**March 8, 1936**

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

For years, I had the specific distribution of all daily activities. I conscientiously held to this layout by rules of the old order: Hold to an order, and the order will hold for you! And so, certain hours were dedicated to school - certain hours for preparing homilies and research - there was a time for recreation, even a time for physical work in the garden. I spent the time in this way during mornings and afternoons until 5 p.m. When five o'clock approached, I put all aside. Why? Because from five until six I had the time set aside was a walk. Perhaps you would ask why I set that particular time aside for a walk? Well, the school children were already at home, the parish office was fairly not busy at that time, because women were occupied preparing meals, and the men were on their way from work. I didn't pay particular attention to the weather. When it was snowing, I put on my overcoat over my habit, a worn out hat on my head and forward march in order to build up an appetite. During the summer, when it was still daylight, everyone recognized me; in the winter months, when it was already dark, I walked neither seen nor recognized. The streets were well known to me, where in pairs or in groups or alone workers were returning from the steel plant, tire plant, tannery or other mills where they worked. I chose side streets and walked step by step. They did not know this. At times one or the other turned around to see some man but knew not that it was I. The wend there way and I listened with interest. They spoke of their work, complained of long hours or poor pay; they praised their bosses or foremen and sometimes cursed them severely; they reminded each other about family problems - in other words they spoke of everything and everybody. Occasionally I smiled sincerely for these home spun philosophers and wise men; sometimes I empathized with them and always admired their stalwart stance. In their conversations their ideas were always heartfelt. What they spoke of was always what they felt in their hearts. This was generally on payday when they cashed their checks in gin mills where they wet their whistles. You well know the Polish nature. The Pole when drinks water or milk is a meek sheep or calf. However when he drinks two or three vodkas or beers, he heats up. Some new strength cruises through his veins. Then the sheep turns to a lion. It is then that he fears no one. It then that he tells it like it is. (In vino veritas) I am reminded of one conversation which is apropos of today's talk.

**HOW THE CHURCH BENEFITS ME**

For five blocks, I walk behind to laborers. One of them, tall and burly, is well up in age. Health exudes from him. Beside him: one who is thin as a rail and much younger than the other. Both work in a slaughter house. Although they had finished working at four o'clock, they are just returning now at quarter to six since they stopped into the saloon where they cashed their checks. Obviously there was some treating because they were swaying back and forth like a ship on a stormy sea. In addition they were speaking in a loud voice. I listened as they spoke about the situation in the factory. They were recalling their treatment by the foreman who watched them like a hawk and told them to hurry in their work. They were complaining about how much they have to toil for the little that they earn. I listen to the conversation intently. The slowed their pace. I did too. I thought to myself: I wonder if they are going to tip their hats as they pass a church. Interested I see them pausing in front of the church and turned their faces to the doors, took off their hats and the older spoke to his friend: "John, you know what? Every Sunday I give a dime for the collection, and did this church ever give me anything? Never!" John had no response to the question. I, however, have one. How many people have the same criticism? How often we hear older and younger parishioners have the same complaint: for my offering what do I get in return? The church only knows how to receive. Nothing more. Is this true? Is this just a criticism without any basis in reality? Let's see. In October of last year, a group of communists came to me to debate the merits of communism. They were not bad men. Some red agent was enlisting them. They hadn't the slightest idea what they were defending. They were told that communism was a sole help for the working class and it was the best medicine for the hurts, sufferings and needs of the worker. I explained to them that the teaching was false and deceptive, and that it makes the worker a slave and an animal. For proof, I read them facts and daily event from the life of the Russian people. One of them replied to my comments: "I am a Catholic, and I send my children to Catholic school. Why does the church not care for the good of the poor Class? Why does it only care about the soul and speak only of eternal happiness? We are the living.

