**FEBRUARY 12, 1939**

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

The Vatican Museums hold very old works of art. One of the famous works is marble group representing Laocoon and his two sons, dying in horrible sufferings with their bodies entwined with writhing snakes. The group sculpted from marble seems alive. The figures are wrestling with gigantic snakes. The veins and muscles made from cold marble seem to pulse to the breaking point. Their hair disheveled; fear and suffering are expressed in their eyes. Two huge snakes intertwine the father and his two sons as the snakes administer deadly venom into the father’s side despite the struggle of the figures depicted. So much of the sculpture. The history of this piece of art is the following: Laocoon, was a very educated and experienced priest in the city of Troy, which was occupied for a long time by Greek armies. He warned on behalf of his fellow citizens not to admit the wooden horse (a gift of the Greeks) into the city for inside the horse were enemy soldiers. When Laocoon went to sea with his sons in order to give offerings to the gods, two giant snakes threw themselves on the priest and his two sons. All of them perished. This happening grasped the imagination of this unknown to me sculptor who depicted the incident with the sculpture. Laocoon, despite his warnings, saw his fellow citizens let the Greek wooden horse into the city of Troy which of course hid the enemy soldiers. He set out to see with his two sons to offer to the god but was punished by them because of his transgressions. Two giant serpents came out of the waves and administered poison and killed the father and his two sons. – As I mentioned before in my talks, individual persons make up families; families make up society: societies make up the world. Two venomous serpents, in our day, have poisoned our intellects, hearts and souls. Perhaps not all at once but gradually. You ask what these two snakes are. They are nothing else but yellow journalism and bad books. Yes, like stings of venom sharp as a surgeon’s knife flows the poison which floods venom at God, faith, church, marriage, virtue, tradition and everything which to this time was looked upon as holy. Truly it poisons all, leaving behind sadness, weeping and grinding of teeth. These results were prophesied by Zacharias the prophet, when he had this vision: “Then I raised my eyes again and saw a scroll flying. “What do you see?” he asked me. I answered, “I see a scroll flying; it is twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide.: Then he said to me, “This is the curse which is to go forth over the whole earth; in accordance with it shall every thief be swept away, and in accordance with it shall every perjurer be expelled from here. I will send it forth, says the Lord of hosts, and it shall come into the house of the thief, or into the house of him who perjures himself with my name; it shall lodge within his house and consume it, timber and stones.” Now to the talk, entitled:

THE FLYING SCROLL

Speaking to you from the hall of the Roman Catholic Union, in Chicago, after a long time considering it, I finally chose this theme. The month of February is the month of the Catholic Press. The Catholic Press is one of the main activities of Catholic Action, on which the Apostolic See relies; which operates the Union and which brought for the reorganization of the Association of Polish Priests in America. The holy Pope Pius X, besides other titles, assumed the title of “The Apostle of the Catholic Press.” I had finished my studies in Rome at the end of His tenure. Among my paper clippings from the “Observatory Romano”, I have a few references in my old tablet. I’ll read some interviews: According to the Holy Father: “One still does not understand the meaning of the press as media. Today it is a fact that Godless writings which cheat, poison, and ruin Christians. Needlessly you build churches. Without results are your strife since you do not understand how to protect yourself against the badness of the secular press and use the goodness of the Catholic press.” Who today, looking at the obscene workings in the press, can reach back to the words of a long gone Pope.

I return for a while to the prophecies of Zacharias. What is the worth of that roll of papyrus that comes into homes and tears and ruins, so much so that stone upon stone does not remain. Did not this ancient prophet see in his mind’s eye, our times, when the scrolls were covered with current print, in the form of a book or a newspaper which are thrown not only under the doors of palaces but even on the doorsteps of the poorest homes? The greater part of them destroys happiness and destroys the foundations of Christian families. All, today, read everything under the assumption of enlightenment and culture. Modern printing presses fill the world daily with thousands of tons of paper printed under the banner of enlightenment and culture. But never in the history of the world was there such darkness of the mind as are in our times when entire cultures head for paganism and do the devil’s work. “Who knows about life” writes one learned writer, “knows have little this new knowledge contains and that it can do harm instead of good. We are living in a worldly culture. We become more and blinder to personal relationships. We have become internally poor. Behavior and culture eradicated two phrases: love and heart!” Bad press and literature of the new life got rid of the love of God and neighbor and choked various noble dispositions of the heart of humanity.

