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Witam Was Zacni Rodacy i Miłe Rodzaczki Słowami: Niech Gędzie Pochwalony Jesus Chrystus!

Looking at the current medium of the Press, and especially looking at our newspapers, it seems there are no good people, all is in turmoil, nothing id good. As a result we avoid reading bad news. Thefts, raids, and robberies. Murders, killings and suicides! Cheating, extortion, blackmail. Separation and divorce in marriage. Drunks, women and men and gamblers. And all this is present on every page. And what is worse, the criminal acts and court trials are reported to the minutest degree. It seems as if the world is now not occupied with people and the world has become a zoo. Reader’s heads are reeling, and the newspaper is thrown aside and one wonders whether one should give up responsible behavior. Or think that all sanity is gone from this zoological world garden in which entities crawl about and virtuous living is gone. Newspapers and other publications smell of sensationalism, whatever makes the greatest impression. Whatever is out of the ordinary, something extraordinary, something special, and not in good, virtue, honesty, but in the underpinnings of evil, vice and darkness. However, I believe that in reality the greater part of humanity there are three classes: the good, the careless and the evil. People have been in these three classes since the beginning of time. This is the way it was before Christ and continues after Christ. Such people were before Christ, during Christ’s time, and will be forever. I do know that the better portion of mankind are noble, worthy of being human, coming from the creative hand of God. But these do not tout their virtue before humanity. Authorities weed out of society those who do it harm. We have the strength of good people, God-fearing. Who can count the obedient sons and virtuous daughters? The world is not conscious of all these noble people. Their number is beyond count and their good deeds are not known. Yes, we have the strength of these good people, merciful and noble, who journey through the world without fanfare, who give to God what is God’s and are kind to their neighbor. The best example is our mothers and fathers from the common people, laborers of the pick and shovel who stay on the straight, not fearing God because they loved Him, and served him well through the storms of life and persevered in the faith. And now for our talk based on the report of a religious. The title:

 MY RECOLLECTION

My mother lives with my father, brother and sister in law on a farm located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Pennsylvania. Her name is Jadwiga Stanisława,. Her last name is of no consequence. She is 78 years of age and for her age is very beautiful. She has sky-blue eyes, hair of frosty fluff but laced with long and thick braids. She maintains that the style is from bygone days (1961) when she was 17 years old and was a brunette. A mother with a serene face like a sunny May morning and a sunny smile on her lips and a look of satisfaction. Don’t laugh if I tell you that my mother, is known to me when she was sixteen years old. An unheard of thing, you may say, but no, not really. Dozens of times, my mother related to me things of the past, things happening in her youth. I felt that I grew older with her and was going through the things that were happening to her. I know that, when she was a child on a farm, not too far from the border of West Virginia, in an expansive house, that was leaning toward the ground from its old age, It was circled with a cordon of ancient oak trees. I knew that my mother with her sister Maggie played “ciu-ciu-babkę in a large smokehouse where home-made kielbasi, pork, bacon and beef hung from the ceiling. The gravel of the flowing stream nearby was as white as snow and the sand was as delicate as the moss around the pine tree. I remember that when Mom was twenty years old she made her First Holy Communion in a small wooden church where she fervently asked God that she would never commit a serious sin and strive to avoid the occasions of sin. She wore a white dress with a pretty ribbon. She wore a short veil decorated with tiny flowers. In her left hand she had a white rosary. She also had a small devotional book. She also had a waxen candle. I know that on that day she was nervous and very frightened. A year later, her hearing began to wane. And a while later, she could not even hear the muttering of a cat, or her beloved dog. I know, that her worried parents decided to take her to a specialist in Pittsburg, in order to at least save a bit of her hearing ability. I know that she lived with her aunt, helping her with her housework. The specialist did not help her regain her capacity to hear, and her aunt did not pay for the work done. I know that when she was eighteen years old, she wished to join the Nararene Sisters in Pittsburg. She wrote to the Sisters pleading to join but received the reply: “The problem of hearing stands in the way of our acceptance policy which has at its goal, teaching and nursing. God evidently has other aims for you! I know that, in 1897, my mother who was 20 years old, with her father and mother, went away to Michigan to the environs of Kalamazoo. I know that in the meantime, her two sisters, Anna and Marta were married farmers. The farm in Kalamazoo certainly did not flow in milk and honey and was instead paradise for frogs, snakes, and mosquitos. And there, a year later, her father broken in spirit - died, with a smile on his face. I know that shortly after the funeral, mother sold the farm and returned to Pennsylvania. She bought a farm and a small home. Not long after that, her two older sisters came with their families. They settled nearby. I know that the home of my mother became of little worth and a liability. Both sisters had large families. There was no doctor nearby. I know that their mother was doctor, pharmacist and nurse. The mother closed the eyes of her sister Annie. She had her eleventh child Martha and buried both. Later she cleaned and put the house back in some order from top to bottom. And for two years took care of the crowd of orphans. She sewed and washed and prepared food for the family. After such a sacrificial life she returned to her home. I know when my mother was just 28 years old, one Sunday she knelt in the church of St. Joseph and was waiting for the High Mass, a young farmer came to her pew and knelt near her. After mass they just left the church. And just to be polite, he struck up a conversation with her and offered her a ride home. On the way she learned that he was thirty years old and that he was a widower for two years, that he owns an old house and an 80 acre farm. –I know that later they met at the church every Sunday and in 1906 they got engaged. One day, my mother, telling about it whole affair: “And so this is what it was like: There was no romance involved, as you may very well know. Instead there were a lot of work and troubles. But at home there was plenty of understanding, working together, and help. True, there were responsibilities but a lot of satisfaction as we travelled together in life. We decided to build a nest: First there was Władzia, then Kasia, Leo, Staś, Gertruda, Fred, Rose, Marcia, and Joseph - Mother kept a diary. She faithfully recorded daily events. –I remember in the evening mother sat by of old Singer sewing machine to sew. When mother worked around the old kitchen stove with pots of potatoes, cabbages, beans and large pans of meat . How mother used to bake large loaves of bread on the outside. How mother, during summer storms, lit a candle before the figure of Our Lady, saying reverently: “We are in the hands of God!” How Mother used to kneel in the evenings and say the rosary, and we children had to say the Hail Marys according to the mysteries. And I remember how mom used to keep things in order and how she protected us, one from another, how she counseled us not to lie and fostered unity among us. – I remember one day when I returned from school and complained about my brother. “Mom, Leo ate candy during Mass. And I told the teacher about it.” Mother showed dissatisfaction on her face. She said, I’m sorry, but I do not wish my children to be gossipers and busy bodies. “Don’t do that anymore, except if it concerns something really bad.” “And I will tell.” “I turned away shamed that my mother had reprimanded me.” My mother could read my facial expressions without a word being spoken. I learned early not to offend my mother. On one occasion, my mother with some emotion that when after the birth of a child, the new baby in her arms, was always offered up to God and prayed that we should remain under the protection of God. Lying and squealing on others deserved a severe reprimand. Our little mouths were then subject to reprimand. The hand that diligently sewed for the household also knew how to wash our mouths with soap? We knew that from experience. Mother was always even tempered, peaceful; father was irascible, nervous, but a veritable pillar of help in difficulty. Mother knew how to keep the peace, always checking out the aims of the plan or situation. Father knew how to look forceful but was east on punishments. He had the heart of a dove and hare.

