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Witam Was Zacni Rodacy i Miłe Rodaczki Słowani: Niech Będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus.

In my visit to the British Isles, I met Polish men and women who were displaced and imprisoned; those who were taken to forced labor, and those who had spent several months in concentration camps. This is the true picture. I am in an old medical building, in a wing of a hospital in ruins - thanks to the graces of German pilots. Those who have been labeled culture changers and wished to spread their national culture among patients, school children, helpless women with the help of fiery bombardment. I have seen countless examples of this with my very eyes. Therefore, let no one judge me as being biased or exaggerating. If you had seen what I had seen; if you had heard what I have heard not from witnesses, but from the lips of sacrificed martyrs…, but why should I explain? Rather, listen: in a slender little room of a partially collapse hospital are four beds. All are occupied by beaten, hurting Poles who miraculously escaped the hands of the terrible occupiers. Here, on this bed, lies a young man who is merely twenty years old. This is no sixty year old man worn out be long years of hard work and broken through the storms of many years. This is a youth who has just begun to live. His cheeks are ruddy because of a high fever. His eyes display some kind of caution and fear. Listen to what he says in a subdued and weak voice: “I have spent eight months in a concentration camp. First take took us as hostages. Within twenty four hours we were put into jail. The guards beat us with rubber clubs. We were beaten systematically not to kill us but to break us. We slept like animals. They fed us with potato soup and the bread that had been baked in various homes. One day two men of the Gestapo took me out of the barracks. I didn’t have the slightest idea why. There, beyond the gate, knelt my mother. She knelt with her hands crossed on her breast. As I looked on, one of the solders pushed her, and the other held her to the ground with his bayonet. I stood helpless. I prayed with my whole soul. If we didn’t have faith, we would have been broken long ago. Our faith gave us spirit and strength. Two weeks later, I and two of my fellow prisoners managed to escape.” So much from this man. I am not permitted to tell you more, although I may say that his persecutors had broken out all of his teeth. He had scars healing on his body. And now to our talk:

 DO WE NEED RELIGION?

Knowledge, the true and fundamental understanding of the conditions of human life, among the various nations of the world, demands a need of certain power which would be an indicator and director of the fields of morality and the of social and commercial intercourse. There must be some must be some ground for the principle which will provide harmony and common activity; there has to exist some kind of insight or conviction which would be the source of justice, mercy and that is nothing else but love of neighbor and sincerity in speech and behavior; there ultimately must exist some power, beyond the ordinary power of man, which would be able to stem or put an end to egoism, which appears under various guises as in greed, avarice, insincerity, jealousy and hatred. What every being ought to have is simply a collection of laws, or a codex of life, a life which concerns thought and behavior which is private or public. Fortunately, the heart of every human being, I repeat every human being, is ingrained with a certain feeling for one’s neighbor; the power of recognition of good and evil; carved by a sense of justice and a belief in the power greater than self to which everything is subordinated. Human beings are endowed with a realization of a certain invisible power and might, always and everywhere present from which he cannot hide and has no control over. Every human being is in need of this kind of omnipotence. Every human entity knows that in itself it is lacking, powerless and without help. And that power must exist beyond man and beyond created things. This applies not only to civilized people, but relates to barbaric entities unknowing civilization in its best state. This explains the drive to create a certain societal structure. Man naturally does not like loneliness. He prefers to live in a group. He feels his mortality. He wonders at the beauty of sunsets and sunrises, the wonders of starry skies. He is curious about the deep echo of distant thunder and the zigzag of lightening as it traverses the air. He is in awe of the might of storms and hurricanes with the havoc their raise in destruction of what human hand have made. In a short time man discovers and he can accomplish more when living and working with others rather than his own hand alone and without others. Something drives him to be honest with intercourse with others, maybe it’s nothing other than his personal suffering experienced when he is unjustly treated. Then he works to better himself and those who are dear to him. And that is why he goes into groups, with the understanding that in social interaction there are benefits, help, and risks. He willingly obeys the prescriptions of society, the rules and laws of the current governing body and lives according to them. He takes on certain obligations in order to be a good citizen. He understands that he must not transgress the rights of his fellow men. He seeks reasonable merit and a fare wage for the sweat and blood shed making a living, but he acknowledges the rights of the bread giver. Truly, the Creator in His wisdom ordered all so that man with the help of plain thoughtfulness, through his endeavors and pains, through his personal little victories, can show proper respect and love of his neighbor. From this followed certain virtues and rights in humans for the benefit of all. And God also and with wisdom directed that the first steps of man should be directed and necessarily so to contact with his neighbors. No one should take lightly or neglect his obligations regarding his neighbor and at the same time live in order peacefully with God. The path of perfection which leads to God, but is a public road leading through groups and with groups. No one can truly understand the life of man, and cannot take advantage of and be happy with the normal gifts and rewards without living and socializing with people. The hermit, who loses contact with others, loses the feeling of obligation and their worth in regard to neighbors and is in a state of indifference. And this is so he doesn’t have the occasion to give and be of worth or harm to others. He is cut off. Only with socializing with others and working with them he reinforces our moral side and then our deeds have a moral stature. Careless acts do not count.

