**December 3, 1933**

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

My intention was to change my talk to a completely different topic for today's program when last Tuesday I received this painful and bitter letter:

Chicago, Illinois

Beloved Father:

I am nineteen years old. I married last year, practically forced into it by my mother. She almost always said that if no bachelor took me before my twentieth birthday then I could wait for a husband until death. She forced me to go to parties to get known. I knew how to dance well, I met a young man who was a good dancer. My mother liked him. Last year we got married. After the wedding we lived with my mother, but after three months she made us set up our own household. We had nothing. We took the furniture on credit. I found work, my husband did not even want to find work because he was a "dance hall hound." After bitter arguments he even threatened to beat me. He told me: I will always take care of myself, you work or starve to death. From that day I have not seen him. If I then knew what I know now; if I then understood what a marriage is then I would not be crying today. What am I to do? I am ashamed to return home, I am too angry to look at my mother. I am embarrassed to have acquaintances see me as they would laugh at me. I live among strangers. I work hard everyday, even though I do not know what will happen to me. Why do our parents not tell us the truth, why do they not teach us beforehand, but only wait  until someone breaks our heart and health?"

That is the letter. No comment for now. I will now go to today's talk which has the title:

**True Image of Marriage**

The French storywriter Henry Bordeaux puts these words in the mouth of Mrs. Guibert, who speaks to the young and unhappy wife: "Life, dear child, is not recreation, or the whirlpool of life. Real life is concentrated in the interior and deeds gush out of this source. To live is to exist with the whole depth of thought and spirit, and to take on oneself the entire load of weights that life puts in. It is to love and to love with the whole power of one's being- always and up until the end, until it becomes a holocaust. One should not fear, neither the work that one is bound to, nor the suffering that it carries, nor also the great joys and the enormous turmoil of great pains, they wrap us into the mystery of the very essence of life, and deepen our soul. In this life, one has to be able to fish out the passing good during the days, which does not pass. A young lady, marrying a man, with her marriage should put herself to be ready for the need of sharing with her life's companion, for good or bad luck: work, dangers, and all that life carries. It is not her goal to acquire for herself comforts and pleasures. May she remember that in her own struggle she will find more joy than she would in the most elaborate worldly recreations." To these words I will put forth a question, just one question: do the ladies of our times think of marriage? Today, already a fourteen year old flirt thinks that marriage is the only and most important goal of their young life; as the only escape from the slavery of her parents. She dreams day and night about a happy engagement, about a happier wedding, about which newspapers will describe the lovely young bride who, surrounded by loved ones, married the man of her dreams, amidst the wonderful soloist's song, and so on without end. She goes to a wedding just as she would to a theater or a dance hall, intoxicated with her vivid imagination, not having the slightest idea of what sacrifice a married life entails. Let us ask, in what and where lies the cause of this misunderstanding of the responsibilities and difficulties of married life? After all, today everyone debates and writes about marriage. Today, even in school, not just the higher but also the lower ones, they do public lectures about engagements and marriages; in almost all newspapers we see the special sections for the engaged, the married. There is no theater which would not highlight the life of young lovers, often with scandalous scenes. The mind of not only the young but also of children often focuses on marriage. On the surface it appears as if the current young generation knows more about it than our fathers and mothers! Right here lies the evil and ruin of modern marriages. They think they know everything and they know nothing! They do not have the slightest grasp of the rules of happy marriage. What is the ruling thought on which today's youth builds its nest? "We will use as much as we eat and drink" or: "What is ours is that which we can use on earth." It is easy to acquire and to use well. The youth of both genders, poisoned with romances, stories, and gossip widely described in the smallest details in newspapers, have fallen in love with the light and loose life. What has not been achieved by fashion, the theaters, books, and newspapers, has been completed by the unfortunate prohibition. Today's youth digests time, wastes their strength and destroys their health in unceasing balls and dances, not only in various halls but also in private homes; by green tables, in all-night parties, with bottles and glasses. Here they fall into physical and moral debts, which they will never be able to pay back. After hospital stays, after the houses of the Good Shepherd, in penal houses, and unfortunately in insane asylums, there lie uncounted victims of using and abusing life. The great majority of them are youth, often underage children. I will not go to the examples of other nationalities and other faiths in the area of marital issues. Because there, marriages do not have the slightest moral meaning. There marriages are the trading or even public auctioning of daughters and sons! The details are too degrading and damning, especially for a woman. Let us look into our own garden, because here there are enough weeds, greens, and thorns. A dance hall in Poland. By the sounds of the orchestra, in which the saxophone and wild clank of the drums dominate, pairs of young people hang around. In the arms of a shining and made-up "sheik", there twists a dressed up and painted up "sheba". And they call this a dance and innocent fun. The guardian angel cries at the sight of this and the devil dances with joy. And so it continues for hours, the male and the female dancers, spin and stretch; they jump and twist. During breaks, bottles and glasses are passed around. The head also spins. The senses and mind are feverish. The first meeting, one evening spent dancing, and here they have an engagement.- A automobile trip, outside of down, often to places which openly handle human virtue and morality- announcements follow. Private "card parties" and dances, today in almost every house, by the music of the wildest "jazz", especially in the time of misery and unemployment, often cause "forced marriages". Today, a girl will not notice if the bachelor is sober, hard-working, and pious; with them only the color of the hair and eyes; shape of the nose and mouth; the dress and walk, is what is most important. The lady gets excited with the man because he is a good dancer; because he knows the newest songs, and sings them to the moon. Well, this is a finalized marriage. And so on without end. These are issues over which we should bitterly cry. Which of them pay attention to the mind and hearts of the youth? And they call this love? This might be a craze and blindness, but it is never worthy of being called love. Do you want an example? Four years ago, a woman comes to me and confides to me that she has a fiancé. Where did she meet him? At a certain party in the house of a friend where they had card and dance games to help a family whose father was sitting in jail for a serious crime. I advised the girl to proceed slowly and carefully. I did not discourage her nor did I explain much because the fiancé was the son of the criminal. One month later they made the announcement. A few days later, I went to the parents and openly told them how things stood. The mother was especially angry at me and as a farewell threw this sentence in my face: "Why don’t you stop sticking your nose into our business? I am the mother." Very well. At the designated time, the wedding took place. Three months later, a petition for divorce. Today the daughter curses and abuses her mother, and the mother slanders and curses her daughter.

