**December 2, 1945**

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

Friday, November 9 was a dreary, cloudy day. Large dark clouds passed over the chimneys of two story houses. From time to time large drops of rain fell on the roof. It was about quarter to one in the afternoon. I rose from my desk and went to the window to see what the weather was like outside. On a narrow street covered with leaves and mud, a few cars stood, one of which was used to deliver bread and was owned by some bakery. Here, three school boys were hanging out. They were looking around the area to see if anyone was observing them. Finally they paused in their maneuvering. One of them stood at the corner of two streets. Another was in an alley between buildings. The one on the corner gave a signal motioning by hand. On that sign, the smallest of the three jumped toward the bakery truck. After a few seconds, he jumped out of the truck having in his hands to large poppy seed breads. Quickly and deftly the stolen treasure was tucked under his sweater as he turned into the street. The two accomplices followed close by. - Tuesday, November 20th was a bright day but cold. Again I am by my desk working on the Rosary Hour. I was thinking about how I would name one of the programs. Suddenly I hear cries, shots and loud whistling from the street. It was noon time. I hurry to the window and see a group of school children. I count them. There were six small school kids and two urchins about 12 years old. The boys were hugging and kissing girls, amid laughing and giggling. They passed others without attention to them. An elderly lady tries to pass by without them paying attention to her. The woman enters the street to pass them by. A soldier stops and says something. The girls left and went their ways; the boys went their ways. And so to the title of the program:

 **SAVE THE CHILDREN**

I am having a conversation with the father of five children. The eldest of the children is a 15 year old daughter. I ask about the health and well-being of the family. I have known him for years. He had always been in good health and in good humor. Today he doesn’t look well. What happened? What occurred that would change him. His reponse: “Father, I am ashamed to say. During the war I worked as well as my wife. My wife worked from three in the afternoon until midnight. I worked from midnight until eight o’clock in the morning. We relied on our daughter. She robbed us left and right by falsifying the numbers. She would go out at night and in the mornings when my wife slept and I wasn’t home. She was going out with some stranger who had a wife and two children. When I found out about it, I criticized her behavior. She started arguing with me that I was behaving like I was in the Old Country. My advice meant nothing to her. I need to look upon this and keep my mouth shut, because sooner or later she is going to leave home. She says she is going to school but I don’t believe it. Besides, her mother sticks up for her and protects her. – My friend motioned with his hand and left with tears in his eyes!

I came across a non-Catholic friend, an owner of one of the smaller theaters. After greeting him, he looked at me in the eye and asked: “Father, why don’t you talk to the parents so that they would remind their children about respecting another’s property? I cannot watch my theater even thought I have two policemen to help. They ruin the seats cut up the seats with scissors; they throw lit cigarette butts on the floor. Once they ripped the seats from the floor. They come in gangs and shout loudly and whistle which irritates the ear. There are more and more of these recalcitrant children. If the parents at home do not teach their children how to behave, the churches and schools should teach the respect that the parents fail to do. It won’t be long that we will be beset with criminal gangs.” At that I willingly changed the topic of the conversation.

Close to the middle of November, about the 16th, here in Buffalo, the police caught two underage thieves. One was a 13-yearold, the other not quite 12. They stole a car which they drove around with as many as could fit in it until they smashed into a telephone pole and totaled the car. – The newspapers carry stories of teenage perpetrators and school children who may be guilty of murder. Solomon, the sage, was the father of many families, and he had an experiential knowledge of the responsibility of parents in the caring rearing of children, and the usage of the responsible means in order that the family be respected. He knew how to give practical advice to parents in order to relieve them of the pain and sadness involved and the prevention of losing children. During the war, every parent was working – the mother the father and the children who were able to work. Everyone earned a wage. Everyone brought home a pay check. Others went to factories to pay off debts. Others only to avoid debt of the family. Everyone was a cashier and had his own financial responsibilities. Everyone went their own way and everyone was a consumer. Because of this independence and having their own income, the family ties were weakened and were gradually broken. Neither father or mother had the time to give proper care of their children. Children grew up like trees in the forest. There were always complaints; everyone wanted his or her own way. “This is my money and I can do with it whatever I want. No one has the right to my pockets.” That was the argument with which they shut the mouths of those who had certain experience of life, who would give advice to the parents or their children when family was threatened. It led to dire circumstances which we already have in our current times among our youth. Mothers bewail this, fathers complain, the newspapers write about them, society watches coldly and is impoverished. Here, we pride ourselves on the sign of behavior in the role of criminology, or behavioral science in explaining the bad behavior as a societal emergence of various criminals and behaviorisms. There are as many differing opinions as there are heads. Besides the psychologist, psychiatrists, sociologs, biologists and experts that we have in our clinics, who fill their heads and wear white clothes and treat individuals as numbers.

