**December 31, 1933**

I greet you esteemed countrymen and countrywomen with the words: Praised be Jesus Christ!

  About twenty-two miles from the City of Buffalo, the world famous Niagara Falls can be found. It is one of the natural wonders. Every year tourists travel not just from America, but also from the furthest corners of the world. Thousands come and admire them. The Niagara Falls is a giant, full of majesty and might. It is divided into two parts: the American Falls and the Horseshoe Falls. The width of both is 3500 feet. The falls on the American side is one hundred and sixty feet while the falls on the Canadian Falls is one hundred and fifty-eight feet. Every minute, fifteen million cubic feet of water goes through this channel with a bang and slam into the canyon that connects the Niagara River to Lake Ontario! I am standing at the edge of the falls. Enraptured in the distance, I see how the furious river waves beating and smashing, bounce here off the bank, there off the huge rocks, foamy and enraged, rushing until it disappears suddenly in the abyss of the canyon. This is how wave after wave dies, not only every year and every month, but every week, every day, every hour, every minute, ever second! It dies once and for all, so as to never return.

I am standing, pensively, as I imagine that that is how human life runs by, as does time. We are carried on the waves of time. The waves throw us in this direction and that. Often, we are weak and helpless, with fear and timidity, we reach out our hands for help, as time flows one without stopping. The months pass as do the years. In the meantime, we meet the rocks of disappointment and falls, we fall, often causing ourselves irreparable damage we wound ourselves painfully, living as though we were half-asleep. Often, we reach our hands for things that are harmful, we chase after superficial and unreachable happiness! Time flows on. The joyful and pleasant years of childhood pass by. The youthful years full of dreams, passion, and good desires pass by. The years of intellectual maturation and stabilization pass by. Old age approaches with its trappings. This also passes. Finally, we stand amazed in the face of that angel who knows no exceptions, from whom no mortal can escape. At his sight, our whole life moves in our memory like a picture in the theater! After all, human life is nothing more than a theater, and the people play the role of actors in farces and comedies, in dramas and tragedies. After so many years of struggle and fighting, people open their fists and are surprised to see vanities. Time does not wait, it goes on. People nod their heads and say curtly: "He was, she was!" Some remember that someone was but time, sooner or later, always erases even the traces of this being of time, and the future generation will not say that "he or she was"- and time will flow on. Today, we stand at the threshold of time. These few hours that separate the old year from the new should be important for all of us. It is worthwhile to stay and think.

**The Old and New Year**

I have a watch before me. At the moment at which I am speaking to you, the seconds’ hand is moving quickly and regularly. Every sixty seconds the minute hand moves; the hour hand moves even slower and more somberly. When this indicator points to midnight, the old year will die, and the new year will come. Midnight is a cradle and grave. The old year? It will count only three hundred and sixty five days. Why is it old? Maybe because for many it was a time of suffering and pain, complaining, and tears. Or maybe I know. I know that today's midnight is a farewell to the old 1933 and a welcoming of 1934, which in twelve months will change into a rotten and weak old man. I know that the world will bid the old man farewell and welcome the child with joyful cries and greetings! Midnight will turn into day. The bells and whistles, songs and music, will announce to the world that one more year has ended and a new one begins. Will we sing the old one a hymn of sorrow and mourning and sing the new one a song of celebration and joy? I do not know! Do we have just reason for that? I also do not know!

Let us do one thing, and that is what this evening every good host does; let us make and examination of the gains and losses of the past twelve months, not only with material matters but also with spiritual ones! In other words, let us make an account with our conscience! The watch beats. Let us examine. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Midnight. Life is shortened by one more year. One more year closer to death and thus to eternity! For some, the past twelve months have been one, long Calvary! Hunger, misery, and poverty; uncertainty, and doubt; to the degree that not once the thought of ending it all crosses. Faith in a better future and a lighter one gives them courage, holds up their strength, so that all these weights can be endured and won over! These people bid the old year farewell, with warm prayer on their mouth and a deep faith in their hearts that the new year will bring them new life and new happiness. Last year, some people were swimming in the things of this world. They were convinced that this would always be this way!

