**December 3, 1939**

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

Today Poland lies in rubble. She looked different only a few months ago. Then, she was alive. She was beautiful, wonderfully beautiful. Charming and marvelous. Whoever is listening to me now will be under the impression that a native Pole is speaking, someone who is deeply in love with Poland, who therefore exaggerates and praises too much! No! I was born in the United States. I am proud of this. But I did have Polish parents. And I am proud of this too. Today, I am a hundred times prouder than ever before, because in my veins flow a few dozen drops of blood of a gallant nation of martyrs. With all my soul I love the country whose citizen I am, I love the United States as a child loves its mother. I also love the country of my forefathers with the love a child feels towards his grandmother. One does not exclude the other, but even encompasses it. No honest person can be upset at me over this! – While still a child, I often listened to the stories of my Daddy, who had served in the army of the occupant. Apart from that I read books, I read them greedily, I read them gladly! My imagination frequently took me beyond the sea! I dreamed of a beautiful, peaceful country, about a nation that was admired by the whole world.

Well, finally in the year 1923 I saw Polish land for the first time and I came to know the Polish people. I admit that I fell in love with the country, and the nation suited my taste; I sincerely liked the Poles. It is true that at that time you could still see the traces of the world war; the country was ragged, the nation impoverished; but the fields were rich with wheat, rye and oats; the gardens were green with a variety of vegetables. It seemed as if the land was covered with a rich, multi-colored carpet. And the nation? The nation worked and built and prayed! At every step, I saw these noble faces and calm foreheads and happy eyes! And what about cordiality and honesty? As nowhere else in the world! A few times afterwards I visited Poland and I saw her growing in strength. She was becoming more and more beautiful and wonderful. In some, she inspired admiration, in others – envy! The nation by a common effort pushed the national wheelbarrow ever forward and higher. I will leave this beautiful and soothing image in your minds and I will start a talk entitled:

**Bluffs and Bluffers**

Last Sunday I warded off attacks on the Popes. Some sophist claimed that Popes have always been hostile to and even harmed the Polish issue. Among others, a radio preacher took out and discussed an encyclical of Pope Gregory XVI who reigned from 1831 to 1846! It is true that Pope Gregory XVI issued an encyclical declaring the November Uprising a revolutionary act and calling for Poles to respect the designated authorities. The Pope was wrong, because he had been deceived by a Russian diplomat in Rome. The latter had been using a pack of lies and false facts! However, when [the Pope] learned of the truth, he admitted his error, retracted the encyclical and gave a harsh rebuff to the tsar himself! In this matter, two non-Polish scholars, namely Dr. Francis Seppelt and Professor Klemens Loffler write as follows[[1]](#footnote-1): “The difficult situation of Poles under the reign of Tsar Nicholas I became a source of much worry to the Pope. It was difficult to decide what was better for the good of the Church; not to irritate the powerful monarch, but to use methods of concession and compliance, or rather to decide to break ties with him, to protest and encourage resistance, but at the same time expose the Church itself to harsh persecution. This was all the more difficult since the Catholic issue was closely connected to the Polish issue. And the Poles had just suffered defeat in the November Uprising of 1830!

Then Gregory XVI, who had been misled by the Russian ambassador to Rome - as he himself later admitted – published in 1832 an encyclical to Polish bishops, in which he called the Uprising a revolutionary movement, aiming to disrupt peace and upset social order; he called for loyal obedience towards the authority sanctioned by God. This message deeply hurt the Polish nation. Further events however convinced the Pope that he had chosen the wrong path, because not only did the Church not gain anything after the papal encyclical, contrariwise – persecution started especially in the Union, which ceased to exist on the old Lithuanian lands. The confiscation of church and monastic property, forced conversions to the schismatic religion, deportation of resisting priests and bishops, the interference of national authorities in the internal life of the Church, the creation of obstacles to communication with Rome, and the efforts to make people follow the anti-Catholic policy of the government – all of this swayed the Pope to change his position. Already in the preface to the consistory in 1842 he expressed, before the whole world, his regret that he had been unworthily misled and his sadness over the sorry fate of the Church under the Russian occupation!”