I have permission to tell the following anecdote from the unfortunate victim of a horrible and moving occurrence. A girl came to me from outside the city. She was eighteen years old. Listen to this sad story. One of her dreams was to become a teacher. She went to a university where, as we know, the youth organize fun and bizarre parties. According to today's experts, this also belongs to higher education. She did not want to participate in these parties. She had a superficial and worldly mother who convinced her, often even threatened, so that the daughter would let herself be seen among her fellow students! She had an eye out for a certain young man as a future husband for the daughter, who went to this school. Finally, the daughter gave into the arguments of the mother. She went with him to a party. The boy treated her to one drink of soda water to which he added a dose of some sleeping powder. He put her into the car and carried her out past the city! In the morning, he brought her back all fainted, beaten, and abused and threw her in front of the house, and then escaped to another city. The first and only auto ride, and what consequences!

One more event. As long as the mother live, everyone lived in agreement and unity. The mother died, and in the family there arose confusion and misunderstanding. The father was too good to the children. One of the daughters had an especial liking to parties. She spent three or four evenings of the week out of the house. If it was not at the theater, then it was a dance or a party.  A good-for-nothing attached himself to her at one such party. In twenty years of his life, he had not worked a single hour. He spend his days standing in the streets, the nights in cheap bars or in dance halls. However, he did not lack money. He made himself out to be a real "dandy". He owed this to the blindness of the foolish mother. To this day, I do not know what that girl saw in him. But it happened. The father gave his daughter a big and ostentatious wedding reception. I remember how other people were jealous of the daughter. The illusion of happiness lasted one whole day. The day after the wedding, the husband showed not only his horns but also his hooves. In four years, the young wife aged fifty years. She wanders around confused; she grasps everything, if only to live. She goes around pondering in sadness; one more broken heart, one more warped life, one more lost happiness.

How do our Polish bachelors look at marriage; how do they think of life? For him, instead of looking at character, on calm behavior, on hospitality, and on the piety of the girl, he only sees the superficialities. For him, it is enough if the girl is a "good sport". Indeed, the title of a “good sport" covers a great deal in the minds of today's generation. I do not dare to go into details. The young gambler, the amateur drinker, the corner man, the patron of dice, an elegant dancer, but in his heart, mind, and pocket, there is only emptiness; another bankrupt person. He is physically lazy, impoverished intellectually, blinded by the graceful figure. Thoughtlessly he throws himself in the marriage of the most diverse kinds, debasing himself and the entire state of bachelorhood.

What is this change in the perspective of the married life today from years ago? People prefer to be silent about what the wife is in the eyes of people today. What should be is taught to us by the Church regarding her is through the mouth of one of our bishops from the fourth century: "She is part of your being, your helper, your comforter in the sorrows and difficulties of this life; she nurses you in sickness, cheers you up in times of hardship, she is the guardian angel of your fireplace, the substitute for your rights. She shares with you sufferings and joys. She upholds your riches, if you have them. If you are poor, she makes use of the smallest things, she bravely resists all evil. Through the knot she has tied with you, she has taken up the weight of raising children with you. If your happiness is clouded, and friends leave you, and you, oppressed, withdraw from people, only your wife remains with you, as if a member of your sickly body, and in these sufferings she surrounds you with care. She will dry your tears, bandage your wounds, she will even accompany you to slavery."

