March 4, 1945

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

In our times, everyone walks not only rapt in thought and somewhat sadly and nervously expecting a better tomorrow. That tomorrow, which will bring humanity the peace and the liberty trod upon and a just recompense for those who authored the war, the murders, and the crimes. For this we dream and whole heartedly and humbly ask God. We know that that day of peace and justice will come, however, we do not know how and when it will come. The storm wages on and bombs fall to the earth. Sweat and many tears will fall before the star of world peace will appear. In the meantime it is necessary to work and pray to hasten and make real that day when the world will see peace. We cannot hesitate. Neither are we to despair or fear the future. For the man who believes, we are in the hands of God, and His Providence helps us to survive the darkest days and the greatest difficulties. We can bend under the weight of our problems but not for long. We straighten up, in order to go forward, without complaining. To those who lost someone in the war, I give you the words of the late Bishop Bandurski: “Whoever loves not only his family, his home, or his town but also his relatives, the entire Fatherland, will not be lost even though he dies. Whoever so loved his nation and freedom and did not hesitate to give his life in sacrifice for those principles – he will not be lost. And who has died, it is not dead. He who died, as the eater of bread, who died, loving self and saw nothing beyond self, his comfort, his home and his own belongings, who died like an ordinary mortal does not live in the memory of the nation, who lives a short time in the memory of his successors, who use his heritage, he is lost in the sea of human oblivion. But there are those who die – and are not lost. They live in the memory, the heart and soul of their heirs. And even though their tombstones have sunk deep into the ground and though their bones have turned to dust in the fields of their fathers live unforgotten and from their death live arises. Though they died, they did not lose life and will live on in their parents and their works and the triumphant hymns of glory.

# THE LAND OF HEROES AND MARTYRS

I took our entire talk today from the pages of the daily press. It consists of short articles but written with blood and tears. I share them with you in order that you do not come to be dispirited, but have hope and faith in looking at the life of today and tomorrow. Please listen and keep it memory. Under the title: “A Woodland Mass”, I read: “The camp still sleeps. Peopled like never before. Seemingly as it was before, with its shacks, field kitchens, black fireplaces, but what a difference. On the flagpole in the middle of the campsite flew, for the first time, a white and red flag. Today-a holyday! The reception of the first transport of officers came from Warsaw for Forest Departments. The concentration of officers are ready for nightly rest. The hours pass quickly. Morn approaches. It is quiet in the bivouac. Suddenly the sound of reveille; there is a stir of men; morning wash etc. In 15 minutes all are ready. All get into line review. Attention! The red and white flag is hoisted, the trumpet sounds for the first time in four years and the Polish flag is raised. There is joy in the eyes. How long have we waited for this moment; some of us didn’t make it, many lie underground, in forests, on the edges of towns, on unholy ground. But shoes with holes and other ailments were far gone to plan, at this time, when looking at the symbol – we see our aim. Some of our company are preparing the altar. On the altar they put a crucifix, some wildflowers, two candles and that’s all. Poor like our lives! The chaplain comes in for the Mass with two soldiers as altar servers. No organ to be played and silence engulfs the scene except the birds that make some music. Suddenly the altar is flooded with light with from the clouds that have moved away. The sun enriched our soldierly poverty. The consecration ensues. Those around bow their heads in reverence. The Gospel is read… After Mass the priest wanted to say a few word but his voice broke up while his eyes rested on the flag. On the faces of soldiers whose faces were blanched with emotion and whose vision was accustomed to death, who took out the flag in this wooded, sequestered place, they thought of defending it in battle either winning or losing. Today we had a great experience. Today we understood that even if the whole world was against us – God is with us. He leads us on; he brought us to battle, - He will permit us to win!

