**January 24, 1932**

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

During the last two weeks I have received letters from over four hundred cities and towns regarding the worker, just remuneration for the working class, unemployment, and other matters strictly concerned with the present critical condition of workers and their families. In every letter we find complaints, we read about poverty and privation; we see the uncertainty and the fear that an event which would destroy the foundations of society and the country could take place. It is true that the working class, since it is the most numerous, has suffered the most, but others suffer as well; I have before me a report written by T. F. Shony, the leader of a charitable committee in Longmont, Colorado. “A farmer in Colorado, along with his family, earns no more than 300 dollars a year. Farmers live in old sheds, or even in tents. They eat poorly and dress even more poorly.” – I remind you too that during the last three years, around three thousand banks have gone out of business; that callous magnates sold foreign bonds, which are now worthless, for billions of dollars and themselves took millions of dollars in commissions; I remind you that in the times of the greatest activity of the stock markets, millions were given to buy shares which today are worth no more than the paper they are printed on, and so in the face of these facts, not only the worker, but the whole middle class suffers. Let me repeat once more that because the worker was paid badly, unsuitably and according to unjust principles, and lived from day to day, from hand to mouth, that he is the most painfully hurt and wounded by the crown of thorns, made by the hands of heartless employers and the present unemployment and that he and his family find themselves today in a situation which proves false the loudly acclaimed progress – education - and civilization as well, which has made the worker into a slave – which has made a thinking being into an unthinking animal, regarded by the employer as his property – abandoned by him today – whom the employer doesn’t want to care about and has no intention of doing so. Pagan emperors imported their slaves, used them, but at least they cared for them enough to feed and clothe them, and give them a place to live. In the twentieth century the situation is worse. The emperors of today not only do not accept God’s law, but they also reject any other laws than their own. Not only do they take advantage of the strength and skills of workers, but suck out their life-blood – break the health and ruin the life of the worker. When before them stands the fearless Catholic Church, and in defense of the worker and his rights proclaims Christ’s principles, the principles of truth and justice, then these Pharisees rent their garments and cry out: “The Church is blaspheming, the Church is mixing itself up in politics, crucify the Church, crucify it.” To these and about these we can say what the Savior said: “"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing.” (Matthew 23: 27-28).

Dear radio listeners, you want to know perhaps who can or who should take care of the worker, who should watch out for the worker so that no harm is done to him, but so that he will be provided for and his family’s happiness ensured. I will try to explain this to you.

**The Care of the Worker**

In the “Polish Union Daily” (“Dziennik Zjednoczenia”) from January 5th, 1932, we find a description of the following sad event: “Adam Purecki, veteran workman. Purecki died in a jail infirmary of wounds inflicted when fighting with the police. Those who don’t know all the details of this tragic event and read only short memos in newspapers will think that Adam Purecki was most probably a Chicago gangster, or maybe bootlegger, or at least some drunkard and daredevil, who was caught red-handed, fought with the police and died the death that he deserved. Yes. More than one person will think and judge Adam Purecki in this way, all the more easily as Purecki was not famous, held no civic positions, and did not even get himself mixed up in politics. Purecki was a normal, calm, respectable man - a normal workman, working hard to earn a piece of bread. When the war broke out, Purecki did not seek patronage nor try to escape the draft, but went into battle under the star-spangled banner, to fight against the descendants of the Huns for the freedom of the world of nations. – He fought in the trenches, was wounded, and after the war was over, he returned to Chicago. Having scraped together some money by dint of hard, back-breaking work, he got married, bought himself a house and founded a home, where he felt happy. And if not for today’s unparalleled depression, most probably the rest of the world never would have heard about Adam Purecki, as he, like millions of his comrades in arms, did not seek glory or praise for his dedication and the blood spilled over for the country’s glory. But the depression came – or more aptly, it did not come, but was forced upon us, and forced upon us by those who made million-dollar fortunes out of the blood and exploitation of people like Purecki – Purecki lost his job – Purecki looked for a new one, but he couldn’t find one anywhere, and having a numerous family, four tiny children and no income, he spent his last cent and finally lost the house into which he had put his life savings. Purecki and his wife and children were thrown out into the street, and he didn’t even have enough money to hire someone to transport his belongings. In his pain and despair that this affluent country, for which he had gladly and honestly sacrificed his life, his blood and his property in the entrenchments of the battlefield, had abandoned him and wasn’t going to help him in the hardest moments of his life, and that with his children and wife he was becoming a homeless beggar, and not through his own fault, Purecki went crazy and came up with a mad plan. He decided to defend his house; he decided to die in the defense of his rights and his property, but being a noble and good person, he didn’t want to expose his beloved wife and innocent children to the dangers of battle. So he told his family to go into the streets, as he couldn’t give them any accommodation, having no money, and he barricaded himself in his house. And when the authorities came to throw him out, he blocked their access to his house, which he had lost because of the depression. The police surrounded the entire house, threw gas bombs, shot at him, and finally Purecki, mortally wounded, gave in to the pressure of the police. He died in the prison infirmary where he was taken to afterwards. Death had spared Purecki during the battle for the liberty and glory of the nations of the world – and he had found death in the battle for his liberty and that of his property. And that is how his history ended. But his death is not the end of the history of 35 million other “Pureckis” in this beautiful and affluent country. This story is not finished, it is only the preface to a ‘great history’, and who will write this history and in what manner, that depends only on the leaders and representatives of our country. Millions, tens of millions of good, honest and noble sons of this great nation are in exactly the same situation as Adam Purecki was. If help, significant help is not given to them, then within a short period of time, they may go crazy from pain and poverty – and the deeds of madmen will be mad deeds.“

