December 20, 1942

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

In the Roman Martyrology is found the chronology of the birth of the Son of God. It is there that we read the festive and soul engaging words: "The year from the creation of the world 5199 - from the Great Flood 2957 - from the birth of Abraham 2015 - from Moses and the flight of the Jews from Egypt 1510, from the anointing of David as king 1032, in the 65 week of the years foretold by Daniel - in the 194 Olympiad - in the 752 year from the founding of Rome - in the 42 year of the reign of Octavian Augustus, among peace in the entire world, Jesus Christ, Eternal God and Son of the Eternal Father, wishing to bless the earth with His love, coming after 9 months from conception by the Holy Spirit was born as a man in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

The evangelist Luke again writes of the birth of the Savior in two sentences: “And it happened that (Joseph and Mary) were there, the day had come for her to give birth. And she bore her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling close and laid him in the manger for there was no room for him at the inn."

This coming Friday, the world will observe the birth of the Lord. On this one night, in the town of Bethlehem was fulfilled something which will never happen again. On this miraculous night, on this holy night, heaven was joined with earth with a strong bond, an unravelable bond of Love and Peace. The Son of God accomplished this by his birth. On this night, holy and peaceful, in a lowly stable, choir of angels announced the great message of God, the marvelous freedom message of the rebirth of mankind - glory to God in the Highest and Peace to people of good will. As we stand before the Bethlehem crèche and meditate all that has taken place and all that has happened up to this time, we believe and understand that there will never again be this kind of birth. As then so now there are Godless and bitter Herods throughout the world. They rave to defeat in the hearts of people the thought of Child-God born in Bethlehem. Their raving is for naught. It is a blasting temporary display of their power and glory. When the world will be saturated with the people's blood and tears of the innocently suffering, when the world will have had enough of Godlessness and tyranny and humanity will be dirtied with lies and hatred, then they will stretch out their hands to that stable, where began the one hope of a beaten and mistreated humanity - the king of peace for men of good will - Jesus Christ - Savior and Redeemer.

 CHRIST'S ORDER

"And it happened that one day there went forth a decree from Cesar Augustus for a general census." Everyone went to their own town to be listed. Joseph also went to Galilee, to the town of Nazareth to Jewish land, to the town of David, which they named Bethlehem since he was of the lineage of
David, to register with his newly engaged wife, Mary" - this decree was a traditional effort of the country. Everyone who was the head of the family was required to the town of their origin. This was the journey required of Joseph. What therefore prompted Mary to take this journey? Perhaps she was born in the line of the house of David? Perhaps Joseph thought that he would settle in Bethlehem. In any case Providence was here at work. The Son of God was to appear to the world in poverty and in hiding, as an example of poverty, humility and obedience. The journey was long for Joseph and Mary. It lasted four to five days and was uncomfortable. The month was December, a windy time of year with winds from the West. Downpours of rain are frequent. Frequently the tops of the mountains are covered with snow. Such a journey requires much patience. Those who travel long distances are beset with difficulties travelling barefooted or by donkey. Finally they reach Bethlehem. The entire town was full of those taking the census. Having gone to the homes knocking on doors for overnight stay. They were beset with refusals. "There is no room at the Inn." Evening approached. According to the custom, doors were locked for the night. The streets were emptied and they could find no place to say. They went to the outskirts of town. One has to understand that in the East and throughout European Countries, there are stables, which are hewn out of the hills. They are often used by shepherds. By luck the holy family found such a grotto. And one can see by this the finger of God. Not too far from the grotto, pilgrims found their stay. And so Joseph and Mary had to stay in a grotto where cattle were harbored. Wearied from their journey, they nevertheless were grateful to Providence for the place they found. I often muse on this fact that Christ found no hospitality with people in the moments of his birth and even in the moment of his death. The cradle of the savior was outside of town in a grotto; the cross of the Savior beyond the gates of Jerusalem on Golgotha.

