January 11, 1942

Welcome noble countrymen and countrywomen with the words: “Praised be Jesus Christ!

Last year I was returning from our seminary, St. Hyacinth’s in Granby, Massachusetts. The passenger cars were all full. Everywhere there were people dressed in military uniforms. The men looked painted. Sparks were in their eyes. Satisfaction shone in their faces. Some were being transferred from one camp to another. Others were on their way to port cities. Some were on leave. Some to homes. And then? No one knows. And couldn’t care less. If only to spend the holidays at home with their mother and father, with their brothers and sisters. One nineteen old journalism student said: I didn’t think that some day I would yearn to be home. I’ll be home among my own. If they miss me as I do them then, “I’ll have the time of my life, just loafing around the home!” – How many in these words of emotion, satisfaction and happiness can understand unless in his or her experience were forced out of the home into the mad whirl of the world of coldness, isolation, and carelessness. And I truly understand that situation. I listened curiously to the young warriors in their comments. Another said: “My parents do not know that I’m coming home. I wish to surprise them. I can see the wonder in my mother, when I knock on the door, open it without waiting and yell: “Hello Mom! How are you and Dad and Sis?” – Another said that it was his first leave in ten months. He returns home as a sergeant. He used to praise his mother for making the best cup of coffee and bake the best pies in America. He concluded: “Boy, oh boy, there is just no other mother like mine” And so I heard similar utterances to these during the entire trip. In Syracuse, N.Y. a group of volunteers came aboard. There were 12. I counted them. They sat down in the dining car. I diligently observed them. Nine of them had gold crosses on the lapels of their coats. One of them had blond hair. I guessed that if he wasn’t Polish then Slavonic of some origin. As the train left the station, they began a discussion with each other. The blond said to his companions: “Thank God, the most difficult time has passed: the moment of parting with my mother. – Everything else was as if nothing compared with this moment when I said “good-by” to my mother. I cannot explain how I felt at that moment.” The other men listened. The passengers also listened. Silence pervaded the railroad passenger car. I looked like I was reading the paper but my thoughts went to the numerous homes where similar “good-bye’s” took place. After a while, I approached the blond and asked: “Are you of Polish descent?” – “Yes, Father, I am. I left four brothers and four sisters. I am on my way to Fort Niagara. My mother gave me permission to sign up for the army. However, she cried as I was leaving. I felt ill at ease.” He also told me many other things. But never mind that. I begin today’s talk entitled:

 CRY NOT FOR YOUR SONS

I have before me a letter from Alaska. It is dated December 14th. It was written by one of our men in military service. Before he entered into the military, he lived in Detroit, with his parents. Listen to what he writes: “Dear Father: I am sorry to say that I cannot listen to the Rosary Hour this year because I am out of range for the broadcasts. But that is temporary. When I was with my parents I found that the teachings helped me considerably and I shall not forget that. I entered the army because I heard what you said about what was happening overseas and I couldn’t stand to hear what the Germans were doing to women and children. I would not be able to stand it if my mother and sisters would have to go through that hell. My mother writes to me often but not as I would like her to write. Her letter indicates that she is very worried and perturbed at the situation that I am in. I would ask that you, Father, would encourage our mothers not to worry as much as they do. Perhaps we expect too much of our mothers but we soldiers would feel more comfortable in our service if they did not worry as much. They should receive some consolation from the fact that we are protecting our country, our homes, and our families!” - This soldier wrote as a good soldier should write! Shouldn’t mothers of service men be proud of their sons for their service. They ought to bless them and kiss them as they go off to war saying: “Go, my son and fulfill your obligation in regard to your country. We will be proud of you. Let God be with you and bring you back healthy. We will remember you to God daily!”

