**January 21, 1940**

I greet you all, noble countrymen and countrywomen, with the words, Praised be Jesus Christ!

I suggested a few weeks ago that Europe is cooking and boiling, that all of Europe is engulfed by a wave of uncertainty and disturbance. People are just continuing on like automatons. They are not living, but just existing. Wherever one goes is full of fear and dread. This is especially apparent in the Balkan countries! The Balkans, it seems, have turned into an international chessboard! England and France, Germany and Russia, and even Italy are incessantly maneuvering about. There are not only diplomatic maneuvers but also trade and military ones! In addition, these countries are full of spies. The main role in these shifty undertakings is played not only by German minorities dispersed throughout these countries from Hungary to Turkey, but clearly by various trade commissions and secret organizations, which are following commands sent straight from Hitler’s lair! The Allied blockade is suffocating the Germans slowly and without mercy. Despite food rations being meager already for a long time, today the lack of everything grows even more apparent!

Bread from sawdust, coffee from rye, tea from raspberry leaves, these are surely not signs of the descendents of the Huns and the Goths being adequately nourished! The gang in Berlin should change their insignia of a broken cross to the character of a starveling! Leaders of this well-cultured nation understand the critical situation of their nation, which has up to now blindly and unthinkingly allowed itself to be led on the Nazi leash! For this reason, they are desperately looking for safety and help from the small Balkan countries. Numerous German commissions not only ask but brutally demand that Romania send even more oil, meat, wheat, and corn, or that Yugoslavia send wagonloads of livestock and metals—especially scrap metal, that is, old iron—or that Bulgaria allow extraordinary credits to be drawn for tobacco and lumber, or that Hungary part with more wheat, or that Turkey send more raisins, jam, and butter! What is the worst is the fact that the proud and conceited Teutonic nation—because it is financially bankrupt—cannot pay cash for these goods. It pays either with the surplus of its factory products or with promises, which, like all other German assurances, are pointless, meaningless, and without value! Add to all that the colossal costs of mobilization and then you will believe me that everywhere there is unrest, uncertainty, poverty, and misery! Every person can foretell the moment when the Russian shoemaker will wave his finger and the Moscow horde will descend upon the lands of Bessarabia or the moment when the Berlin Anti-Christ will give the command for the gangs of savage Teutons, which stand in readiness on the border of the former Czechoslovakia, to storm through Romania’s boundaries! Then, and only then, will the war really rage across the whole of Europe! For our suffering Poles, this will be a new misfortune because there are no Balkan countries from Hungary to Turkey in which there are no Polish refugees! Where then will they be able to search for safety and comfort? To what place can they flee? When I think about this, my mind is in a daze, because I have already seen so much of this Polish adversity and despair! In any case, listen to the following:

**The Voices of the Polish Wanderers**

Some Americans of Polish descent are scandalized by my tales of German brutalities and Russian atrocities and of the merciless abuse not only directed towards the Polish clergy, officers, and soldiers but even towards women who do not know how to defend themselves and children that cannot defend themselves. These critics are people lacking heart or conscience. I boldly throw this accusation in their face! They have only one cold and cynical response: “We are Americans!” I have always, at least until now, had the impression that the American man and American woman are noble creatures, sympathizing with misfortune and suffering, standing in defense of the unjustly oppressed, and declaring the superiority of law over the fist, of equality, and of brotherhood! Do American men and women of Polish descent just represent a disgraceful exception when it comes to mercy or compassion towards one’s brothers and sisters? Both the real American man and woman have mercy not only towards the unfortunate and suffering but also display a certain regard and charity towards unthinking livestock and animals! The driver of a car will stop his vehicle in order to avoid injuring or killing a dog or cat! Despite the fact that not only tears but blood lay on Polish ground, that illnesses are spreading there, that death cuts them down without regard for age, and that in neighboring countries there is hunger, misery, despair, and disease, here, among those that seem to be our own, are creatures so thick-skinned and unfeeling, so un-Christian and inhumane, who can shrug their shoulders and unwillingly offer the cynical saying: “We are Americans!”