We and our children are hungry and cold. We are in bad straights. We lack food. Other have much, we have what? We lack bread. But the church speaks of the soul but what about our flesh?" I explained that without work, there is poverty and misery; neither is God's fault nor the church; it should be assigned to self love, greed, and the desire of mankind. Contrary to the teachings of the church, the responsibility lies on those whose responsibility is to see that justice is done; I read in the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, "Defenders of the working man" and currently reigning Pope Pius XI who teach and criticize the true medicine, for the suffering amidst laborers; I further spoke of the Unions instituted by the church whose aim it was create justice between unions and management. I cited the institutions, societies and good will brotherhoods who bring help and care to the unfortunate and from whom for the greater part workers and their children profit. Considering these facts is it in accordance with their claim that the church gives nothing and cares less about the flesh and its temporal good? Is it not a lie perpetrated by these wise liars constantly harping over and over to the naive and easily believing workers, poisoning their minds? When the church speaks about this matter, these same Pharisee complain to high heaven: "The church is butting into material things, the church is butting into politics; let the church pay attention to souls and heaven and leave the rest to the care of the government. In the end, I said: "I beg your pardon, sirs, do not be so fiercely angry at the rich and don't envy them their daily goods and treasures. You are just seeing things on the surface and all that glitters is not gold. If you were to look into their hearts and minds, maybe the sight of boredom, remorse, anxiety and suffering that they endured would not only surprise you but also scare you. Listen and things may be clarified. A horse-drawn carriage rolls across a country road. Workers in the field lift their heads and make ugly remarks and throw angry looks at the rich man who sits in the carriage which halts at the estate house. The doors open, a servant exits and brings the man a glass of beer. That didn't set will with one of the worker, who spoke loudly: "Look at this guy, his highness in a demanding mood. He can't even walk a couple steps to get a glass of beer and has to have a servant. Some people have a lot of everything, others don't even have bread to eat. Where is God's justice?" The seemingly very rich man heard the words. He called out in a loud voice with a tinge of sadness in it, "I heard you. You envy my fortune and are angry at God. I will show you my good fortune - take a look. He uncovered the coverlet over his knees. The workers stood around the carriage. At once they looked and were embarrassed when they saw, instead of legs, stumps. The man had no legs. The rich man said further, " Yes, I am a cripple without lets. I lost my legs because of gangrene. "Would I be able to go for the beer? Yes, I am rich, but at the same time incapacitated." - and he looked at one of the strong healthy workers and said to him, "give me your legs and I will give you my treasure." The workers winced and went back to work. A sufficiency of bread and drink, riches, comfort, - that is not enough to be happy. You who have your health and are sufficient!

That is not the end. Listen further. You say that the Church does not give anything, that it does not care about human temporal being. The Church teaches: Remember to keep the holy day: Why? Not only for strengthening the soul, but the body needs rest and relaxation to give strength and renewed energy for future work. Is that not a concern for you, your body, about the daily care for the worker? The Church reminds us: Honor your father and mother..it thereby crowns them, who are often unworthy, with the crown of love, of respect and thankfulness, and shows children the way to happiness not only eternal but temporal happiness "so that you will live a long life, and good fortune while on earth." The church warns: "Thou shall not kill! What does that mean? It means that life and health are God's gifts. Woe to those who take their own life or shorten in or place it in danger. Especially in these day of materialism and new paganism, when human life is identified as animal life, which can be blown out like a candle. Only the church has the daring to stand and openly call pseudo-educated professors, doctors, nurses, fathers and mothers: It is not permitted to kill under any circumstances. It is not permitted to murder in the womb, in the crib, nor take the life of someone ill. The church teaches: "Do not commit adultery - do not seek your brother's wife." Protect the holiness of marriage, the holiness of family life and the holiness of every woman." The church advises, "Do not steal, do not desire another's property." In other words, we are reminded not to harm another person's possessions. It is not right to squander your own possessions, not to take property from your work place or cheat on scale, to falsify documents. The Church reminds, "Do not bear false witness against you neighbor." On ought to believe in equality, freedom and brotherhood out of love of neighbor. Is it true that the Church gives nothing to the world? Listen, because that is not all. The Church forbids pride, lust, envy, excess in eating and drinking. The Church teaches that persecution of the poor, widows and orphans, holding back pay to workers call out for vengeance in heaven. Tell me now, is the an institution on earth which does more for man than the Catholic Church? Is there even a country which provides its citizens a greater care and conscientious aid than the Catholic Church? Not only from the cradle, but from birth until the last breath the church is conscientious in its responsibility. It does not allow one to harm one's self or the other in life, in health, in honor and respectability. What can one give beyond that?