Finally, the holy night arrived and darkness covered the earth which did not recognize how close it was to God. That night "The Word became flesh in the figure of a tiny baby and a stable was changed into God's palace. God appears under the image of a tiny baby. His palace: Mary and Joseph, a steer and a donkey. Hard hay in the stable. Can one imagine a great poverty, abandonment and lower position? He was born at night beyond the city, unknown to all. Not powerful or rich or famous. What a lesson for the world? A baby God proved that a fortunate life does not depend on external factors, on riches or fame or knowledge. To whom among the Israelites was given the first knowledge of His birth. Not to the mighty, not to the rich; not to the learned, not to the priests. It was first made known to shepherds, who were unlearned, poor and unknown and who stood as night guards before their folds. An angel was the only one, who appeared before them in glory and brilliance, announcing: "You will find him in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." But that's not the end. Along with the shepherds there appeared a multitude of angels and sang: "Glory to God in the Highest and Peace to people of good will." Why was it that the first people to whom the angels revealed the birth of Jesus were shepherds? Because God chooses his agents according to his own wise purposes. Just as he chose the twelve poor apostles, so at his birth he chose plain shepherds, in order that they would be the first witnesses of the coming of the Christ. And so it was. Returning to the stable, they inform all they meet of all they witnessed and they build a sense of awe in the people. Later they disappear from sight completely as they came and nothing further was heard. One ray of glory of the newly born savior fell upon them and that was sufficient, to make them remembered forever. Without the shepherds, we could not understand Christmas, the birth of Christ. There are other factors - The Savior was poor and He wanted to be poor, so he chose friends who were poor, from whom he could not anticipate help. He is the Prince of Peace and so he does not wish to see around the stable soldiers, or teachers or but those who amidst quiet and gentle undertakings themselves grew to be peaceful and humble people. Christ is the Savior of all people, most of all those who are poor and downtrodden. And so he announces his coming through the angels. In the end the newborn Christ wished to give the impression that all are welcome to come to him and that he is always open to them. He came for the poor and loves all, but he prefers the poor, the plain and the humble. The shepherds were symbols of simplicity. Simplicity chooses to seek only God and not only self; it goes to God in the shortest way. Simplicity believes all, it goes for the good. In all of Israel there were no more simple souls like the shepherds and so it was given to them to hear the angels and the give obeisance to the loving God-Child. Let all of us, on Christmas Day, look into our souls and ask our consciences it they possess such sincerity, simplicity and faith as had the shepherds who first heard the good news of the birth of Christ and first to pay him homage.

Approximately two thousand years ago, the star of Bethlehem signified a new era to the shepherds based on the foundation of love of God and love of neighbor - it wasn't going well for the world. After twenty centuries of world evangelization in the spread of Christian ideals - one cannot say that today the world is better than it was two thousand years ago. The blood of the innocent is still spilled, the tears of the downtrodden and emotionally injured still flow, and justice is in disarray with falsehood. Can it be that the sacrifice of the Son of God was fruitless, and His teaching misinterpreted. Could error be reckoned as the same idea as sacrifice and love, replace good with evil, gentleness with brutality, forgiveness with vengeance.

False prophets and blaspheming leaders are teaching their unsuspecting people, that evil and hatred is strength, goodness and love is also might, and according to the laws of nature that you can only prevail with greater strength; the battle between good and evil is carried on by two blind physical forces. The one who can but together the greater strength will win, without regard to good or evil. This is the way the false leadership leads its people: as the neo-pagan nazi-ism asks its people to believe. We Christians, have our motto, the cross of Christ not armed weapons or executioners swords. The Anti Christ is not a liberator but a subjugator. We, as Christians, are convinced of that and our faith comes from nowhere else but Bethlehem's Stable, in which twenty centuries ago, when the Christ child smiles upon the world for the first time. The Son of God "came upon the beloved humanity" to battle against evil, and so we don't have the battle between good and evil. Evil is not strength it is a falling. The only true strength is Good and its highest expression - the Almighty God and Father. The Word was born of eternity in order to carry our weight and protects us from evil, in order to give evidence to the great and holy truth, that justice and law, though without arms and instruments of war, without Satan’s aid will ultimately be victorious because it has with it - the might of God. That word, which became flesh is among us, at our Christmas vigil, in the warm hearts of all who have a deep and abiding faith

For the fourth time during this World War, we are celebrating Christmas and for the fourth time, our voices sing carols with the prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God, on earth with the peace of Christ.

