**November 19, 1933**

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

Last week I talked to you about divorces; I proved to you that divorce, whether it is between Christians or people of other faiths, increasingly spreads and tears at the foundations of the family and society, and causes awful harm to innocent children. Among us Catholics and Poles there is another parasite, no less harmful to either our faith or our nationality. I would even say that it has spread its dominion, especially amongst our youth who have acquired a great taste for it, even though it bites and poisons, causing irreparable harm.

It is strange that the greatest victims are our Polish women. They don't want to fall into miseries but they fall off the path with open eyes. Often, they become victims out of their own free will. Pleadings and threats of others are for nothing. Tears and unsuccessful prayers are in vain. Some of them forget that a Polish woman should be proud of her nationality and not lose her and her parents' faith. Others, bedazzled by superficiality, regard friends of different background or faith to be worse and base. There are even those that are light headed enough, seeking happiness, that fall into traps that have been cunningly set for them. All of them commit a greater or lesser mistake, which sooner or later they will have to regret and unfortunately cry over with bitter tears. It is true that our youth works and plays with people of different nationality and faith; today they even pray, not with the tongue of their mother and father, but with a foreign one.

The entire environment, work, recreation, and even prayer leads them to others, not to their own. It is not surprising that all of this has an enormous influence on the minds and life outlook of our youth. After all, there is the saying, "those with whom you associate, you become." This refers to all classes of our society, from the poor to the wealthy, from the worker to our intelligentsia. I will even say that the educated and wealthy are at greater fault in this area than others. That the fish stinks from the head causes simpletons to follow those who long to be trailblazers in our society: Polishness is disrespected and religion is trampled over! I know that some will smile out of pity, another will wave his hand and tell me that one has to go with the flow and not against; sooner or later we will lose our tongue, our language and in spite of warnings there will always be losses to the faith; there is no point in even talking about them! Can a doctor, seeing his patient slowly dying, stand by inactively? Can he administer poison to hasten the dying? Never, absolutely never. Is a priest free to, seeing someone going astray, point him to the road of faster loss or is it not his obligation to stand in front of the path of the misguided one and openly say, even emphatically crying: "This is not the way, and you are not allowed to do it!" Yes, and here is the title of today's talk:

**Mixed Marriages**

Marriages can be mixed in religion and in nationalities. Let us suppose that a Catholic lady gets married with an Englishman: a Methodist, Baptist, or someone else. This is a mixed marriage according to religion. If a Pole marries an Italian, English, or German lady, then it is a wedding mixed according to nationality. Let us consider marriages mixed in religion. What is the teaching of the Church? It is clear and at the same time severe. The Canon law teaches thus: "The Church strictly forbids getting married to any baptized person, in which one partner is Catholic and the other belonging to a heretical or schismatic sect. These marriages are forbidden by the divine law if they pose a danger to the soul of the Catholic side and the children." From this we find that the Catholic Church did not always just openly discourage and clearly denounce but also strictly forbade such marriages.

Canon 1064 states: "May the ordinaries and other pastors discourage, as much as they can, the faithful from mixed marriages. If they cannot not forbid it, they should try by all means so that the faithful do not take up such marriages against the laws of God and the Church." In canon 1065 we read: "May they also discourage the faithful from having marriage with those who have notably departed from the Catholic faith or with those who belong to sects denounced by the Church." The Church never gives a dispensation to mixed marriages, unless they are valid and proper: if the non Catholic side gives an agreement that the Catholic side will not be open to danger and if both sides agree that all the children will be baptized and raised Catholic. A few will say that the Catholic Church is in this teaching too tight and too one-sided. No, the Catholic Church is caring and attentive to the good of its subjects and stands on the guard of the temporal and eternal happiness of its believers. In mixed marriages, the Catholic side exposes itself to indifference in faith and a cooling in the fulfillment of religious obligations. In one word, the complete loss of faith!

Not long ago, I had a conversation with a great Catholic priest, not a Pole, who claimed that eighty percent of Irish Catholics fall away from the faith because of mixed marriages; and for the same reason sixty percent of German-Catholics lost their faith. Already Leo XIII said that mixed marriages lead easily to indifference, which is one of the greatest misfortunes of our age. In one of the dioceses here in America, the Bishop ordered the pastors to closely examine the results of mixed marriages. He got the report that 450 of such marriages: "four hundred resulted in a total loss of faith, and 90 percent of the children of these marriages never came into the Church." Father Jan A. Schmitt, points to the statistic according to which: "When one side is Catholic and the other non-Catholic, about sixty six percent of the children, from every group, never declares any religion, so that two-thirds die to the Church."

Here amongst us, because of the so highly praised freedom, which often hides itself behind careless thinking and strange mental contortions seeking novelties, for years there has been an inundation of the heretical principle that it does not matter what a person believes, that all faiths are equally good, and that man can just as easily achieve salvation in every faith. Well, this is the first step to the loss of the true faith. Non-Catholics are not obligated to go to Holy Mass on Sunday; they are not obligated to use the holy sacraments, they do not need to fast. The Catholic side begins to doubt and asks: "If some do not have to do this, why do I? Why do I have to mortify myself? Why should I restrain myself? Why?" Or maybe a Catholic wife will ask her non-Catholic husband to go with her to church. He will do that. In return for this favor, he will ask her to go with him to the evening services at a Protestant church; she goes because it is not just about politeness but also to keep peace in the marriage. There they meet in polite society, educated, maybe even favorable to her. She starts friendships that are naturally antagonized to her faith; there come invitations to coffee, tea, card playing, and other games; what follows is the breaking of the fast, leaving Holy Mass, neglecting the holy sacraments. Finally, the loss of faith! What if the non Catholic side stands openly to the interruption of the Catholic side in fulfilling obligations?  What if it is smug, and sneers at the practices of the holy faith? What kind of common life is that? How many arguments ensue, some bloody? Maybe I exaggerate? Listen to a few of these letters, which prove this statement.

