**January 14 , 1944**

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

Someone once wrote that all the world's a stage and we are all actors! And so it is in reality. On this stage are played out farces and comedies, dramas and tragedies. It all revolves around daily the daily life of people, which should be a flowing, peaceful, happy existence. That life should be a source of happiness, while it is one big battle of a helpless people. Perhaps it is well that we cannot tear away the veil that hides from our eyes, the secrets of the minds and hearts of men. On one hand we have seen angelic virtues, on the other hand, grim and ugly scenes, doubt, suffering and tear jerking disappointments and despair. Uncertainty in minds, restlessness in conscience, darkening in our understanding and hurt in our hearts. However we thank God that we cannot see everything. There are moments in a person's life when something compels us to show our feelings, admit our struggles and show forth our sufferings to others. It is then when we can understand what human life is in reality, not something that ought to be, but what actually is. We all got used to complaining, looking for sympathy and consolation. When we compare our suffering with the suffering of others; when we weigh our crosses with the crosses of others, when we realize our own short way of the cross with the long unending way of the cross of our neighbor, we have to admit that our life is a drama in comparison with the life of others, because it is a tragedy. As a result, I'd like to read a few letters sent to me. By reason of some delicate matters, I will omit names. I have a couple thousand letters of similar nature but I chose only these which I came across by chance. These outpourings of heart seeking aid and mercy I entitle:

HUMAN TEARS

So. Chicago, Ill.

Reverend Father: Forgive me that I am taking up your valuable time, but despair and sadness tear at my soul, and I can't expect any consolation except perhaps from you, Father, and your talks which I sense compassion for the human condition that you will be able to understand human suffering and sadness. I will try to tersely unfold my life; since to describe it in detail would take up a volume. My past is very grim and sad; my parents came to South America when I was still a child and as a result I only attended Spanish schools in I already learned Polish and English in the United States. I ask that you will forgive my Polish language. I was but 14 years of age when my mother sent me out to work in Buenos Aires at her friend's house and she was not too concerned about my safety. And so I went out into the world without too much smarts or preparation for adult living. It was really a time when I most needed a mother. The lady quickly found a job for me; but what kind of a job? I acquired a maid's job where I had to clean clothes, wash, clean house; in a word, I had to take care of everything in a large house. I had to work with the lady of the house e; at night I slept in an anteroom on the floor, worse than a dog. I had to be door keeper and answer the bell at all times and always let in some lady with a guest; I was kicked by some young lady. I suffered for almost two years; I only wrote what I was told to write; and talk with no one. Once the lady of the house told me: "You are quite good at what you do and you are not ugly - I will give you a room and you will not have to work so hard. I feared because I did not understand life as I do today. I had the feeling that something was wrong in this house. I was permitted to go to Church; I could not always finish my prayers because something came up all the time. I knew a girl a bit older than me and asked her to try to get a different job for me which I received. I thought I would never be free so I ran away only with the dress on my back. I was liked immediately in my new place with children. My former employer could not forgive me a brought me to court. I was in small claims court. I did not relish being a slave and valued my freedom. I felt bad because everyone would look upon me as recalcitrant and a thief. I could only repeat to myself: Mother, why did you do this to me. The whole affair quieted down and I wrote to my mother but she only told me that I was lying. After that, I sought no more consolation for my plight. In the meantime by father got rid of his plantation in South American and came to the United States. He liked his liquor. My mother told me to come home and sent me to live with my father in Philadelphia. That's when my new hell arrived. It is difficult for me to write about my experiences, what I went through. Despite my piety and reading good books which helped me to survive, eventually I was dispirited and went into despondency and depression in my life. My father went back to Argentina. I sought relationships with people and met a poor, young, good man who today is my husband. We have six children and live in poverty. However we have good family relationships and live in peace. We try to bring up our children in the faith and even though we were poor, I am careful not to send out our two daughters like I had been sent out by my mother. But this is not all I want to tell you. My father brought the family together to Philadelphia. I wrote to them and was happy because I wanted to see my mother, tell her my sorrows and perhaps receive some consolation. I had forgotten all the bitterness I had had to my mother for sending me away. On our first meeting, my mother started to criticize me: that I was poor while many other enriched themselves. She started to praise my sisters and their successes. I thought then that my heart would break into pieces. I stood before her like a statue, unable to say anything. I prayed asking God to give my mother the memory about how she treated me and hoping I would get some small words of understanding my plight. Because of my mother's feeling about me, the family treats me like the woman in Helen Mniszek's character, "the leper". My mother went to the movies two or three times a week to the movies in the evening. My sisters are smarter and have few children and they were taken care of by my mother while me sisters entertained themselves at dances or the theatre. Having seen that I am not accepted by the family, I removed myself from any contact with them. My mother has not visited me in two years. Somehow I felt that God did not listen to my prayers for a reconciliation with my mother because she died not too long ago. Before her death, she wanted to see me and called me but I was out of town and when I returned, I learned that she had died. I it is difficult to explain how I felt, but circumstances were such that I could not see her alive for the last time; I thought I could not bear it. My knees buckled as I thought of visiting my mother when she was alive for they would think that I am feigning my difficulties. I had not gone and now my brothers and sisters speak terribly about me and think me the worst. No one can understand my suffering and my emotions. I write this hoping that there are on this earth similarly abandoned daughters and mother like me. Let this be an example to new mothers, who would want to send their daughters out into the world, unless it is absolutely necessary. Such a mother should later as much as possible great he daughter to what she could not give her in the first place. I feel this way since I now am a mother. I end my letter now and beg you father to tell me whether I am at fault and how I should act.

