**January 29, 1950**

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

As a cleric, preparing myself for priestly ordination, I spent five years in the Holy City, on theological studies. They were the most fortunate years of my student life, because there, in Rome, I was witness to the richest, imposing Church rituals in which the main role was played out, either by the Holy Father or one of the famous cardinals of the Church. In addition, I familiarized myself with the catacombs, the amphitheater, basilicas and other ancient artifacts, pagan as well as Christian. It all made a deep impression on me to the degree, that relived the lives of the first Christians. I was particularly struck by the suffering endured by the martyrs by the spilling of their blood for their faith. Wherever I turned, wherever I went, I saw tombstones, graves, traces and witness given to these heroes and heroines who led God-fearing, holy, lives which were awesome even to the persecutors, executioners, and tyrants. From all the marvelous, majestic temples, I the midst of the amphitheaters, within which Christian blood was spilt, I took a shine to the small dark Church of the Capuchin Fathers located in the piazza Barberini. This little church was built by the noted Cardinal Barberini, a member of the order of Capuchins, and, has been name the Church of the Immaculate Conception. What was it that attracted me to this quiet, little church of the seventeenth century? In the first place it contained the remains of my patron: St. Justin, convert, philosopher and martyr. Secondly because it has on one of the side altars lie the remains of Blessed Crispin of Wiergo, who for many y ears was a lay brother with the Capuchins. He was noted for his humility, piety, and love of the poor. He begged for alms in the streets of Rome and worked the lowest position in the kitchen. He died in 1750 at the age of 82. After thirty years, his remains were unearthed; the body was intact. At the request of the authorities, it was placed under one of the altars. They are still intact to this day. Thirdly, underneath the altar, or rather the church itself there is a Capuchin cemetery. The public is permitted to view the site twice annually but are reticent to view it. It is an experience to some of loathing and fear. The cemetery consist s of four medium sized rooms containing the bones of the religious. In one of the rooms, the walls are lined with skulls., The second, bones from the hands. In the third room are leg bones. In the fourth, an array of bones. The vaults are even dressed with bones. Candlesticks, chandeliers and other decorations are intricately stacked with human bones. In the niches, among these bones are placed skeletons in the Capuchin religious habits, and are affixed to the walls with the ordinary Franciscan cord. On the chests of the hanging skeletons are metal name plates with their names and date of death. Their skeletal mouths express grins of peace and joy or surprise or cynicism. These features are not recognizable until you are close to the corpses. I had visited these places often. I asked myself questioning what these skeletal remains could tell if they were able to tell their story. I did not wait for an answer. It was useless. On to today’s talk, entitled.

“TIME – LIFE – DEATH”

Again I reference to the translations of the good priest, Felix Feldheim, with certain changes and additions with personal observations. I wish to be well understood right from the beginning! Every human being has to work in order to survive for his upkeep and his daily bread, or better for himself and his family. Additionally he has an obligation and a right. This is imperative and at the same time, discerning. But it is a stupid, undiscerning thing to chase after money, to fulfill your personal ambitions, to accumulate wealth to the extent that you do not need it. All that effort takes little time and passes by quickly. All the plans and preparation for material well being end in sadness. You can’t take it with you! Please take note. To take an examination of our lives, we do not count the days that we are inside our mother’s wound as it would be in a prison. We count our days from the day we leave the womb. And that is still incorrect because there are years when we are totally helpless and dependent on others to live. We are not conscious and not aware that we are alive. One third of our life is not really conscious of being a human being. Eating, sleeping, trying to walk. You cannot even think that you are a human being, that you can walk, you can feed yourself properly and walk and talk, come to complete reason, to be responsible for your actions. That creature becomes a human being when he comes to the ability of reason; when he can be responsible for his actions but no one can be assured of what time that is. Some think it is at the age of fourteen; others at the age of twenty ones. Reason and human life are sometimes covered with rays of sunshine, sometimes dew drops heavy, sometimes with heavy and black clouds . The little man first the notes his physical abilities, activities or abilities such as appetite, taste, willfulness. He can converse about flies, dogs, flowers and food. Later he comprehends candle light, not that they are Items of necessity but that he begins to understand their nature. And so forth, as time passes. Before a man matures somewhat, before he attains some practical knowledge about living, he is half dead from rheumatism or other illnesses Man becomes such an enigma to himself. Physically he goes through his physical development but his spiritual and intellectual development does not keep up with his physical development. His maturity is curtailed so that people say about him, “He behaves like a child,” or “He talks like a child.” “He thinks like a child.” “He didn’t grow up,” and so on and so on. When a man does reach spiritual and mental maturity, he is physically deteriorating. The mind matures but the flesh deteriorates. An old forgotten philosopher had reason to write: "man is a creature with a weak mind but strong sturdy body!" What a bright, distinct and clever definition of a human being. Let us be aware of the changes in the lives of people. In this way we will not the dependency of the care and watchfulness of the mother and father of the child. It is true that it grants the parents a great deal of satisfaction, but it also cost come concern, care and worry. The young leave school and they rejoice when set free to do their own thing after their "imprisonment" or dependence on their parents. During the time of schooling, modern youth takes on certain mental abilities, but for what?

