**December 19, 1943**

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

If ever there was a time in history from the creation of the world that could be named a valley of tears, of deprivation and suffering, then it would be the world in which we live today: the shadows of the evil enemy covered not only the material world but wormed itself into the minds of men, and settled into the hearts of men and took over their souls. From the lips of a million sacrifices, unjustly suffering comes a pleading for help and rescue. From behind the thick prison walls, from behind high barbed wire proceeds a humble and intense prayer which calls for mercy and love. It rises above countless tombstones of martyrs, who fell as sacrifices to brute strength and power, above the ruins of devastated cities and towns which are totally burned out. Under this umbrella of supplication, of prayer and begging, the virtues of the Christian Faith, hope and charity, take umbrage which in amazement and admiration of all soar in the estimation of those who contemptuously look upon all Christian virtue and features of civilization. It is true that the earth had always been a field of battle, and human life itself was a battle, but never to this extent as we encounter these days. People sink not only in their own tears but in their own blood. In fear and stupor they await the end. And we look to the future with uncertainty and anxiety. However, in spite of hurting souls and tired hearts, in spite of poverty and need, in spite of concerns and doubt, in this period, some kind of powerful faith, a deeper and surer hope and heartfelt feelings of love encompass us. Why? Because Christmas, the feast of the Savior of us all and the Prince of Peace - the birthday of Christ. On the mere utterance of these two words, "Christ's Birthday", a curious peace flows into the soul of man. A feeling of joy refreshes us all and calls out for a celebration. Forgetfulness comes of the temporary imprisonment of life and we rejoice, because on this day, two thousand years ago, a Savior was born. It spawned a remembrance of Him who came to his people, lived with them and died for them. The Son of God and the Son of Man came down from His heavenly throne to a stable in Bethlehem. He took upon himself human nature in the form of a helpless little baby, in order to facilitate for us, ordinary people, and an easier relationship with us. I take you by the hand and lead you to the stable, for a short meditation on this remarkable miracle.

GLORY TO GOD: PEACE TO PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL

Upon the edict of Caesar Augustus, a call for a census rang out in the Roman Empire. Everyone had to go to the town in which he or she was born. The parents of Jesus, responsibly obeying the edict, hurried to Bethlehem the town of their birth. They dismissed any inconvenience from the distance they had to travel and the weather they had to encounter. Because of the coming of guests to the town, the Holy Family had difficulty finding living quarters. They had to seek accommodations outside the town's limits. They ended up in an old stable which the shepherds used in inclement weather. In the depth of a deep nightly silence, away from the crowds, came into the world God's Child. A young mother wrapped the firstborn in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger. At the same time, a heavenly messenger appeared to the shepherds saying: "Do not be afraid, for I bring you great tidings of joy for all peoples, for this day is born, in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord." And this will be a sign: you will find a baby in fondling clothes and lying in a manger. Then a host of angels or the heavenly army, praising God, sang: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to people of good will!" I bring to your attention a significant fact: God the Father did not send his messenger to any of the great cities, or to Rulers and potentates, or to highly educated people, or to the military, with the news of this miraculous and joyous birth. No. It was not to any of these that He was sent but he chose a group of ordinary, hard working shepherds. Why? Because they were weary unsettled shepherds; simple people without hypocrisy or bile. Because at the doorstep of His human life, He wished to demonstrate that even though he came to everyone, that specifically he came to the poor, the forgotten, the humble and the weary as he said at one time in his life, "Come to me all you who are weary and I will refresh you!"

Theologians ask the reason for which the Son of God lowered himself to such an extent, that he took the form of a helpless infant with a stable for a home, and a rocker, a manger. First as St. Athanasius comments: "The Son of God became the Son of man so that we all could become sons of God. Man is already by his nature a miserable entity. Through his falls he still lowers himself more. We are aware from history that during pagan times half of the people were prisoners. They were treated like animals. The lives of people were worth less that the lives of irrational creatures. Prisoner’s corpses were fed to the fish at the shore. Pigs were fattened with corpses. The flesh of prisoners was turned into hogs. Prisoners became the food of goats, horses, sheep, and oxen. They were sold in public markets. And how were women treated. Better not mention it. Mankind had forgotten that it had been created in the image of God. When the Son of God was born in a stable, humankind was reminded that it had to have some kind of worth. Writers in the time of St. Francis of Assisi, who was first to create a Christmas crèche, reminded us: "Love this infant of Bethlehem because He first loved us." St. Pope Leo in a sermon on the Birth of Christ uttered, inflamed at the thought: "Understand, O man, your essential worth as a sharer in God's nature, do not descend to your previous lowliness. Look a bit more closely at the face of the newborn child. In reality He is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. To Him belongs heaven and earth. He is ruler over all whatever moves and has being. He sustains creation. He sends for the dew and the rain. At his command the earth yields the wheat, the fruits, the flowers, and the grasses. At his will the sun gives us warmth, the heavens shine with stars, thunder roars and lightning flashes. Despite his might and riches, He became the poorest of the poor. Every newborn child finds safety and comfort, a home and a bed. What about the Savior? He had no comforts. His was a dark and cold stable with hay. What does that teach us? How many times we complain at our situation and specifically about our needs? At such times I hear this reminder from the lips of the Lord: "You say that you are poor. Look at me. Who is poorer? See, when I was born, my own did not receive me. There is no room for me at the inn. A stable was my Palace. Besides, my whole life will be in poverty. I will live amidst aliens with alms. I will have only two tunics. I will die on the cross and they will bury me in someone else's tomb. And the birds have a home and foxes have dens, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. Will you continue to complain?