 Once, Freddie declared war with another student and school. They fought like two roosters. Freddie picked a fight with him over something concerning play and kicked his buddy several times. When his mother found out about the unchivalrous behavior of her son, she called him to her. The little one smelled trouble. He foresaw that he was in trouble; he looked for escape at the doorway. Mother spoke to him: “Fine, perhaps it is better that you father deals with you when he come home from work!” Freddy stood frozen. He hung his head low and approached his mother: “Mom, I know” the little guy replied “ but when dad gives a licking, he looks angry and serious. I would rather that you give me a licking; you are always smiling.” I was nine years old when our house burned to the ground. The firefighters just about left and we ended up living comfortably in the barn. The house was rebuilt under mom’s direction. At the beginning of December, we were able to transfer back to the house from living in the barn even though the house wasn’t finished. One evening, mother said to father: “This year, Christmas will be terrible. Santa Claus will not come! I guess the children will understand. It will be a practical lesson for them: that our best gift is the Christ Child.” But two days before Christmas, our parents send us to bed and had some kind of secret meeting. Instead of going to bed after prayers and after opening the door our bedroom, we heard laughter. But I didn’t say anything. On the vigil of Christmas my father according to his usual tradition went to Church and to confession but almost 10 minutes after, the doors were opened and there was Santa Claus! Joy beyond measure! In the spring, father leased forty acres of land. He leased it because mother was afraid of debt; but, when times were better and good weather imminent he bought the land in good fortune. Nearby were a stream and some wooded area. A beloved corner for mother. Mother at that time, was overjoyed, that strip of land, the flowers, trees, vegetables and – God! She worked the land delicately, peacefully. During the summer months we went to confession regularly, because she went. For the child, who daily in vacation time went to Mass, there were delectables for breakfast: warm milk, toast, sweet butter, freshly beaten in a wooden churn – fried eggs and fruit jams, general from peaches. In May and October, not all could go to church for rosary devotion. Mother, however, sent out a representative. The rest, nightly, right after dinner, knelt before the table, for a collective rosary. Mother was a smiling diplomat, in spreading peace to misunderstandings and quarrels and “Who from among you is guilty of error please leave. But whoever loves Our Lady gets to do the dishes..” Or “who is empathetic to the souls in purgatory, sweep the floor!” and the similar expressions. In such language we were defenseless. We had no argument. We gladly went to work!