Man evolved little and advanced intellectually until he understood and finally became conscious of the existence of the highest, eternal and almighty being calling him to being – fashioning him with his own creative might and create everything we call the world. Then in the beauty of nature he saw evidence of beauty and goodness – God. In the desert sand and the desert devoid of life he saw the face of God disgruntled. In the storms he saw God angry and punishing. Wherever he turned and wherever he looked – everywhere and in all he spotted signs and clues of an unseen might, a power which he could not understand. Slowly and by steps he began to believe, that he, and every human being is dependent upon the will of this unseen might but present everywhere.

Occasionally e looked at death. He saw the dying. Then generally he heard some kind of mysterious voice, coming not from outside of himself but somewhere in his being which reminded him that he too sooner or later sill meet this death on the path of life and on her demands will go where others have gone. He could not and did not want to believe that death and the grave was the end of man. And again that same inner voice gently whispered these words of joy: “death is the gateway to life beyond the grave; death is the beginning of a better life, lasting for eternity.” And then this man came closer to the divine being, seeking his well-being and understanding the vicissitudes of life.

The first hunger and the first urging of the heart aims at and better and more perfect knowledge of God, to come closer to God and to lay his worries at the foot of the One Who is the beginning and the end of the created things. That hunger and wish is not the feeling of only one, or only some kind of group or part of humanity but is the drive of all humanity, of everyone. It is the natural feeling of every thinking being. And that is why the first and highest need in the world which always was, is today, and always will be – Religion. Mankind wants to believe in justice, namely, reward for the good and punishment for the evil. The unity of belief in this fundamental principle of humanity knit and united humanity. The wise and those with good judgment explained the word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy spirit; taught the principles of faith and morals, wrote in the most details the liturgical ceremonies of the many devotions. They chose the highest hill or the lowest valleys and there built altars in order to sacrifice and give sacrifices of the Creator and Lord. The world felt the need for religion. With the passage of time the altars themselves were not sufficient and people were not satisfied with them. They began to build churches. Some were very primitive others more or less glorious, and more or less ornate. It depended on artistic taste, or the backing of rich benefactors. The churches did not stand only as material dwelling of the Creator, but places where people gathered in unity and the understanding of certain general goals and aspirations. Religion became the foundation of mankind’s aspirations. It became the part on which the whole world revolves. Without religion the virtues which are the ornament and glory of human life would not be able to exist. The man without religion is a bird without wings. He cannot lift himself up above the common beast. Besides, one does not have to delve into the depth of history to prove that. It is enough to look at the behavior and activity of the neo barbarians, the so-called culture-formers who were fed a Godless teaching – terrible, atrocious, and bloodletting.

A country without religion? There is no such thing. A country without building temples for the Creator, nothing prophetic about that. It is the breaking of an unfortunate people. What does religion mean? What is its meaning in the larger sense? It is nothing more than an internal act or form, through which people profess the existence of God in whom they rely and claim that they must worship, obey and honor, I other words one must obey God, Serve God n Honor God. Religion means the attitude linking Creature and Creator. It is the attitude which is specified with laws and prescriptions which regulate our entire life and are the foundation of our behavior not only in relationship to God, but our relationship to others. In the strict sense religion means believing in revelations made by God and relegating our life to them willingly. Our life means a great deal, a great deal, because it encompasses our thought words and deeds, always and everywhere, in our private lives and in our public lives. If religion is the greatest need of the world, it is needed everywhere. There is no corner of the world where religion does not carry light, warmth and love; where there is no religion there is a desert, cold and dark. Religion has a meaning in every field of life. It has an impact on our life of reason, our ethics our community on the losses of man on earth and his whole temporal life. The intellect which does not recognize religion is tight and darkened. In that kind of intellect there is chaos, error, and panic. You find there a lot of fear and insecurity. It does not know where it came from, why it exists, and exactly what its goal is. Wherever it turns, it comes to a high and thick wall. It only sees difficulties, obstacles, and hindrances. It falls apart under the difficulties of life. It is no wonder then that it encounters difficulties in life. The intellect which is enlightened by the rays of religion, unravels the cares of life recognizing its limitations and errors, its helplessness, and looks forward with hope to the future because it believes in the gracious and good willed help from God!

