May 1, 1938

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

In a week, we will be celebrating “Mothers Day.” – This coming Sunday, all without exception, without exception of nationality, race, or persuasion, in some way, will show their respect for – mother! We Catholics will go to confession and receive Holy Communion for the intention of our mother if we still have her with us. However, if the merciful Lord has taken her from us, we will offer our Holy Communion for the repose of her soul. She will be remembered in our prayers. A good group will offer a Mass in her intention. Others in a material way will show their appreciation with gifts. She will receive letters and telegrams with well wishes. On this day, even the prisoner behind bars or one waiting for execution will think momentarily of times spent at the side of their mothers. Who knows if even a tear of heartfelt emotion would be shed in those who were hardened by life and bereft of human tenderness? For some, a mother who long past had died and rests in a grave. Her memory is ingrained in the brain and imagination; the conscience throws forth the question: “Am I like this kind of person or that kind of person that my mother wished me to be?” And the heart beats with deep joy that we followed the path taught by our mothers when sitting on her lap or at her knees. Usually a person forgets a lot of things with age but always remembers things about his or her mother. And that is especially so if one had a very notable and good mother. He remembers her through life and often speaks about her. For us of Polish descent, our mother was always and will be the ideal of womanhood. We seek in every woman virtues which we found in our mothers. When we don’t find them, we complain that things go wrong in the world because the mothers of old are no longer with us. There must be some validity in the thought. The world admits this when it sees the need to honor our mothers at least once a year. In this last seasonal talk, we ask the question:

Should Every Day Not Be Mothers’ Day?

On the tablets of the commandments regarding our relationship with God the command is: “Honor your father and your mother!” This commandment is written on the heart of every human being journeying on this earth. The mother from the moment of conception, carries her child under her heart. After birth she gives her child feeling, cares for it, protects it and is concerned about it - which is part of the mystery of human life. Often the mother dedicates not only her health but even her life to the child. A son, in the eyes of people, may be the worst criminal but in the eyes of a mother, he never stops being her child. A daughter could be thankless and terrible but the mother will never shove her aside. The world could reject and alienate the child but the mother’s heart is always open to it. It is why the first word spoken with the innocent lips is “Mama!” It is also why in the midst of our sufferings, with parched lips we call out: Mother, help! In addition, often we hear lips whisper, Mother, my Mother! The life of every good mother is a bouquet of miraculous flowers, amidst which is a giant red rose – love; a lily – sacrifice and a hidden dedication; one can imagine the scene in its reality: “It was the third day. She sat day and night with her son, noting every breath, every motion of the suffering mouth, red from its wounds, and the mother’s response to the suffering of her son. At times the baked lips of the sick one moved and the mother moved quickly to give the lips of the child a few drops of orange juice. The little one with closed eyes said that he will go to school, that they await him, that he will be late, that he has to go. That high fever debilitated him. The little one was strong. The mother could hardly hold him in her arms and he could not maneuver and fell back into bed. The mother remembered the words of the doctor: “The possibility of recuperation is one in a thousand.” Her heart was so wounded that she seemed to be dying.” Everyone was fast asleep in the town. From town to town, grandma came in as well as the father. The sorrowful mother put them at ease. She would not wish to be replaced; to leave her son would be unconscionable. At about two o’clock in the morning, the child’s breath became clipped; the color of his mouth started to change. She could no longer stay alone so she called her husband. They were startled looking at the son. The knelt by the bed. Their souls prayed together beseechingly. The youngster breathed haltingly. It sounded adult as if saying: “Help me to suffer because I can’t any longer; I am so small, and so tired… it is difficult for me. The hours went by with no change in the little one. The bells of a nearby church rang on this May Day. The mother turned to her husband. “Stay here; I’m going to the church.” The church was empty. She proceeded to Our Lady’s flowered altar since it was May. She knelt and prayed beseechingly. Her motherly love seemed to touch Our Lady’s feet. Crying, she told Mary about her situation. She thought of Jesus’ suffering and Mary’s under the cross. That identification with the Mother of God softened her tears. She felt that her son would heal. She went to the sacristy where the priest was dressing for Mass and asked for prayers. He looked at her with compassion and promised he would pray. She returned to Mary’s altar and prayed during the entire Mass. When she returned home, her son was still ashen but breathing even. Those who were with the child felt as though he would be getting better. She kissed her child. The child slept deeply until the next day when around noon he awoke and asked for something to drink and then looked curiously, not knowing what had happened. It was like a mother who would stay up with her sick child by the crib. We take this as nothing extraordinary, not thinking of our mothers as heroines, who totally had forgotten about self and night and day did the mother’s thing. Should these mothers not merit our remembrance and gratitude? Our Savior, Christ, wove a crown of honor and praise and crowned the temple of every mother, in the person of his own mother on earth. The “Madonna with Child” depicts not only the Mother of God, but our mother. And so the Christ Child as an example shows us not only his own Mother but how every child should honor his own mother. – In our Polish tradition respect for the Mother is deeper and more heartfelt than with other nations. We are not surprised since we are blessed with the best mothers in the world. Besides, besides after God, to whom should we be thankful that our generation is healthy and looks at the world ahead to a world in hope? We are grateful to our mothers who rocked us in the cradle, taught us language and prayers, in a word, she taught us how to live! - May your imagination float through the years of your childhood. Perhaps today, you have your own family; perhaps you no longer have a mother. Perhaps in hard times when you feel that the world is against you and things aren’t going well, you remember your mother. Does her person drift before the eyes of your imagination? Do you mentally say to yourself, “It is unfortunate that you do not have your mother with you, and that you feel that if she was with you, your outlook may be more comforting; that she could give you advice that would cheer you?

