**March 20, 1932**

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

This world has many enigmas and mysteries. There are many things that people do not understand. There are many events which we not only cannot explain but also, do not know how to explain. Among these, the most difficult puzzle is man, and the deepest mysteries are the people.

Let us only recall the year 1914. The war which began as a small spark gradually turned into a big fire. Vengeance, hatred, dread, crippleness, death, ruin, hunger, poverty, and thousand other miseries stalked into the footsteps of the war. Believers and unbelievers prayed day and night, and begged God to have pity on the sufferings and distress of the world. Then came November 11, 1918. The world was mad with joy, because the World War ended, a war waged for the deliverance of nations from the claws of autocrats, tyrants and oppressors. In a very short time the people have forgotten about their tears, sufferings, sad and painful experiences and on the new graves a dance of license and luxury unseen by humanity was begun. Then came the years of welfare and prosperity, living in extravagance and beyond the means of one’s state of life. Who took the expenses into consideration at that time? Money meant nothing to many. The only thought was luxury and the gratifying of all desires. Pride and vanity, seated on a gilded throne were rulers. It seemed that among our fellow country men all were rich and abounding in wealth and luxury. Did any one of them thing about the future? Nobody. Just as in the fabulous golden times, everybody ate and drank as much as he could. The best was not good enough; the most expensive was not costly enough; luxury was absolutely necessary. In the meantime on the walls of the world; the unseen hand of God’s Justice was writing the mysterious words: “Mene-Tekel-Peres!” MENE, God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it; TEKEL, you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Suddenly the years of abundance came to an end. God took into His hand the scourge of hunger, misery, and unemployment with which he punishes the people for forsaking and forgetting their God. Holy Scripture teaches us, that whenever sins and evils surpassed the good, God sent extraordinary punishments such as the deluge, earthquakes, wars, pestilences and hunger. The last war did not improve after the conditions, it rather made them worse, and the people after the World War selected the wide and comfortable road. It seems, speaking analogously that God’s patience has been tried and what do we see today? Those who kept their heads the highest, now bend them low; the proud became humble for today instead of luxury they lack the daily bread. Today in the place of comfort there is need, instead of joy and happiness there are tears, complaints and despair. The just Divine wrath fell and destroyed the castle of human pride, while humanity stands weeping at its ruins, as did the Jews near the walls of the burned temple of Jerusalem. As once before, a beggar at the sight of the Savior cried with a pleading voice: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” Many today pray in the following way. ‘’Give us this day our daily bread.” There are millions of others who fervently pray: “Behold us humbled before you almighty God, we know that if your mercy will not forgive, your justice can rightly punish us.

As a consolation to all, as a comfort to despairing minds: to add courage to those who doubt I entitle today’s talk.

