MARCH 28, 1937

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

More or less two thousand years on Golgotha, a great tragedy was played out on Good Friday! That same crowd, who grimly and with vengeance cried out, “Crucify Him!” “Crucify Him!” and who had witnessed their wants carried out, and sated with the abuse of Christ by the soldiers, returned to their homes. The blasphemies quieted down after the ill treatment and sadistic animosity was played out on Christ. The mob ofsoldiers, henchmen, Pharisees, and priests, went home scared restless and ashamed. Nature itself was disturbed at the thanklessness of people’s hearts. The sun, astounded by the inhuman treatment of Christ stopped shedding its rays on the angry mob. The earth shook internally. The rock crags were crushed and broken to pieces. The temple broke in half. Here and there was an upheaval of graves, with risen corpses which showed themselves to people and announced the might and majesty of the crucified. The same lips that had uttered their blasphemies, continued: “If you are the Son of God come down from the cross!” Now the uttered broken with the converted centurion, “Truly this was the Son of God.” - They were reminded how He had touched the people with his kindness and mercy; how he cured, healed and raised people from the dead. Their ears brought back from the recesses of their mind the words of the new just and firm teaching: love your neighbor as yourself; do good to those who persecute you. Blessed are the meek, the poor, the persecuted, the suffering for they shall be rewarded. On rethinking this advice, tears came from their eyes and their lips sorrowfully spoke words of contrition and sadness. In the meantime, Calvary’s Hill, amidst a small band of grieving hearts “stood the sorrowful mother, under the cross, concerned. She stood, breaking her hands in a symbol of grief with a sorrowful heart which was also breaking. A band of soldiers was nearing the cross, on which they were assigned to break the bones of the legs to ensure a definite death. Seeing the condition of the body the soldiers did not have the heart to break the bones of Christ. But one of the soldiers speared His heart. Blood and water gushed out and spilled over the ground underneath the cross. Christ had died. He died to teach us how to die. He died that we may live, be saved; he died in order to save us, died to give us live. He died to resurrect.

 A SHAMEFUL DEATH – A GLORIOUS RESURRECTION

Jesus had barely died on the cross, when Joseph of Arimatea and Nicodemus were summoned by Pilate for the burial. Joseph was a secret follower of Christ. Nicodemus was a devoted follower of Jesus’ teaching who came to him at night because of human consideration. They asked for the Christ’s body for burial. Pilate gave Him to Joseph and Nicodemus; they wrapped him in a burial sheet. Joseph buried Him in his burial tomb, a cave in the earth, and put a boulder to close the entrance. He went away. The next day the priests and the Pharisees came to Pilate with the request: “Sir, this man said while he was alive: in three days, I will resurrect. At that they ordered that the grave be guarded for three days so that his disciples would not steal him and claim that He had resurrected which would add error to error. They went and secured the grave. His disciples and friends remembered the promise of Christ. At first with hope; others with fears. Because if Christ beaks the inevitability of death, if he conquers death itself and rises victorious from the cold grave by His own will then truly He will have proven that He is the Son of God. The guards chatted beside well secured grave and recalled the events of the past days. They made fun of Christ and the name, King of the Jews. Why did they have to spend here guarding the dead? If He didn’t manage to save himself from death, what chance was there after He died? Midnight past, and still nothing. Morning light arrived slowly. The stars, slowly dimming disappeared. An unearthly light appears engulfing the tomb. The soldiers shivered with fear. A heavenly creature stood before. He looked like lightning and his clothing appeared white as snow. He sat down on a boulder” Christ appeared in his new spirited body. When the guards were blinded by the light and frightened of the risen Christ, they shook, paralyzed, as if dead, the two Mary’s arrived. The Angels said: “Do not be afraid for if you were seeking Jesus who was crucified, he is not here; He has risen as he said. Come here and see the place where He was laid. Go quickly at tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead: Go to Galilee and you will meet him there. They left quickly with great joy to tell the disciples. And Jesus met them, saying greetings. They knelt and gave Him homage. Then Jesus said to them: Be not afraid, go, tell the brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there. When they went away some of the guards came to town and told the priests what had happened. The guards told the soldiers to tell the authorities that his disciples came at night and stole the body while they slept. We will confirm it. They paid them to do this. We find this narrative in the Gospel of St. Matthew. This miraculous night was written about far and wide in the annals of the world. The Poles for this reason named this night: Wielka Noc (the great night). With reason to do so! Because on that night Christ triumphed over death, broke the might of hell, opened the gates of heaven. The resurrection of the Lord is fuels the Christian faith, as St. Paul wrote: “If Christ did not rise from the dead, our words as Christians would be fruitless and our faith would be empty.” Today, bells ring out loudly and people sing in full force, “Christ is risen, and give us an example that we too shall rise and reign with Christ, Alleluia!” The feast of Christ’s Resurrection is a glorious song, cheerful and happy, because in it are the seeds of love, agreement, peace, victory, the rising of the flesh, the eternity of the soul and the happiness of mankind. If contemporary people, from time to time, made up their minds on the fact of the Resurrection of the Lord, the face of the earth would become unrecognizable, and people’s lives will be filled with peace and happiness. In place of unbelief would blossom a fresh, new and deep faith; instead of skepticism, doubt and despair, would come a lust for life, a certainty about the goals of our life and a hope and happy reward. A dark night, in which intellects wander and are intertwined with hearts, in shadow in which consciences weave their way; all this would be replaced with a joyous and welcomed night. If from the beginning of the Christian era people would walk the path of the way of the cross, much confusion and misdirection would be avoided. Each should search himself. There is a legend that cruises among a certain people: When the Jews wanted Pilate to free the criminal Barabbas and they chose the innocent Christ for crucifixion, Barabbas himself could not believe the stubbornness and the revenge seeking crowd. After the verdict, Barabbas mixed in with the enemies of Christ. Curious, he moved his somber gaze at those present. His eye caught the face of an elderly man with a placid and kind look on it. Barabbas tore through the crowd and stood before him. The old man said, “Now they will crucify him but the Son of God will resurrect from the dead.” The criminal became thoughtful. Later, he murmured cynically to the old man: “It is possible that He will resurrect, but uselessly, because if he rose a hundred times, they would crucify him a hundred times. The old man curiously looked a Barabbas saying,
“I gather that you don’t believe He is the Son of God? You don’t believe that He will truly resurrect?” In Him,” came the loud utterance, “and in what He taught and even that he would rise from the dead, I could probably believe but I would never believe people!