But now I return to the ancient wise man, who said this under the influence of the Holy Spirit: “Spare the rod, spoil the child” and “Teach your child what is good”. Be patient, teach responsibly, care about bringing him up, do not get discouraged because ultimately the child will bring profit and gladness to you. Be careful , however, not to expect too much from your child, don’t give him work beyond his abilities and deprive him of his health or his life. - Stupidity is in the heart of the child but the spanking will drive it out and will keep him safe from hell.” Do not fail to discipline your child, because if you spare the rod you will save him.”
“The rod and discipline gives wisdom,” “But the child left to his own will, shames his mother.” He is the reason for his mother’s shame. It is the role of the mother rather than the father here. It has come to be that in the past the role has been assigned to either the mother or the father. – and, “discipline your son and he will bring you joy and delight to your soul” that is, he will be you joy and your help! – Please understand that Solomon did not always have physical discipline in mind but advice, warning and caring. Lets face the truth: these days it would not harm to use physical discipline. I know a certain Johnnie. He is a certain wise acre. He is four years old. Normally he is plaster for a wound, other times he’s a pain. At those times it is sufficient for mother to say: “Magduś, bring the strap.” That sufficed. He settled down and forgot about what he was doing.

And so, every father agrees with the Wise man, that a smart son is a joy for the father.

 There probably isn’t a father who does not feel pride and satisfaction in seeing his son maturing and living virtuously.

And every father asks himself: how could he teach his son that wisdom, which makes the parents proud and happy? – And the wise man also says: “The recalcitrant son shames his mother. You have seen an old mother, whose hair has grayed and brow is wrinkled whose son has saddened her. Perhaps you know a mother who felt great love for her child, borrowed from God and who grew old early because of her concern for her child. Did you ever notice how the light of satisfaction and joy has gone out of the eyes or had to go to court for some crime. Again you ask: “what could I have done to avoid that misfortune? On that question the sage replied, “Discipline your son to understand what it is that is required of him. So that he will not stray from that straight road.”

 Here in America, parents use two methods of rearing children. In certain families wherever the child looks he sees the writing: Not Permitted. On the floor, on the walls, on the ceiling. In addition, the mother advises: A child should be seen and not heard.” The father adds to that: “It would be better that the child not be seen too frequently.” The older brother says that his younger brother is always in the way and the older sister is always up to no good. Everything is forbidden. Don’t do this; don’t do that. For the child that needs to roam the home becomes a concentration caqmp. From morning to night, the ears of the child is bombarded with the tyrannical: “That’s not necessary” and “That’s not permitted.” And in that little brain everything is helter skelter.. I heard a certain older nun speak of a mother who brought her son for the first time to school and filled the brain of the child with so many things that he should not do that when the teachers asked the little one what his name was he replied, “Joey Don’t”. It was laughable in a way but tragic in another.

The second method of rearing children, also extreme, is by giving them too much freedom. The children grow in the home like weeds in the field. Who has time to watch the child all the time? The father? He is only at home to eat, wash and read the paper. Besides, he is under the impression that it is enough to bring home the pay. The mother? She is not a hermit. She is a social being. One has to recreate. Besides she is the one who clothes, washes, and feeds the children. That is sufficient. The child can help itself. I know parents who put the child to bed, lock the door and go for a few hours to the theater. It is here that we also have to include children who mindlessly and harmfully pamper the child with every whim that it has. Because Tommy wants something, Tommy must have it. Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets. The child is the general, the father and mother are privates. The child directs and the father and mother dance. I know that some laugh at my observations and who can hinder them?

Besides these methods, there is yet one manner of rearing a child, and that is to weed out lovingly and patiently that which is unhealthy, unpalatable, evil and not good, and fosters that which is lovable, giving, virtuous and good. It is not a new or original method, since Christ the Lord was reared in this way, of whom St. Luke writes, the Child grew in strength, in wisdom, in age, and the grace of God was in Him.” And “and he multiplied his wisdom, in years, with the grace of God and with the people.”