What else can we learn from this baby in the stable? Humility. He left heaven and came to earth. He took on the flesh of man. Almighty God took on the form of a babe. He came to work for mankind. He calls: "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart."

He teaches us the value of discomfort! Hard bed - poor bedding - hay. Cold and tears! Who of us seeks discomfort? We all reach out for what pleases us and makes life pleasant whether in drink or food, in clothes, and coming across the smallest discomfort we shrink from it. The stable of Bethlehem was the pulpit of Christ, from which the new born Christ preached his new teaching: Love of God and neighbor. He teaches us all virtue. Even He does not talk, his example teaches well! Poor, quiet, pious, bearing up with difficulty he is approachable in the best way possible. The Son of God on His day of birth brought glory to his heavenly father and peace to people of good will. And so year after year we celebrate the feast of the birth of Christ, and we seek that inner peace that surpasses all.

Only in the Garden of Eden was peace complete. Peace between creature and creator; between the Creator and the first parents. Until man rebelled against God, God was his best and heart felt friend. Wars and skirmishes were unknown. Man was lord of all. It did not take long for man to lose his status. Then the earth evolved its thorns, the air contaminated the flesh, and waters covered the fields and man had to work by the sweat of his brow. Earth warred with heaven and man warred with nature and with God. The Christ Child brought the peace of heaven to earth. It united man with God. It offered him a way to return to his generous father. Every wayward son, downtrodden, was given a way to return to his merciful God. And in God, he found peace with himself.

Everyone's life is a never-ending battle, moving forward and retreating, amidst difficulties and obstacles, amidst woes and dangers. Everyone from his nature seeks satisfaction, having convinced himself that somewhere there is peace and rest. But where? A clear conscience, from the satisfaction with vocation, in agreement with God's will and His Providential care. All is temporary and passing and awaiting some break in the darkness where the sun will shine through. Such a one will not break. He will survive. The reason for survival: the Polish Nation. One need not reach out to times long past or to the history of long past ages. I have before me a copy of some underground writing which was given to me in a previous year in London. Listen as I read: "the Polish nation undergoes unheard of tortures. No nation on earth has experiences such atrocities, methodically created according to strict principles. Unending murders, planned manipulation of intelligence, barbaric destruction, theft of thousands of years of culture, and grasp of everything. No one is spared. Thousands of priests, religious, learned professors, lawyers and doctors, boys and workers, the elderly, women and children, the flower of Polish youth, rot in concentration camps or in prison, hungry, cold and dirty, and treated worse than animals. Millions of men and women taken away in slavery, hard labor in the Reich. Satan gorges himself on Poland. The Polish nation is in its darkest hour. But we shall overcome. We will remain in the highest spirit. We will await the hour of justice. We will survive. Polish was always great under fire. We shall not let ourselves to be beaten. We shall not forsake our goodness and our honor. Suffering is not a punishment. It is motivation for a creative activism. From our sufferings will be born the creativeness of previous generations. There, God himself will be our help!" "And today in the midst of evil, brutality, man will extricate himself, and seek to better social order. And he will find the pathway to do this. And this is so because the sense of human life is such, that in spite of great persecution, one must strive for the heights to a fulfilled life. What a great faith is found in the martyrs who bleed and cry and despite this, look forward with hope to a better and a more peaceful future!