Here suddenly, without any warning, thunder came down on their shoulder and crushed everything they had to pieces. Today, the year ends which promised a great deal, and not only gave them nothing, but also took everything away! Today, they sit wondering, like the Jews did once over the ruined city, crying and sorrowing. They sigh, asking themselves: "What will the next year bring?" Last year, some joyfully greeted the new year. Full of strength, the willingly jumped into life, and today? Disease has dragged them off their feet, taken away their strength, and today, instead of joyfully greeting the new year, they bid the old year farewell with sorrowful cries and yelping. One of them is filled with the hope of fixing their health, but the other is afraid of the sad image of greater and longer sufferings. This is what the promised year brought them. This evening, in many families, the parents and children gather together and examine. There are fewer of them today than there were last year! Someone is missing.

Last year the father was sitting here and thinking. This father, who for many years worked hard and enjoyed a virtuous and hospitable wife and obedient children; maybe, who knows, last year he promised himself some peaceful rest among loving hearts. He found it under a cold lump in the graveyard. Today, this is where one can find him. Here a mother is missing. Last year she received wishes for a happy new year from her children and grandchildren, and she accepted them with a dreamed off longing, because now she will have a little rest and fewer chores, because for so many years she endured and went through so much. At least now she will look at old age calmly and with joy, she will look at the results of her work and chores. From this year on, her children, relatives, and acquaintances will examine the anniversary of her death! Here a husband is missing, there a wife, here a son and there a daughter! Yes, this year thinned out the family, the groups of friends and acquaintances; and they had promised themselves so much at the beginning of the year, meanwhile time lifted them into the eternal country. Temporality turned into eternity. Enough of these considerations! I will return to the living. In today's day, for the past twenty-eight years, every year I sit down in the evening and think. I examine myself. When I finish this examination, I clearly see my personal deficiencies, and how many there are only God knows. Then, as I have already related to you once, the figure of my deceased mother stands before me. She looks at me and I look at her. Slowly, she disappears as if in a fog and a strange thought comes to me: "Maybe you would be better if your mother was alive!" It is a strange though, but it is obsessive and real!

Now I ask the father of the family: What did you gain in this year? Did you suffer any losses? How many evenings did you spend at home? On payday, did you return straight to home to the wife and kids, or was the company of your frequently suspicious and sometimes even corrupt friends more important to you? Did you have goodness in your heart and a smile on your lips or was there hatred in your heart and swearing on your lips? How was the attendance at Holy Mass and the reception of the Holy Sacraments? Answer yourself. I do not accuse you, but I reprimand and remind you. If you feel guilty, at that moment admit to the fault and make a promise for the new year, you will change into a new, better, and more perfect Christian father! You mother, ask yourself if you are happy from the passing year? How often did your face, covered in clouds of anger and viciousness from your eyes there flashed flames of heatedness, and bad words came our of your mouth? Instead of being an example of patience and goodness, how many times did you cause storms, arguments, and disagreements! Answer yourself, beating your breast: "The old habits and defects I leave on the corner of the past year, and the new year will see me in the dress of a good and exemplary wife and mother!

You sons and daughters, today look into your consciences. Is God and your parents happy with your conduct from the past twelve months? What kind of sons and what kind of daughters have you been in the past year? Did you steal time from God and cheat your own selves? Where did you go and in what kind of company? How many times did you disregard the reprimands of your father and were ungrateful and unpleasant to your mother? You do not remember, that not that long ago, your parents refused themselves decent recreation so that life would be better for you. Children, dear children, younger and older, listen only: during the times of the world war the following took place. I heard about this incident when I was in Kalisz, about twenty years ago in Poland. The German army entered a city. To scare the residents, the commanding leader decided to execute one out of every ten citizens. Fate fell on aging man, who actually served in an enemy army. Brutally led by the soldiers, he falls on his knees before the officer to ask to spare his life for a few minutes, so that he could pray for his son! The officer does not want to hear. The father stands under the wall, the soldiers aim and the machine guns fire. The poor man collapses under his knees and is being soaked in his own blood. With superhuman strength, with a shaking hand, he tears the shirt on his breast, takes out the scapular and says in a dying voice: "Queen of the Polish crown, take care of my son, guard him from misfortune." The last thought of the dying father is about his child! You children, if you love your parents, have some gratitude for them, if up to now you have not had any, let this be the beginning of your change! St. Augustine writes: "No one is unhappy before God, except out of his own fault; no one is as dangerous and bad for a person as a person is for himself, through his own mistakes, imprudence, bad habits, and inclinations." And so with the new year, let us begin a new life. A better, more sober, and more virtuous life. May God bless our efforts!