Do we have the same views today? Why don't you judge for yourselves! Just this past week, a certain young lady, a student of a university, said this to me: "I don't view marriage the way my parents do. My father never went anywhere without my mother and she did the same with him. My husband will be free; I will have my path, he will have his. I will not demand anything, except that he be educated and fashionable in his dress and social circles, but I will not have any less than he does. He will have his life, I will have mine." Is this not selfishness and egoism? Indeed this is a pagan principle, nothing more! Ask me, say what we should do in picking a husband? Prudence is necessary so that the husband is religious and moral. There cannot even be any talk of a happy marriage where one of the sides is unbelieving, especially when the husband believes in nothing. An even character is demanded; there is no happiness when the wife conducts herself according to worldly principles, chases after amusements and pleasures and the husband satisfies himself with quiet and peaceful daily work; where the wife is educated and the husband a simple worker, etc. An even temperament greatly helps the happy marital life. It is a natural demand for the husband to be somewhat older. The husband should be the head of the family, so he should be more reasonable, more mature, and more experienced in life. And so I ask, does a young man, eighteen or nineteen years old have such qualifications? The difference in age, should not be too great, I would say it should be at most ten to twelve years, otherwise the girl will not be a wife, but the husband's nurse! The proverb states that a husband himself marries up to thirty, up to forty others marry him, and after forty he gets married by the one with hooves. What can we think of those who after fifty, take on eighteen year old girls? An available lady should remember that she will make an enormous mistake if she marries someone who for years "was around", for what the shell acquires in early life is what it will give off in later life. If his past is uncertain, love will not repair him, nor will the wife settle him down. One should not believe the promises or the oaths, for when the novelty of the wife becomes common, he will forget everything and fall back on his former lifestyle. Nature draws the wolf into the forest.

Everything I have said can be summarized in the following virtues: The future husband should be a believing, industrious, and kind or understanding. Be wary of the youth who does not believe, a liar, bragger, vain, and weakling. One can easily recognize the virtues and the vices of a bachelor. Only do not hurry. In a short time either he will become more kind to you or more irritating. If he is the first kind, marry him; if he is the second kind, with no allotment or any scruples, tell him: "Goodbye.”

The bachelor asks: what kind of virtues should I seek in ladies whom I pick as our wives? I answer shortly. The best wife will be pious, hospitable, orderly, practical, wise, and hard working. The husband who gets married can come to worship his wife if she has interior virtues. If she does not have the above mentioned virtues he will come to resent her in a short time, the house will become for him too narrow and too confined, the result of which will be that she will seek company beyond the house. The husbands, generally speaking, regard such a wife as a real treasure, they value such a one the most. One of these husbands, asked where he feels the best; whether in the country, the city, or abroad replied with no hesitation, “wherever my wife is”!

Now let us cast our gaze at how we view marriage today! Even today, it is common for there to be cases in which the mother picks out the future husband for her daughters. Such a mother will look at a guy, she will praise him day and night, and if the daughter resists, will get angry, raging, or even threatening. Often she can buy over the father's will with a bottle of cheap wine. I remind such parents that God himself put them on the guard of their children's happiness, but he did not give them the right to force their children to this or that marriage. One can only forbid it when the child faces a threat. God did not give them the right to nag, pressure, force with the threat of disinheritance and the retraction of a blessing to lead them to marriage. The bachelor and the lady have the right of choice. The parents should remember that the son gets married for himself and that the lady gets married for herself, not to please them. And if they choose poorly? Only they themselves will cry! Often the ladies themselves are at fault for their marital unhappiness. They pick their husband blindly. Many women are like the hunter who prowls the forest all day, and having not hunted anything, return home in the evening and shoot at crows only to release their loaded gun. Women also behave this way. The first better one whom they come across is enough. More than one explains herself with difficult circumstances at home. Everything is better than what they have to endure at home. The difficulties at home are only temporary and will pass while marital union lasts until the grave. She escapes from the purgatory of the house and falls into the hell of marriage! One can apply the following poem:

It is better not to marry, better to rule oneself,

Than to poorly marry and keep arguing with the husband;

To birth weaklings

And endure martyrdom!

Disappointments and sorrows are in vain after a while. It is easy to tear oneself out of the apparent slavery of the father and mother, but it is a lot more difficult to break the fettered yolk of an unhappy marriage. This is where the advocates of divorce and the cleverly called “free love” make their mark. Here, instead of marriage, sacrifice, and teamwork, there nests hatred, selfishness, and division. It all ends in catastrophe, usually for the woman!