I would forget about the past. Our hearts and minds are capable or taking only so much and no more. For the sake of harmony and peace, keep your distance from your family, and diligently care for your own, carefully giving your own daughters that warm heartfelt love which was so lacking and which your heart suffered over through the years. Do not harbor ill will toward your deceased mother but pray that the Lord give her soul eternal rest. Let God give some present mother take advice from this sorrow laden letter which displays the sorrow and hurt that abandonment may bring.

Another letter:

Chicago, Ill.

Reverend Father:

We have a house for which we paid 20 thousand dollars 15 years ago; today we have a mortgage of 5 thousand dollars and are about to take it away, which means a Polish organization is to take it away even though I belong to it for 25 years as well as my husband and we pay monthly dues. Three years ago I rented 4 rooms out for 35 dollars, not too long ago I rented them out for 12 dollars. The renters paid for a month and now they do not pay anything at all while the rest of the house is empty. Our Polish organizations take 6 percent from the borrowing and will not lower the percentage. Thousands of families were bereft of their buildings and thrown out into the street and for this reason many people are despondent, some go crazy, some take their lives, and each day there are consequences. Years ago our priests advised us to sign up for these Polish organizations; today they are not familiar with what the organizations are doing. Fr. Justin, what do you think? Please respond.

Response: Let's not be one-sided. If it was only the organizations fault, we would have reason to complain. Everyone will admit that the Polish organizations were very helpful to our brethren by loans, sometimes blindly, without investigation of the assets of the borrowers. Before the clash, that worked. However, after the crash, the organization's assets were frozen. It happened with almost every bank, in the housing market and almost everywhere. As far as the foreclosures, no one could have foretold that. Generally these organizations are calling for patience and justice. You say that the organizations are charging 6 percent on the loans but I know foreign organizations are charging as much as 18percent interest. I still dare to say that every Pole should be registered in Polish Organizations because they charge less but, of course, the risk is great also. I will admit and repeat that suffered harm; however, not as much as other national organizations.

A third letter:

Chicago, Ill.

Reverend Father,

I heard the question from one brother asking if it would not be better to defend ourselves and get rid of the capitalists. I think that we should wait, because perhaps the current president will manage to suppress all of this talk with God's help; true we have suffered enough during this depression, but we should wait and pray to God for patience for it is a gift. I don't hold the factories as responsible as the superintendents, their assistants, as well as the foremen who help them in stealing from the workers, and sometimes having their hands in the till. I am a worker in the steel mills; through the past 23 years I have worked as a molder and for the greater part of that time I worked for on company. Through that time, I have not met a superintendent or assistant who was a Catholic, but always a Mason. What, I ask, can one expect from such a man who has no faith, only in the dollar, and whose entertainment is the worker whom he does not respect and who has to take everything with patience, or he would be fired and incapable of supporting his family. The Catholic is sometimes named foreman but then he is only a tool in the hands of the company or he is dismissed and an injustice is done. Father, if you would touch this issue, you would be of aid to our state as workers. Day after day I experience these and other injustices quietly and patiently.

All these complaints show the growing impairment of the relationship between Management and Labor. The government has already looked into this matter and President Roosevelt stressed in his talk at the opening of the Congressional session, on Wednesday, January 3: " In the past several months, as a result of the steps that we have taken, we have demanded of many citizens to get rid of certain freedoms of their position as the controllers (management in commerce). In other words not to take advantage of workers because of their power position as managers. So much for now. In a further talk, I will deal with Polish superintendents and foremen.