Through a quarter of a century of my priesthood, I was in various situations. I saw children crying before the beds of their dying mothers; I saw children at wakes of their mothers, and at cemeteries. Always I heard the words: “Mother, why did you leave us? Why did God take you away from us?” “Mother, what will we do without you?” At hospitals, on operating tables, the last word was, “Mother, help me.” A prisoner going for the death penalty, frightened kisses the photo of his mother and says: “I am sad for you, my Mother!”

The love of a mother for his child is without boundaries. It is beyond understanding. Perhaps the son or daughter strayed. Temptation is always at hand. The world can abandon you and hate you. For a mother, you always will remain her child. Only your mother will cry for you and will be merciful to you and open her heart to you. At the foot of your mother you will find understanding, mercy, and help. Always – You mother will not forget you and will never leave you. And always you will hear the words, “after all, he is my son or she is my daughter. – Today all should remember our mothers. A least, today! Maybe you have forgotten how she taught you to pray? Remember when she took you by the hand and led you to church? How she rejoiced on the day of your First Communion. When you came home from school, she asked you how things went, what you learned. There was something good for you on the table. At night everyone went to rest. The mother was still there cleaning up or was sewing. Before she retired, she knelt on her knees and prayed for the children. Early in the morning, she was the first one up. She clearly understood the vocation of motherhood. She needed to pay attention to everything and put everything in order. What was needed was always at hand. She was house keeper, treasurer, lawyer and judge! How many of our mothers with ever greater sacrifice, not only spent evenings but all night in payless work, scrubbing floors, cleaning furniture or washing as maids in other households. And these mothers never complained. They prayed, worked and brought up their children, surrendering their health on the sacrificial altars of their dedicated vocation. Bring back to memory this nobility. Confirm to yourself the dedication to your mother with gratitude for all she did behind the scenes.

Not too long ago I spoke to a certain Polish chaplain. He related to me a bit of his personal history with reverie. I listened with some degree of emotion since I lost my mother in the years when I needed her most. The chaplain was about 60 years and shared this with me. Every several years I take a journey to Poland. I consider it my duty, a conscience based and sacred. My mother still lives in Poland and is ninety-one years old. How happy she is to see me when I visit her. She will not permit me to live in the rectory but has two rooms available for me. She alone must prepare me meals, make my bed and takes care of me as if I, as a child, returned from a day at school. Even at night, she looks in on me to see if I sleep, covers me if there is a draft which could give me a cold. When I leave, she cries as if it was the first time in her life that she saw me. How could I not love my mother. I love to visit her to make her happy for all her care.

On that note, I’ll end today’s program which ends this series of the Rosary Hour. Again I turn my attention to all sons and all daughters. On this special day of the year let us show gratitude to our mothers. It is the custom of children to offer Communion for the intentions of living mothers or pray for peace for the souls of our deceased mothers who went to their reward. Some children offer the sacrifice of the Mass. If you think of it, kiss your mother’s brow or hand which worked for you and brought you up. May we every day, consider Mother’s Day for the Lord reminds us to remember our mothers. Let us love and honor our mother and often ask ourselves: Do we live as our mothers taught us. May the Lord bless our mothers. Let us remember as well our Heavenly Mother whose month of May is dedicated to her. Attend May devotions if possible and recite the rosary. Let us keep thankful for the care that our Mothers gave us.