**March 19, 1939**

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

One beautiful evening, last year, I was sitting in a boat, on a pond near our seminary in Granby, Massachusetts. I intended to do some fishing. It was a miraculous evening. The heavens were star-seeded. The moon threw rays of light which created a path on the surface of the pond. The moon is that great oceanic lantern for every lover of the rod and the net. Bird songs issued from the small woods. They were hidden in the darkness of the tree laden shore. Then sounds came from as near a thirty feet from the boat as if something splashed into the water from the shore. I made out some kind of water fowl in the dimness. Finally I distinguished the figures of a bevy of six baby ducks led by an old duck. Evidently they had left their protected area and went out into the water to search for food. The old duck swam out a distance from the young ones on a reconnaissance mission, but came back to keep them in check. She kept them close to the shore in the event of danger so they could escape to a hiding place. I thought to myself: such helpless creatures and yet are careful to be aware of their surroundings. Without the keen eye and production of the birth mother, they would not survive long. From this portrait of nature I wish to move your imagination to capture an event from human life... Do we not spot the same effort, care and fatherly and motherly protection in leading our youth to a more normal, safe and noble life. As I have said, more than once that we tend to be very critical of our youth throwing stones of criticism not realizing that we ourselves live in glass houses. Our youth is not guilty of what we maintain. But now, listen to the talk entitled:

 THE SHORE OR THE POND

Human life can be compared to a pond or a lake. It is bordered by four shores. The shores are: the commandments of God, the laws of nature, Church laws, and traditional human morality. Woe to every human entity which does not keep close to those four protective and sheltered shores and blindly heads out to deep waters. Tides and winds take one out further than one thinks. The brazen become victims of destruction and drowning. The metaphor proves suitable to the life of youth. I repeat again and will do so often, that youth is not totally to blame. The judgment came forth upon the earth in a critical epoch. It originated in times when youth was misdirected from the safety of the shores which are lasting and dependable and threw them into the turbulent waves of different attitudes. Yes, not only new times but in addition doubtful and erring times. Why? Because the border between good and evil; perhaps understandably, reversed the distinction between the two. And that, always under the appearances of enlightenment and freedom. Despite these appearances and this curiously conceived freedom, the youth fell victim. Let anyone say what they want to say, this same enlightenment coupled with today’s freedom does not protect our youth from peril. Listen what a young child writes: “I belong to those of Father Justin terms “the moderns” I am eighteen years old. I drink, smoke, and go to dances. I know what I can do and I can take care of myself. We live in America where young people need not be protected by their elders. We do not want our parents always to be near us. We have a mind of our own and want to live like others live.”

A brave admission, no? She is too brazen, and too sure of herself, this person who has drifted far from the safety of shores. I am afraid that at the time of danger, she will fruitlessly reach out to the shores with the call: “Help, I am drowning.” And in this cry of despair she will sink to the bottom. Perhaps a certain variety of modern parents more accurately, the so-called behavioral parents did not take their youths away from the shores and brutally toss them into dangerous waters? Listen to the argument of a mother who defends her daughter’s behavior to a teacher: “My daughter behaves. I admit that she has been around for a while, more than hers peers but she is a nice and a good girl. No one at home complains about here. Her father trusts her. I cannot keep her closed in. She has good judgment and doesn’t cross the line. Maybe a fleeting kiss at the gate. Inconsequential. A flirt and no more than that. You claim that that kind of play is dangerous? A little flirt is of no great matter. Today’s children know how far they can go. And mothers need time to live also. You have to agree that I can’t be with my daughter at every step. Our youth behave and play much differently than we do. You say that it’s a terrible use of time and an immoral way. These are just phrases. Youth has always been the same. We force our children to be hypocritical. It is not necessary to put on a moral connection to behavior. One has to return to nature. I ask: If mothers have this attitude, is it not part of their children’s upbringing and what they allow their children to do and a parents’ fault. Children will say that everybody does it as a defense. There is still an admiration for those who keep themselves free of mud and dirt. Do you believe it? Listen to an experienced author who writes: “Besides do not get hot and bothered about the behavior of today’s youth which turns its attention to tradition. Everyone respects a clean moral poster to a greet degree and even yearns to have it. In the life of every person there comes a time who secretly when no one sees him regrets with tears a lost innocence of flesh or soul. And so I often return to advising youth about the dangers of some of today’s dances and I’d like to add some observations of this author. She claims; “I was once young and a now definitely that in youth there flows an energetic life and the best response is motion. And whether there is a harmonious relationship of the music and the motion and it is fine. Today, it depends upon the dance and how closely the bodies bond, so the waltz is different from dances where the behavior in the dance can be less than desired. So if you go to a dance, go to dance and not seek a way to flirt but seek a good dancer. A decent dance provides a joy. There is a difference between an appropriate dance and an inappropriate dance. Similar to life, there is a decent way to live and an indecent way. This is the key to proper behavior.” - I suspect that the above observation will fall on the ears of youth who blindly go to dance and not understand the restraints of morality. There is a boundary between enjoyable entertainment and harmful behavior.

I proceed, always cautiously, continuing with the same author as above. I add the following conversation of young people: A young lad with the demeanor of experience says: I don’t see anything bad in girls kissing boys. Today it is acceptable, much like greeting with a hand!” – “True, true!” retorted a few voices – long live this day; who worries about the future?” A more sober man’s voice, who hadn’t been partaking in the discussion added: “You are forgetting that now-ness touches the future with its roots. And if the roots are rotten, they will not result in a healthy tree!” “But a single kiss does no harm. Nothing is wrong with that. It’s a simple gesture – that’s all!” added a student. “No, my friend”, added a serious voice, it is not a simple gesture because behind it is a degree of emotion.” The kiss of a mother is different from a family kiss or a friendly kiss and the kiss between a girl and a boy is again something different from any other kind of kiss. This type of kiss must come before a great, sincere sympathy and if the connection is very strong that lasts a life time the kiss is a confirmation of the connection between two souls and a seal which is a holy thing.” – A silence began after these words. The smiles disappeared from the faces of those present. On the faces of the girls a rosy color appeared and turned red... No one was able to look into their souls but the memory of that first kiss came to fore and the reaction flowed as a consequence. Sometimes one couldn’t even remember who it was given to. The company responded to the voice of the literary person: “Indeed, the kiss is not an empty gesture. Even the squeeze of the hand often talks to the receiver. If the kiss did not have anything to do with the emotions, youth would not yearn for it. And so a shadow falls on the cleanliness of the soul. That purity among you must say something. If two young entities, a young man and a young woman make promises to each other, even though not through contact – they connect with the immortal thought of God. Then at one time they will be called father and mother. The lark does not test or philosophize only operates quietly and naturally the dictates of the creator and builds a nest, not for itself but for its progeny. Two people, starting a family and arranging a household build a nest for its progeny. However, abusing the privilege of a free will, forgetting the wonderful plan of God and serious reality, considers it fun. Fun, which could be tainted. Nevertheless the child, every child has a right to the integrity of its home and the purity of its parents. It has the right to the mother’s nearness not only with its lips but with a loving kiss, beside the father. Think only of you own mother. How would you feel if she gave out those kisses and hugs very freely as a young girl. Approaching a female, young people ought to think of their mother or sister. In your quiet moments at home it would not hurt to think of this a bit in relation to what you have just heard.” - In addition to the advice of the author, I add, “My dear youth! Hold on the protective shores, the commandments of God, the law of nature, the law of the church and to the tradition handed down by the ages – for in these, your happiness, peace and satisfaction lies.”