**March 29, 1936**

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

A couple days ago, a young man paid me a visit. He came sadly, hurt and completely discouraged because, up until now, he had gone through a lot in his life. About ten years ago, his youngest sister died. They were very proud of her. She was hard working, quiet and lovable. Perhaps she was too good to remain on this earth. She caught pneumonia and after several days of suffering, left this world. Two years ago, the young man suffered another blow. Suddenly he lost his mother. Perhaps she would have survived her illness because she had the best of medical help in town, but because of family troubles which broke her heart and the worries accompanying them. Despite the specialists, they drove her to the cemetery. Now, five weeks ago suddenly like thunder from heaven, bad luck struck again. His wife got sick. At the same time they took her to the hospital where after a quick consultation the physicians decided that she needed an operation. It was her twelfth operation. After the operation I visited her twice daily. She suffered greatly. Her lips were curved in addition to a high fever. She was dying slowly and prayed for a quick death. From her lips came the question: "Why must I suffer so: After doctors and hospitals, always in pain, day and night and instead of recovering it was worse and worse, when will all of this end?" I want to live for my husband and son, but such pain and suffering, I no longer can stand it" Shortly after she lost consciousness, and two days, she died. After the funeral, her husband came to me. He was a broken man. He sits before the desk, and tears flow from his eyes. Again comes the question which I had heard many times from the sick and the suffering, Why does God send these sufferings, these crosses, on people who believe in Him and pray to Him? Why is it that those who have no faith, who believe in nothing, who even curse God, walk about happily and healthy without worries and crosses? I tried to explain the best I could to soothe the young man. He became calm, and he promised me that evidently Divine Providence knows better than we, what it is that is best for us. He bid me farewell. He left peacefully. I remained at my desk in reverie. Scenes pass before my eyes: the sick and the suffering. In private homes and through countless hospitals, in sanitariums: poor Lazar uses. Some lay for untold weeks, in beds, being promised by their healers that health will return. They know that for them, there is no recovery. In order to give hope, to give some joy, some understanding of this valley of tears, I have entitled this talk:

WHY?

Crying, complaining and the sorrows of the sick and the suffering are so numerous and so bitter as the waters of the ocean. There isn't a man on earth who was free of suffering. There is only one difference in equality. Some suffer less; others more. Some carry their small cross; others, lug a greater one. Some suffer morally; others physically. Those who suffer or are ill think that only the carry their crosses not of wood but of steel. However how small are our sufferings compared with the pain and cross of our Lord and Savior. Let us hear what St. Matthew has to say in his Gospel about how our Lord suffered. In order for this narrative to really sink in to the souls of our listeners, close your eyes and collect yourself to hear deeply: "He told his disciples: You know that in two days' time it will be Passover, and the Son of Man will be handed over to b e crucified." Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and they consulted together to arrest Jesus by treachery and put him to death. But they said, "Not during the festival, that there may not be a riot among the people.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman cape up to him with an alabaster jar of costly perfumed oil, and poured it on his head while he was reclining at table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant and said, "Why this waste? It could have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor. Since Jesus knew this, he said to them, "Why do you make trouble for this woman? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you but you will not always have me. In pouring this perfumed oil upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. amen I say to you wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of, in memory of her. Then one of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, "The teacher says, "My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples."The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me" Deeply distressed by this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born. Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi" He answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said" Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying. "Drink from it, all of you for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father. Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, "This night all of you will have your faith in me shaken, for it is written:

 "I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed"

but after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee.: Peter said to him in reply, "Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be: Jesus said to him. "Amen I say to you, this very night before the cock crows, you will deny me three time.: Peter said to him, "Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you," And all the disciples spoke likewise.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray. He took along Peter and the two sons of "Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me; He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My father if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter. "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour. Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your ill be done. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand."

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, " The man I shall kiss is the one: arrest him" Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!, and he kissed him. Jesus answered him, :Friend, do what you have come for.: Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your word back into it sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more that twelve legions of angels? But then how would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must come to pass in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled. Peter was following him at a distance as far as the high priest's courtyard and going inside he sat down with the servants to see the outcome. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward who stated, "This man said, "I can destroy the temple of God and within three days rebuild it." The high priest rose and addressed him, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the son of God." Jesus said to him ion reply, "You have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power; and 'coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy: what is your opinion?" They said in reply, "He deserves to die!" Then they spit in his face and struck him, while some slapped him, saying "Prophesy for us, Messiah: who is it that struck you?" Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came up to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, " I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean. Again he denied it with an oath. "I do not know the man!" A little while later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken. "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times. He went out and wept bitterly."