Fifth letter:

Lackawana, NY

Reverend Father,

My sister left home, because Dad forbid her to run around to dance halls, which she attended three times a week and came home drunk the next morning. When she came home Sunday morning drunk, Dad forbad her to go. She nevertheless went the next day telling her mother that she was an American, and should be able to see the world in freedom. Our mother, who does not forbid us anything, does not forbid us to go riding with boys or go to dances; Dad lets us go only with known people and stay out only till midnight. Whom should I obey, Dad or Mom?

Dear Child, is not the saying of Christ, the Lord, prove the point: "Any kingdom divided against itself, will not endure, and any town or family divided against itself will not stand." - Unless the father and mother will not maintain the family bond, in harmony and unity, that bond will l unravel, and the unity of the family with go into the four corners of the world. It is time for your father to put the brakes on everyone and say: "STOP". Although your sister is an American, she has no right to backtalk and egotism with her father. Soon she will be drunk with the world and with her freedom and then? The consequences will be sour and bitter. Riding around with various boys because Mom says it's ok, is to lower yourself. No one will respect or pay attention to the "easy one" but with throw them in the corner. So in this respect Dad has reason to be concerned; Mom deserves a reprimand. Go with the dictates of your father, one day you will be thankful for it.

Chicago, Ill.

Reverend Father:

I venture to summarize my thought and my pains on paper and hope that you will agree father to read my letter. People who were pressing me and worrying about tomorrow, today the same people are celebrating at parties and feel slighted that other workers can pay off their mortgages. " It is no easy matter to foreclose a mortgage," say those who foreclose. If you are taking monthly rent on 5 apartments, give the rent back to at least one of the five to prevent foreclosure. We who have been careful to save up for our retirement, today those who did not care to do so have the foreclosures. Some who owe four thousand dollars go to a lawyer who sends a letter that he will agree to pay two thousand dollars. I have lived on this earth 52 years. I worked for every cent I earned which with the help of God, I attained and I am thankful. If the bankers and speculators have taken away money from people with bonds, mortgages, and speculations, they do not do it with ill will and do not ask themselves whether they should do it or not, but the worker who worked hard to have a piece of read in his old age, want to choke him. What are your thoughts?

My humble opinion is this: It is true that the depression and lack of a job are unjustly exploited by those who do not work and walk around like princes. They are crooks about whom the Savior himself said, "The do not sow, nor harvest, and have no larder - yet they live. The greater portion of "Mortgage lenders" are import ant people who are not only just but merciful, and are satisfied if the debtors give them a percentage at times; it is not surprising that occasionally they urge and remind those who are negligent in their payments. Often it is necessary to blame some unconscionable lawyers or real estate agents who in taking care of such transactions have itching hands. Debtors have the obligation to repay fully an honest debt to the penny. However, if I had a mortgage of, let's say, five thousand, and knew that unless I obtain half of what is owned to me, it all would be lost, I would take half. Better something than nothing. And concerning certain conscience-less human drunkards, and some of the Banker magnates who sit behind bars and should - it's better not to dwell.

Buffalo, NY

Dear Father: Please reply: Is it permitted to sell whiskey to children? For example, in a certain private home near Broadway, there is an old widower who does this. He is and elderly man who does not go to church, does not believe in God and pokes fun at everyone and brags that he doesn't have to work hard, and has money. People of various ages congregated there, adults and children and what is worse he sells moonshine to children. Children bother their parents for money. He gathers a group of children who chip into a pool. He sells them whiskey. They get so drunk that they cannot stand on their feet and have to be helped. It is time to clean up that house. Where can we have recourse to contain this evil?

There is no way in the Polish language to describe this terrible entity who scandalizes children. He is a despicable creature. "Whoever scandalizes one of these the smallest of children, it would be better that a millstone me hung around his neck and thrown into the deepest ocean." Such are the words of Christ. This kind of atheist, this kind of blasphemer, worse than Herod, who commanded the slaughter of the innocents, and this man who sells whiskey to children ruining their health and killing a moral sense and advocating extremes. Mothers ought to be concerned and seek remedy for the situation. I know what I would do if I were in their shoes. I cannot officially announce my plan. One could go the the Police and talk with the Captain. But you have to be careful. A couple of years ago, I had a similar incident. I learned that a store keeper was selling school children liquor. I reported it to the police. What happened? Some guy went to the store keeper and told him, "Pal, look out for this Fr. Justin, he reported you for selling liquor to school boys." - Look at how protection works. They are almighty. I finish the reading of letters. Probably in a few weeks, I will return to retelling the tears of people.