Bethlehem's stable sounds a teaching of unity, mutual love, peace and obedience, from the members of every family. St. Joseph, model of every father and husband. Mary, mother of God, is the model for all mothers. The Christ child the model of every child. - Fathers and husbands, mothers and wives, children - sons and daughters, come to the stable, come to the mangers and look into the eyes of the ideal models and ask some vital questions. I will not ask you. Ask yourselves. I am curious in seeing how fathers and mothers, husbands and wives do not live in unity. Who through anger, and quarreling, poison their lives and shorten them. What say you, fathers, who spend your time with friends drinking and gambling rather than enjoy the family circle. What say you, husband who has not a good word to his dearest on earth, and is ignored and disliked on every occasion? What say you, wife, who cruise the rooms of your house like a donkey in the field and nag your husband with sharp words and accusations. Or you who never speak peacefully and kindly to your husband, but boils like a volcano, which bursts in fire and lava and carries destruction in the path. Or the one who has time for everything else but does not have the time to prepare a warm meal for the husband who after many hours of labor, comes home tired from work. Or the one who has a sweet tongue with her acquaintances like honey from the comb but at home yields a tongue which is barbed and sharp and prickly. What say the crabby children, greedy and disobedient ashamed of their common parents.

But...enough of all that, because today the angels sing "Peace on Earth to men of good will." May that good will begin to rule from this day in the family circle, in the soul of every member of every family. Let us forget our hurts, forgive our hurts, curb our angers, be peacemakers in atmospheres of arguing, extend our hands, then the words of the first carol on earth will come to fruition, and the words of the Angels will be heard, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth." That glory to God we will give in our daily lives, model lives, hard working, sober, peaceful, satisfied and lived according to the example of the Christ child.

Kneeling before the crib, some ask, "Christ Child, why in our times is there so much disagreement, hatred, contempt of neighbor, selfishness, violence and slavery?" There is an answer: "One nation called with proud Pharisaical voice: We do not know your God and we will not serve him?" "Your God?" What God is that?" God does not belong solely to you or solely to us! He is the God of all. The Son of God can to all and for all. He came on earth not to save one or the other nation. He came to save all of mankind. The Son of God did not come to teach only these of only those but to teach all of humanity without regard to race, color, or persuasion. Christ, along with his teaching of the love of God announced the love of neighbor. And for the obedience to this teaching he promised a reward and for the disregard of this teaching - punishment. Unfortunately some people and some nations reject God and threw away the teaching of love. The supplanted the God of all by their national god. The teaching of love was replaced by the teaching of hate. They labeled Christian virtue as weakness. They dug up some doctrine of the superior race and culture. On the order of "might before right" they imposed themselves on weaker nations and burned, beat, murdered children and women. They were considered prisoners. Barbarians were formed by such thinking.

Other nations did not abandon God completely but rejected the teachings of Christ. All intellectual and material progress they assigned to a strange culture and unreasoning ways. And where did all this lead to the advantage of humanity. It all ordered itself to the extermination of people on this earth, genocide. What this kind of intelligence worth without laws and teachings espoused at the stable of Bethlehem. But enough of this today. I do not aim to overstate what is going on in the world today but I needed to point out some observations that were very pertinent to Bethlehem's stable.

Among the many mysteries, the most joyful and instructive is the birth of Christ. The God-Child! A baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. God provided for Himself a stable for a palace, a manger for a throne, a parade of shepherds who were very poor. Nothing speaks more vividly to the honest person, nothing shames the human mind more, nothing affects the heart of man like the scene of the stable and the manger! Always and everywhere all regarded as the total source of happiness and good for the world, its greatest treasure and honor. The God-Child, the stable and the manger showed the people their errors. Even today, the world wonders on the poverty, humility and discomfort which the Christ Child came upon as a doorstep to life. The voice from the crib says: "Man, am I not teaching you what you deed to love and what you need to disown? What you have to strive for and what to avoid? Be modest in requirements, humble in your demeanor, patient in you undertakings, the moderate in your taste, and patient in carrying out your duties and you will be rewarded with peace similar to the one surrounded by the manger. Refrain from murmuring and complaining for you will lose your accessibility to that reward. When God showed Himself to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, he did so on a silver cloud amidst thunder and lightning. He wanted to call attention to the people in this way. He reminded them in solemn and angry voice. The people responded out of fright. God did not appear in the stable in that manner. No great sign of His might, glory or omnipotence but as a baby, full of sweetness, helplessness and love. He came to gain our hearts and our love.

God demonstrated his Almightiness by creating the world. He showed his wisdom by creating order in that world. He showed his love for the people by sending his own Son - a small child. God, who is the source of goodness and mercy loves mankind despite the fact that that humanity is sinful, weak and wavering. God showed us his boundless love. Are we ready to reciprocate? To give him our love which is our duty. Christ came to all and for all. He therefore imposes on us to love our neighbors. Kneeling before the crib, let us give God our gift - in the form of a promise that as he has loved us we will repay Him with our love of neighbor, in private and in public. May this talk be an occasion to lead us to a better daily life for the greater glory of God and a stable peace to men.