**February 7, 1932**

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

Among the various and sad events which we Poles have gone through recently, two especially merit special mention, and those are the last world war and the present unemployment! We all remember and will remember how the whole world, and far-away Poland especially, strained under the weight of enemy armies, and how it was bathed in human blood; and here we witnessed heart-rending scenes. We saw mothers saying goodbye to their sons, among tears and prayers; wives bidding adieu to their husbands among sobs and complaints; children kissing their fathers for the last time before they left for the fields of distant countries, where among the clatter of machine guns and among the boom of cannon balls, often with prayer or curses on their lips – they sacrificed their lives. We also saw the lamentable results of this tremendous global effort. They came back wounded, disfigured, gassed, and with their minds confused. Even today we meet these victims, in private houses, on streets – and in homeless shelters! These poor victims of global turmoil! And the world thought, or at least promised, that now the relations between nations will be better, happier and more peaceful! It seemed so, until three years ago. Until again something happened and today nations weep – complain – lament! Countless countries, instead of flowing with milk and honey, flow with the cries and complaints of their inhabitants; and governments, instead of being mothers, turn into step-mothers of their own subjects! Millions lack their daily bread, so that they are close to death from hunger; millions have their houses taken from them; for not paying taxes they are expropriated, and cast out into the streets! – Here hunger, there destitution! Suffering all around! And if this is true for any part of the nation, it is especially true for our fellow countrymen. They left their mother country, came here only to improve their own lives and those of their children, to find an easier piece of bread, to honestly work and live peacefully. – Is it then surprising that so often we meet with despair and complaints? Often we even hear how complaints turn into blasphemy, against God and his Providence. “If God existed, there wouldn’t be this poverty and this destitution in the world,” “Even God himself has abandoned us poor people.” “God doesn’t care for us, or has forgotten about us!”. God exists. God sees poverty and destitution. God will call before him the perpetrators of oppression and injustice, God will judge them severely. However, let us leave this to God’s fatherly Providence. – In the present, lamentable situation some crows search doggedly for prey, cawing malevolently: “Why pray? Why go to church? Why believe?” I want to answer these questions for my radio-listeners by way of events taken from daily life! I will call this:

**The Return to God**

“Great despair took over the soul of the poor worker. His present lot and his future fate seemed to be hopeless to him! From his youth he was used to hard work, he worked conscientiously and diligently! In the steel factory he was known for his endurance and his perseverance. He once bet his neighbor in the factory that he would carry such a burden on his shoulders as no other worker had even lifted from the ground! He was so young and strong that others were jealous of him. A healthy smile never left his lips, and his energy burst forth from his eyes. He lifted up and put on his back a bundle of iron rods, so enormous that it seemed it would’ve crushed any other person’s bones, and after a moment threw it off his back onto the ground. And he smiled defiantly! That was what he was like years ago. Then came the days of battle, of class hatred, instability and fierceness! Between the workers there appeared suspicion, grumbling, misunderstandings, and denunciations! The leaders convinced workers to not only demand justice, but also to squeeze everything they could get from their employer! To which the employer replied that he could not agree to such conditions, and that he never would give in. He preferred to close the factory. The leaders pressured the workers to never come to any agreement with the employer; and to the irresolute they promised revenge! The workers felt lost. After a few weeks, the factory was closed! The leaders who supposedly were to look after the good of the workers gave up and closed their eyes to the sight of unemployment, and its lamentable effects! Then came the hours of despair, weeks of weeping, months of destitution and poverty! The workers wandered and roamed through the streets of the city, looking for earnings on the side. Not many of them found something. Our hero had it even worse than the others. How he changed in so short a time. His eyes clouded over, his stare vacant; despair, uncertainty, destitution and poverty had distorted his otherwise cheerful and happy features, and his brows plowed by difficulties and cares gave him a look of fierce doggedness! He even had the impression that the passersby gave him strange looks, and seeing his fierce face, his worn and torn clothing, directly turned away from him. Pangs of hunger afflicted him, his stomach and pocket were empty, and in his head confusion reigned. For months already no occupation, no earnings. He smiled to himself mockingly and cynically. Wouldn’t it be better to have it over once and for all? A soul! Who had ever seen it? Immortality? There’s no truth in that. God? Where is he? And if he exists, he is unmerciful and unjust. A good, strong piece of rope, and a dark corner, an attic or cellar, and if not that, then there’s plenty of water around, and not far away. – The evening was dark and there was rain in the air! And the thoughts of the unemployed man were darker and darker, more and more clouded. He went further, not knowing - where! It seemed to him that he was carrying on his shoulders a weight underneath which he would fall in a moment! He felt as if someone was slowly, unhurriedly burying a long knife in his heart. He felt as if some sharp nail was mercilessly piercing his mind! Suddenly he stopped in his tracks – surprised! He listened. Somewhere close by he hears singing, almost forgotten by now, and yet so familiar, so tender, so well-known. He thought. Something rends his heart, and before the eyes of his soul move the memories of past years. He sees clearly how he goes to church with his father. In the church it is bright and nice. So many people there and everybody attentive, their hands devoutly together, their heads humbly bent. Above them flows the singing and in this singing an imploring request:

