February 24, 1952

Dear Countrymen and Countrywomen, I greet you with the words: Praised be Our Lord, Jesus Christ!

 Years ago, when I had more energy, passion and the Spirit of God, I was very interested in prisoners. I never gave up the occasion to visit citizens who seemed to think that all was allowed under the banner of freedom and that citizenship lifts them above the law, and so either from idiocy or thoughtlessness, either from anger lack of thought they were in trouble with the law. As a result they found themselves behind bars temporarily or for life or even faced the electric chair. I didn’t deal with small town prisons for those provided small fry. You need to seek state prisons; for example at Auburn, Sing Sing, Attica, all in the state of New York or Weathersfield, Connecticut! There one sees and recognizes the elite, the aristocracy, the cream of the crop, the specialist and the expert, in every crime group, the nature of whom were those who thought that they were above the law, every law, God’s law, natural law, or human law; they thought that the world owed them a living. And so they did as they please avoiding capture until arrested and faced the music. As an old Polish aphorism put it: “The wolf carried away the sheep until the wolf was carried away.” And “The pitcher carries the load until the ear of the pitcher breaks away.” Here, in the United States we have more penal institutions than any country in the world. There, behind walls, thousands of prisoners are on retreat, in graveyard silence, in meditation, in penance, and in sadness. The authorities teach them order, obedience, self-respect, respect for the law. It is the popular belief that whoever serves orderliness which comes from the law, that person never swerves from the right path which leads to God, for disorder creates chaos and creates the fall of man, society and nation. Psychologists, socialists and teachers write all kinds of recipes for abolishing criminality but these medicines somehow don’t work. Not only do these criminalities lessen but they increase. And what is worse and even more frightening is the fact that current transgressors are from high schools. And so on to our talk:

**WARPED LIVES**

From a headline: “A Young Life Poisoned With Films and Photographs Ended Miserably,” I read, “An eighteen-year old, who admitted that his life was filled with films and Comic books ended his short life on the electric chair in Ohio.” This impudent and aggressive Don Froczner broke down completely when from his death cell thirteen. When a black mask was placed on his face, he cried out, “Lord, forgive me. Lord, have mercy on me.” Don committed a crime when while in an attempt to rob William Spieth, a grocer in Ashtabula, Ohio. He was merely sixteen years old. He shot the old Spieth, in the attempt to steal his money and his car! There were many attempts to save his life by a verdict of a long prison sentence since he was a mere youth. Nothing came of it. He was the youngest of anyone put to death in the State of Ohio. Before his death, he admitted to plans to kill a young school colleague in Youngstown. He offered his eyes to Columbia University in order to benefit a blind person. He was led to the electric chair by prison officials and two priests. Because of his fear of death, he was not in the state of mind to repeat the words proffered him by Father Leiuer, but instead called out: “Lord, I’m sorry! Lord, Forgive me!” Frochner had told a newspaper reporter that his fate was dictated by a lack of proper upbringing and the divorce of his parents and his broken family. Prison officials seeing him in his humility, they were amazed to see him changed from a cantankerous, cold, unfeeling youth. The change they said came after he changed over to the Roman Catholic faith. He said that the result was mainly his lack of upbringing. He said: “My outlook was based on the films I watched and the comics I read.” Several weeks ago I read in “Nowy Swiat”, an interesting article. I’ll quote it in its entirety: “Several times a week we spend our evening watching television for two hours. – Is there something new on television? - my stereotypical answer – six corpses – after which we sit and count. There exists, in California a society by the name of: “California Association for Better Radio and Television.” It is a worthy association. In tens of thousands of households there are radios and televisions, tuned into “spiritual food” such as newspapers and books. This food is of value to households that have children. The child generally accepts radio and television as a natural medium for them. Besides the comic, there is programming which is geared to younger generation. It is nothing extraordinary that the mentioned society did not make much of the worth of that spiritual feeding, despite the media presentations. The society therefore organized a group of observers. Each observer was given a television station. That person was given the responsibility to schedule programs between six and nine o’clock in the evening, which are the hours which children watch television the most. Within one weeks programing the television stations in Los Angeles, in the hours between six and none in the evening, programs broadcast has the following topic: 91 murders, seven forced entries, 3 kidnappings, 10 robberies, 2 arsons, 2 escapes from prison, 1 explosion killing 12 people, and 2 suicides.