In Milwaukee, the newspapers of November 1931 register the following incident: A man wandered the streets of Milwaukee day and night. He was looking for work. The night from Thursday to Friday he slept in the park. From Friday to Saturday he slept some in a dingy second-rate restaurant. On Saturday, his strength left him entirely. Hunger, which had wreaked havoc with his insides only two days before, had almost stopped to bother him. He was only very weak. Feeling that his end was near, he went to the nearby hospital of Our Lady, asking for help. It seemed to him that maybe a spoonful of food would set him back on his feet. But it was too late. When a bowl of soup was set before him, he was so weak that he couldn’t hold up a spoon. The nurses, seeing his condition, put him to bed. At that moment he lost consciousness. “I’m walking, I’m walking – I’m looking for work” – he repeated feverishly, with burning lips. A postmortem exam showed that the cause of death was pneumonia. “And hunger” added the doctor.

Before me lies a letter written by Mr. S. K. from Lincoln Park, Michigan. Listen: “I am 46 years old, I have been in America since 1902. I am the father of four children whose upkeep I can no longer work for. I worked in coal mines, in steel plants, and the last 18 years I worked on the railroad, but since four years ago I have no job. Only my wife, from time to time, finds some kind of job. I lost my house and everything that we had, and today we depend on the charity of good people. I lost my house which we had paid seven thousand two hundred dollars for. The doctors claim that I underwent major strain when lifting weights at work. Only a year ago we still had 200 dollars in the bank, which we lost since the bank was closed. Today I must live on begged food. Father, when I listened to the last Rosary Hour, I started crying, for what are we poor people to do in this world, has God also forgotten about the poor?”

The same sadness, the same bitter complaints and tears come across from almost every single letter. So as to prevent the desperate, hungry and homeless from committing mad deeds, our government, whose duty and responsibility it is to care for the good of the whole nation, and especially for the good of workers and their families, because these with their often blood-wrenching toil have given the most to the development and enrichment of our country. Otherwise the tears of workers, their wives and children will sway the scale of God’s justice, and the day of an awful reckoning will come.

In today’s political system we see the following bad conditions: 1. Because of the increasing use of machines in the place of humans, and due to new and perfected inventions, many workers lose their posts, are thrown into the streets. Workers who are deprived of their work in this way, nonetheless have an undiminished right to live, and they want to live. So they work for lower pay, so as to only earn something and keep themselves alive. In this way the value of the strength, the sweat and blood of the worker is reduced. When this daily pay of the worker is not sufficient for the family’s upkeep, then the wife and children, even minors, will be forced to work for food. In this way the situation of the worker and his family will be increasingly worse and more difficult if the government does not take care of him by passing appropriate legislation. 2. Due to the work of machines, small companies are going out of business, and are being replaced by billion-dollar giants. Before, the unsatisfied worker could leave one factory and go on to the next, today this is hard to do; there are inspections and examinations, as well as more harsh and strict expectations, and anyway the so-called “trusts” do whatever they feel like! These inadequacies, that are faults or shortcomings of the present system, can and should be removed or at least lessened by the federal government, that is, the state. Each state has the duty to care for the good of its citizens. Among the citizens there are no better, more peaceful or exemplary citizens than workers. There are also no other people in any society who are so often taken advantage of, neglected and underprivileged each step of the way as workers. Therefore it is the duty of the state to defend this worker, to protect him and to help him, because he is too weak, helpless and powerless against capitalists, magnates and employers. The federal government should 1. Limit the work of women and children; in this way the ranks of the working class will diminish and the value of work shall be raised; at the same time this will enable better marital life – it will protect the health of the mother and wife, help to bring up the children. 2. Shorten the hours of the working day, that is, less working hours, without cutting down on the pay. 3. To make certain laws concerning the health of body and soul. 4. To create factory inspectors who would make sure that the government regulations are faithfully adhered to. 5. To insure the worker in case of inability to work, or in the case of forced unemployment.