More or less two years ago, one night, I was wakened in the morning hours asking me for my presence in the hospital. Nothing new. I have a time for at tending to the listening. I am ready at whatever hour the problem arises. I got used to this type of thing as a young priest. In a short time, I arrived at the hospital. The nurse led me to a large ward, where there were about twenty beds. All beds were occupied. Overlooking one bed, enclosed in curtains, were several doctors and four nurses. Their faces wore the look of concern. After a while one of the doctors gave me the sign that I could move in. At that time the nurses made room for me. I neared the bed. There is a young lady lying in the bed, at the most, twenty three years old. Face as white as the bed sheet under which the patient lies; face covered with bruises, like a plowed field in the spring. The forehead is wrinkled. The lips are swollen, red, obviously burnt by fever and shut tight as if in anger. The eyes were slotted under which were large and effusive tears. At first glance it seemed to me that here was a woman worn out by life to the point where she cared about nothing on earth; only to be left alone in peace, at least in peace. I took her by the hand and whispered in her ear, “I have been called here; would you like to go to confession? - She slowly opened her eyes, large black eyes which evidenced sparks of fever. In those large eyes, I saw the signs of fear and hurt. She eyed me like a magnet. She suffered a spasm, her face put on the visage of pain, she berthed deeply ; a few more pearly tears travelled down her cheek; the fingers of her right hand grasped mine as if seeking help from some enemy. One could feel the heat of her fever. She whispered her sacrifices of life . “My life not only got to be boring but was dying. When I was seventeen, I met a young polish boy who believed in nothing. He laughed at everything. He said that the old could believe, but the young did not need a God. Besides here in America people had no faith. He gave me a several Polish books and regularly brought with himself one polish newspaper and one English in which were articles against faith, parochial schools, and Catholic priest and so forth. I read the blasphemies against God and the satires of the pious and the good. My friend used to say to me: Now you will see the truth. One needs to read everything to be learned about the world and what is happening in it. The more I read, the less I prayed. In the course of two years, I stopped going to church and to confession. He talked me into a civil marriage. After a year of living together, I found a letter from which I learned that he has a wife in a different town. When I confronted him with it, he got angr5y and beat me so mercilessly that I didn’t show myself to people for a whole week. I wanted to leave him but I was afraid because he told me he would find me and kill me and himself. From then on my life became a torment. I did not want to go to my sisters and brothers because I was ashamed. I lived in fear of my life. My conscience gave me no respite. I was tormented day and night. I wanted to pray but couldn’t because how could God be able to listen to the prayers of a person like me who forgot to pray, didn’t go to Mas, fast or confess because I had believed a faithless man who stole my faith through bad books and bad press. In no way was I able to help myself. I had a nervous breakdown. I thought it was useless to live. So in despair I took poison. Now I do not want to confess, I want to die. In reality she confessed with great difficulty. I stayed with her and quietly she prayed with me. It was six o’clock; the Angelus rang. Once again she opened those large dark eyes. She was at last in peace. She took a deep breath, he body shook and she was gone. She was a sacrifice of a perverse man who fed her bad press and bad ideas so that she poisoned her mind and heart. Not being able to justify her existence and finding no help after losing her faith she fell into despair. The moral poison was changed into material poison; first she destroyed her mind and then he flesh. She fell a victim of the new poison which young and old daily feed themselves even the children. Now in the name of the members of the Union, here present in this hall of Unity, and in the name of every young man and young lady, who in this moment hear the sound of my voice, wherever they are, in the cities or towns, on farms or suburbs, I publically and whole heartedly call out to parents and teachers; to editors of newspapers, and journalism in various publications, to owners of theaters to radio programs: For the love of God stop, stop getting rid of God from the minds and hearts of in the name of enlightenment, behavior and culture especially with the youth who look to you for help. And instead of showing them the cross on which the creator God hung, instead of showing them the narrow path you show them the wide path of over use and comfort above all. Why do you not tell them the truth but what will ultimately lead them to despair, suffering and hell on earth. Why not teach youth the truth and honor but you teach them lies, falsehoods, and hatred? Stop sowing weeds instead of good seed for when harvest time comes they will have poisons which ought to be burned. Besides have you not eyes to see what is going on around you? The earth is filled with pyres on which youth is sacrificed. They are sacrificed by uncaring parents, super-intelligent teachers, arch educators and cynical professors, and morally corrupt journalists, unschooled in morality and not knowing laws human or God’s. The New sensationalist press, smelling of the gutter, under the cover of freedom of religion, is creating a whole new batch of unfortunates! Plain and evident materialism and new-paganism works on the intellect and the mind. Today’s theater chokes any idea of God, faith, or morality or virtue. Even today we are reaping the harvest of negligence and carelessness. It seemed to parents that they already fulfilled their obligation bringing children into the world and clothing and feeding them. As a result they bear such epithets thrown at their parents, “We did not ask to be born into this world. We are here not by our own will and not through our fault. So What? – We priests or at least the greater part of us was under the impression that the child needs catechism, preparation for Confession, Communion and Confirmation. We thought that that was enough. The greater portion of these children after first Holy Communion went to public school and universities. We lost contact with them. Growing up in an environment hostile to God and confronted with a corrupt press, they left God and Church and joined socialist ideologies and anarchists. “”The priest does not care.” “The priest only takes.” “The priest gives nothing.” And what did we do about that? We took care of churches and schools. We now begin to understand the problem. But thank God we are coming to the realization what this generation is about. We are beginning to go out to the people to the books, the radio, and the media.

In 1926, after the ending of the General Chapter in Rome, I went to Poland. On the way I lay over in Wieden. I stayed in a hotel near the railroad station. In the room I stayed in hung a large and beautiful paining. I don’t know who painted it. But that is not the point I want to make. In a field a young lady sat on a stone. She had a pleasant and good natured look on her face with a heavenly smile. But the forehead was wrinkled and from the eyes came a hurtful sadness. Some small children gather around her. The lady jugs them to herself protectively while another group of children run away from her. Today that image brings to mind a metaphor for the age. The lady is an image to me of the Catholic Church, a good mother who wishes to attract all people to herself lovingly, but there are people who move away from her not distracted by the flutist but through writers who use sweet sounding words, phrases and sentences. They give people the stones of injustice, double dealing, craftiness directed at the breast of the Church and the faith and God. Bad journalism poisons the minds and hearts with unbelief and lack of faith. Despite that, Catholics find nothing wrong with it. Often you hear the phrase: “What’s the problem; what harm could a piece of paper do. One reads it and forgets. One small drop of ink, reflecting a letter on paper is enough to kindle a planetary conflagration; enough to cover the face of the earth with blood; enough to have a nation to commit moral suicide, in the end, physical suicide. Someone once wrote, “Whoever respects self, shies away from the company of insincere men and loose women “– I add: “avoids contact with bad book and yellow journalism. Otherwise a French sickness awaits us; a loss of faith – a waning of traditions which indicate destruction and complete annihilation.