When in 1845 the tsar came to Rome, the Pope did not hesitate to harshly condemn his behavior at a private audience. In a dignified and proud manner, with his head held high, the tsar went to the audience in the Vatican. When he returned from the papal rooms, he was doubled over, changed, with drops of sweat on his forehead. “I told him everything that the Holy Spirit had told me”, said the Holy Father. The event caused a great stir. The Roman correspondent of the French newspaper “L’Univers” wrote, “Everybody claims that the Pope was sublime, that this noble aged man in his majestic simplicity seemed to be inspired by God’s Spirit. Who knows if that uncommon and non-Christian system of persecution would not have broken on that pillar which for eighteen centuries has crushed so many powerful injustices!” However, the hope remained only a desire. In matters of faith and the Church, nothing had improved in Russia! This is the historical truth about the stance of Pope Gregory XVI on Polish matters! Why should you change facts by yourself, according to your own whims, all the while duping faltering and harried minds? But the snake which for the first time hissed in paradise has not stopped hissing yet, and with his venomous sting he poisons human souls!

I repeat for the tenth time, “Dear listeners! The papacy was always a just advocate of Polish matters. The popes were always protectors of the Poles! This was understood well by the famous archbishop Stablewski who in the year 1903 wrote as follows about Pope Pius X: “Let us remember that there in Rome the pulse of fatherly emotions beats quickly for us. We can be sure that the great heart of the Pope will never reject us and that he will comfort us in our pains and our sorrows!” Listen also as this same holy Pope wrote to Polish archbishops and bishops under Russian occupation on December 3, 1905: “With a fatherly, tender and steady love we feel for the entire Polish nation, in spite of differences in background, language and religious rites. We will not let any opportunity pass without clearly emphasizing this. Your forefathers will always have the glory that in the defense of Catholic sanctities they offered their magnanimous hearts as shields; since then, the words “Pole” and “Catholic” have been used interchangeably.” On the basis of a concordat with the Russian government, Pius X was able to appoint bishops; here in the United States he gave us two bishops, Rhode and Kozłowski! The saintly Pius X gave us so many other proofs of care and protection before he died in 1914, broken by the outbreak of the world war. I also personally knew Pope Benedict XV! How much money he spent on the widows, orphans and other unhappy people in Poland, God only knows! I don’t think I have to remind you either of Pius XI, who died a little over a year ago! He was for many years the Nuncio in an independent Poland. He lived for many years in Warsaw – on Książęca Street, at the lodgings of the Pastor of the Parish of St. Aleksander, at the Plac Trzech Krzyży – today on his building there is a memorial plaque! He got to know Poles closely and well, he learned of our love for Poland and our devotion to the Catholic faith! When in the year 1922 he was called by the conclave to Peter’s throne, he retained until his death his great sympathy, understanding and even devotion to Poland, because he had realized that Polish souls are noble, calm, and turn to God. He showed this often and emphasized it always in his speeches to all the pilgrims that would come to Rome from Poland. Whether it was a pilgrimage of gray working-class people – or in his speeches to students or people from different professional backgrounds.

He not only greeted those pilgrim groups with a happy smile, saying in Polish[[2]](#footnote-2), “Niech bedzie pochwalony!” but always asked about Poland and in his speeches always underlined that the years spent in Poland were the most beautiful and for Him always pleasant to remember. And he used to say, “I am in some way a Pole!” On the other hand, who doesn’t remember the harsh and bold words of admonition and open denouncing of the motivation and behavior of Poland’s enemies? The world admired the courage of the Pope, who didn’t pay attention to the potentates of our times, but reprimanded them at each step and at every moment! Did then this Pope, who spoke in this way and behaved thus and honestly thought this way about Poland – did he not care for the Polish nation? Only a dishonest person can make such a claim, a person for whom light is darkness and darkness light – the truth a lie, and a lie the truth! We can say the same about the present Pope Pius XII, who has had the highest authority in the Catholic Church for a year. He has inherited the tradition from his predecessor! And you know well, my dear listeners that the Catholic Church is based on and builds on tradition, which it regards as inviolable and sacred!

One more accusation has apparently come from the mouth of some infallible teacher, namely that “The Pope could have saved Poland through his intercession with Germany!” And here again I tell you that such a sentence could only be said by a malicious person, or someone who is mentally ill! Intercede with whom? The Nazis, that means their leader, and that means a man who from the moment he gained power began to persecute (and he still does persecute!) his fellow countrymen, German Catholics living in Bavaria and Saxony; with him who started to harass the Catholics and harshly persecute them when he annexed Austria, a Catholic country through and through! Even there, he dissolved all the Catholic youth associations, he closed religious schools, and he confiscated the funds of charities, and so on and so forth! Would it have been worth it to appeal to such a person? To a person who not only persecutes the Catholic faith, but even declared war on the German faith, the so-called Lutheran religion – and he tries in his own country to introduce the cult of ancient paganism – with the addition of divinization of a country and some ‘superhuman’!