What should be the second, practical, finish to today's talk? I repeat again, when we look into the future and examine the years, they seem to us to be one long and sometimes too long space of time. When we cast an eye behind us, they seem too short. They go by and are no more. The months are like a train wagon and a very fast one. The years are like various train stations. Year after year, we move deeper and deeper into the depths of midnight. When sooner or later, according to the laws of nature, we stop at our last station and we hear the command of God: 'Stand up and get out, this is the end of your temporal journey," what then? I am reminded of the following example: in old days, at almost ever court, there were at least one or many jesters, so called clowns, who with their jokes and jests amused the court and visiting guests. The mouths of these jesters released bitter and sharp truths, which were clothes in rags of jest! A certain king one time called one of these jesters, and giving him a gilded cane, which was like a regal scepter, told him: "When you find someone who will be a bigger jester than you, give him this cane!" After a while, the monarch fell into a serious illness. To the surprise of the servants, the jester showed up in the king's palace, holding the cane in his hand. He asked to be let into the quarters of the master. The servants let him in reluctantly. After a short greeting, the king told the jester in a quivering voice that he wanted to bid farewell forever. The jester put on a front, and pretending to cry he asks with fear: "Where are you going, Lord?" "Into another world!" " And when do you intend to return, next month?" "No!" "Next year?" "No!" "In five years?" "No!" "So when?" "Never!" "And in what way have you prepared yourself for such a far journey and such a long stay?" "I have not prepared at all!" "What?" asks this jester with surprise and anger, "Then take back this can which you gave me before; you are going on a trip into eternity and you have not even thought about making sure that in this eternity, from which you will never return, you had it not only well but the best! Take this cane, because I would never allow such foolishness. You are a greater jester not only than me, but you are the greatest jester, I have ever met in my life!"

Does this example, and especially the words of the jester not pertain to us? Going after the temporal and worldly things, carried on by the waves of time, forgetting that the years pass by and that we are doing nothing to be ready for the trip from which there is no return. For the trip that leads to either a joyful or unhappy land! How beautiful was the writing of our Mickiewicz:

     What is feeling?

     Only a spark!

     What is my life?

     One moment!

     What is the continuity of time,

     Known to me from time?

     One moment!

Before your eyes, dear radio listeners, I will move one picture taken from the historical incident in the Biblical Old Testament! We are in the throne hall in the luxurious castle of the Egyptian Pharaoh. The proud Pharaoh sits on the throne, amidst unbelievable riches. The humble patriarch Jacob stands before him, already an old man. The monarch, moved and surprised, looks at the old man and asks how old he is? Listen to the answer: "The days of my pilgrimage county one hundred and thirty- short, and bad!" It is not surprising that the Holy Ghost teaches: "You dreamt that these are years, from the morning they passed, which in the morning bloom and ripen, and in the evening fall and dry out." I finish on the words of the patriarch and the Holy Ghost. Let us think about their meaning, today we say goodbye to the old 1933 and we greet the childlike New Year 1934!

     The old year died in the twilight of night,

     The new tomorrow comes to the world,

     In the rainbow colors, and great power

     With the emblem of hope, the New Year comes.

Everyone is uncertain, what it will bring

Joy, celebration, or mounts of gold?

Does life tear itself into the scraps of life-

Will shadows, sadness, and longing overcome it?

     Or will the star of happiness shine?

     Will it bring possessions, thoughtfulness, and fame?

     Or will it bring the opposite, with a storm will pass

     And destroy the future, the basis of life?

Let us not lose hope in life,

Even if dark clowns surround us,

Even though we lose the way in the snowy storm

And thunder strikes in our bleeding wounds.

     Remember that Love, Faith, and Hope

     Was sown by Christ on the way of the Cross,

     And even though we go through following storms,

     Even though pain, suffering oppresses us severely.

Remember that God is always above us,

That he watches over our happiness for centuries

Though the difficult living swims with tears

He gives us his Divine Providence

     In this New Year life up your head!

     Boldly take your life into battle!

     God will reward your clean endurance!

     Do not lose faith, though darkness surrounds.