January 30, 1938

I greet all of you my dear countrymen with the words: Praised be Jesus Christ!

In the thirtieth chapter of the Book of Proverbs, is found one sentence, which in a special way stuck in my memory and it’s this one: A leech has two daughters, uttering: “bring, bring!” I repeat, “A leech has two daughters uttering, “bring more, bring more!” A leech? Who has not seen, at one time or another or is not aware of that slippery, ugly, and disgusting creature. The entire body of a leech is divided into many rings. Those rings are in constant motion. Leeches are found in damp and wet places. They subsist only on the blood of animals, to which they attach themselves, but they also swallow creatures that are smaller than themselves. The mouths cavity is provided with three jaws, similar in structure to saws. With the help of these jaws the leech can cut through the skin of an animal or a human being and suck out the blood. The blood flows into an relatively enormous stomach. A leech, at one occasion can suck out so much blood that it is able to last for several months as nourishment. In our times, there is no human leech beyond a drunken man or woman. Alcoholics are also slippery and disgusting beings. They ought to be reasoned, but because of their nasty habit, they are regarded as animals and lowered to the level lower than that. They affix themselves to their bad health and treasure; to the happiness and peace of domestic life and suck out their material possession and spirit of the entire family. Drunks have two daughters: throat and stomach; the through never stops working and the stomach is never sufficiently filled. These daughters are never satisfied and call out night and day: bring, bring constantly more whiskey and other intoxicating drinks. We wish not only to drink but to get drunk, even to unconsciousness. We wish to quiet the guilt of conscience. We wish to drown our sorrowful dignity. We wish to drown reason which sets us apart from animals which always walk with the heads to the ground. In a word, we do not wish to be people. We wish to hold our eyes on the bottle, the glass, and the shot glass. Our health and the health of our families do not matter. Our good fortune and that of our families mean nothing to us. Give us some glasses bottles and shot glasses! Bring them on, Bring them on? Today, despite the apparent unemployment, we have not only fathers but also mothers, not only the sons but also daughters, who empty the bottle, commit suicide, in the full sense of the word. This will be the topic of my speeches, for the next few Sundays.

 MY FATHER – THE MURDERER

Between hydras, or the snakes that poison human happiness, there are two reptiles crawling among humanity. These are twin sisters. Their names? – Prohibition and drunkenness. They are like the poles, north and south, on which the earth revolves! The comparison is too ad hoc, but no less real, if we consider the events of the past quarter of a century. Both prohibition and alcoholism insult the goodness of human beings. Prohibition attacks natural law, dependence on free will. Alcoholism murders the human intellect and all the activity of that reason. Both prohibition as well as drunkenness make human beings prisoners. And, not only prisoners but thieves, crooks, and murderers. What is prohibition capable of doing? The whole American nation was convinced of in what it experienced. Prohibition helped drink to death the current generation, which came into this world, one can say with some conviction, in private breweries and speakeasies; and who were fed not on milk but on moonshine with various additions in beer joints, in attics and in woods. It is distasteful to think of the moral bankruptcy brought about by prohibition. We will pay for it for generations to come. Prohibition came and went. In place of the hydra, another snake showed his ugly face. Alcoholism or drunkenness. I reiterate I am not any kind of reformer, or even puritanical. I know that God created all things for man’s use and for his benefit. I maintain, nevertheless, that man is not to misuse the things of this earth either for oneself or for another. Using the things of this earth with restraint and borders, ok, but to misuse them – never. It is why the creator gifted human beings with intellect and will. However, what is it that the drunk does. He clouds his intellect and loses control of his will. He becomes blind, deaf, helpless and paralyzed. He often takes the stature of a madman brutal, self-destructive, and murderous. You don’t believe me? Please look at the dunk. Would a human being with a healthy and full reason behave like he does? Disheveled hair bristling, like back angry and infuriated animal sparkling, throwing lightning bolts at each - face on fire – belching, rotten mouth breathing, breathing blasphemy, curse, imprecation. He sits and holds a bottle in his shaking hands. He cares not about his world. Neither is he concerned with his health. He forgot about his wife and family. He does not understand how that bottle is a bloody pen and fire-laden, with which he write with his own hand the prophecy: infirmity, sickness, need, poverty, hospital, prison, crazy house. Isn’t this a description of a madman? A sane, reasoning man will not poison his well-earned money. A reasoning man will not drink away his health, powers, and abilities. A reasoning man will not build himself a coffin and dig himself the surety of a grave before his time to go. He won’t open the doors to the hospital, to the poor house or to the crazy house. This, however, without thinking, and who knows, maybe even deliberately, every drunkard does.

