into – politicizing – sensational – financial – epileptic – racial – inactive, and most popular! – The politicizing are those who have professional and paid lobbyists in senates and legislatures, who force lawgivers to push through resolutions which are profitable for them, by way of force, tricks, or even bribery! – The sensational are those where children speak from the pulpits; choirs are replaced by ‘jazz-bands’, and the duties of ushers are taken over by girls in fancy dresses. Financial, who have no qualms about the way they get money. Epileptic, in which preachers organize Bible-reading marathons and deliver the longest sermons. Racial, are those which devote all their religion to solving racial issues. Inactive are those whose only goal is to be, and not to do anything! The most popular, which in the blink of an eye make their own brand of Christianity and preachers, according to the spirit of the times!

Professor Meier claims that such sects are the sanctuary of those “pirate preachers” who completely change the idea of the basics of faith, which, according to the Lutherans are the Sacred Scriptures, and according to the Catholic Church, the Sacred Scriptures along with Tradition and good deeds!” This is what professor Meier said! Or maybe Christ did not warn us, when he cried: “If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is the Messiah! Look, there he is!' do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders in order to mislead, if that were possible, the elect.

Be watchful! I have told it all to you beforehand.” [[6]](#footnote-6) And the Apostle Paul admonished the Colossians: “See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ.” [[7]](#footnote-7) Let us make an examination of conscience! Let us ask: do we profess Christ’s faith, or maybe we have wandered from the path of Christ, and we walk the wide roads created by proud human minds! Let us return to God’s teaching, to the faith of our forefathers! Let us start living!

1. Luke 7: 11-15. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John 14:27. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. John 20:23. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ephesians 5:32. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Matthew 19:6. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Marc 13: 21-23. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Colossians 2:8. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)