Such a ruler would never listen to the Pope, just as he did not listen to our President Roosevelt, who on April 15th of this year addressed him with the demand to avoid causing war in Europe. He never even deigned to reply to the letter of President Roosevelt, which later, in October, the American newspapers reminded us of, when he pushed our president to be a moderator in peace negotiations, which were and still are needed for him! With such people, who in a barbarian manner attack free and peaceful countries – who destroy the regimes confirmed by generations – with a person who suffers from delusions of greatness and human infallibility, with a being who is the true incarnation of the announced antichrist – an authority such as the Pope should not and cannot speak and negotiate. Every average honest person must admit that. The Pope does greater diplomatic moves than we know. And anyway, did not the Apostolic See, from the very beginning, in its semi-official paper “L’Osservatore Romano” denounce and stigmatize the attacks on Poland? Was not the Pope one of the first to recognize the new Polish government in France? Did not the Pope designate his representative to this government? And in various speeches and audiences, did not the Pope emphasize that in spite of the seeming tragedy, Poland is and will be and must be? And lastly in his marvelous encyclical, did not the Pope address the whole Christian world with a request for sympathy and help for Poland[[3]](#footnote-3): “The blood of countless human beings, even noncombatants, raises a piteous dirge over a nation such as Our dear Poland, which, for its fidelity to the Church, for its services in the defense of Christian civilization, written in indelible characters in the annals of history, has a right to the generous and brotherly sympathy of the whole world, while it awaits, relying on the powerful intercession of Mary, Help of Christians, the hour of a resurrection in harmony with the principles of justice and true peace.” Yet another proof of the care of the Pope for the poor Poles.

When the two attackers unlawfully divided Poland between themselves and started to persecute and abuse the poor people, killing or torturing them, or displacing them and bringing them to the interior of the occupants’ countries, or to concentration camps, or to heavy labor – then again the Pope spoke out. However, he did not direct his intervention to the governments of the enemies, because such a protest would have had no effect, but instead he turned to the governments of England and France for help. And what did he hear? That today these countries are helpless in the matter, and cannot do anything. So what could the Pope do then, and what can he do now? A Pope whose authority is not backed by cannons, nor tanks nor bomber planes, nor great armies full of soldiers armed from head to toe. The Holy Father has only faith and prayer, and only the fist and force speak loud enough to people of war and savagery. They pay no heed to the word of noble people, to the emotions of Christian hearts or to any idea of justice. Not long ago “L’Osservatore Romano” answered accusations that the Holy See was indifferent to Poland’s problem. The newspaper draws attention to the fact that “currently the world has gotten so used to a strong, brutal way of expressing thoughts, that every statement made in a calm, measured tone of voice seems to be weak. The Pope, due to his high and universal position, must use cautious words; however, such caution is never a sign of indifference to those who are suffering!”

I have also heard the hissing echo that, “The Polish clergy is responsible for the defeat of Poland. That the country was poor and did not have enough money for armaments, but the Polish Catholic clergy received a salary from the government, and this money could have gone to fortifications, tanks and bomber planes.” Once again, a very naive and somewhat funny accusation! Only an ill person can play with such accusations! Do you, who claim to be cultured, do you not understand that just like every human being needs food, water, air and light in order to exist in this world, likewise he needs words of comfort, which serve to raise his spirit, to guide his acts? If you think otherwise, then your thoughts go hand in hand with those of neo-pagans, and you know very well where their main headquarters are! There you will have a successful career and there you will take leadership positions! But before you leave for the country of the heavy boots and the armed right hand, maybe you would like to look into the “Statistical Yearbook”, published in Warsaw in 1939; then you will stop throwing such empty words to the wind, you will stop falsely informing and disturbing the minds of our fellow countrymen. You will find here on page 24 information that in 1931 (there were no later statistics), Poland was inhabited by 20, 670, 100 people of the Latin Roman Catholic rite; and on page 353 that the territorial structure in Poland in 1937 looked as follows. There were 5 metropolises mentioned in the year: Gniezno and Poznań, Warsaw, Vilnius, Lvov and Kraków. There were also 15 dioceses: 456 deaneries, and 5170 parishes. In the Budget of the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Enlightenment there were only 14, 442 positions for employees of the Roman Catholic Church, Latin rite. The sum of expenses for their support was in 1939/1940 calculated at 20, 355, 000 zloty.