Please listen to what a certain female listener from Chicago writes from a letter on the 14th of October:

Dearest Father Justin,

The below signed, listening to the radio program of the Rosary hour, I am forced to inform you of certain information. As a woman, I know other women and their disposition. Father Justin elevates women to the highest good, but not all mothers are worthy of that name. In my opinion, the world makes progress, but the country is making regress in every respect. Formerly, there was no such regard for women, the world was better off. Today, women have gotten into governments, their rights and freedoms have not only denigrated religion, but the entire society, even their own children.

Now I ask, whose fault is it that there are so many divorces in the United States? Are the guilty ones really those gray people who cannot properly use freedom, or those who direct these people? Here, I will indicate only two examples.

A woman who has sold her husband's fortune, ran off to America with another man; here she pretended to be single; it has turned out that this lady has had three husbands, in other words, three unlucky men who are all alive! The court powers, even the federal ones know about this; why will they not do anything about it, despite having evidence against her to this day and from twenty years ago as well.

The second woman, pretending to be a greatly serious and honest person, left her husband ten years ago and her three children, living with another man for six years, two weeks ago got married in court in Chicago. Why do the authorities permit such shenanigans? In this affair please cut out proper speech. In addition, let me send to you a cut out from the newspaper, as an example for Polish Catholic women, how the pagans conduct themselves in India! In the article, entitled “The Country of the Happiest Women”, I quote the words of the English traveler and painter, A. Stowitts: “In India, in the province of Travancore, each women without exception has the right to pick her own husband and she is allowed to return him after the first day if she thinks that they do not harmonize together.  The woman could here, in compliance with the law of the country, change 365 men in a year. Usually, she does not take advantage of this privilege, not leaving her first husband. I am intrigued, that right here, where the freedom of women has no boundary, the moral convictions, which are held here as well, are triumphant. There does not exist scandal, abuse, betrayal, and the idea of illegitimate children is foreign to them. The families form a tightly closed union.

In the Seraphic Chronicle, published by our province, the editor Rev. Fr. Józef, has placed the following article entitled “Marriage- The Sixth Order.”  “St. Frances de Sales stated this one sentence: Marriage is an order in which the vows come before the novitiate. If here, as in the monastery, the vows were preceded by a year of trial, then few people would be willing to get married.” This opinion was picked up by the famous Augustinian, Abraham of St. Clare who tried to convey these truths in his way. In one of his sermons in the imperial court, he indicated that the marriage is a sixth order. Here are his words: whoever prepares for the marital state is one who submits himself to a Benedictine monastery, but not one in which there is a strict observation of the law, but rather one in which it is not hard to obtain comforts, wealth, and honors. Here one can hear music and song and there are few problems with the rules. Not soon after that the blissful stage passes, because the couple enters into the Dominican monastery where they mutually give each other reproaches. These sermons often have no measure nor end from dawn to sunset, but after these sermons they forget about the blessing. When this Dominican monastery gets ugly and makes them unhappy, they go over to the order of the barefooted, where their daily bread are tears, sobs, sighs, poverty, fasting, and other hard and difficult crosses. But here, in spite of stubbornness and determination, they cannot endure for long but enter into a monastery that is completely unregulated, as there once was an order of scourgers; here words are not wasted, since they go into the wind anyway, but reprimands and warnings give way to something hard in the hand or bare face. Soon they are convinced that they cannot endure longer in such an order, so they go to the Carthusians. There they maintain a grave silence; each has his own corner and his own cares in them, they do not even talk amongst themselves at a common table. There are those who are satiated with meeting and seeing each other, and go hide themselves in the hermit order, where they stay out of each others way, the husband goes his way and the wife goes hers. What do you think, will such a couple meet again in heaven?”

Surely for people who are soundly and healthily looking at marriage, this state can be the source of the highest earthly happiness, but it is also the state of difficulties and sorrows. The weaknesses, vices, and mistakes of the spouses emerge in common life. The fight to maintain the family, sickness, and other similarities, require fortitude and sacrifice. Excitement passes by quickly as does the worship of the dear spouse, and deteriorates into the drabness of everyday life, and what then? The preacher was not wrong who teaching of marriage, claimed that it is composed of the letter O! One is a short o, the other is a long O! In the day of the wedding and for some time, the young are asked how they feel about their marriage answer: O, how happy I am! O, how good he is! O, how happy I am! O, how sweet she is! O, what a real angel! Not long after that, the same people claim: Oooo, if only I knew! Oooo, I am sure that God has punished me! Oooo, how jealous he is! Oooo, what an unorganized person! And he will cry: Oooo, this is an angel?  Oooo, how horrible I feel. Oooo, I do not have peace neither in the day nor in the night! Here I put the period and exclamation point.