The statistics of fights and brutality, and well as planned though not carried out murders was a bit insignificant to name. The programs include paid off judges, bought police, quite a collection of criminal activity…in one week…in children’s time between six and nine…ninety one murders!!! Cynically I foretold my wife how many murders will occur. Adults perhaps view but certainly not children. There is plenty of drunkenness. Perhaps this is not a teaching method linking reasons as I make them…but I cannot neglect to note what effect all this has on the small children who see even one murder reported by the media. The day before yesterday I read about a six year old girl who in another home made a fuss. She pushed another girl and the girl fell to death from a roof. Where did she get the idea from to even think of doing something like that? I saw the program where she might have gotten the idea from on television. Or take another case: Dramatic. It is a problem of our times: a national, social problem. In a Chicago Daily under the headline “Television and Drunkenness” I read: “The American Nation became the world’s most powerful nation in the world in the last fifty years however at the same time it became more populous and the economy spread but it also witnessed a growth in alcoholism. We have too many drunks among our populous and, what’s worse and alcoholism is steadily growing and is causing greater trouble especially with our young people. What is the cause? There are multiple causes. One of them is that the populace has more time on their hands and lives the high life. Years ago when there was no radio or television, the group doing most of the drinking were the adults, people of week character who wished to drown their troubles or in the Polish language “drown the bug.” Today the problem has grown bigger as Fr. John W, Keogh, the president of the Catholic organization of sobriety in the United States said. The tendency nowadays is the drinking vodka and other intoxicating liquors has been taken up by teen agers as well as the small children. More families are drinking alcoholic beverages than the year before poisoning their flesh and souls and causing the ruin of family life. The spread of drinking alcohol is encouraged by television which urges to drink alcohol and not only by word but by photographs and are watched by the entire family including small children. The hype about drinking is so alluring that folks who have been used to drinking alcohol only on holidays turn to drinking it daily since the daily ads on TV keep their habit alive. The visual presentation of drinking is prevalent in all places and effective in drawing people effectively. In a word, the entire social life turns around the bottle. Parents, having little ones or teen agers at home, should be an example to the children, to drink moderately and point out the power of the ads which will help them to grow healthy in mind and body. Parents need to remember that drinking vodka is not a heroic act or sign of wisdom or maturity Drinking alcoholic drinks is very habit forming and more harmful not only for those who drink but for preserving future generations from abuse of alcohol, from excessive drinking.” American tobacco firms are so pervasive in advertising smoking. Almost every station encourages smoking by cigarette ads. You can’t avoid choosing a station on which the voice calls out, “Smoke our cigarettes because they are long and filter themselves from harmful elements. The announcer however does not say that a smoker smokes the whole cigarette and burns the lees of nicotine on tobacco, which is an alleged filter. Another announcer shouts: “Smoke our cigarettes and you’ll never have a sore throat.” The ads take on the aura of a hint of pleasure ability. A woman is ordinarily presented scantily dressed, smoking a cigarette and enveloped in smoke. Another cigarette firm assembled a group of young men and young woman of high school age! The women dance and sing with cigarettes in their hands as they greet one another. The assumption garnered from this portrayal is easily guessed. The firm associates with smoking in the midst of revelry. Does not the federal commission whose responsibility is to monitor the radio and television ads, ban the health risks involved in that type of advertising. Here in our beloved America everything is geared to business, to money making. Who cares about morals; the object is purely material gain. Morality does not enter the picture since it is not material, not theatrical, and not hyped to sell. I do not wish to gallop along with the idea, so I will not continue further with the subject. In a Chicago paper editorial entitled, “Laziness Leads to Crime,” I read, “Three young men, Chicagoans, considered to be in their prime, robbed two banks of 55 thousand dollars. The question was why such well-dressed, healthy, and having sufficiency would take the road to criminal activity. It was the talk of the town. Soon it was learned that the three, Jack, Al, and Richard attended the same class in grammar school. All looked like prime time athletes and in great shape, but learning was not their forte. They advanced in school with difficulty, they like to play, and in the company of young ladies they dreamed of owning cars, driving convertibles. Often they were caught smoking in school lavatories. Students of the same class, said that Jack was a kind of fat boor, pretended to be omniscient, but in reality, knew little and proud of his physical strength. Al and Richard were praised by their fellow students as being good athletes in school, played well in basketball and great swimmers. It was known that both of them