**March 12, 1939**

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

When traveling, one hears a lot and sees a lot. And if one has a special gift of awareness and perceptiveness, one learns quite a bit. In travel one comes across scenes and comes across images which one cannot forget. They embed themselves so vividly in one’s memory that one cannot forget them. For me nothing impresses me so as the ocean whether peaceful or stormy. I see in it, the portrait of the people of the earth. Once peaceful, another time filled with waves of turbulence and in the end, thrown our way, are the waves of dissatisfaction, fear, suspicion and other emotions which we come across in our lives. Years ago there were few transatlantic ships which had a chapel. A priest had to celebrate mass in a dance hall. A temporary altar was set up and the priest during mass had a vision of the ocean before his eyes. I remember celebrating mass while the ocean was turbulent. From the point of view of the potentates of the world, there was nothing comparable to the power and majesty of the ocean at storm. Even when the waters are still, there is awakened in the mind of man, awe. But when a storm comes and the waters rage, a fear grips the heart. One feels that the ship will be torn apart. At the end of January, the Vulcania came into the port of New York City. It had 360 passengers, all of whom told the take of a violent storm they experienced in the Azores. The storm created panic on the ship. Some of the women were hysterical, when through two hours the ship was thrown about like a ball by gigantic waves of water accompanied by heavy rain and near hurricane winds. The tremendous wind broke the main mast and torn apart the radio antennas. J. M. McClelland, owner of a daily newspaper in Longview, Washington maintained that six of the passengers were seriously wounded and half of all the passengers suffered some kind of injury. “Tremendous waves flooded the deck and covered it totally, breaking windows and ripping them from the walls. The hurricane hit the ship at 12:30 in the afternoon with gale force winds at 125 miles an hour. We thought that we would not survive. Everyone was terrified. People screamed and women fainted. Everyone prayed. Even those who had never prayed before.” With this introduction, on to our talk entitled:

 COWARDS FEAR!

Today, the entire world fears. Fear has large eyes. Youth fears life itself. This is not an exaggeration. This is not an exaggeration. Youth itself testifies to this truth. Listen: “I don’t feel like battling with my being. For what…just to work day to day probably only to pay for my food and clothing? I don’t see the rationale to live only for that.” - It’s a shame that someone just beginning their life might have that kind of thinking. It testifies to a life without faith in Providence, a lack of faith in one’s self and a lack of faith in people, or as St. Pius XI spoke to 600 youths “Today there is no spirit of truth, love or faith in humanity. It seems that people have totally forgotten that human beings have many goals in life, besides fighting and ruining each other brutally. Society anticipates citizens with a spirit of truth, love and goodness. Whatever is not Christian is not for people and what is anti-Christian is anti-people.” So much from Pius XI: lies, falsehood, hat red undermine humanity and fill the souls of people, the result of which people are suspicious and careless; they escape their responsibility; hide from their duties; look for the easiest way from life, without a look at the possibilities, whether they are satisfied or not. With that kind of behavior greater problems await. They lead a miserable life because they are always on the defensive, are doubtful and fearful. An English writer wrote this significant sentence: “Cowards die many times before they physically die.” Human life never was free from troubles and worries. In palaces of the rich and the huts of the poor there is uncertainty, problems and fears. In a time of world war, among the soldiers, this little history circulated. Who knows, whether this had the objective to give awareness to the young soldiers who for the first time found themselves in trenches where death was a near possibility. In a certain trench two soldiers lay next to each other. One was a vertebral, who for months suffered discomfort and looked upon dire consequences of war. But he made nothing of it. At his side was a new recruit. At every onslaught of the enemy he shook with fear and did not want to face it. – What is it that you are so taken with fear said the veteran. I am afraid of getting shot. - Listen my friend. “Not every bullet hits its intended mark because even though people aim and shoot, God takes care of the ammunition. Otherwise the war would be over long time ago because there would be no soldiers to fight it. Besides, the veteran offered: Why have fear about something that hasn’t happened. One of two things will happen: either you will suffer mortal wounds or just superficial wounds. If it takes your life, then you need not worry because all your fears and sufferings will be ended. If you suffer superficial wounds, you will be restored to health. So what further to worry about? If you suffer mortal wounds, you will have nothing further to fear. If you accept the inevitability of daily hardships, then you continue to worry and fret about something needlessly. There are those who sump pump all their past problems and resurrect them and make the present and the future difficult in the coping. The worry, lack an appetite for food and are sleepless. The nervous system takes on terrible consequences. Some throw up their hands. They lose a willingness to work even a willingness to continue living. Others despair from worry and through their own fault become intellectual misfits. If we only wanted to understand that there is not a person on the earth who at one time or another makes a mistake whose soul has been affected by it, we would come back to our common sense behaviors. To despair is to have lack of faith in God. We read in the Gospel of Matthew that Peter once came to the Lord, who had just given a teaching about goodness, mercy and forgiveness and asked the Lord: “Lord how many times should I forgive my brother, seven times or up to seventeen times? Jesus told him: “I do not tell you seven times but seven times seven times.” Also, the Lord established the Sacrament of reconciliation. We have the confessional. Why don’t you go there and why not get rid of you present hurt, lacks, falls and error? Soon you concerns, worries, disturbed insights will go away. Besides it is a way to convince yourself that there is way of peace and a return to a healthier outlook. Why worry about things that will happen when they haven’t happened. Someone wrote that our life is an uphill battle and we come to bridges we have built ourselves which are detrimental to our emotional and spiritual and even our physical well-being but we’ll never cross them so don’t worry about them. Our nation is restless because of what we have experienced. Some fear about their work, war, the end of the world. Others worry about the weather, their health, their happiness. I am reminded of a certain event from the times of Christ. It is mentioned in the Gospel of St. Luke. “The disciples got into a boat in order to return to Capernaum. It was already late in the evening. And a great wind moved the waves ahead of the boat so that they could not proceed. Jesus came to them in the morning walking on the water. When the disciples saw him they were frightened. Thinking that they were seeing a vision, they called out in fright. Jesus spoke to them kindly saying: “Do not be afraid, I am here.” Peter said: “Lord if it is you, tell me to come to you. Jesus told him to come. When Peter was walking toward Jesus on the water, he was scared and he began to sink. He called out: “Lord help me!” Jesus reached out his hands and said: “You of little faith, why did you doubt.” And when they both entered the boat, the wind died down and the arrived safely to the beach at Genezaret.