 One day, when I was in eighth grade, I came home a bit early, and found mother with a letter in her hands. She looked at me tearfully, saying: “Your oldest sister wrote that she would enter a religious order! The cloister of the Bernadine Sisters in Pittsburg, seemed to us somewhere in China. I couldn’t understand why mother was in tears, since just a half year ago since her daughter entered the academy and I could not understand mother crying when something that mother prayed for so fervently to God for such a long time. In the next thirteen years, she had seen four sisters take the religious habit! Two in Pittsburg and two in Greensburg, Pa. The family at home became smaller and smaller. And after thirteen years mother attended the ordination of her son –Daniel. After the newly ordination ceremony, she put in her son’s hands and golden envelope. The envelope was forty-four years old. In it was found the reply of the Nun to the application of mother to the Congregation, which had for its goal investiture into the congregation. It read, “Hearing loss, which you in sincerity admit, prevents us from welcoming you to our Assembly, which has the goal is teaching and nursing. The Good Lord apparently has different goals for you! The mother went into the evening of her life and didn’t have time to escape he path of life. She never took time to rest because there was always a lot to be done. In 1938 the wife of my brother died. After the death of the mother-in-law, mother took four little orphans and took care of them for five years, that is, until the time when their father found himself another wife. Now the home became a desert which at the Holiday’s revives with the visit of the son-in-law and daughters; the grandchildren and great grandchildren and the mother regains her vitality. She relives her past life long gone, the years which will never come back again. The mother still has reveries of her past life. Two years ago she sat, one winter day, she was sitting by the sowing machine. She was very busy. She was making a surplice for her priest son. The silence was broken by a banging on the door. Mother other, put her work aside and went to open the door. A young lady, stylistically dressed in her middle years. “I have”, she said, some interesting literature…and she hesitated because she saw the cross on one wall and the painting of the Mother of God by which was a devotional lamp. The scene of these holy objects her sense of stability and she said in her nervousness, “But all leave all this literature here.” At which, after a while, the Mother replied, “This is all filth unending!” Garbage about faith, priesthood and the church…nothing I am interested in!” I have grandchildren and great grandchildren visit here often. We are careful to protect them from those who ridicule the faith. It is the way we also the keep an eye from food that would poison us. The other scanned the literature that the lady had brought in. She said in a disturbed voice: “And this is dirt. The spurned lady retorted. “You farmers are very naïve, and you do not know the truth about your priests and religious. If you will listen, I will explain”… But the mother could not stand it anymore: “No, I will not listen but you Maam, are not willing to hear my opinion.” This said, she grabbed the defender by the hand and led her into the parlor saying: “There on the piano, do you see the four photographs? They are my daughters in religious garb. And there is a picture of my son, the priest. And you dare to tell me about nuns and priests!? You wish to through mud on my childen? Take your filthy literature and leave my home and don’t show up anymore! The lady rose quickly and hurried out, murmuring something under her nose. The mother loved to read legends and sing songs. And I received than liking also. When I teach children I could hear the voice of my mother and I tell the stories to my children who listen to me very interested in what I say. I see in my eye’s mind the large round dinner table where we gather to eat and did our school work and the lessons we learned; where we played cards, where we sat reciting our rosaries, from which our mother now writes letters to us every week and teaches us of the wonderful kingdom of God on earth and heaven. Today she has that experienced thought and phrase that she uses. She does not complain or blame anyone. “In the past year my sight has been declining but I lived happily. If I lose my sight it will be my thankful sacrifice for bringing up my children!” She spoke with a peaceful voice, like she was losing a hair and not losing her sight. In the first few days of November of last year, we received the telegraphic news about coming home. We anticipated that something was wrong with mother. We rode home but mother was not there. We found her in the hospital in an oxygen tent. We stood with our father around her bedside she was smiling and tears were flowing down her cheeks. She motioned to her priest son. “I am not afraid of death she whispered because I strived to be the best at all times. It was the truth. Now, my son, hear my confession”. We went out and her priest son remained with her. That son, who was brought into the world by this mother and was helping his mother to prepare for her journey beyond. After a few minutes he exited with tears in his eyes. He cried with plentiful tears. We all reentered to see mother. She lay peacefully; white as a sheet she lay on. When her priest reentered and took her hand, bending down in order to be close to her. She murmured again, “Kneel and recite with us the rosary as we always did at home at the large table. With a peaceful, smiling and satisfied face. Let us pray that God’s will be done. Perhaps never in life had we prayed as fervently as we did at our mother’s bedside. At this solemn moment, I visualized the portrait of mother, when we as children recited with the plea that we would never commit a mortal sin. We returned home with tears in our eyes with the understanding that we would lose our mother. But she didn’t depart from this life as of now. She returned temporarily to health and after three weeks and we brought her home. To this day she weaves and does her chores and writes to us weekly. My mother is the happiest person on earth. She hardly sees and hardly hears and gets weaker – but she still lives.” She was never afraid of life. She accepted in her heart, what Providence brought her and this day, standing on the doorstep of eternity, she is not afraid of death because all her life she strove to fulfill her obligations as best she could.