So now please listen to and think about the following accounts. When I was in Bucharest, I met Poles from every corner of Poland. They were military and civilian, intelligentsia and country bumpkins. There were women and children! I am talking to a Warsaw resident who has just escaped the city and crossed the Romanian border. He is haggard and terrified. In his eyes there is some kind of incredible fire. He seems to be on the verge of some kind of illness. Who knows what threatens him? Maybe a fever? Maybe malaria? Maybe a lung infection? The man is dressed in threadbare clothing! At one time, not so long ago, things were going well for him. He had a good position; he had a wife and two children; his life was calm; he was very content; he lived for his family. And today? Now everything has been lost! In the third air strike on the Polish capital, bombers destroyed his house; the walls collapsed on those most dear to him. He almost went insane from anguish. After the surrender of the capital, he dug through the rubble to find the bodies and bury them in some decent place. The invading soldiers drove him away from the purchase of lime, brick, and rocks. They threatened him with death because he wanted to fulfill his duty of mercy and bury his dearest decently. This human skeleton, clothed in tatters, talks about how a committee of German dignitaries moved along the streets of heroic Warsaw. Their eyes shined with delight. They looked upon the destruction and ruins with arrogant joy. Clearly they were not only delighted but proud of the destruction and terrible appearance of beautiful Warsaw. They undertook an examination of collapsing buildings. They decided to leave everything as it was. This would be a display of German anger, German justice, German revenge, and German culture! Also, it would scare the smaller countries and weaker nations! One of the dignitaries said: “Why should we waste money on the repair of homes in Warsaw? Either way, Poles are doomed to death from hunger or something else!”

My source tightens his fists until the bones creak in their joints, deep creases appear on his forehead, tears stream from his eyes, and he whispers: “God, my God, how people are suffering in Poland, the world does not even know!” In one of the Romanian camps in which I found some four thousand refugees, they took me to an orphan boy. The poor thing is dressed shabbily in a shirt without a vest. On his legs are the remains of his well-worn leather boots. After all, this eleven year-old refugee walked several hundred miles! A child in years but an adult in suffering and a true hero! Even after all this, he is not crying! He speaks of his experiences in an even voice, as if he was reciting a story from memory at an event in a public hall: “My father was killed near Warsaw in the first German bomber raid. I left the city with my mother. We were going by car. Suddenly three bombers appeared above us. They dropped so low we could see the faces of the Germans! We left the car on the road and lay down in a ditch! The pilots circled us three times and returned shooting at us with machine guns. They killed Mother and the two acquaintances that were fleeing with us. Only I survived. I scratched out a grave with my bare hands in the ditch and buried Mother!” He recounted this without shedding a single tear, this eleven year-old Polish refugee! A real refugee on foreign soil, an orphan without father or mother!

At the second camp, right under the Romanian Carpathians, is a group of the so-called Polish intelligentsia. Doctors, lawyers, a few ex-officers, etc. There are also a few country bumpkins. One of them just arrived in Romania on November 12th! He had a farm not far from Warsaw. He recounts the brutal abuse of the wretched Polish populace at the hands of the German secret police and the bestial Prussian soldiers! Members of the German Gestapo walk around armed not only with revolvers and clubs but often with machine guns! At the slightest of pretexts, they mercilessly beat and shoot at passersby, not only men but women and children! Listen, you, who say that I exaggerate in my stories, despite the fact that I have not once but time and time again assured you that I am telling you the truth about what I have seen or heard. Listen to the words of this simple country bumpkin: “Father, believe me that the Germans have only one goal, which is to kill off the Polish people! Illnesses are spreading in Warsaw, particularly typhus. Children die most frequently! My neighbor was delivering three containers to the children’s hospital in Warsaw. Before he entered the city, he was stopped by a military patrol. One of the soldiers coarsely asked what he was bringing, where to, and for whom? The scared peasant replied, “To the hospital, for the children.” The peasant’s reply angered the beastly German. He jumped on the cart, took off the lids of the containers, and turned them over, screaming: “Let the Polish puppies perish of hunger!” The peasant refugee was grinding his teeth as he was telling me this. He finished the story, closing his arms convulsively, and saying: “This is inhumane! I show more pity to my livestock than the Germans do to our children!” Swallow and digest all this well, all you who until today are still in thrall to the Teutonic system and culture! What kind of culture do these arch-people or super-humans display in their systematic extermination of the Polish race? What kind of brutality is there in torturing the defenseless population? What kind of super-human hatred against the helpless and defenseless children? Only for one reason that is a crime in the eyes of the German nation: being Polish!!