This year, thousands of Polish mothers here in the States and a million mothers overseas, on Christmas Eve, break bread with tears in their eyes, looking at the faraway places the war effort has taken their sons. And there the storm is raging. There is need for some kind of new order in civilization and Christianity, since the foundations of nations are crumbling. Here as well as overseas the banner of revolution against the actions of barbarians and neo pagan might. And here as well as where the Polish language exists and where Polish hearts beat, there is one thought and one aim to garner all effort and undertakings with the idea of Christian justice and Christ peace so that a complete victory over evil will take place. We stand united. This week under the sound of church organs, with the melody of our carols, that spirit greets the coming of Christ. And there is not a Polish heart or polish soul, which would not feel that the blessed evening of Christmas does not unite all of us, close and far away, those who are close to us and those away from us, living next to each other or spread throughout the world. There dwell within us wonderful and warm traditions which we brought from our family homes and which bind thousands of Poles together in a unifying faith. In this great Polish family we celebrate yearly the Birth of Christ. These traditions are observed by others as well. The entire Christian world celebrates together. With pride we could maintain that nowhere on earth and especially the observance of the vigil evening of Christmas there is not such a heartfelt and moving turn of the soul as is felt within ourselves.

Nowhere else is the Eve of Christmas a holy day, raised high above other holy days. And unless that had been the case from time immemorial, that celebration is no more powerful than now in the fourth year of the great war, when the downtrodden, the suffering, hopping for an end of the bloody battle, with yearning we wait for the hour when we celebrate the words, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of good will. The annals of the world have been turned. History writes in different phrases. Among them, would be Truth and Justice which were stepped upon by a material might, brutal and prideful. Truth and Justice await fulfillment. The impoverished stable at Bethlehem shouts that fulfillment. Amidst the discordance of the nations, separated from each other by hatred and spilled blood, falls the word of Christ like an olive branch, the Word of the Master, the Prince of Peace, which came into depth of the human soul, and showed forth human failures and illnesses and gave them the power of perseverance and healing – a great might, acting in truth and justice in the name of love of neighbor. We ought to pray and triumph these principles of Christ at the birthday of the baby Christ. Pray for the victory everywhere but especially among ourselves, in order that we might come to a new life through unity, sacrifice and love in regard to others.

On the occasion of this feast of the Birth of Christ, and especial at the breaking of the wafer, vicariously live through that which we had during the last four celebrations of the vigil by the Polish people. On the occasion of feast of love and brotherhood, every heart will feel the separation of their family and friends. We will ask ourselves these questions: “when will we be able count stably, when will the pining arms of mothers and fathers be able to hug their sons who were delivered from harm. We have no answer to that as of today. We still live today amidst uncertainty and tragedy. But we know that the day of reckoning will come and we will have peace. It is then that the light of truth and justice will appear and will take away our tears. Up until now, there were too many Herods and not enough shepherds.