Shortly before the outbreak of WW II, I visited Poland. When in Warsaw, I went to the Museum of Art. There was an exhibition of paintings by a variety of Polish painters. I am in no way an artist, despite the fact that I greatly admire the works in an public exhibition. I was especially taken with one painting, entitled “Family.” Against the back wall was the fireplace. Five or six pieces of firewood were glowing . The fire threw gleams of sparks into the emergency room. In the interior not far from the hearth, sitting on a comfortable rocking chair sat an old woman with cheerful features, in white, dressed in a lace trimmed head covering. She was holding wires. Apparently the old man told something interesting, because two children, a boy and girl hugged her knees. The little children were listening attentively. I extremely liked the little one, with finger in his mouth . - On the other side of the fireplace , a man in the prime of life, known as the father of the family, reading like a newspaper. Apparently he was interested in story of the grandmother, because his face was smiling. Before him sat a man on a low footstool, on his knees a box of chocolates. At the wall, a young lady rocked the cradle, staring at the faces of the baby child. Her boyfriend looked one eye focused the mother, the other on the cradle. On a nearby couch sat a shaggy dog, his head resting on his front legs. He appeared in a dreamy state. Inside the room a servant stood holding a tray with cups of tea and some pastries. Peace, joy and satisfaction beamed in the faces of the members of this family. Looking at this portrait I thought of anideal family, such a family as God created for the happiness of the human family. The father, a protector, whose mind, tired from his labor, taking care of his family for a responsible life; the mother who is its heart and a caring homemaker builds a loving entity, Christian souls for the good of all the family members who are the hope and strength of society and the whole nation.

 The foundation of happiness in the family and therefore the responsible rearing of children, is love, unity, and agreement of the marital couple. From these three flow all the virtues to creating the basis for happiness of the entire little community: understanding, mutual help, humility, caring, and self-sacrifice. The family – someone once wrote is – field developing virtue, developing a society and a nation. The marital couple love each other as well as their children and in turn the children love the parents who have cared for and nurtured them. The children love their brothers and sisters who are their first friends. Parents sacrifice their comforts occasionally and the children take care of parents in their old age.

Understanding in regard to children is an obligation of the parents and without it there is no talk of happiness and domestic peace. Otherwise there will be misunderstanding, quarreling and anger. Bad judgment and injustice occur. In all these virtues the mother ought to teach her children early in their life. Then they have a chance not to fall off the beaten path and know the direction they should follow. In a good family the lessons the physical is not only cared for but what is more important, the soul, the spirit the intellect and the heart and that precious element which we call character. The family is a great school established by God for the rearing of humanity and the social life.

Top of Form

Such a good family life is invaluable and leaves lasting mark blessed footsteps on the human soul, signs of resistance to injury of the difficulties and troubles later in life. A family man derailed even later in the track obligations, if it jogs his memory of a previous family life, of a respectable and noble life and almost involuntarily turns back to the life he led in the family home. Cecylia Zyberkówna writes of contemporary family life. “Less and less people know how to rest at home; the family; family life beckons less and less. The home is a place to sleep and eat; after that the members of the families spend less time with each other and spend their entire life with strangers. Little children spend their time in kinder-garden; older people spend it at the computer. The father spends part of the day at the office, in the factory in the club or the coffee shop. The mother if not in school then in some other strange roof. If by chance the whole family is at the table, the mother is reprimanding the children and after the meal, everyone goes their own way. The atmosphere of the family is getting more and more heavy and unpleasant to be in. It is said, “Nothing is worthwhile.” Children head for the corners and criticize the parents. For a break everyone goes to the street, to the theater or to their friends. The hearths of the homes are the arenas of worsening scenes between the wife and the husband; they talk of punishment given out to the children in anger, often without any reason. What is more curious is that all rune away from home and seeks a more likeable place. The husband seeks a club; the wife the theater; children to the parks. It is a happiness not found. The mother plays the more significant role because the moral fiber of the family is generally her business. Do we want to save our children? No doubt, everyone says. One has to start from the basics. What awaits is a hard, long labor to understand the meaning of marriage, from the Christianization of that way of life and raising the children in the spirit of Christ. Marriage, family, elementary school, middle school, high school and on to college; preparing for life not only with education. Then and only then will the behavior of youthful life be good and those under-age who break the laws of God and man, become model citizens loving justice and respecting the rights of others.