From these numbers we can see that for one government position there are 1430 zloty per year. This would mean that for his work, each employee-priest of average status would receive less than 100 zloty per month, so around twenty dollars! Do you see the truth now? The lowest of our boys earns between 25 and 30 dollars a week! It is true that each sum has its position in the budget, so those 20 million are a sum which burdens the Polish people with taxes, but if we think in this way, then the budget position of 89, 131 posts for teachers of elementary, middle, technical schools and universities, which cost 462, 600, 000 zloty in the year 1939/1940 was also a serious position. A person with such a limited and narrow mind as this “enlightener” would be ready to delete the position of education from the budget of the country and instead use the money for armament and fortifications! What is this weird love for the Polish nation? Up until the time of Poland’s disgrace he and others similar to him blamed the Polish government for giving large amounts of money to the army, saying that Poles cared too much for soldiers and too little for the education of the people, that Poles are ignorant, illiterate, and backward. Now they shoot from different cannon! Now they say Poles were too pious, prayed too much, etc. Where is the logic in this? Where is the reasoning? What are these arguments? They want to play hide-and-seek with us! A clairvoyant with a microphone cried that, “Poland could only be saved by working closely with Russia, as a sympathizer – but the Catholic Church in Poland protested and didn’t let this alliance happen, as a result of which Russia has become Poland’s enemy instead of her ally!”

I am not a politician, but only a Franciscan, so I will reply as my common sense tells me to. Poland was not ruled by any church, but by a government with a Parliament, elected by the people of the nation. The Polish government – as far as I know – maintained the best diplomatic and commercial relations with the Bolshevik government, and concluded a treaty of non-aggression, that is, that one country will not attack the other. And what resulted from this treaty? The Bolsheviks, encouraged by the Nazis, broke the treaty they had signed with the Polish government and attacked the land of our forefathers without declaring war! Why did they do this? Only because they wanted to spread their power and propagate the Communist idea in a new part of the world. And see what happens next? The Bolsheviks stretch out their bear’s paw to other peaceful and weak nations, which had been created after the world war, and take one country after another under their protectorate, just like the Nazis did with the Czech Republic, Moravia and Slovakia. And today Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have Bolshevik armies within their borders! And if Poland’s friends do not win the war, than the nations occupied ‘in a friendly manner’ by the Bolsheviks will in time, in a very short time, completely lose their independence. That is why Hitler not only makes Germans leave those countries, but deports them himself! Rightfully, he is scared of communism!

You can see the Polish government and Warsaw Parliament knew better what to do, and they knew through their Ambassador in Moscow – and also through their consuls what the Bolshevik government thought and what it planned to do. That is why Poland did not make any stronger ties of friendship than the treaty which I have just mentioned. And anyway Poles had unpleasant impressions and painful experiences from the visit of uninvited Tartar hordes in the year 1920! Many of you, my dear listeners, must have been at the rallies where the late Bishop Cieplak talked about his experiences in Bolshevia. He spoke about how people are mistreated, how they are tortured and killed; what are the ethics of the Bolshevik authorities and what their life is like! Remember now these stories of the martyr Archbishop – remember this yourselves and without my help you will reply, “We cannot cooperate on a solid basis with such a nation, which is ruled by Asian ethics and a special way of thinking, because it will never hold true to far-reaching treaties – and we cannot build on these treaties. We have living proof of this today!

Finally, if this enlightener likes the Bolshevik regime so much, he believes so much in their word, in their signatures and in the commitments they made – then I advise him sincerely to go there. He will taste heaven on earth. I heard that the paper “The Atheist” is looking for a new editor, so there is a job waiting, and a well-paid one at that. But as a well-wishing Christian I warn you, buy a steel collar before you leave, because “weak and light”, that means, “empty” heads go quickly under the axe of the Asian executioners!

Comments:

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1. Quoted most probably after „Francis X. Seppelt, D.D., and Clement Loffler, Ph.D., *A Short History of the Popes*, authorized adaptation from the German by Horace A. Frommelt (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1932)”. Annotation by UAC. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. „Praised be Jesus Christ!” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Summi Pontificatus, Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the Unity of Human Society. Accessed on March 7 2010, <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20101939_summi-pontificatus_en.html>. Annotation by UAC. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)