For mutual recommending to courtship and other considerations; to flirt and neck, to dating and rendezvous, which refines the art of romancing the young, and which so often end in blood and murder. Today's youth occupy themselves with these concerns which someone called "America's Most Popular Tribal Custom".

To constant chatting, to absolute confidence, without the least understanding what the subject is in reality..

To spurning knowledge, teaching, and the experience of older and wiser elders. Today's youth does not wish to hear any advice, any rules, any most concerned and honestly heartfelt given advice because that is all old time stuff and not agreeing with the spirit of the time and American freedom.

To do nothing, never saying something that would cramp his style either on the material sphere or in the sphere of morality. The young person never asks about what is not permitted, what virtue is, what sin is. The youth knows only one commandment: the eleventh commandment, which sounds like, "Be careful so you don't get caught in the act." Young people follow the way that says, "Sow all possible wild oats in your youth" - And unfortunately they sow in two handfuls.

To do things and to permit yourself to do certain things which a person will be ashamed for the rest of life. Because when a person comes to his senses and becomes mature, he sees life in a different light. The young eye looks at life in its externals, the elderly eyes looks long and searchingly and sees better, deeper than the young eye. It is no wonder that the young pick up some harmful, lowering, and sinful habits. I understand that these words, "sin", "sinful", and "sinner" anger some and irritate others, and disturb all. It's a bit much. It's not permissible to call black, white; evil, good, and transgression, a virtue; if I step on someone's toes. These lowering habits drag down the persons from the pedestals on which the Creator set them taking away the goodness, meaning and nobility of the human; they darken the intellect and reason, deaden the conscience, inhibit the good heart, murder the soul, and the one who was created in the image of God, loses that likeness to God, and more and more erases it, and becomes more and more the fool of the Bible and becomes an unreasoning animal. Can such a life be termed a real life of a reasoning human being? Old age creeps up and finds people who although they still think but think as they thought when they were children in their youth. Vices have encroached on their lives, like leeches latch on to the body and the person becomes listless and weak. They are unable to pray because they because they have already abandoned prayer for a long time. Besides, they have nothing to pray for. They have abandoned prayer and they still live; their proof for the insufficiency of prayer. They do not attend church. It is better in their estimation to spend the time lying leisurely in bed to rest and refresh one's body. It is more worthwhile. They do not go to confession. They did not kill anyone. Why go? That there is dissention in the family, that arguments and cursing pervade their workplace, that ugly conversation pervades their language, that they cheat on their wives, wish evil on their children, blaspheme God, and look upon these things lightly and explain in a certain peaceful cynicism that, hey, they only do as others do. And so there is no time for affairs of conscience, the soul and God. There is no time for that. There is no time for thinking that there is a need to find the time, in which it will be time to die. Death has never asked anyone if they have the time to die. Death up til now has not communicated or invited anyone to die. Death comes quietly, unexpectedly. No one knows how or when. At home or at the factory? In bed or at the table? On the street or in the tavern? Amongst friends or enemies? At work or at fun? At day or night? No one knows. No one can foretell. No one can guess. But it with come with certainty not asking if anyone has the time, or doesn't have the time. When it comes, one needs to have the time, whether one has the free time or not. Such people are similar to the mariner who leaves port and comes upon a hurricane. Waves sweep in all directions. There is no question of return to port. They are in no shape to return to their port. They perish in the waves having been on the sea for a long time. The similarity is clearly seen to the Godless. They leave on their journey through life and are thrown about of the waves of life, and the get lost in the waves not having reached their intended destination.