Under the title “My Blessing” a mother says: “You left again, my son, as morning broke. You leave so often and come back after many days. I know, my son, that you go into danger. Crossroads with watches beckon you. You leave me and say from the doorway: until I see you again, mom. See you, she says, and come back soon. We both know that we might not come back, because the paths you trod are covered with the thorns of death and wounds, like the wheat that has been choked by weeds. I say lightheartedly: come back soon, but I know in my maternal heart the hurt of his failure to return. You are my one and only son left, the eldest. When Walter went in 1939 to Hungary, you were still young, 16 years old, not even a man yet. You were eager to go with him. But, you stayed. Later news came that Walter was flying and you complained; but you see, I would be flying too. At that time you still thought like a child in your views of the world; he offered: “you’ll see, I will run away and who will care – the Germans?” They took father and shut him up in the Oswiecim concentration camp. On the way they killed Joe. And you didn’t abandon me. There were only two of us left. Today you do not speak of leaving home. You don’t talk about it, but I know. You are still young, my son. Before the war, you had walked the paths of boyish mischief and emptiness. You would return to the door happy and disheveled and call out: mom, I’m hungry. Today, your forehead is darkened in wrinkles of quietude and inner thought: a harder mind. Your eyes have seen the truth more clearly. You have matured. You became one who cares, a protector. You became an avenger. You protect us from invaders; avenge the harm done to your family at German hands. You became hardy and had a sober outlook on weakness. But to my mind you are soft and good. You get angry when I don’t wake you to the daily tasks, when you have been running around outdoors and sleep a deep sleep. You don’t want me to do any hard work and maintain that it is your prerogative to do so. There are no gentle words between us. But in our silence, we say more than we could say in expressed language. – You have matured, my son. Your youthful hard life in the family made you a good protector of the weak and a serious contender with the enemy. What can I, your mother, do for you, when your captivity becomes more severe, when death threatens, not only of the roads of your internalized matters, but also in every corner of the house at every hour of day and night? I can only clue you in about myself and how worry about you, and how I dream in sleepless nights about your coming home and how heavy my mind in thinking dark thoughts. I pray that intensity of the killing might not discourage you soul or soil your character. Daily when I pray the Our Father I use the words “and deliver us from evil”…and I add: may the vapors of blood not obscure the vision of my son and the sons of other mothers to make a straight and true path in the road of a thousand roads. May they find not so much satisfaction in destruction so as to inhibit their protection and the making of things right. Grant that our sons, after bloody days of conflagration, return to the wide welcoming roads of hospitality of a free Poland. Let them experience that return. Save them before the day of liberation. And grant us, their mothers, to experience that moment. You left home as you were wont to go out the door many times before. I send you now with my best wishes and with a loving heart to accompany you along your way. Come back; accomplish what you set out to do. I bless your steps leading to a happy future. I bless the work of your hands which hack out a way back to the family roof. I bless the resolve of your young mind, planning your tasks so that you may do well in your undertakings. Return, son. Come back whole. You have much more work to do.

I read very interesting details under the headline “An Ordinary Day”: “The Germans brag that their concern for the health of the people and especially in Warsaw is extraordinary. For the time being let us see how the daily life of the Warsaw native fares. As far as the fact that the Germans did not put him into exile and his homes have evaded destruction, how does the Warsaw native thrive? In the morning, he gets up in the darkness because he has no electricity. He washes and gets dressing by candle light, since other kinds of lamps are forbidden. Radiators do not work. As far as stoves are concerned, they either don’t work because they were rendered unusable because of the German bombardments. So because of the darkness and the cold in the homes, the cloths are dirty and the house is filthy. And how about food? Breakfast consists of old bread, flour from wood for the most part and useless because of the lack of ovens. The coffee is black and made with beets and color, and used with artificial sweetener – and so goes breakfast under German occupation. The blue collar worker as well as the white color worker fare equally in poverty and pay. A bun costs five złoty and bread 25 złoty for a kilogram. Help is soup given out at work. There is something missing in the soup. Everything is in it except good vegetable fat, meat and cream! Not much nutrition for health and energy for work. Tuberculosis which is common is treated whether you have it or not. Every other child suffers from scrofula. Another treasure our invaders have brought us is typhus which comes from the western front. It is brought in by persons infected who were in work camps or having contact with the army. Typhus is common because there is ineffective water filtration systems in the city and drinking water is not clean.”