Religion depends on the moral posture of man; therefore it gives everyone a norm according to which we can distinguish good and evil, virtue and vice, responsibility from regulation. The intellect devoid of the aid of religion, walks blindly, is interested only in itself, holds out its hands more and more without end, without scruples and without the admonition of conscience.

Religion impinges on community life. It formulates and works out the factors of social intercourse. It lifts community life to a higher plane and adorns it with justice, honesty and openness. A good example of communal life without religion is the German Third Reich. Lying, cheating, theft, murder, hate, persecution, prisons, concentration camps etc. are evidences of common effort without religion.

Religion impinges on the difficulties man encounters on earth and his daily life. It indicates the worth of suffering, dedication and good hard work. It teaches that laziness, waste, excesses, drunkenness leads to disease, brings needless suffering, and takes life. Religion is a moral force with which man keeps his wants in check and directs them effectively so man becomes a reasoned entity. In my journey through the British Isles, I stopped in Scotland. And not unwittingly. I not only received permission but an invitation to visit the camp of the Polish paratroopers. The camp is in a forest called “Małpim Gajem”. The leader brought me to see the normal training maneuvers from a 100 foot tower. Hundreds of young me took part in thee maneuvers on land, sea, air. I admired the agility of the men. But what created more of an impression on me. It was the unusual calmness and peace on the faces of these young heroes in spite of what they must have gone through having been displaced from their motherland. They had been separated from parents and family. Some escaped from prisons; other from concentration camps. They were weary and beaten. Considering their plights their faces wore peace and a smile. Surprised at this, I asked the chaplain, for an explanation. With a smile, he replied: “Father, every one of my men is religious. Religion is miraculous ballast which kept them even tempered in trying times. My men know how to talk to God.” The chaplain pinpointed religion as the ballast in aid of camp life. Religion is the underpinning of life through difficulties and changes and brings us to safe ports.

If religion is necessary in every society, where, in the first place, must it be found? Where? In each and every family. Why? Society is composed of families. The family is the first place it is the part of every integral society. Families create society. The way the family is; that is the way society is. Only religious families can create religious societies. And so, in this family nest room should be made for faith which creates close bonds among married people and promotes love between the members: love of parents toward the children, children toward their parents. The mother and father should be good examples. The example of the elders is a magnet which draws to good or evil. Every child chooses its father as a model and a model of love. If the child notices, and you, fathers and mothers understand the best how children of our times watch your every step, every behavior to be imitated. If the child sees the father on his knees for morning and evening prayers, if the child does not see him making the sign of the cross before and after meals, if he doesn’t see the father hurrying to church on Sunday, then the child begins to think and ask others opinion about the behavior. If the mother is careless in religious matters, what a demoralizing is extended to the whole family. We need more families in which the Christian spirit rules in creating protection, and the virtues delineated by practicing religion.

Religion I needed in the factory, in the institution, in every interest. In the workplace, wherever it may be, religious convictions should buttress conscientiousness, justice, and understanding. May these virtues declare your religion. The believer person knows not cheating, theft, deception, and of the intellect, the heart, and the soul. Is it not the reason the Savior said: “let the little children come to me; do not prevent them, because of such consists the kingdom of heaven”. Religion is needed by young and old. It is needed to prevent one from stumbling, to prevent harm to self, to help one to realize that it leads to eternal joy. Religion is necessary in old age when the flesh becomes weakened, and past experiences shows the mistakes, the **failures, the vices which one has experienced. It is then that religion more clearly shows a loving and merciful Savior, reminding us the Lord is father, brother who knows from experience about the weakness of his creators. In religion you will find joy and sorrow, medicine in suffering, strength in difficulties, awareness in life’s battle; religion brings peace, gives you a certain satisfaction;** in a word, if gives you certain things which you will search for without finding and will never find outside its borders, I recall a certain event. In prewar years, I often travelled. About seven years ago I travelled to far away Alaska. When returning I met and spend some time with a conductor on a train, a non-Catholic. We spoke of various things. He told me that he is a believer but doesn’t belong to any specific religion. In passing a town he noted: “Once I lived there. I left because there was no church and I wanted my children to have some kind of religion.” - This man knew well the benefits derived from Religion.

In Alaska, bought from Russia in 1867 near the Klondike River, were discovered great deposits of gold. In 1996 there began a gold rush. Thousands were in the hills and waters of the river amidst Alaska’s natural beauty. Along with the movement, there were adventures and murders. And they knew the reason. There was no church. They decided to build a church. I saw one of these churches in Whitehorse. In a short time, the murders almost all disappeared.

Religion is necessary for family, for society and for nations. That became understood after terrible consequences in society. Without religion, family life as well as city and national life is without goals. Life without religion is a large desert; and the man without religion will never be satisfied or in peace with himself; he will spend his entire life dying of hunger in search of the spiritual.