In the third camp, not too far from Bucharest, on muddy marshland, eight Polish officers are sitting in a separate mud hut closely guarded by Romanian soldiers! One of them is ill with spotted typhus; the second, the beginnings of tuberculosis; the third, his head bandaged with a rag; the mud hut itself constructed from bamboo reeds; gaps between the woven reeds filled with clay; the walls covered with quicklime. The roof is covered with thatch on which moss has spread. There is no door here, nor floor, nor windows! The officers are sitting on bunks! One of the officers, the one with the bandaged head, is writing a letter. They greet me in the military manner. I ask about their location and luck. They don’t want to talk about it: “We do not care about our own poverty or sad situation.” Instead, they are concerned about their families left in Poland; they are anxious about them because the wicked invaders exact revenge terribly on the families of Polish officers. This thought worries them greatly.

One of the officers, when he found out that I am a Franciscan, started talking about how it was during the firstdays of the air offensive on Poland. An evacuation train stood on the railroad track leading out of Warsaw. The train was stopped because an alarm was sounded to warn of incoming German bombers. The train was made up of thirty coal wagons, that is, flat and open railroad cars. Children were being transported out of Warsaw and its surroundings on these cars. There were only children on these cars, ranging from five to fourteen years of age. The majority of girls wore dresses of bright colors. It would have been very easy to see that these were children! Altogether there were nearly a thousand. Three huge German bombers appeared overhead. They first dropped a few bombs. But apparently the pilots were unsatisfied with the bloody results. They returned, flying the bombers about a hundred meters lower, so probably about three hundred thirty feet above the railroad cars, and decimated a number of children with machine gun bullets. They repeated this bloody and bloodthirsty game once and twice; three, four, and five times! Of the thousand children, just before alive and lively, the bodies of innocent creatures were torn into pieces, the same children about which the Savior said: "Unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." They were victims of these hyenas and wild dogs, the cultural offspring of the "over-man" regime beloved by the whole German nation! My officer finished slowly with a quiet voice: "Father, among these victims, crying out to Heaven for vengeance and for the vengeance of every just person, were forty boys from our school in Niepokalanów! The railroad cars turned into a sea of the blood of innocent Polish children!" Continuing in a whisper, the officer spoke further: "Probably God Himself will sooner or later exact a just punishment on these murderers and criminals for the blood of these Polish youngsters!" The Polish soldier spoke in this manner, a man who had seen the results of war, who had faced death firsthand, yet who could not find the appropriate words to condemn the "bravery" and "courage" of the cynical products of Hitler's principles of hatred towards God, mankind, and Christian civilization and morals! What will the naive defenders of Teutonic self-love and plans to conquer not just Europe but the whole world say now? In spite of this, you dare to teach me about the law of brotherly love! Do you not want to understand that brotherly love requires a measure of love of self and others? This is the teaching of Christ our Savior! It is this way and no other!

In the fourth camp, where there are about a thousand Polish pilots, among others, I meet a few Polish doctors. These are doctors that are famous not only in Poland but in the whole world. These are experts in various branches of the medical arts. In short, they are specialists! They had to run in order to save themselves! And they did it well! Germans, like the Moscovians, are first systematically executing the Polish clergy, then the Polish intelligentsia! Here is the verbatim account of a director of one of the hospitals in Warsaw. The words of this great surgeon and author of much scholarly medical literature: “I just got out of Warsaw on November 10th. At this point, there was a severe shortage not only of medicine but even of bandages in Warsaw. One could not procure not only chloroform but even iodine, cotton, and bandages! There is no need for money in Warsaw; no one is concerned with that! There is a need, a great need, for medicine, disinfecting agents, and supplies for dressing wounds! The Polish people ask their expatriates in America for medical help!”

