September 13, 1946

I greet you all, noble countrymen and countrywomen, with the words: Let Jesus Christ be praised.

The more important Catholic writers maintain with one voice that the most vital question of the present times is - marriage. The family is the most basic foundation of society. Marriage is the substructure on which a family is built. If the marriage bond is loose, uncertain and unstable, the family as well as the society will be on shaky ground predicting the breakup of the family and the degradation of society. Common history teaches us that wherever and whenever marriages are considered lightly, not taken seriously by the people, it is there and then that nations are weak and relationships deteriorate completely. The family home is the heart of a nation. Citizenship and patriotism depend on the spirit in family living. People who have a solid family life and where love is in the family, will serve the nation in a better way and the nation will be of service to it. A family home will be an honorable model if the marriage bond is well defined and worthy of honor. It is frequently that people ask why the Catholic Church has such stipulations to marriage. It is only because it takes is form from Christ. Christ’s words form its responsibility. It is important that the institution of marriage as a sacrament by Christ gives the Church its moral posture and responsibility. In the first place at the beginning of humanity, right after creation, God the creator himself established it. Later, our Savior lifted marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. In the plan of the creator, marriage had as its goal the continuance of the human race. It was a bond between one man and one woman. In time, however, human weakness relaxed this noble bond and weakened it. Our Savior reclaimed its original dignity, its importance and meaning and gave it a sacramental status. The Church is watchful, and guards and protects this marriage status. The Church cannot act contrary to this institution because it is unable to. It will be so until the end of the world, in spite of who and what kind of changes are proposed by people or introduced by them. Unfortunately, social structures teach the young that humans are nothing more than advanced animals. In the words of the American: “that men are high grade animals, with highly developed senses.” That God plays no role in the life of man. That man himself makes the laws for himself. The result flowing from such ideas are obvious and sad. And now to our talk:

THE MARRIAGE PUZZLE

No small impression on me were the words of a certain American soldier, who was asked by a reporter, what he aims to do after he returns to the United States when dismissed from military service. Automatically, he replied, “I’ll marry the first girl I can get!” - I marveled at the direct sincerity of the soldier. Even more, I marvel at the naiveté, the thoughtless stupidity of this young man in uniform. In light of this I fear, and this not without reason, he echoed the mentality of several million young men, sick and tired of the military service. – Married service men impatiently look forward to the day they are freed from their service to return to their wives and children. Those who are not married, according to them, would wish to have wives, who would prepare a quiet and peaceful corner in the home where they could rest up after the wartime troubles and inconveniences. And so many of the returning service men will seek to fill the emptiness in their lives without much deliberate thought with the first best girl they meet. For the young with burgeoning imaginations such a scene will be filled with romance. In reality, it is very perilous leading to misfortune after misfortune ending in separation, divorce, and sometimes murder. A noted sociologist from the University of Chicago, Dr. E. W. Burgess, foretold that during the post war period, one should expect a twofold increase in marriages and a divorce rate increase of 50 percent. After the war, wrote Professor Burgess, there will be a definite tendency for hasty and thoughtless taking on marriage ties. After losing time while at war, young people will take less time to get to know each other. With a dependence on the experiences encountered in the WW1, and considering the lengthy waging of WWII, the professor maintains that every fourth marriage will strive for divorce, namely a few months after taking the marriage vows. Before the war the statistics show the one in six marriages end up in divorce. Most probably the statistics of marriages for returning service men after a war: 20 % of such marriages happen quickly amidst the difficulties and deep misunderstandings that divorce will be an unavoidable necessity; 25 % will stick it out because of good will and practical advice from people; 45% will help themselves through the difficulties; only 10% can be counted on to live the married life in agreement with total understanding and harmony. - There exist a number of factors – the professor ends up – one of which is that the service men went through war which was hell and it takes time for recuperation from their nervous conditions and so the women need to have more understanding, patience, and agreeability than when conditions are normal.

I return to the warnings to the young that they do not hurriedly get married, without sufficient understanding of each other because soon or later, they will bewail with bitter tears their hasty action. We ought to make a distinction between two situations, two positions. One, when the soldier and his girl had known each other for more than a year and had communicated with each other through letters or made a commitment by mail. The other situation, when the soldier, freed from service for the first time meets a girl and proposes marriage explaining naively to her that he loves her and she tends to believe it - love at first sight. He says he can’t live without her etc. These are beautiful words and that’s all they are. - If the soldier as he returns from duty, knew the woman before he entered and his service put a delay on their intention to marry, that’s a different story so that when he returns, he may after sober thought, take his intended to the altar.