When I had finished my arguments, a group of my listeners stood, shook my hand, said good bye, and returned to their homes! Today, let me give yet several other examples to back up my previous arguments. A certain follower of Carl Marx, a socialist, wanted in his own socialist way, to equalize the class structure. Unfortunately when he took a thick wallet from the wallet of his associate, the sheriff caught him in the act. Naturally he ended up in jail. The next day, he stood before the judge and defended himself by claiming that his freedom was violated. "How's that?" asked the austere judge, after all, you stole your neighbor's goods, to which you have no right!" "No, judge, I beg you, I just wanted to even out the equality between us. "If I am poor and find myself in need, and my neighbor or my friend has not only what he needs, but has it in excess, I not only am rendering him an injustice but I am fulfilling an social obligation, because moving money from the pocket of the rich to my poor pocket, I am helping to restore a balance in the economic order between classes." This is today's vision observed by the individual and governments. What's worse and gives itself to some thought, is the fact that it is the view of younger minds. In June of the past year, we caught a thief stealing from the poor box in our church. It was a sixteen year-old German boy, a student of one of our higher institutions of learning. I had authorized his graduation certificate in the parish office. Then I handed him over to the police. He acknowledged that he was educated in the higher school, that to take another's ownership is no crime because you are not robbing the poor, but the rich. He told the judge plainly: " I wanted to take from the poor box because those offerings were for the poor and I am poor. Therefore I had a right to that money." The judge shot back: "And I have the right to send you to prison." The judge sent him to reform school until his twenty first birthday. What then is the church doing when it teaches that private ownership is a holy thing which it considers wrong to violate. Nothing else assures you that what you own is yours. Your ownership is surrounded by a lasting wall, which protects you from an angry eye and the stealing fingers of unconscionable thugs and thieves. Isn't that something? The Catholic Church, in spite of the fact that it has among its believers the rich and even millionaires, if is a church of workers, the poor, widows and orphans. It is especially careful and watchful that injustice is not done to these. It teaches, reminds, and asks that capitalists and magnates show justice and mercy to the poor and a fair wage to the worker. First the church presents before the eyes of capitalists, bankers and the rich a table with commandments and seriously quotes these directives in two words: "Do not steal," explaining seriously that it means not to steal from health, honesty, and deserved recompense from those lowly people whose efforts, in blood sweat and tears, have given them a living. Remember that God gave you the key to your personal happiness, and he gave them a key too. Someday You will give an account of your stewardship. Remember that the unjust, the robbers and thieves will not possess the kingdom of God. Therefore do not pay your workers a beggar's or prisoner's wage, but pay them a wage consistent with their ability to survive. The Popes have called out to us: "You have to provide swift and effective assistance to the lowest classes of humanity, when there are countless people leading the life of the oppressed and indeed unworthy of man." - and further "a group of the rich has imposed a prisoner's state on the working class." - Even in Canon law there is a canon 1524 which teaches that "everyone, especially religious and administrators of churches, ought to pay their workers a just and fair wage for their work; being concerned that they will be able to easily perform their obligations of religion; keep their hours for the goodness of family life, demand work over their ability to perform." The Church also quotes the apostles of the nations: "and whoever does not help their family members in their needs he has forsaken his faith and is worse than the unbeliever." Do you want to understand especially you workers what it is that the Church gives you. In the Church, you have a caring, conscientious advocate, a constant and unpaid protector and a sincere intercessor.