 Another letter comes from the Hawaiian Islands. It was written December 4th by a man who lives in the mountains of Pennsylvania! It is worth listening to. “Dear Father Justin, throughout the years, I have listened to your program frequently as well as written to you. In 1940, I enlisted in the army. I am now an officer. All goes well with me; I am well and satisfied. One thing disturbs me though: my parents complain that I am not home and they miss me. If I hadn’t signed up, who knows what would happen to me? I might have fallen into bad company. Who knows? Here, I have a profession to live up to. I am healthy but this is not enough for my parents. They ought to be happy that their sun serves in the armed forces in defense of his country. So write the parents of my colleagues also and that does not help us at all. We don’t like them to pity us or cry about our situation. We are soldiers, after all. It would help if they would cheer us on a bit instead. Father, pray for us.” I add that both of these letters were written in the Polish language. They were written in the manner and spirit of an American soldier who is of Polish lineage. My dear mothers! Write words of encouragement! Write with phrases of joy. Write to your sons and our soldiers that are sons of a brave nation and act in a chivalrous way. Write to them how proud you are that you are in the defense of our country, of freedom, and brotherhood and that they act in defense of democracy and Chrisitanity. Such letters with spur them on to stick it out in their vocation. Be Spartans. The your children will be Spartans. They will earn respect, praise, and thankfulness from us. They will be our glory.

 And now the results from a twenty year old volunteer. He maintains that he has a vocation to the military service and has chosen to be a career soldier. He is a good rifleman and because of it has advanced in rank. Among other, he writes: “I think little of war. I am a soldier and I enlisted in the army not to have some kind of “good time”, only to train as a soldier. It seems to me that our parents don’t understand that. Their mail depresses us. They write of their domestic problems which is nothing uplifting to us. After school and training we are tired. Then, the reading of such letters makes us nervous. We would rather letters which cheer us up and cheer us on. Then our thoughts would be more homeward bound and it seems to us that we are among our own and conversing with them. We are most cheered when we receive packages from home. Especially when they are mother-made cookies. We share them and the officers complement our moms for their cooking and ask for more. Such small things make us proud of our mothers and we forget our daily drudgeries. It would do well for our mothers to understand this.

 In one of the may hand-written letters which I brought back from Romania in December of 1939, I read: We are in Czerniowce. It is a town filled with refugees! The Polish language could be heard everywhere in civilian and military groups. I sat, tired, on one of the benches in the garden. By me sat a grandma with her grandchildren. They eyed me with curiosity. She is very well aware of the tragedy of the war situation. I felt sorry for her and wanted to say a few words to cheer her up. She would probably like to say something but too shy in the situation and didn’t know how to start a conversation. She let go of her grandchild and he came to me hurriedly, looks me in the eye, with some innocent, beautiful, becoming look and from his lips comes a well understood question by those on the road: “And where is your mother?” “My dear good child, I said, you have heard of our troubles! You do not understand, my child, that you have by your side your parents and grandma, and that we are motherless and without a mother-country.”

 “ My mother, my mother, I responded after a while – stayed home, far away in Poland. Grandma didn’t exactly catch what we were saying and continued the conversation about my mother. Hereon a foreign land in a garden, for the first time in my life, I recognized the tragedy of my mother; a tragedy of many Polish mothers. You who sit peacefully by the side of your mother, by your husbands, who have your own little piece of property, do you understand the feelings and hurts of your sisters – the martyrdom of the mothers of the Polish nation?”

 “ My mother. My elderly parents lived on the border of the “Królestwo Kongressowe.” A quiet little house in the ancient backwater survived the centuries. War came in 1914. The two of us were drafted into the army. The parents remained with the younger children. The battling Russians burnt down the household. The heart of mother survived the ordeal. They rebuilt and manag ed to come by and live in it. In the long run in 1920 the heart of mother again was tested with yet further because the four of us warred to protect the home from the Russians. We returned but not all; one was lost. The hard work of the farm returned again. But somehow it didn’t work out. The heart of the mother rested. The parents became elderly and the grandchildren made their life more cheerful. Another battle devastated the home and all left - my two brothers, and uncle, my young son and I.” I lost track of who still lived or who died. I don’t know if the Germans or The Russians destroyed the homestead or if they murdered by elderly parents. But if they are still alive, they suffer and I pray for them and for Poland and the heart of my mother for the third time sees the enemy in her home. There are many in Poland today that suffer, pray and wait for the end. They suffer, tey pray and wait. Our thoughts go out to them with prayers to the suffering Madonna who knows the pain of separation with her child.