 The drunkard is a brute like no other in the world. In addition, he is the executioner of his own family, of his wife and of his children. Observe his hesitant and uncertain stride as he passes the doorsill of his house. See the troubled eyes of his wife. Look into the faces of his fearful, underfed and poorly clad children. See how his wife and children look at the drunkard-husband and father of the family. How they look on this brute, who often drinks away his pay check and so drinks away the daily bread of his children has the gall to look askance at the woman he took to be his companion through life and upon those who are bone of his bones and blood of his blood. Listen to the way the words flow the mouth filled with the smell of alcohol. What a degradation of the Father of the family - a brute – a drunkard, the murderer and slow suicider. How many and what kind of crimes are perpetrated under the influence of alcohol, anyone who has eyes – sees for himself. I will read with the slightest change the letter written in its entirety, with its painful sorrow. For obvious reasons I will not disclose the origin of the letter. The letter: “I begin this letter in the Name of God, and ask for prayers for us, for you, Father, may adjudicate us as the unhappy orphans on this earth. It’s terrible and unbelievable. Perhaps you have read about the tragedy which happened on October 4, 1937 which told of a drunkard murdered his wife, the mother of seven children. That drunkard was our father. Through twenty eight years he mistreated our mother in the worst way possible; he drank, spent his salary of whiskey and did terrible things. At times, he would not come home for several days. Our mother and we shook with fear at times. And when he did come home, he was always drunk. My brothers and sisters never were given a good example. He was at his sister’s place a lot; she was as bad as he was. She always made him angry. She knew his intentions. She witnessed his purchase of a revolver. And her boarder was witness to his doings. She did not inform the authorities about his intentions. It is now too late. It’s all over for us, the saddest orphans on earth. Our hearts have been wounded forever and our faces soaked with tears. Our fat her, the drunk murdered our dear mother at a time when she did not expect it. She was doing a wash in the cellar when he approached her from the back and, like the worst thief, shot her. He killed her on the spot and then shot himself. What was left for us, on this earth? I am the oldest and I worked hard for twelve years in order to survive. Our father worked whenever he wanted to and when he didn’t go to work, he drank. Our mother lent his sister a sum of money which she never paid back. I went to her for money asking her for help because I was the only earner left in our family of six who I had to feed. I am 27 years old; I worked for 15 years for my dear mother, who wept day and night in fear of death, because father had threatened her. She never went out and there was always one of us children with her. We all prayed novenas. Our mother was a God-fearing, religious woman. She did everything she could for us, because we feared our tyrant-father. Our father never was satisfied about anything and never had a good word for us. Her reward for her fidelity was a terrible death at the hands of our father. We had one relief for mother had gone to confession shortly before her death so she was prepared. Three months have now passed by since our mother died at the hands of our father and it seems that the yeas sped quickly since then. We go to sleep and rise with tears on our eyes. We can’t forget the crime which was perpetrated because our father was a drunkard. What’s worse, the family of our father never has a good word for us, but laugh with others at our expense. I now end this very sorrowful letter. Forgive me for sump pumping all our fears and tears with this letter. I had to release my sorrow somewhere. I had not been able to release my grief because people would not believe me and they wish not to hear the sorrowful news of the death of a good and caring mother. I write this letter as it were with the ink-blood of my heart because this great tragedy needed release at least with a letter. The world is a cold place to live in and with the help of God we will remain together. My youngest brother is ten years old and my sister is fourteen – both attend parochial school. I want to add that our father died on the same day he killed our mother. He was unconscious when he died. What say you all, when the shot glass is dearer than health, happiness, peace and contentment of the family members? Can you not understand and see our debasement when you escape with your troubles with alcohol? What misunderstanding and discord can be brought into your families through alcohol? In your lifetime place before your mind’s eye, the tombstone that reads, having been etched with your own hands: “Drunkard.” What destiny would you leave your children with? A sad and painful memory - a memory devoid of honor, love and dignity. Suggest to your children to be ever mindful and repeat: our father is an alcoholic. What will your children say about you when they stand at your grave? Will they say: He taught us blasphemies and bad language? Home was hell! Material and moral hell! What will you say? What does your countenance look like in a mirror? Can you recognize that face, once clean with understanding expression. Why can’t you raise your head in pride and honorably as in the past but now with a certain fearfulness which rouses your soul? Are you only happy when you set at a bar and raise your shot glass situated by your bottle and in the company of a group of overdosed drunken people? You are not aware of the fact that your blinding bad habit inducing you to swig, a step closer to the hospital or to your troubled family. You wish not to believe that, in spite of your grin, you are not satisfied and troubled because, passing through your imagination slide the visage of your deceased mother, warning you with her finger and reprimanding you “Don’t drink too much” – Perhaps in you blinded imagination you picture your weeping wife, worn out, and un thought of calls out “Don’t get drunk!” Perhaps your young children appear before you as they once appeared before the biblical Herod and shake their finger at you, saying under their breath: “Don’t get drunk, Daddy because we need bread and milk and clothes; because we are cold and hungry. Have mercy on us and show us a true father’s heart, feeling and caring.” Will you not discard your drinking glass and leave behind the bottle and come home to your wife and children.

