**January 10, 1932**

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

The Saturday after Christmas, that is, on December 26th, 1931, I stopped by our Corpus Christi Church to pray to the Infant Jesus. It was a few minutes before 6 PM. I was deeply surprised to hear and see what I will now describe to you: By the manger knelt a father, and by him three small children, who prayed “Hail Mary” aloud and at the end added “Dear Baby Jesus, please give Dad a job.” – At that moment I saw before my eyes the millions of children all over the world, who at Christmas bring this ardent and beseeching prayer before Christ: “Dear Baby Jesus, please give our Dad a job and an occupation.” How much requests were in this prayer, and how much despair, God only knows. Because really, from time immemorial, there haven’t been such difficult, sad and bitter holidays as the last! Almost the whole of humanity has broken down and lies today covered in wounds, like the historic Lazarus, shedding tears and pleadingly holding out its hands, begging for pity, for mercy and help. Winter is around the corner and millions see before them the rising head of the wolf of poverty and hunger. Despair grips the heart, indignation racks the soul, uncertainty and lack of confidence wreak havoc with minds; and people, surprised and amazed, ask themselves, is it possible that in this 20th century, so pompously and falsely heralded as the century of progress, prosperity and the height of civilization, these sorts of things can happen? That this so-called progress – that this seeming prosperity – that this over-praised civilization, built on a foundation of sand, has crashed with a bang and a boom, and its ruins have buried the whole world? That over mankind black and threatening clouds have gathered, which do not bode well for social order, and also for the political and economic system? That from these clouds comes thunder, lightning, and thunderbolts in the guise of principles and doctrines which not only do not heal wounds, but aggravate them – which will not bring comfort but force even greater burdens onto people’s shoulders – which will not improve anything, but worsen relations a thousand-fold – which will completely ruin, crush and destroy humanity, both body and soul, and also destroy happiness, both earthly and eternal! Since the greater part of today’s suffering humanity is the drab mass of the working class, let us speak of it and of its rights.

**The Law and the Worker’s Pay**

At the precise moment when I am speaking to you, there are armies a million-strong which the world hadn’t even imagined three years ago. These aren’t armies of soldiers or police, but of the unemployed. In Poland more than a quarter million, in Italy another million, in England three million, in Germany five million and in our United States about seven million. These armies of the unemployed walk the streets of cities and towns with curses on their lips, with despair in their hearts and terror and uncertainty in their souls. They not only lost their jobs, but thousands lost their money, which they had earned by blood-wrenching toil and saved up eagerly over the years; factories closed and workers lost their jobs; banks closed their doors and workers lost their savings. The wife and children cry for bread, but where will the poor worker take it from? It is not surprising then that he is sad and desperate, that diverse plans and ideas come to his mind? After all, he and his wife and his children have a right to live! He doesn’t want either mercy or alms; he demands and asks only for an occupation, for income, to work for his daily bread! The same worker has ears and hears, he has eyes and sees. He sees that capitalists with neither scruples nor heart, that millionaires who see material goods as the one and only goal of life, for whom the omnipotent dollar is God, pay more attention and care to their horse, dog or cat than to the good of the worker and his family! That when workers with their wives and children scavenge for scraps of food to keep their bodies alive, the rich men often host expensive parties, balls, and banquets; that when the poor have nothing to wear to shelter them from the chill, the cold and the frost, the wives and daughters of rich men waste thousands on the attire of dogs, cats and monkeys! And finally the remnants of the millions squeezed from the blood and sweat of workers, instead of being used to help the worker and his family, or to make their life more secure, is left in testaments to societies or organizations that help dogs, cats or other animals! Does all of this not call for vengeance from heaven? Is it not time, is it not high time for some of today’s systems and views to be changed to the just advantage of the worker? The working class doesn’t want to fight with capitalists or employers, but demands only the just distribution of income and profits, because up until now the employer took all the cream, and the workers were left only sour milk, that is, the employer took the lion’s share of earnings and the worker took what fell from his beard and whiskers! Today’s workers have a right to just remuneration, which they demand. And what does fairness call for? “That the distribution of the profits of production, that is, the distribution of income and fortune should become, if not entirely equal, then at least more equal,” or, so that the pay and private earnings should be sufficient at least to appropriately fulfill the needs of the worker and his family’s life! Life is not only food, but everything necessary to lead a life worthy of a human! Work must ensure the worker’s security, not only when he works, but when he is preparing for work, when because of his work he becomes disabled or becomes unable to work due to his ripe old age or like now, in the times of unemployment, when he is unable to get a job! Since work is the only source of the worker’s income, his pay should and must cover and ensure the fulfilling of the needs of the worker and his family! A certain Catholic priest makes a pertinent remark regarding this matter: “One must distinguish between the costs of work and the pay. If a master has a slave whom he treats as a thing to buy or sell, using him as an instrument of work, he doesn’t give him pay. And yet he feeds him well, maybe even better than a hired hand or servant whom he pays, since he wants to have as much profit as he can out of him. But what the master spends on his slave nobody will call payment, but rather compensation, that is the restoration of vital forces used up in the master’s service, or an investment that the slave will immediately return by his work. For this same reason, we do not speak of the pay of a workhorse or saddle horse, although their upkeep might be expensive. However, if by chance the horse by his speed, or the dog by his vigilance saves his master from danger, then the master may give the animal a reward, that is, something more or better than absolutely necessary to restore lost forces. So only that which the master gives in addition is payment. Payment, strictly speaking, begins only there where he receives more than absolutely necessary to live and have enough vital forces to work. Pay is what labor makes on its own part, that is, the fruit of labors. So the worker who takes as much as necessary to live and be able to work receives a very necessary thing, but does not yet receive actual payment!” How much more payment beyond his own upkeep should the worker receive? Enough so that the worker, in his mature years, will be able to found his own home and earn enough to support his family, without his wife or young children having to go to work! I allude to the words of the Holy Father Leon XIII, who in the famous encyclical “Rerum Novarum”, published May 15th, 1891, extensively defines the duties of: the Church and the state, employers, workers, so that the workers receive just payment. And so: “If we turn not to things external and material, the first thing of all to secure is to save unfortunate working people from the cruelty of men of greed, who use human beings as mere instruments for money-making. It is neither just nor human so togrind men down with excessive labor as to stupefy their minds and wear out their bodies. Man's powers, like his general nature, are limited, and beyond these limits he cannot go. […] Daily labor, therefore, should be so regulated as not to be protracted over longer hours than strength admits. […] Finally, work which is quite suitable for a strong man cannot rightly be required from a woman or a child. And, in regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently developed. […] Women, again, are not suited for certain occupations; a woman is by nature fitted for home-work, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family. As a general principle it may be laid down that a workman ought to have leisure and rest proportionate to the wear and tear of his strength, for waste of strength must be repaired by cessation from hard work. […] We now approach a subject of great importance, and one in respect of which, if extremes are to be avoided, right notions are absolutely necessary. Wages [!] To labor is to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the various purposes of life, and chief of all for self preservation. […] The preservation of life is the bounden duty of one and all, and to be wanting therein is a crime. It necessarily follows that each one has a natural right to procure what is required in order to live, and the poor can procure that in no other way than by what they can earn through their work. Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accept harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice.”