It was the year 1918. Influenza reigned which took many lives. It decimated ten percent of families or totally destroyed them. We had a family in the parish which came into great wealth. How they came into these riches is irrelevant here. They were not educated and were common people. They had, however, the strength of the dollar. I knew them well, even too well. On son attended the university, a daughter was learning to be a pharmacist. One smarter than the other. The mother and father had over the years abandoned their European way of life and clearly their Catholic ways, and were surprised that their children were so smart. The children went the way of their parents. When I met these young people, I asked them when they will be in church, they openly said: "Why?" Our church is the university. God is nothing else but knowledge, teaching, an education. The Church will not give us a career or money. Our professor does not go to church, in fact he doesn't believe in anything, yet his has state, power, and a good living. They ;shook their arms and laughed to me, as if they wanted to say: "Give us a break with your God and your Church. We will do well by ourselves." - The influenza obviously did not know or maybe didn't pay attention to the possessions, or the money or even to the smartness or the education. It gave a surprise to the status quo. It paid them a visit. It first touches the wife of the house. Then, her husband sent for a priest. I think I will not forget this family for the rest of my life. When I arrived the ill wife was losing consciousness. In her fever she reached out with her hands, tossed, and promised God that if she recovered, she would never neglect the Mass, fasting, as well as her night and morning prayers. However she was physically unable to go to confession. I gave her conditional forgiveness and the last rites. They buried her at noon. In the afternoon the daughter came for me to go see her father. I went. He was now dying. At eleven o'clock one night we took him to the cemetery. On the next day again, before noon the frightened son came with the plea for me to come and see his sister. It seems that the youths changed their smart maintaining that the church does no good, the their church is the university and so forth. The poor girl for whom the world smiled forgot the promise of a career, honors, earthly fortune. Feverishly she spoke of her knowledge, sports, and pharmaceuticals. The next day she joined her parents. To this day, I ask myself was this all a coincidence that for all three had the inability to confess before their death because they were not conscious. I don't know, and I don't judge and I don't wish to judge them; I just question the situation. If you think this is the end of the story, listen to this. The son remains. Naturally after all his family died, he was left with the family fortune and it was quite sizable. Not on your life! Just the opposite. The decline went to his head. Money made him drunk. He forgot about his education, his learning, and his so called church university. He spent his time in the company of his sporting friends. He gambled, drank and spent his time at the horse track. He drank and laughed at the world and made fun of honest people. People often told me about him. They always pitied him: what a waste, a waste. Time passed - more or less three years. They bring me a letter. I open it and read: "Mr. J. D., asks Fr. Justin to come quickly to the hospital. An important matter. Please do not send another priest but Fr. Justin. - I try to figure what that important matter could be. I arrive at the city hospital. At the office they inform me that the patient not only has a contagious disease but is delirious. They dressed me in white frock, a white hat and white gloves. The lead me to the emergency room. I enter and look at the patient. He has an emaciated face but vaguely familiar. Just from looking, I can't tell whether he is old or young. He has a blanched face, corpselike. I hear a voice as from the grave broken by coughing: "I know that Fr. Justin does not recognize me. The name by which they know me here is false. My name is.... and gave me his true name. It was no other than the youth about whom I had related in the tragedy. He started to cry as if he wanted to erase all the stains in his life. He begged to go to confession and said: I now see what my church wanted to give me, and I wished what the world would give me. It gave me a contagious disease, suffering and death in the twenty third year of my life. I listened and sadness overwhelmed me. I visited him a few times afterward. For three weeks he has suffered greatly. He found peace and rest in the cemetery. Before I end, I should like to ask my listeners about what the church gives us. Isn't it not only naive but an angry assertion that the church only cares about the soul and neglects man's temporal existence? That the church only takes but does not give. Today, as in the time of Christ, as in the last two thousand years, the church willingly gives them bread, temporal happiness as well as eternal. The church cares for the whole person, about the soul as well about the body, because the whole person is an entity created by God, because he came from God and to God he shall return.