 At this moment my mind pictures my aged mother. I bless her. It is hard. I hear her voice: “Son, go again to protect your nation. On you and others like you depends the freedom of the countryand the nation. We will prevail with the help of God. God leads and aids us. May dearest motner. Your son will keep the faith. We will cross the great water, we will arrive to fight for your freedom and the freedom of all Polish mothers:

 From the time of war for freedom I add this item of this generation of women: “it was a great epoch in which women were worth of the heart of men and bound by the ideals of fatherland and virtue. They sacrificed their own fortune, in the face of their husbands deaths and helped them through into eternal memory. And athe men who will come in future generations, will be sad that they did not live to be thankful to the women and experience what they had sacrificed in their heroism.

 In those times there lived Polish women, wives and great sacrificing, noble women. Among the women in civilian work, it is appropriate to mention the wife of the army colonel, Ms. Chrapowicka. After of the carnage of war by dictate of the Governor Oszmiański, this brave patriot, purchased at the Wilno market, several pairs of earrings with ears, bracelets, a few rings with fingers and filled a box with them and sent them to the Governor with a hand written note: “I am sending you parts of the women who were martyred and crying out for vengeance. Remember that the voices of these helpless women, children, elderly and priests, the voices of 360 martyrs must cry out for justice for such a slaughter, if not from heaven than from the deepest hell. You have supreme power and so take my life; I peacefully await, but with contempt for murderers.” Ewa! From Mirsk! Chrapowicka! Such were the Polish women. Manly, full of sacrifice and dedication, an example for you Mothers of today’s American soldiers.

 Mothers, listen to what Skarga said in one of his sermons. I speak of Skarga, a fearless and relentless knight in regard to God and Nation. “How about Judith; what did she accomplish? Besieged Betula, people dying from hunger and thirst; and she sorrowing over their plight, weighed her health and her chastity in order to save her people. God came to her aid and she saved her people and received the fame of a thankful people. How about Esther, manly and loving her people sacrificed her health in order that they be saved from Aman. She delivered her people from great harm. And let be ashamed of the pagans who taught and wrote: The republic is called the ordinary town to die for and give everything to it and put all our hopes into it and honor its existence.” And the women of the Pagan Romans said: “for that reason have sons in the family so there would be someone to die for the republic.” The pagans died for the republic expecting nothing after death even the honor of the sacrifice. And we so sure of reward after death, have the promise of our God if we keep the commandments. And here on earth we commemorate those who suffered for the good of the republic. What fame even today is given to them in Holy Scripture.

 My dear Mothers! Our country fights a defensive war! America was attacked by the treacherous yellow skinned race! These yellow ants secretly attacked Pearl Harbor, while their diplomats carried out peace missions with the United States. Our soldiers, marines, pilots, and civilian woman and children shed their blood. In the last days squadrons of barbarians from the south bombed Manila without mercy spreading ruin, wounds and death. Another bandit and gangster was added to the other two. These three invaders put up a front against freedom, civilization and Christianity. We understand now whom your sons fight. Would you rather that your sons stay at home with you while you suffer at the hands of the enemy coming to our land? Would you rather that the enemy destroy our cities, our homes and churches, and our men put into concentration camps? Would you rather live an enslaved life and look at your children starve to death? Your sons, our soldiers stand guarding our rights and laws given to us by God. They stand in defense of the best country on earth. And so, dear Mothers, it is not time or season to weep or sympathize with your sons. Their actions are the reasons we remain free for generations to come. Especially in the current world war the role of mothers is especially unusual and lofty. Your sons stand in defense of people’s rights – their goal is peace especially of our country and nation and rebuilding what the destroyers have ruined. Their actions demand big heart, might and survival. From you, mothers and from your willingness, from you hard and unbreakable stance depend the success of your sons. Mickiewicz wrote: “a shield has as much power as the sword for whatever protects, wins! Mothers, you ought to be that shield fo love and sacrifice. The storm of war goes on from month to month seeming darker and more fierce. And today the is more clear that in this brutal and bloody efforts of the nations those will win who persevere, whose nerves will not be shattered, who go further in the defense of freedom and justice! Mothers! Your obligation, your support through work, and your encouragement of your sons to endure and succeed in the end. That is your role and your test in the midst of this storm. “Do not cry for your sons” who are in the service of God, in service of the nation and in the service of the world.” Rejoice and be of joyous heart that your sons have accepted the great mission of Christian Knights and civilization.