The words of Pope Leo XIII are too clear and understandable for us to spend much time explaining them; our Holy Father mentioned the more imperious and ancient law, which we read about in Deuteronomy, Chapter 24: “You shall not defraud a poor and needy hired servant, whether he be one of your own countrymen or one of the aliens who live in your communities. You shall pay him each day’s wages before sundown on the day itself, since he is poor and looks forward to them. Otherwise he will cry to the LORD against you, and you will be held guilty.” Later in the book of Sirach, chapter 34: “The bread of charity is life itself for the needy; he who withholds it is a man of blood. He slays his neighbor who deprives him of his living: he sheds blood who denies the laborer his wages.” The prophet Jeremiah also cried (Chapter 22): “Woe to him […] Who works his neighbor without pay, and gives him no wages.” In the book of Malachi (chapter 3): “I will draw near to you for judgment, and I will be swift to bear witness Against the sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, those who defraud the hired man of his wages, Against those who defraud widows and orphans; those who turn aside the stranger, and those who do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.” In St. Luke: “For the laborer deserves his payment.” In the First Letter to the Corinthians (3:8): “and each will receive wages in proportion to his labor.” There are even more indications in the Sacred Scripture, but let the above suffice!

Is today’s pay sufficient and is it just? Pagan theories claim it is! These are the theories that the capitalists and fabric owners, corporations etc. of our time subscribe to. The state and civic authorities have done little to defend the working class from the abuse of employers! The present situation of workers proves the above theories to be false! Hunger and poverty, uncertainty and despair, this is what the workers and their families must feed upon today. Rich men and capitalists ask: why didn’t workers put aside their money? And I ask: what were they supposed to put away? And if they did set something aside in banks? You closed the banks, wicked men! You stole, you looted, you abused as much as you could, and you wanted to make the nation moral, you wanted to teach it virtue, make it impeccable and flawless by imposing the shameless prohibition which smells unto the ends of the earth! Christian theory claims that the workers’ pay according to the present system is neither adequate nor just. According to Christian theory, workers should have a share in the profits, that is, workers should not only receive payment like now, for a day’s work or piecework, but in addition, should receive a certain percentage. For instance: in a certain steel plant there are a thousand workers; at present they receive two and a half dollars per day; the shares of this steel plant bring 50 % dividends. According to Christian theory, the workers should receive not only a day’s pay, but also a certain part of the 50 % dividends. And so the worker would have a steady pay necessary for his upkeep, and would take part in the profits, in this way the worker would be more earnest, enterprising and diligent in his work, as well as show affection and trust towards employers!

It is time, it is high time to give the working class quick and effective help, because as a result of the unfortunate situation, an immeasurable number of people lead an oppressed life, unworthy of human beings. Public laws and bills have lost the Christian spirit, and taken up with the spirit of naturalism and materialism have left the worker to a fate dictated by inhuman and greedy capitalists, and this handful of millionaires has placed a heavy yoke on the working class. Cunning rabble-rousers take advantage of this system by spreading unrest and discontent, and even open rebellion among the people! Already such a man as Bebel publicly cried in the Prussian parliament: “In the political area, we aim for republican government; in the area of economics for the socialist system, in the area of religion – for atheism!” Another, Liebknecht cried out: “The future belongs to atheism. Only atheism can save mankind; it is our duty to forcefully destroy the belief in God and replace it with atheism!” The working class, following these and similar mottos, will not improve its situation. However, workers have not only the privilege but also the right to demand that which rightly and justly belongs to them, so as to put an end to the exploitation by capitalists, and so as to ensure for a piece of daily bread for themselves and their families! The present system, from which a few have excessively enriched themselves, and the masses drown in poverty and destitution, is unjust, is inhuman! Today like never before the Apostle Paul calls out to the rich and the great: “Give and lend willingly.”

Dear radio listeners, please forgive me if I have gotten fervent in the course of today’s talk. I do not worry about human regards; I do not wish to flatter anyone; this is not about my own good; this is about justice which justly and legally is due to the worker and his family. I tried to prove that the present system of paying workers for their labor is unsuitable and unjust; it is not in accordance with the principles of Christianity, nor the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Let me finish today’s talk with words taken from the letter of St. James, chapter 5. “Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.”