No worker acting for himself can achieve an improvement of his standard of living. Workers who join great associations and unions won’t achieve anything permanent either. Because all workers do not wish to belong to unions, and will never belong to them; there is no mutual understanding and agreement between them, and so employers will bring in workers who are not part of unions and the work will go on. Often too those who are at the head of unions of workers are ruthless and vicious people, who under cover of protecting the working class, seek to raise their own income, and as a last resort, for huge sums of graft, they sell the worker to employers. These are the apostle of perverse doctrines which make the worker lose much and not gain anything in return. Once again I repeat, governments have not only the right but the obligation to make laws in favor of workers and to see to these laws being conscientiously followed. The state, according to the task given to it by God, is supposed to care for social good. This good calls for not permitting that this big and vitally important part of society, which is that created by workers, be abandoned, neglected or completely forgotten, and secondly, the situation of the worker in the present system is such that without federal laws, he is unable to help himself, and he cannot defend himself!

I will allow myself to mention to listeners how the Polish Government cared for and still cares for the worker. After the world war, due to the change of political and economic conditions, as well as due to the ruin of an enormous number of factories and other workshops, the financial and economic situation of Poland was difficult. However, the government promptly set to work. Already in 1918 the first benefits were paid to unemployed blue-collar and white-collar workers. In 1919 for a certain time, the unemployed were given raw products, which turned out not to work too well. In 1923, Poland ratified the project of an international convention for unemployment, accepted at the first session of the International Labor Conference in Washington, and in 1924 the Polish Sejm [Parliament] passed a law “of insurance in the case of unemployment”, which covered all blue-collar workers. At the present time, outside of Poland, other countries which have introduced mandatory insurance in case of unemployment include: Austria, Australia, Holland, Germany, Russia, Great Britain and Italy. In eighteen other countries, similar securities exist, but they are not mandatory. The “Funds for unemployed” , funds for benefits for the unemployed who qualify, draw on the for a single, 30 percent, for contributions of workplaces for employed workers, as well as from subsidies of the State Treasury amounting to half of the sum, which are taken from insurance fees. These fees are about two percent of each worker’s pay. Of the total sum of fees, the insured worker pays one-fourth, and the employer three-fourths. The right to receive unemployment benefit in the case of losing a received by the unemployed is: someone with a job starts ten days after the unemployed registers and lasts 13 weeks of the first year, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Services has the right to extend this period to 17 weeks. The obligation of registering in case of unemployment affects workers regardless of sex, upon reaching 16 years of age. The amount of benefit family of two – 35 percent; for someone with a family of five, 40 percent etc., of the income which is the basis for calculating insurance contributions. The “Funds for the unemployed” is not a charitable organization, but a social insurance organization, as first and foremost it is composed of contributions paid by workers and employers. If such a poor and war-ruined country such as Poland has thought about protecting the worker, why did our country, so rich and supposedly so progressive, not think about this earlier and even now refuses to consider this solution? The question of workers is not a political matter, nor only a matter of the stomach, but is a general and national matter! The foundations of the American country are “this uncountable number of people” who, as Leo XIII wrote already in 1890, “Lead a miserable life, a life unworthy of human beings.” It is not strange then that this mass of the working class is ruled by anarchy of feelings and thoughts, by disorganized action, by material poverty, and frequently by moral decline. In order to partly lift the working class from this temporary poverty and moral poverty, what is needed is the action of all parties, a reform of the present system of work and pay, and what more, the government must pass federal laws to the advantage of the worker, so that the poor and until now suppressed worker may further work for the good of his country and for the good and happiness of his family. If these national laws will be based on God’s and Christian justice, that the working class will truly bless the government which procured this for them and gave them protection and care!