Beloved Mother, guardian of our nation.

O hearken to our supplication.

Your loyal children kneeling we beseech you.

Grant us the graces to be loyal to you.

Where shall we seek our solace in distress?

Where shall we turn, whom guilt and sin oppress?

Thine open heart, our refuge e'er shall be.

When trials assail us on life's stormy sea.

The soul of the poor man awakens when he remembers olden times! He, who in the pursuit of bread, in the everyday friction between people of different opinions and views, abandoned his faith in God; who lost any emotion of fraternal love, who nailed down the protests of his conscience, in the blink of an eye, he came to see reason! It was years since he had been in any church. In church they didn’t give out bread, and that was the one and only aim of his life; bread and even more bread! Any anyway, his comrades had wisely said: “Go to church? Whatever for? God is everywhere! You can pray on the street, in the factory and at home, that’s enough!” His fellow-workers even sang some new songs, which he liked and which he soon learned by heart. “The Red Banner” and the “Marseillaise”. – He wanted to forget about the Church, so he steered clear of it.

But here unexpectedly this hymn “Beloved Mother”. Here is the same wistful and imploring request. He himself had sung it, although today he barely remembers when and where. Oh yes, so many years ago when he came for the first time to the Lord’s Table. And then, often at home, especially in the evenings with his mother and father. And then, every Sunday in church. Wistfulness and tenderness touched his heart – filled his throat – and in spite of himself tears misted his haggard and boney cheeks! He instinctively turned his steps towards the church and a moment later he found himself among the singing crowd. On the altar richly lighted by candles and lamps the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. At this sight, the heart of the poor man pounded, and his conscience cried out: “On your knees, on your knees, poor man! Humble yourself, admit that you had forgotten about God, that you even went as far as to want to end your miserable life by suicide, by what right? This God and Savior shed his Blood for you too, and wants your earthly and eternal happiness. And so on your knees, on your knees! And he knelt down. And for the first time since time immemorial he started to pray: “Our Father, who art in heaven.” And now the poor man burst out crying for good. He swallowed his own bitter tears! He calmed down – some new trust, a hope until then unknown to him enveloped not only his soul but also his body! And his conscience kept firing instant questions at him: Can man feel abandoned, if this Christ in the Eucharist is always with him? Is man, endowed with reason, allowed to think of poison or a noose to end once and for all this earthly wandering but at the same time open the gate to eternally lasting unhappiness? This is what a coward does, or a madman; a courageous man takes his cross onto his shoulders and carries it further; he can fall and he does fall, but he picks himself up and keeps going! Are poverty and destitution a curse or a shame? No! Many of those who now live in the lap of luxury and wallow in riches have their fingers bespattered with the blood of injustice and hatred, and many poor men hold in their worn and rough hands pearls of merit, for their patience and belief in God’s just mercy. Are gold, honors and privileges necessary for happiness and satisfaction? The poor man grappled with the problem, looked for an answer, searched for justification, and his conscience pushed on: “Look at this cross and God’s Son hanging on it! What are your cares and sufferings in comparison with His way of the cross? This Christ loved poverty and suffering, so that you would have a good example, and you got cold feet, you even thought about the noose.” Even now it seemed to him that the Savior himself moved his lips and said to him: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!”