 Perhaps you still not wish to hear my advice, my arguments but throw them away uselessly. Go therefore beyond the thresholds of shelters. Do not hesitate. Give me your hand. I will help. Go and look at the children of drunkards. Observe how nature characterizes marking innocent children, in punishment for drunkenness fathers. The children are living, walking tombstones of drunken fathers. Look at some kind of creature lying there. Seemingly a human being or animal. A true monster! – The child of a drunkard, born with water on the brain. The head is larger than the body. You shudder. Would you want to be a father of such a being? No. Through away your alcoholism! Otherwise, who knows what will happen; who knows? Move ahead. There lies child, which will never have his full reasoning. There lies the child of a Drunkard. The whole small body is swollen, smelly and abscessed. Perhaps it is no longer explainable that this is a child of a drunkard. Would you want it to be your child? No? Throw away your addiction. Stop not only getting drunk but stop drinking – It is not the end. Not yet. They lead a young man to the electric chair. Before they turn on the electrical key, before the current throws the soul into eternity, the accused opens his lips and in his last breath, curses his Creator. Why? Because he was a drunkard. As a result of his drinking, he blasphemed; gave bad example, wasted his wages; he beat his wife, was nasty to his children. The accused calls out: “It is the fault of my father, the drunk. He should be here, sitting where I am sitting” - Would you like this young man to be your son? No? Give up your drinking. Get rid of your alcoholic ways – now, today, for the rest of your life.

 My good man, who preferred your addition beyond your God, soul, family; pause and reflect: is it worth to go your way the way which brings you to the doorstep of the hospital, the crazy house, the poor house, in the gutter, under the fence, in an unholy place in the cemetery? Be no longer a prisoner, stop your addiction, wish to be freed from drunkenness, and alcoholism, on the road to sobriety. You will get back your life, your peace and your general well-being