I do not plead for forgiveness, when I acknowledge that the crazed hatred of one tribe which hid itself under the banner of German civilization and action of Huns, doing all these atrocities and sufferings, poverty and imprisonment of countless millions. That tribe let go all their strength in ruins and is ready to call for Satan himself to turn the earth into ashes. We know what war is from afar. Thank God for that. At the current time, the peoples from Norway to Africa know war up close. They see it in all its naked ferocity. They look upon the flames of burning, blitzkriegs at night. They see hordes of those fleeing from the destruction and from their homes. They look upon their destroyed churches, their torn sanctuaries in city and suburb. They look upon orphan graves. The seethe sad faces of sorrowed mothers, crying wives, ill-treated sisters. Millions hunger for peace, with all their loneliness of heart and soul. And Poles are among those who hunger and pray for peace. The pine for peace as a writer once wrote, “in order to stand as hurrying ants upon ruined ant hills, to rebuild their nests, to repair the ruined threads of their lives, to bandage our wounds. We are aware that the absolute condition to the rebuilding and the medicine to heal our wounds which are country underwent in such a catastrophe as the war imposed on us is Peace! Of this peace we pray with the deepest feeling of our Polish souls, which has within itself the least of vengeance and governed by Christ’s commandment: “forgiveness of our neighbor”; it wishes only one thing: the preservation of our God-given rights.

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us go to Bethlehem in order to see what is happening; what the Lord revealed to us.” And they went. Let us go with them. Let us go without exception. Let us witness the wondrous and gripping scene. In the cold and abandoned stable, we will observe the Holy Family. The chaste Mother. The peaceful father. On the lips of the new born child – an innocent smile. Jesus extends hi little hands as if to welcome us to himself, and moreover he wishes to press all of us to his heart. Let us bend our knees to this child who hides in himself a king of kings. In the tiny body of Christ hides the power and might of the Lord of Lords. The stable is the most splendid sanctuary on earth. The Bethlehem cradle is the greatest ambo under the sun. It is the wisest school of human life. Here is the model of our lives. Here you see to whom you are most grateful. Are you a Father? Look upon the countenance of St. Joseph. In that face you can read love of work, sobriety, and care for family, peace and wisdom. Are you a mother? Look at the features of our Lady’s face. Does your life engender patience, goodness, and understanding? Are you a child? Do you have patience and obedience of that child in the stable? Are there agreeability, understanding, peace and happiness of the Holy Family? If not, it is time to realize that life is being wasted, graces are being rejected and you are frustrating the will of God. Our lives should be imitative of our Creator. Let there be at least a difference in our souls as we say humbly and sincerely:

 “What can we give you in offering, Christ child?

 That is more than our hearts, which wants to love you, for more than that we have not

 Take then from our heart s what is deepest within, what is worthy of Thee,

 And with those hearts, praise is yours in heaven and on earth.

Then from the lips of the infant Jesus we will hear that word so hungrily awaited – PEACE ON EATH TO MEN OF GOOD WILL!

The following verses I dedicate to the mothers of our soldiers. They were written by Arturo Oppman, who wrote under the pen name, Or-Ot:

“With the Christmas wafer I send this letter, my son

And when I put the wafer in the envelope,

It seemed to me that in this mention

I send something from God, that among the shells of War

God will free you from harm

When in battle….a wafer from mother and from God.

 For God is in consonance with mothers

 And only He knows the deep concern of mothers

 Which carries me now with wings

 To you, my child, in quiet talk,

 Puts other beside son

 And we will both sense each other.

Oh, my child, remember that during these holidays,

We all were home together

My heart always remembers Christmas Eve

Each heart aches when it remembers

And looks into the memory – my son is not here.

 I see you my son, when you were little

 When your arms went out to the Christmas tree

 When your eyes glittered with the colors of the lights

 Your golden hair braided

 And year to year I see it the same

And hear your voice

Mamo!

You grew my son, and you had grown up

And are no longer here on this sweet vigil of Christmas

And when I gaze on the golden star

On which one time we both looked upon

I don’t know whether my heart can stand it

Now that you are so far away.

I wish to call you back from the darkness

But you, my son, stand on the battlefield

In the silence of a desert, cold to the bone,

All alone, dear to no one

And think of us at home.

But God is with us all.

God is present in our poor country

In the Blood stained Poland, in the tired earth

Which sings carols, nevertheless,

And even though there are tears that were shed

And blood was let, it wishes evil to none on earth.

And you my child, looking on that star

That beckons the world to the crib

Break the wafer that I sent for our star

Pray, my son, throughout the battle

That you blood be a Polish prayer.