In a book entitled, “The Testimony of Truth” I read: “Goniometers have detected our broadcasting radio station and gave us the information that some cars were travelling past our radio station.” - Johnny! – I called – Johnny, stop, they have arrived. Right away… he said in his normal nonchalant way – and his half sentence retort baffled me…he returned to his play. From fear, I knew my shouting would not be effective. He would be up to his play. When he figured out what I wanted – the doorbell rang. I hurried to answer the door bell. “Maam, are you home alone. – we walked into the room. John was sitting reading the New Warsaw Courier, and I doubt whether he was reading. He dropped the paper and the German surrounded him. Where is your radio? – An innocent appearance occurred in John’s eyes. How should I know, John asked? - He doesn’t live here – I injected into the conversation – and I have not seen such a thing in this house. They paid no attention to my remark. John backed up against the wall. Lord, how they beat him. John responded: “I don’t know. I’m a guest.” - They turned over my couch, threw everything on the floor and knocked on the walls. It seemed that this room was incapable of hiding something, nevertheless….John looked upon the ransacking, blood ran from his lips, eyes were blackened, beaten and his cheeks swollen. But from the corner of his mouth an angry sneer appeared. I know him and I could have assured them mentally: “cold, cold, and you will find nothing. And they found nothing. Subsequently we broadcast from a different place.

 In an article entitled, “Help from the Woods,” an underground writer wrote: “The mood in the Bigoraj prison was terrible. The week began with the transport of several prisoners to Majdanka. Soon the newly arrested brought the news about the behavior of the Germans, protected by the party. On Wednesday a few were interrogated. They came back beaten and cut up. After that, a group of men and women were brought in who were arrested for “sabotage.” One of the prisoners, badly beaten, died in the night in his cell after being greatly tortured. Two of the women were taken for the task of “cleaning” in the Gestapo. They did not return. There was long lasting sadness and no peace. Tomorrow the same thing, continued interrogation and slavery. The wall of the prison was 5 yards tall, filled with two rows of barbed wire. The gates are guarded well even during the day. Guarding is increased at night. September 25 went by. A heavy darkness came. Windows were shut tight. Evening prayer. The prisoners are in their bunks. Conversations quieted gradually. Suddenly a gunshot! Close. A machine gun. Then three pistol shots. The electric lights dim as one. Everyone awakens from their sleep. Hurriedly they rise; look for their clothes, dress…..A fire arises. The shots grow louder. There is no doubt – the Nazis are in town. It is a large component, because the gunfire appears to come from all directions. They attack downtown, colored blasts. They are rockets. They light up the night. Salvos. Prolonged rat-a-tat of gunfire. Coming closer. Seemingly besieging the prison walls... Fire, ceases for a while. A loud voice: “Surrender and you will be spared. – No response. Again a rain of gunfire. Could prisoners surrender? A powerful blast. Windows break from the blast…Czy poddaje się? The police are hiding in the building . The Storm Troopers are already on the wall. Then a voice: “Zeskakiwać z Drabin”… They are already here! The patter of feet underneath the window. The frightening sound of a machine gun. Then a second. Then a third. The attack shoots the doors on the doorways. Voices on the corridor. Those alive tend toward the door. “Open the cells. There are twelve of us.” There are a lot more of us. Seventy two of us. Groups of prisoners rush the doors. All are worried that they won’t make it. Voice: Ok, Ok, be still. The sound of the key clanks. Many prisoners storm the door. “Exit to the right. A chaotic words of thanks, of blessing. In the darkness several figures with their hands up, It is the police, unarmed with helmets.