If we really and truly wished to extend our life, wisely, honorably we ought to begin early in life according to the sober dictates of reason to follow the aid of holy faith. Then there is no need to complain that our life journey is too short. But when a man squandered, will have missed and wasted these gifts that his creator in His goodness and generosity so generously donated and when man devotes his youth to dissipation, his masculinity to promiscuity, his old age to greed, unbelief and craze without starting to live a true life when time goes by and faces the end of its earthly phase, and the indications are that there is a short time left, the chase after material things then there is indeed a short time to live a virtuous life. When man receives talents from God but ignores them in good works and a virtuous life or drinks them to oblivion, or does not use them to spiritual profit, time eventually runs out to take advantage. What happens to a youth when time run out? What happens when the youth has not taken advantage of the means God supplies him with? When life has been ruined by ill guarded health which is his treasure. What does a man do when he is maturing and getting wise, and floats on the waves of pride, arrogance, stubbornness and wrath. He wastes his health which is the treasure of all men and should be guarded. He wastes his intellect and reason, that gift of God which differentiates man and beast and puts him in the midst of God and the Angels. What does he do when the age of judgment arrives as far as the willingness of man to be a slave of cynicism, cunning and lust for material gain gathering. He wastes his love of neighbor and the nobility of human nature. Such a life quickly passes; it is dry, unprofitable, and bankrupt. - People seem to fear everything, war, poverty, sickness, lack of work, fire and flood and despite that, we chase everything, as if we were immortal, or had time to live several generations. We complain that our life is too short, and not take account of the time we waste in our conversations, on worthless entertainments, on laziness and empty time. We complain that the day is long, the evening and night short; we want and seek entertainments to pass the time away or as they say in these days, "kill time." - and then we complain and cry that the time passed away too quickly, to fulfill all our ambitions. Life gives us too much time to make enough money to supply our greed to spend it on nonsense or protection from our enemies.

But how about the acquisition of virtue to acquire good work habits, soberness, and piety and a life based on faith. - God gives us plenty of time if we take into consideration the stages of our lives to take into account the income and outflow of our time. If our childhood from the time of our baptism was a good learning process and obedient to good counsel. If our youth was modest, marked and hard working, with religious faith a prominent factor, we would live our lives as the Church sings in the Preface of the funeral mass, we would never die but be changed in the preparation for something better, something more rewarding and eternal life. If, besides our normal hurried prayerfulness at some feasts and going to Communion, in addition spent some time reading the Bible and the teachings of Christ rather than on needless ambition, silly entertainments, and trying to avoid sadness, and all that time, we would have a great degree of spiritual maturity. We have many writers, painters, sculptors, poet who left behind them great works which following generations have admired to a great degree. Their work was accomplished in generally a small amount of time in their later lives or even in old age. Naturally not everyone has their talent or vocation to great works of art, but every person is called and each person is given abilities, unless he is not capable of work, or attune to sober, noble and religious life. There are people who are honest, pious, God fearing who may take up volumes of description of their good works. There are people who sculpture beautiful lives. There are people whose lives are poems, hymns of praise. These people and those similar profit from every minute of time and live a full and blessed life. Do not forget about your time, the borrowed time; watch and use this time wisely. Cherish this time for it will bring you will bring you uncommon income with great percentages. And so, you should not waste your time, whatever your age, standing or calling. There are people who are indifferent, angry, and evil - then they are fearful hurt by the guilt of conscience and would give away their treasure, all honors, all their fame not for year or a month but for one more day of life. We read about those who, fearful and terrified called of despairingly: "Tomorrow. Just till the morning." If that time had been given them, they would have done marvels. Unfortunately, they were ready to respond when time went out; they awoke late. What would the biblical rich man have done if he had been released from hell and permitted to have another year of life on earth? Would he have gone to Church in that time period? Would he have had pity and helped Lazarus in his needs? But listen to the story as told by Christ. "There was a rich man, dressed in purple and fine linen, and lived well. There was also a beggar named Lazarus, who lay in sores. He wished he could have the orts and scraps from the rich man's table. No one gave him anything and he was covered with sores. It happened that the beggar died and ended up taken by angels to the presence of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried and ended up on hell. And in his suffering he called out: "Abraham, Father Abraham. Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and quench my thirst. I suffer greatly in these flames. Abraham repied: "Remember, you had it good materially in your life while Lazarus had nothing. He now has happiness and you suffer. And between you and Lazarus there exists a great abyss. Those who wish to come across cannot do so. The rich man responded, "Send someone to my father's house for he has five brothers and if you give them warning to prevent them from coming to this place of torture." And Abraham replied: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them." "No, no," the rich man replied, "but if someone from the dead came to them." Abraham's reply, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophet s, even if someone from the dead would go, they would not believe." This biblical story, from the lips of Jesus, ought to be read slowly and with full attention. Perhaps some would change the path of life from bad to better. The man who carries out his obligations conscientiously, under the will of the Divinity, who gives to God, the things of God and to man what is due to man, and to himself, the thing that he has a right to according to nature - such a man will not die prematurely. A sincere piety is conducive to a longer life, because they fill him with the spirit of peace and hope in the Goodness of God. A carelessness in carrying out personal obligation, transgressions against God's law, and the natural law are ensued by the anger of God and against His Divine intent. Man lives by a borrowed life. Let us be practical realists, devoid of pretention. Let us not waste the day by pining for the night and the night by pining for the day. There should be less concern about things that we can't take with us than with the soul's needs which will sweeten our passing. We ought to think about our life and its real goals which lead to eternal life.