Gale winds, uncertainty, waves of doubt and fear fight a weakened humanity, attack them forcibly, weakening even more a wavering humanity, despite the Good Christ walks on earth, sadly looking at a fallen humanity. He yearns to reach out to an erring humanity to give lit peace but to no effect…to no effect on a “people without faith.”

I can just hear some people say that that is nice to say since I am a religious and have not too many concerns etc. Please be patient and listen to what I have to say. Fortunately, it is true, that without my merit, I became with the help of God, a poor Franciscan. To my detriment, I became a superior. It may be that that is my punishment. If you don’t know, the office of a superior, puts on the shoulders of a person various difficulties and heavy weights, especially obligations before the government on earth and before the tribunal of God. You need to accept all of that from and before the Providence of God and go forward day by day, month by month, year by year. It is true that a person bends with his forehead to the ground but the idea is not to give up and let one’s self be totally defeated. One falls occasionally but one must get up. To do that, one must have a strong faith, deep and simple first in God, then in himself, and then in humanity. One must always strive. Row more strongly against the current of the river than the river itself. We need to the best that we can and leave the rest to the Providence of God. We must act as the man who ended each day by saying: “Lord God, your humble man did his part. Now, Lord, do your part.” And therein lies the satisfaction through the length of years.

Worries and troubles will always be ours. Daily, unwavering, life-long! Our troubles will be over when we close our eyes for the last time. Why worry about temporary difficulties and probably won’t at all? It impedes our physical prowess, lessens our strength, frightens us and propels us to visit doctors. Despite the fact that the future is uncertain and lacks peace, live in the present moment. Learn to deal with today’s difficulties. Tomorrow is another day. In this moment someone is sick and tomorrow on the advice of a doctor gets up. Today someone is facing death. Tomorrow the fever goes away and he will be on the way to recovery. Someone for months had no work, tomorrow he will receive information that he is to return to the factory for work. How many today face bad times, tomorrow they are happy and resourceful. Kings and other people of power thought that they will always be successful fell and will fall. The unknown and discarded became successful and acquired a treasure. God fortune is a wheel and the saying was: “today under the horse; tomorrow on top.” Not one of us knows what will come to be, what the future will bring, and all our cares and fears will not change. But they change us depending upon our response to them. They will change us from satisfied and peaceful people to complaining, hurting, and waiting for problems, sickness and death. Get rid of these self-destructive attitudes. Stop being worried and filled with fear.

Often, very often, moments come to us in which it seems to us that our life is one mixed up mess. We don’t know whether we are standing still or moving forward or plodding along. They occur when there is much change in our lives. Looking at our past, we recognize our errors, large and small. We remember only the bad and forget the good in our lives. We see only our difficulties, our struggles, and our hurts and overlook the sunny side of the paths we take in our lives. The future appears bleak to us with dark clouds above and filled with thunder and lightning, foretelling break-up. Succeeding tomorrows seem bleaker and darker. Shut your eyes to the future you are manufacturing. It is not yours. Think of today, of this moment. It is still yours to benefit by if you will. Be conscientious. Put your heart into your abilities and forget of what still hasn’t come. Live in the moment. Always tell yourself, “
With the help of God I can do it, I know I can.” Strive to understand that people today put too much stock into material things. There are great things happening. There are other things of greater worth. You may have a worthy wife, good children, faithful friends, and a good name. Why worry and with fear awaiting tomorrow. Remember that fear has big eyes and only cowards look with apprehension and fear at life.