In the fifth camp, where there are about a thousand Polish refugees, citizens of the Mosaic faith, who found the care of committees of Romanian Jews, I am speaking with an important Jew that has connections with compatriots that hold positions of international prominence. Before the invasion of Poland, he lived in Cracow, where he had a business! It was going very well for him. When the Teutonic horde rushed into the Polish lands, hell was unleashed! German pilots did not start by attacking centers of military importance and value. In order to frighten and demoralize the populace, they singled out hospitals, churches, and synagogues. These youngster pilots, who were boys of eighteen or nineteen, ran wild. They planned flying trips almost for amusement, dropping explosive and incendiary bombs on hospital buildings that were clearly marked with huge red crosses; they destroyed temples and synagogues with particular hatred and ardor! They went after the Jews as fiercely as if they were not human beings. First, a decree was issued which forced every Israelite to wear a yellow armband with a Star of Zion! The armband must be yellow. Why? Because this color denotes contagious diseases and the risk of infection. Jews are not allowed to walk on the sidewalk; they are absolutely not allowed to buy anything in the stores; they cannot leave their homes after certain designated hours; the secret government police constantly undertake home searches, complete some kind of inspections, levy huge fines or ransoms, and murder on the spot! They leave the bodies at the place of the killing. One is not allowed to bury corpses without the express consent of the occupation authorities; so, the bodies lie in such a state for one day, two or three, as a warning and example for rebels, the occupation forces claim. The German Vandals are devouring the Polish land! Flocks of Hunnish vultures are circling Polish cities and villages! Berlin’s jackals are tormenting Polish corpses! Hell has been unleashed in our day and the agents of Lucifer beat, torture, rob, and murder.

In Bucharest, I spoke with a refugee from Gdansk. Later, I will recount our conversation in detail. For today, I will tell you that my friend was sitting in a Gdansk prison for several days. I will also tell you about this fellow and how he got out of prison. You don’t have to believe me; however, you will probably believe him. When he is telling the story, his voice breaks, he bites his lips, and his eyes fill with tears. A few times, he breaks off. This man must have truly gone through a purgatory of pain and suffering. At times, he speaks in a tortured and pathetic voice: “In the Gdansk prison, we were fed herring and dried, over-salted fish. During the day and at night, we were led to various tests. From these, few were brought back. Members of the Gestapo would enter into our jail cells. The prisoners would have to undress completely! During the tests, the Gestapo beat men on the head, back, and chest with clubs! They knocked out teeth! They grabbed us by the throat and choked us mercilessly! They acted this way not only towards men but towards women!” Here, he stopped. After a moment of silence, he continued with a voice full of fear and pain: “The Gestapo tore my friend’s tongue out while he was alive! I was in the neighboring jail cell, right by him, when this was going on!” Again, his voice went silent! And again, tears began to stream down his face. The poor thing sat there motionless, as if he was terrified by the awfulness of his own story! And again, he continued: “A few times, soldiers and secret police would bring ensnared Poles who were caught not only in Gdansk but in its surroundings; these were men and women; they were placed up against the wall in the courtyard of the jail. A German soldier stood in front of this group of martyrs with a machine gun. A few trucks were situated by the entrance of the jail. At the right signal, the trucks’ motors were started to drown out the sound and bang of the machine gun shots. Despite this, it was still possible to hear the evil “tra-ta-ta” of the gunshots and the shouts and desperate cries of the murdered victims over the roar of the motors. After the execution, military trucks would appear. Corpses were thrown into them and driven somewhere out into the fields outside the city!”

Here, for today, I interrupt the recounting of the eyewitness of what “the reality was and what the Germans were doing” and what they are still doing to this day. Despite this, even among our own are those who judge me for exaggerating the stories of cruelties of the savage, culturally savage, Teutons!

“Father,” a certain high ranking Italian official told me, “I cannot tell you what the Nazis are doing in Poland. Because if I told you, then either your heart would explode from the pain or you would lose your mind from despair!”

And so? Let us ask God for justice to be served for the oppressors and the oppressed. Let us not skimp in giving from our hearts or pockets! Let us help our own; Providence will reward us!