When it was morning, all the chief priest s and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, deeply regretted what he had done. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned betraying innocent blood." They said, "what is that to us? Look to it yourself.: Flinging the money into the temple, he departed and went off and hanged himself. The chief priests gathered up the money, but said, "It is not lawful to deposit this in the temple treasury, for it is the price of blood." After consultation they used it to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ha is why that field even today is call he Field of Blood. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by some of the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter's field just as he Lord had commanded me."

Now Jesus stood before the governor and he questioned him, " Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so" And when he was accused the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you. But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called {Jesus} Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, {Jesus} Barabbas, or Jesus called "Messiah?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over. While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus. The governor said to them in reply, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They answered, "Barabbas!" Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus called Messiah?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" But he said, Why? What evil has he done? They only shouted the louder, "Let him be crucified!" When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. Look to it yourselves." And the whole people said in reply, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed in over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him and weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews! They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.

AS they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull,) they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him. This is Jesus, the king of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with him,. one on his right and the other on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying. "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, (and) come down from the cross: Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and enders mocked him and said, "He save others; he cannot save himself. So he is king of Israel. Let him come down from the cross now and we will believe in him. For he said "I am the Son of God. The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

We are Christians, namely believers in the teachings of Christ. The Savior taught the "disciple is not greater than the Master." He suffered hurt of soul and body. We however would like to avoid the crosses of life. We are guilty of imposing our own suffering. Do we not understand that without suffering no one can reap the reward of eternal life, "because one cannot receive the crown if one is not present at the race." According to writers of the Church: "Narrow is the road to heaven." The stone cutters need to labor to hew the building blocks of the heavenly Jerusalem. The sheaves of wheat are not useful unless the thresher threshes it; similarly we are of no worth unless we suffer and have worth before God. God forges suffering as a chisel with imperfect people. That is the reason why Providence sends crosses on the shoulders of the just, pious people under various conditions. God stabs his chosen on earth with a sword, and so crowns them with glory in heaven. It is true that God does not will that we suffer; only so that by suffering we may perfect ourselves. It is worth to remember what St. Augustine said: "there is no greater misfortune as the fortune of sinners." And: "Great is the misfortune than the fortune of sinners. It is also important to remember that God will not send us suffering which we cannot bear. Like a physician is careful not to prescribe the sick person with too powerful of a medicine which would kill him, so the Heavenly Physician measures the dose of our suffering. Some Christians, however, create their own suffering. Sometimes God sends suffering in order that the sinner is converted from his sinful ways. How many prodigal sons are there among us who left their father's home, forgot about god, and whom God talks to their sinful ways through illness or depravation. It is only then that recognize their sinful ways. Our physical sufferings wake us up to sobriety. We recognize its worth here on earth and in heaven. Christ himself gave us an example through his own suffering and the promise of eternal reward. Those who complain about their suffering complaining and lose patience and even curse God when Divine Providence send them a cross to bear. That kind of complaining does not help. It is like a jumping fish which is caught. It harms itself by flopping about in the boat. Is it not better to cry out as our Savior did. It is not better to cry out as Job did in the scriptures: God gave, God took away; blessed be the Name of the Lord. Besides no one who is sickly and suffers should lose hope. After the darkest night, comes the brightest day; after the greatest storm comes the nicest weather, after the harshest winter comes the beautiful spring; after the heaviest drought comes a cooling breeze. Often after the cruelest illnesses comes health, and a great appreciation of the prior health.

In a small hamlet, lived a man who worried himself with commerce. He didn't have much but the little he had, he shared with others, who had less than he did. Occasionally his health suffered for two or three weeks but never complained. He always had a good word and a nice smile for everyone. No wonder that all liked him and respected him. Eventually someone asked him why, despite his bad health and suffering he always was peaceful and didn't lose his good humor. Why he didn't complain what life shelled out to him? At the beginning he didn't reveal his secret. When insisting a reply, he gave this perplexing response. Every morning, I consider three things: First I look up to heaven because it is the reason for all of my activity and the goal of my endeavors. Then I look at the earth and remind myself that I do not need much, and thirdly I look around to find out that there are other who have a lot less and suffer more than I. If we all had that philosophy and practiced it, I am convinced that a rainbow of grace and blessings would be encountered coming from the Providence of God.