did not belong to any of the clubs in the school because they were irresponsible and lazy. Laziness and having monetary resources they did not have to work hard for what they possessed and so it led them to a life of ease and crime. They succeeded in robbing two banks. They split the money between themselves. Two of them bought cars and a third married and bought a house. Their dream did not last long. The Police caught up to them and ended their desire to lead a life of ease. Laziness destroyed their character and put the three youths behind bars. – I now my harsh criticism of the situation. But please do not turn off your radios, because of my harsh words which will be cutting, and hard for some to understand; but sometimes the truth hurts and is angry, but endures. But facing it sometimes is healthful, even though it is bitter to the taste. A child is not only a new source of love and happiness, but is also the source of new obligations. It needs to be reared, to be raised. What does the word “raised” actually mean? Raising means the making of a human, to open up capacities, mental and spiritual, to give a moral posture and a good disposition for life. It is important to remember that the child is helpless and indefensible. No creature is so helpless for such a long time as a child. Because of this there is born the obligation to monitor and care for the child. The family is a natural institution for bringing up solid and noble citizens. The school is at the service of the family to accomplish this. The most important force to accomplish this word is love. Where, if not in the family, should this concept be present? For Catholic families, rather in the eyes of catholic parents, a child is a gift from God and after baptism, is a child of God, enlightened by a host of virtues to be developed. In a family, the father and the mother have meaning and seriousness – authority. That authority stems from a law of nature and a commandment of God. Parents are the representatives of God on earth. The admission of the authority of parents and obedience to them is the most important underpinning of culture and its progress and the furthering of society. And so, what would happen if parents did not demand recognition and obedience to the authority of parenthood? Humanity would return to the state of barbarism! It would be the wrecking of order instilled from ages past and replaced by revolutionary law. Are we not headed in that direction? Where, in our times, are parents who insist on that parental authority and punish the recalcitrant child; where are the parents of strong character and prayerful stance? Where are the parents who forcefully demand obedience by choosing appropriate and effective punishment? Modern parents, in general, are under the impression that as long as they dress and feed the child, their duty is sufficient. Being with the children, watching them and giving them a good example – there is no time for that in the modern family. It is time for meetings, gatherings, play, games, and tea. Always outside the family home with strangers. Better there. At home it is enclosed, too stifling, too monotonous. The modern generation sees this and acts accordingly. We were raised differently. Our parents taught us, guided us repeatedly, insisted on right action. This is permitted; this is not. This is important; this is not. One has to listen to Mom and Dad. They know better what is good and what is bad from experience. The told us what to do, how to do it; how to behave among ourselves and in relationship to our elderly, sisters and teachers. Avoiding obedience to parents brought with itself a two-fold admonition, and if your foot was slipping, even your guardian angel could help you out. There was the whip! Our father was a miner and had a heavy hand. When he lashed out a couple, the ants moved quickly and the eyes shed a tear and the nose ran. After that moving experience there was no time to sing a thank you because father gave us a tongue lashing. Later it was time to make up with Dad and kiss his hand and hang up your pride. Toda when I think of those experiences I smile but then I cried. But nowadays I recognize that Dad was right and I deserved the lash. Modern parents do not have similar experiences. That way of parenting is old country stuff. They forget that kind of bringing up in reality is a Christian method which Europeans found

 effective. American parent, in current times, give children absolute freedom, unbridled freedom to do what you want. One can’t cramp a child’s style. Do not lecture. Do not punish; it’ll pass by. And so children are reared wild. Someone wrote “They grow like wind roses, full of thorns. They grow up like hornets that bite, chew, and poison. Daily, we read in the press that hundreds of students in schools become pregnant and young people take part in sexual orgies, smoke marihuana, take part in robberies, murders and suicides. We read terrible results of youth using narcotics, alcohol, etc. As a result we read of the effects of liberation from parental authority and the abandonment of parental advice. A daily reporter writes, “Modern parents have become isolated and thoughtless. They read of these terrible events and do not care, do not ask themselves where the problem lies. They thing and believe that these things will not touch their lives and do not see where their children perish at the hand of foreign elements.” The destruction of our children comes from the demoralization of their lives from lack of parental authority. Bands of young gangsters, without honor, no nobility, without any conceptualization of the meaning and worth of human life. Young life is corrupted.