If the woman met him when he already was in a soldier’s uniform, marine, pilot, and they carried on a mail relationship, such should not blindly take on marriage immediately but better to wait a few months so that she may get to know the serviceman more closely and among friends and company. That may show a true relationship and not one based only on romance but true love. Better to wait until the heart cools a bit, the imagination comes closer to reality and the head thinks it out. It is only then that the couple can figure things out soberly. In order to truly diagnose the relationship and convince yourself that the language means what it is supposed to mean, one needs the proper length of time for the “courtship”. Haste makes waste. The soldier does not need to immediately jump to the altar after a “mail” courtship. It is too big of a drastic change. It foretells not only a broken leg but a broken marriage. It is a crime. Engagement is the most practical “test ground.” “Love at first sight-marriages have always been looked upon with askance by people of sound and reasoning people. And they are even more hazardous after wartimes, especially here in the United States where young people think of marriage as a “sport”. “Love” says the noted writer, Dr. Alexis Carrel, “love is a mysterious thing. It is invisible, not material, yet it is a reality. Life during wartimes which is military rarely processes “love” properly and does it deem it sacrificial. It creates, fashions and enhances sexual inclinations and impulses. Here supposed “love” at first look of the eye, does not serve as love in its true reality because that is what it is not. It is sexual, physical allurement. It can, however, transform itself into a spiritual entity. Until its transformation, young people should not rush into marriage.” – Only a true and real love is the foundation and predictor of a successful marriage. Only in mutual love can the couple last through the changing vicissitudes of living. Where this love is missing, the couple heads for ruination. “Such love – according to Dra. Carrel - is mutually and cautiously maintained through the passing years which strengthens it and makes it more powerful and decorates old age. If the feelings of the freed soldier from duty, is truly love, then neither he nor she, the intentioned one, should be careful that a few months wait, the feeling will diminish or erase, and render the waiters unfortunate ones. A quick wedding would satisfy them temporarily and in passing but that would not bring true, lasting, successful marriage. Those take on a quick marriage will spend long days and nights in loneliness feeling sorry that without sufficient thought, they rushed to the altar. Dear Youth! Examine deeply and make up your mind to prepare yourself sufficiently in order not to complain that the marital state is not leading to heaven, but to hell on earth. Here, I throw out this caution: “Don’t marry in haste! Or you’ll be sorry!”

In Poland, we have two short phrases, pregnant with meaning. Namely: “Small children; small trouble; large children, big trouble. The second phrase: “Small children won’t let you sleep; grown-up children will not let you live!” To the first phrase, we might add: The biggest headache parents have is when children grow up and are ready to leave the family nest and start building their own nest.” It is then that the hearts of the parents are filled with caution and concern. They ask themselves: “Is the marriage of our son or daughter going to succeed.” Surely, every parent bewails the loss of his or her child when they leave home. And without doubt, every thinking youth male or female ought to think about the meaning of marriage. The choice of vocation makes a difference about the state of being not only here on earth but in the other world as well. And it also will effect children born to them if they wed. Learned, contemporary people, who were capable of removing the mask from the face of nature and find certain natural mysteries, took to the study of marriage. They thought that the problems of marriage unfold with such spead and with such certainty, as problems in artistry. They soon were convinced that marriage is like the legendary Sphinx. Marriage, marital life, and the life of the family – after many sad conclusions, they own up to the fact that a scientific examination of marriage was not possible. We Catholics consider Marriage as a Sacrament, and therefore a mystery. The learned ones maintained one thing in agreement: Today’s modern marriages have a heavy cross.” We ought to admit that the problems confronting marital couples are many and varied. Thus they have great effect on our public, social and cultural life. A believing person is well-equipped to scale the various channels through which troubles come into the life of a marriage and family. Take a look at people and what do we see? The masses, long ago rejected the commandments of God. Deliberately they threw off the heavy but sweet burden and added their own burden self-imposed. And despite this sensual and moral revolution, we have the gall to demand of our youth, which aims to wed with dignity and discretion. What an irony! Let them first and quickly dust their own rooms, sweep and scrub out their marriage rooms and family homes – those who had dirtied them in the past activities. I have in mind the parents of those who are ready for marriage themselves. How can we expect that youth to understand the meaning of marriage or have a true understanding of what is holy, good and the aims of marriage when for years of their growing up the father and mother stepped on the sacredness of marriage, spit on it and lowered its state in life. It isn’t that bad says one. It’s not true, says another. If you read letters regarding this issue, letters which I received daily, opinion will differ.