And now he beat his breast and wept: “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” And he felt that with the help of God’s grace he would not only endure, but survive, and in the end conquer; that this difficult lot and sad fate were only momentary experiences, that better and happier times would come. He rose, and as if cured of his spiritual wounds, he went home. The next day he woke up changed, happier and more cheerful. He stood by the entrance to the factory and got a job. Today he works. He goes to church regularly and prays genuinely to God, about whom he not only once wanted to forget, but whom he mocked and even sometimes blasphemed. Because there is a God watching over us, and He is a just God!”

Dear radio-listeners! Don’t you see yourself in the role of the worker described above. Maybe one of you, at the instigation of some godless comrade, not only thought but even said: “What do I care about God, about church, about prayer?” Another one of you maybe blasphemed outright: “God cannot exist, because if he did, he would not permit the current injustice!” And finally, maybe some of you have had the passing thought of poison, of a noose, of a gun bullet? Do we not know that the best parents sometimes withhold from their children that what they ask for? Do not children often have to ask their parents insistently and for a long time to gain even a minute portion of that which they ask for! Does not God act towards us as a parent towards his child? You ask me, what does the Church mean? What does faith mean, what can it give you? I reply: everything! The church guards the whole of humanity. Especially in our times, maybe more than ever before. It cries to rich men, to magnates, to bankers, capitalists and factory-owners: “Do not steal! Do not cheat! Have pity and mercy on others!” And to the poor and disadvantaged: “Do not forget God’s justice and Providence!” The Church guards your property and goods! It guards your good name and your reputation. It cares for the elderly, for widows, for orphans; it takes care of unhappy beings; it does not allow the mistreatment of woman, it raised her up or rather freed her from servitude and returned her the respect she is due.

And what can faith give you? Peace of conscience and your heart’s contentment, that which the world will never give you, because – it possesses neither! By the way, listen to a description in the French newspaper “La Croix” from Calais. In 1897 the following event took place: A socialist boasted publicly in front of his comrades that after three years of trying, he had finally succeeded in convincing his wife to relinquish her faith. To celebrate the victory he treated everyone present, all of whom praised him for this supposedly great achievement! It was late when the hero, full of pride, triumphantly went in the direction of his house. Suddenly he stopped in his tracks. In front of the house a crowd of people. He burst into the house as if crazy, on the floor lay the bodies of his wife and three children; nearby a note with the following words: “When I had my religion, I suffered all the tribulations of life in hope of an eternal reward. But ever since my torturer, husband, deprived me of my faith, I have become unhappy. I do not want my children to be equally unhappy, so I have poisoned them all.”

Religion gives fortitude, energy, encouragement, courage and resilience. A person without faith becomes desperate, and so reaches for poison, for the noose or for a revolver! Dear radio-listeners! And we in this moment, some of us in cold, hunger and poverty; others crushed by sicknesses and suffering; or still others almost desperate, let us all remember those blissful and happy moments, when we believed! Let us stop muttering against Heaven and our Heavenly Father; let us stop sneering at God’s justice, let us stop blaspheming God’s Providence, yet let us come back to Our God with hearts filled with sorrow, trust and faith! Everybody, with no exception: learned and simple men; the rich and the poor; superiors and subjects; the healthy and the sick, the young and the old, and God willing, that after his difficult and awful trial, which the world is now going through; that after this thorn-covered Way of the Cross, the world and we… will resurrect!