And this is why the coldness in men’s hearts exists. Our “Asnyk” sang with emotion,”

“Again I heard God’s phrases

“Come to me you who suffer

Come here to me to heal earth’s flaws

In me is peace and in me is life.

Weep not in empty tears on new destruction

All passes – truth will last.

So I heard the sweet summons

And so I go with sick heart

Because I went astray though I loved much

And I am sated with your love

And walked the shadowed paths of life

You will not abandon me now, my Christ.

Christ said to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, will live. Do you believe that?” I throw out to you that same question at the Feast of the Resurrection: Do you believe all of that without the resurrection. Today people believe in everything, with the exception of the teaching of the crucified and risen Christ. Why is that? Because from this plain reason that people would rather believe the world. And again why? Because the world is loud in its broad comfortable resolve. Christ advises the cross, the gr eat and heavy cross saying: “This is life! Accept and carry you cross. Carry it without complaining looking upon me for I am the truth, the road and the light; I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even though he die will live. In this world today, at this moment, do you really believe that He whose memory of the glorious resurrection is celebrated by the world, is the truth, the way, the light and the life? Or do you believe only by words and speech or do you practice it in daily life? Or do you belong to the group of those who no longer bend their knees to daily prayer, because they think that prayer is a thankless and outdated thing. Or maybe you do pray occasionally but I do not see you at Sunday Mass and in addition you have not been to the sacraments for years. So are you on that road of truth, light and life? Have you joined the ranks of those who no longer believe that there is God? Perhaps you believe that there is an unmerciful God who cares not for this world. Or do you believe that man has no soul but it is part of a God and that once our life is done, that’s it…there is no life after death? That despite the miracle of Easter there is no resurrection of man, that Christ redeemed us and redeemed us from bondage. In our day when throughout the world is heard the great joyful outcry, “Alleluia,” the Lord has risen, truly risen!” I repeat the words of a holy religious: “ Of all things, remember my friend, that life is short, heaven is beautiful and Hell is excruciatingly hot.

At a show in Krakow in 1926, an unknown artist, apparently drew on a canvas, a truth relating to the teachings of Christ. On a vast empty plain, meatless in heaps of human bones naked skulls, ribs, shins and toes. Nearby, next to them, human skeletons dance. Wild with frenzy the skeletons dance. Hurry up and compete in the memorable vortex. Why? Because in a short time or a minute or to other bones will be coming in. In that cemetery a peaceful Savior strides leisurely. From his eyes radiate peaceful rays and from the radiance of His body flow mercy and sympathy. On the path Jesus walked appear large crowds of innocent children, boys and girls young men and young women. It seems evident that what the artist wanted to do is to depict the words of the Savior: I am the resurrection and the life – I came that they may have life and life to the fullest! Do we all have such a full life, peaceful, acceptable, happy, while the world nations live a broad, comfortable life ending in a bitter satiety and deep dissatisfaction. “Peace be to you, Our Savior said. My peace I give you not as the world gives it does I give it to you. I people do not have this peace in our world today it is because they do not want it. Some are contrary and angry; others are weak in faith, others too proud and complacent. The fault is on the side of the people. In Spain, in one of the oldest churches, is found a crucifix. On it hangs the figure of Christ. The right arm of the crucified is separated from the wood and hangs toward the earth. The history is this: Once here under the cross a public sinner confessed his sins. After some time he went back to his old ways and was a scandal. Again he returned to the crucifix and promised amendment. After a couple of months he came back to the confessional and the confessor refused to give him absolution saying: “No, there is no more mercy for you.” There came a murmur from the crucifix. The chest of Christ shook, like before death; the right hand parted from the wood and lifting up above the head gave the sign of forgiveness, and simultaneously the voice of Christ announced: “I forgive you, because you cost me a great deal.” Lips previously closed, stayed open, and the right hand hung down. – My dear listener, is it not worth to keep this sight in mind? Surely then the gentle dew of the peace of Christ will fall down upon us.

I especially address all those who once long ago believed; today however from various reasons neglected their faith got rid of it. Remember the doubting Thomas? He wasn’t with Christ when Jesus appeared to the rest of the apostle. When they told him that they had seen Christ he claimed that unless he saw the mark of the nails in his hands and put his finger into his side, he would doubt. When after eight days they were all together, Jesus came through the closed doors and stood in their midst and said: Peace be with you. He said to Thomas: “Put your finger in my side and be not unbelieving but believe. Thomas replied, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said, “Because, Thomas, you have seen, you believe. Blessed are they who have not seen but believe” that that Christ is the truth, the way, the light and the life, that he really rose from the dead and will bless your belief with peace which the world cannot give, the peace about which will always be sung “Alleluia!”