The last quarter of a century has witnessed several wars; various bloody encounters, during which time human tears were shed and human blood flowed. These years saw, among others, one general rebellion in the world, a rebellion without blood but not less important and deleterious and that was the rebellion against the purity of marriage. When I talk about the current rebellion against this marital factor, some will say: “Fr. Justin is the ordinary critic of the old outdated generation, which measures life differently. I beg to differ. You are mistaken. Unfortunately we have certain statistics, just cold numbers, which claims that the morality of marriage was no longer in vogue. I wish not to give statistics about the moral structures of pre-marital activity. Interesting and intriguing ones I send to the courts, to the police station or to the various bureaus or social agencies. On par with the breaking of the purity of the marriage vows I put the change in the marital state. A separation can be looked at via the literature of our times. The theater and movies portray free love to the audiences. It is accepted hook, line and sinker.

The movement against honesty in the marital state has taken on various forms and nomenclature. What is worse, clubs and societies have been formed to militate against with their propaganda to change marital laws. And still worse is the fact that a certain American class has taken upon themselves to popularize notions of the beginings of life, antimarital in nature. It is not surprising that one reads in the papers that there are raids on schools and confiscates hundreds of anti-conception materials. Doctors will recount how the youth reads this material on how to prevent conception and abort life.

All this is done in the name of education, civilization, and the highest national priority. What a caricature? What a monster?

This organized national revolution rages not only in the prevention of pregnancy. It takes on a devastating, bloody and murderous form of when, despite sophisticated precautions, life has begun in the mother's womb under the heart of the mother. Then, women, do not fear to permit aborting their own living child, from their womb. Abortion has become a daily treatment, a procedure which is not whispered but declared openly in parlors, at tea. Dr. Stanley Bross writes: “ Today’s murdering mothers, willingly give themselves to abortionists to free themselves of what they has willingly begun, thus sacrificing health, cost and peace of conscience. The effects of this abomination of fear appears as desperate indecision. A conscience laden with crime does not permit peace and the lives of the murdered victims cast their shadows repeatedly or pop up as cold heartedness in women, whose dearest beings are ripped from beneath the heart. The harm for the living and non-living are incalculable. One cannot even consider marriage under these circumstances – soul and body wither.

The silent murder of one’s nation, the murder of children in the womb of the mother is a result of self-love or egoism. The national revolution against marriage ends up in divorces. How willingly and passionately the married couple seeks reasons to free themselves of marital shackles born only for a few months or as the case may be long-standing, in order to justify one’s activity. One does not know exactly where the problem is, the origin of the lies and deception. I know however that wives posture in the name of emancipation or equality. Pope Pius XI wrote in his encyclical, “The Dignity of Undefined Marriages” – the three deceptions of the teachers of falsehood are social emancipation, home making, and the physiological. The physiological emancipation deals with the idea that women, if they wish, are free from the duties of the wife, they ought to be free from the responsibilities of a wife and therefore the obligations than stem from that state of life. Homemaking emancipation tends to say that in spite of the husband she may choose her own interests and take care of them contrary to her obligation to husband, children and family. Social emancipation means that the wife freed from domestic activities may live her own life as she wishes and may dedicate her efforts for causes instead of the domestic issues she faces.”

In other places the same Pope gives this warning: “Married women, especially those who have children should not be compelled to seek life’s activities beyond the family and home. They should concentrate on the family and its needs. Why does the Holy Father insist on that? Factory occupations outside the family have had an undue influence on the choices made by mothers. They dress like men, walk like men, talk and smoke like men and drink like men. All that I said is unfolding that people revolt against the holiness and goodness of marriage, the result of which is that the true meaning of marriage dims and so the family bond too. Our youth has to be buttressed with a wall of deep faith and protected under the umbrella of stalwart character in order to make a stand against the lowering of the sacredness of marriage. The marital state is a great, important vocation. Those who feel that they are called to this state ought to seriously convince self what responsibility they take upon themselves – a lifelong duty. They ought to judiciously seek and choose a responsible partner. A meeting in a night club, in the dance hall, at a gathering and after a short knowledge of each other, under the romance factor – take on the marriage ties which end with the honeymoon. Then comes the weeping, evening and nights of sadness because the marriage was too swift, without sufficient preparation without conviction and without prayer. Dear young people, the years before marriage should be spent in a godly way. In choosing a partner, seek the help of God. Then the marriage will be undertaken seriously and with understanding what you are undertaking – a lifetime commitment. It will bring you, your partner and your children joy.