**Christ Have Mercy**

We read in “Quo Vadis” of Henry Sienkiewicz that “The face of Vinicius was black, and resembled those waxen masks kept in Lararia. In his features astonishment had grown frigid, as if he had no understanding of what had happened and what might happen. When any one spoke to him, he raised his hands to his face mechanically, and pressing his temples, looked at the speaker with an inquiring and astonished gaze. The slaves found him frequently kneeling with upraised hands or lying with his face to the earth. He prayed to Christ, for Christ was his last hope. And a certain night he went to seek the Apostle. They started about dusk and passing beyond the wall, through hollows overgrown with reeds reached the vineyard in a wild and lonely place. The meeting was held in a wine-shed. As Vinicius drew near, the murmur of prayer reached his ears. On entering he saw by dim lamplight a few tens of kneeling figures sunk in prayer. They were saying a kind of litany, a chorus of voices, male and female, repeated every moment, “Christ, have mercy on us.” In those voices, deep, piercing sadness and sorrow were heard. Peter was present. He was kneeling in front of the others before a wooden cross nailed to the wall of the shed, and was praying. From a distance Vinicius recognized his white hair and his upraised hands. The first thought of the young patrician was to pass through the assembly, cast himself at the Apostle’s feet, and cry, “Save!” but whether it was the solemnity of the prayer, or because weakness bent the knees under Vinicius, he began to repeat while he groaned and clasped his hands. “Christ, have mercy!” Had he been conscious, he would have understood that his was not the only prayer in which there was a groan, that he was not the only one who had brought with him his pain, alarm and grief. There was not in that assembly one soul which had not lost persons dear to the hear, and when the most zealous and courageous confessors were in prison already, when with every moment the tidings were borne about of insults and tortures inflicted on them in the prisons, when the greatness of the calamity exceeded every imagination, when only that handful remained, there was not one heart there which was not terrified in its faith, which did not ask doubtfully, “Where is Christ?” and why does He let evil be mightier than God? Meanwhile they implored Him despairingly for mercy, since in each soul there still smoldered a spark of hope that He would come, hurl Nero into the abyss, and rule the world. They looked yet toward the sky, they listened yet, they prayed yet with trembling. Vinicius, too, in proportion as they repeated, “Christ, have mercy on us!” was seized by such an ecstasy as formerly in the quarryman’s hut. Now from the depths they call on Him in the profoundness of their sorrow, now Peter calls on Him, so any moment the heavens may be rent, the earth tremble to its foundations, and He appear in infinite glory, with stars at His feet, merciful, but awful. He will raise up the faithful, and command the abysses to swallow the persecutors. Vinicius covered his face with both hands, and bowed to the earth. Immediately silence was around him, as if fear had stopped further breathing in the lips of all present. And it seemed to him that something must happen surely, that in a moment a miracle would follow. He felt certain that when he rose and opened his eyes he would see a light from which mortal eyes would be blinded, and hear a voice from which hearts would grow faint. But the silence was unbroken. It was interrupted at last by the sobbing of women. Vinicius rose and looked forward with dazed eyes. In the shed, instead of glories not of earth, shone the faint gleam of lanterns, and rays of the moon, entering through an opening in the roof, filled the place with silvery light. The people kneeling around Vinicius raised their tearful eyes toward the cross in silence, here and there sobbing was heard, and from outside came the warning whistles of watchmen. Meanwhile Peter rose, and turning to the assembly, said, - ‘Children, raise your hearts to the Redeemer and offer Him your tears.” After that he was silent. All at once was heard the voice of a woman, full of sorrowful complaint and pain, “I am a widow, I had one son who supported me, Give him back, O Lord!” Silence followed again. Peter was standing before the kneeling audience, old, full of care. In that moment he seemed to them decrepitude and weakness personified. With that a second voice began to complain, -“Executioners insulted my daughter, and Christ permitted them!” Then a third, “I alone have remained to my children, and when I am taken who will give them bread and water?” Then a fourth, “Linus, spared at first, they have taken now and put to torture, O Lord!” Then a fifth, “When we return to our housed, praetorians will seize us. We know not where to hide.” “Woe to us! Who will protect us?” And thus in that silence of the night complaint after complaint was heard. The old fisherman closed his eyes and shook his white head over that human pain and fear. New silence followed; the watchman merely gave out low whistles beyond the shed. Vinicius sprang up again, so as to break through the crowds to the Apostle and demand salvation; but all of a sudden he saw before him, as it were a precipice, the sight of which took strength from his feet. What if the Apostle were to confess his own weakness, affirm that the Roman Caesar was stronger than Christ the Nazarene? And at that thought terror raised the hair on his head, for he felt that in such a case not only the remnant of his hope would fall into that abyss, but with it he himself, and all through which he had life, and there would remain only night and death, resembling a shore less sea. Meanwhile Peter began to speak in a voice so low at first that it was barely possible to hear him, “My children, on Golgotha I saw them nail God to the cross. I heard the hammers, and I saw them raise the cross on high, so that the crowd might gaze at the death of the Son of Man. I saw them open His side, and I saw Him die. When returning from the cross, I cried in pain, as we cry, ‘Woe! woe! O Lord, You are God! Why have You permitted this? Why did You die, and why have You tormented the hearts of us who believed that Your kingdom would come?” “But He, our Lord and God, rose from the dead the third day, and was among us till He entered His kingdom in great glory. ‘And we, seeing our little faith, became strong in heart, and from that time we are sowing His grain,” Here, turning toward the place when the first complaint came, he began in a voice now stronger, “Why do you complain? God gave Himself to torture and death, and you wish Him to shield you from the same. People of little faith, have you received His teaching? Has He promised you nothing but life? He comes to you and says, ‘Follow in my path.’ He raises you to Himself, and you catch this earth with your hands, crying ‘Lord, save us!’ I am dust before God, but before you I am His apostle and vicegerent. I speak to you in the name of Christ. Not death is before you, but life; not tortures, but endless delights, not tears and groans, but singing, not bondage, but rule! I, God’s apostle, say this. O widow, thy son will not die; he will be born into glory, into eternal life, and you will rejoin him! To you, O Father, whose innocent daughter was defiled by executioners, I promise that you shall find her whiter than the lilies of Hebron! To you, mothers, whom they are tearing away from your orphans; to you who lose fathers; to you who complain; to you who will see the death of loved ones; to you the careworn, the unfortunate, the timed, to you who must die, in the name of Christ I declare that you will wake as if from sleep to a happy waking, as if from night to the light of God. In the name of Christ, let the beam fall from your eyes, and let your hearts be inflamed.” When he had said this, he raised his hand as if commanding, and they felt new blood in their veins, and also a quiver in their bones; for before them was standing, not a decrepit and careworn old man, but a potentate, who took their souls and raised them from dust and terror. “Amen!” called a number of voices. From the Apostle’s eyes came a light ever increasing, power issued from him, majesty issued from him, and holiness. Heads bent before him, and he, when the “Amen” ceased, continued. “You sow in tears to reap in joy. Why fear the power of evil? Above the earth, above Rome, above the walls of cities is the Lord, who has taken His dwelling within you. The stones will be wet from tears, the sand steeped in blood, the valleys will be filled with your bodies, but I say that you are victorious. The Lord is advancing to the conquest of this city of crime, oppression, and pride, and you are His legions! He redeemed with His own blood and sufferings the sins of the world, so He wishes that you should redeem with torture and blood this den of injustice. This He announces to you through my lips.” And he opened his arms, and fixed his eyes upward; the hearts almost ceased to beat in their breasts, for they felt that his glance beheld something which their mortal sight could not see. In fact, his face had changed, and was overspread with serenity; he gazed some time in silence, as if speechless from ecstasy, but after a while they heard his voice. Since the Lord has overcome doubt in you, so will you will go to victory in His name. And over Vinicius who embracing the feet of the Apostle raising his face toward heaven he said aloud, “O merciful Christ, look on this aching heart and console it. O merciful Christ, temper the wind to the fleece of the lamb! O merciful Christ, who implored the Father to turn away the bitter cup from Your mouth, turn it from the mouth of this Your servant! Amen.”