Did you mean: Od drzwi - podwójny szpaler zbrojnych, w mundurach i hełmach. ***Od Sie***

From the door - a double lane of men reinforced in uniforms and helmets. Relief. Through the lane pass the released prisoners. - Long live Poland!... Long live the army - Cry. Behind the gate - it is light almost. Sounds of battle in the city rumbles across the sky, bursting with multicolored stars, luminous spheres, and multicolored sparks. . Germans cry out for help. The Germans defend themselves. Three German formations (Schupo, Ortakomedature, and Selbatschutzkomendature. All these buildings were being defended with gunfire. Three hundred Germans defend themselves against the partisans. No one dared to leave their barracks. The entire German defense was paralyzed. A column on a road leads into a deep forest. A colorful rain comes from the sky and lights up the road. The Germans continue to call for aid. They are still blind to their movements. Wagons await them in the woods. All has been prepared. The prisoners are loaded onto the wagons. Every now and then, someone from the soldiers comes forth with a troubling question, with encouragement and joy. Obviously no one from the saviors knew anyone from those who were freed. Joy and exultation. The prisoners are proud, thankful, and happy. They are not only free, but liberated by the Polish army. In the morning at the quest of those who were freed, they were given directions and help in the goal of continuing in the future with a plea to serve in the Polish national army. Today they already battle. Again. But, this time armed.

 Here is something not only for the adults, but even for children. The title: “I Didn’t Cry…” “Before the train round-up... At the occasion when the Germans take the property of those to go on the train: The Secret Service man wants to seize a loaf of bread from a 10-year old boy’s hand. The boy becomes adamant and grits his teach and looks and the German right in the eye. He slaps the boy, seizes the loaf of bread, and walks away. I say to the boy, “Careful, brother, because they’ll exile you.” The boy replies: “So what: “I didn’t cry, Sir…I didn’t cry!” Here, he reached something in his mouth that was in the way and took out a tooth. He looked at it, shook his head, wiped his lips from blood and said, “they pick on the weak – what daredevils they are – They are bandits and thieves! However, I did not cry.”

 Maria Brzeska in an article entitled, “The Vigil in the Government” among others, writes It is very hard to celebrate these holidays without soul searching, without the sadness which we wanted to evade in our country. How to sit at the table at which there is such a lack of relatives. Among those who are absent are the dead and they are most lucky. With what thoughts at the breaking of the wafer to regard those who in the Concentration Camp get the better soup and they take them under the tree, -under which are the graves of friends? How to pray effectively for those who behind the walls of the prison are counted those who hear not the voice of ammunition? Empty are also the chairs of those prisoners in Oflag and Stalag, who write to their wives: “send some bread and don’t worry about it getting spoiled; it still will come in handy. Also not at the Vigil table are those workers dispersed throughout the Reich, boys 14 yrs. old like you, Jurku, who wrote to your mother: “Don’t worry! It was only at my first absence at the table. Today I am accustomed to it. – across so many boundaries, far away countries, which separated us from the family, they who are fighting for the country. There is so much disappointment through many years without hearing from them. The children have already forgot to deal with their orphan status, as you, Jacek, had wiped away your mother’s tears, “Don’t cry, Mom; Daddy died, but he will return after the war!” Our Vigil is full of dark issues, a longing among women, who are teary-eyed at the breaking of the “opłatek” and children waiting for the Christmas tree and the happy sharing.” In many homes, especially where there are no children, there is no celebration of the Vigil. It is just an ordinary day…coffee and a good book to bed, is the dearest way to spend the holiday. People generally celebrate in a group with friends and calls for a bigger celebration although without fish. No herring, no poppy seed, and no mushrooms. Even the Germans celebrate this way. Tables have no special table cloth. There are no lights on the trees but Children’s eyes sparkle. One can’t afford a try but the scent of pine comes from branches in a vase. I remember evenings on the town, where there was heard the singing of carols with choral voices, but sung in a quieter fashion so as not to bring attention to the Germans – a peasant home, where the Vigil occurred amid the roar of a printing press which printed an underground newspaper. The men from the home went to war in the forest. I remember four of these Christmas Vigils. The Polish people await the end of the war after the sixth vigil. This is especially true in the ruins and devastation in Warsaw where people were separated from their families because of the Reich’s bombardments. Will the star of Bethlehem lead them back to their homes? Is there hope for a better tomorrow?

 My dear people remember these stories from this program. They ought to elicit from your hearts an especially great gratitude to God and efforts to help our brothers and sisters who suffer so deeply.