And Christ heard the prayer of his disciple Peter, and removed the chalice of suffering from Vinicius whose soul was melting with love so immense that he forgot himself utterly. The cranes, reared in the gardens, began to call, heralding the coming day, but Vinicius was still embracing in his mind the feet of Christ, neither seeing nor hearing what was passing around him, with a heart turned into a thanksgiving, sacrificial flame, sunk in ecstasy, and though alive, half seized into heaven.

My dear radio listeners! The early Christians were thrown by thousands into the arena of the Roman amphitheaters to be eaten by the wild beasts. Among them were the aged, men and women, youth and children. They cast themselves on their knees in the presence of thousands of spectators, sobbing cries. ‘Christ, have mercy! Christ, have pity!” The inhuman and bloody games continued. A lion approached a man who was holding in hi arms a child sewed up in a fawn’s skin. The child trembling from crying, and weeping, clung convulsively to the neck of its father; he, to prolong its life even for a moment, tried to pull it from his neck, so as to hand it to those kneeling farther on. But the cry and the movement irritated the lion. All at once he gave out a short, broken roar, killed the child with one blow of his paw, and seizing the head of the father in his jaws, crushed it in a twinkle.

The same thing happens in our churches today, what happened in the Roman catacombs among the first believers of the teaching of Christ. We see today sad faces, eyes filled with tears, sorrow, uncertainty, and fear; it seems that the only prayer sent to the throne of the One, who always showed special care for the poor crowds that surround Him is, “Christ, have mercy.” Almost with despair and yet with a certain hope, the people beg for mercy and are hopeful that the dark and ill foreboding clouds will pass away and the sun of better future with its warm rays will scatter away hunger, poverty and misery. ‘Christ, have mercy on us!

Today, as in the arena of the Roman amphitheater, the old and the young, men and women are thrown into the arena of human life to be eaten up by unmerciful oppression. For who cares today whether the helpless millions have something to eat, something to clothe themselves with, or a place to rest their heads. Those whose duty it is to see to these wants boldly ask: ‘”Are we the guardians of our unfortunate and poor brothers?” The latter, looking into the future, cry: “Christ have mercy on us.”

One more picture from these days of suffering and pain! “The gates were opened simultaneously, and in all passages leading to the arena crowds of Christians were urged forward, naked and carrying crosses on their shoulders. The whole arena was filled with them. Old men, bending under the weight of wooden beams, ran forward; at the side of these went men in the prime of life, women with loosened hair behind which they strove to hide their nakedness, small boys, and little children. The crosses, for the greater part, as well as the victims, were wreathed with flowers. The servants of the amphitheater beat the unfortunates with clubs, forcing them to lay down their crosses near the holes prepared and stand themselves there in rows. Thus were to perish those whom executioners had had no chance to drive out as food for dogs and wild beasts the first day of the games. Black slaves seized the victims, laid them face upward on the wood, and fell to nailing their hands hurriedly and quickly to the arms of the crosses, so that people returning after the interlude might find all the crosses standing. The whole amphitheater resounded with the noise of hammers which echoed through all the rows, went out to the space surrounding the amphitheater, and into the tent where Caesar with wine and entertainment.

History repeats itself today. Today the workman together with his wife and children carry the cross of unemployment, misery and sufferings, while heartless and merciless cliques drive great nails of uncertainty, sew fear and despair into the thoughts and hearts of the people.

My dear radio audience! Today we celebrate the triumphal entrance of Christ into the Holy City. Next Friday we will reflect on Christ’s way of the Cross and his death on Golgotha. Compare His way of the cross and sufferings with our way of the cross and sufferings. Let us admit that our cross is small and very small. During this Holy Week, especially you men, the husbands and fathers of families, who perhaps did not confess for years, humble yourself and confess your trespasses and then let all of us stand under the cross of the Christ and cry: “Christ, have mercy on us.” Our prayers will not be in vain for Christ hears us - Christ listens to us - and Christ comforts us.