Cleveland, Ohio

Beloved Father:

Please read my letter, even though it's long, because I have to say something, otherwise my heart will burst from pain and sorrow. Four years ago, having eighteen years of age, I married a young non-Catholic man. I was eighteen. We met in a factory. He promised me everything. A priest from the parish of N.N. married us. At first he treated me well; he did not forbid me anything. As soon as we had our first child he changed. He forbade me to go to church, he shouted at me and cursed at me. I suffered all of this. It was always even worse. Often when I would start crying he would leave the room and not return for the night. For the last two years, he has not given me peace. We have three children but he does not care for them. I even have to pray in secret. I baptized the children in secret. He forbade me to go to church; I have not been to Holy Confession since my wedding. On top of that I am not healthy and when I tell him that I have to go to a doctor, he curses at me until I get scared; he has sometimes said that the sooner I die the better because there are enough women in the world. His family does not visit us because they say that I am not his equal and that they are ashamed of me! If only I had known what would meet me? Today, I am abused and without desire and I cannot think straight. Maybe it is the punishment of God that I did not listen to my father who opposed the marriage and from that time has not been at our house a single time!" I keep here an example described by the French gazette "Croix" from Calais in the year 1897.

A certain French Catholic lady married some socialist. One has to remember that these French socialists are unbelievers, spreading poisonous hatred to God and the Church. American socialists are like lambs compared to these! The Frenchman managed to convinced his wife that the Catholic faith is the greatest foolishness under the sun after three years of effort. Delighted that he convinced and converted his wife, he went to a public winery and drinking there, he bragged about his victory. A little drunk but happy, with a song on his lips, he returned in the late evening to his house. Surprised, he saw a whole crowd around his house. He rushed into the house and saw his wife and three children on the floor- lifeless! Next to the corpse of his wife there lay a card with this inscription: "While I had religion I patiently endured all the adversities for the eternal reward. But ever since my executioner husband left me without faith I have been miserable. I don't want my children to be miserable as well, which is why I have poisoned them all."

The Catholic Church forbids mixed marriages because in these marriages the Catholic education of the children is in danger. Let us take the example in which a Catholic man marries a non-Catholic woman. If the heavy responsibility of Catholic education falls on anyone, then it is fundamentally on the mother. Neither the Church nor schools will replace the mother; supplementing what is lacking and later formation is the responsibility of the Church and school. Will the non-Catholic mother raise the child in a Catholic spirit? It is a funny question but the answer is very sad. Or do we expect a Catholic father to care for the Catholic education of his children in a mixed marriage? Let him just try. He will meet opposition, tears, often even anger and arguments; the children remain under the influence of the mother. Every one knows the correctional facilities that have the name of the Good Shepherd. The courts send a certain class of girls who falter along the road of life. The sisters of these institutes keep the statistics of the criminals. In one of these places there are one hundred and twenty ladies, out of which ninety are children of mixed marriages.

Only a few months ago I was talking with a certain Pole who twenty years ago married a non-Catholic woman; they have two children: an eighteen year old son and a sixteen year old daughter. The children are not baptized. The father said plainly, "If they want to get baptized, they can do that, it is not my business. I will not force them to believe anything." It is sad, but it is a real life example. The third proof for why the Catholic Church opposes mixed marriages is that with few expectations these marriages don't have lasting joy or real happiness. The happiness of a marriage depends on unity. If there is a lack of unity in religion what can replace it? Nothing, absolutely nothing! If there is no unity there will not be sincerity or real love. I turn again to a letter which literally proves what the Church says about mixed marriages:

Chicago, Ill.

"Beloved Father,

I am twenty-seven years old. Two years ago I married a non-Catholic. I met him at a dance in the hotel N. The dance was arranged by the alumni of a Catholic school. My parents did not like him, especially my mother. She was against it and did not want me to date him; she did not let him come close to our house so I would meet him a few blocks from the house as he would pick me up in an automobile. This hastened our wedding. After the wedding I went to live with his parents. From the beginning the parents and especially the two sisters looked at me with a crooked eye. And he? Before the wedding he was nice and promised me everything, after the wedding he thought that I was a real rag with which he could wipe not only his hands but his feet as well. He abused me, he looked at me with scorn, and cursed at me. Whenever I would cry and start to complain he would chase me back to my parents. He would often not even want to sit at the table to eat dinner with me. His parents allowed us to live with them in the attic. I would spend the evenings like an orphan or a prisoner. When God gave me a child, he left me and to this day I have not seen him. I gave the child to an orphanage, and myself live in an inexpensive apartment. I go to work, I earn only seven dollars a week. When I eat a piece of bread, I cry over my broken life; I am scared and ashamed to go back home after this all."

How many of these unhappy people walk over this world? Only God knows. The fourth reason why the Catholic Church forbids mixed marriages is that the Catholic side suffers burning injustice because a Catholic man or woman cannot obtain a absolution from marriage while the non-Catholic side can leave the marriage whenever and start a new one. It is clear that in mixed marriages, the rights are not equal and the Catholic side is often hurt. I repeat that the Catholic side cannot have a new marriage, even in the case of a civil divorce however long the non-Catholic side lives; the non-Catholic side can try to obtain a court divorce and marry again without any problems. There is nothing strange that even St. Ambrose taught, "Be wary of marrying someone who is foreign to the faith."

I personally many years ago was the witness of the following event. A middle-aged woman came to me with a very strange request to give her daughter an "American" wedding. I pretended that I did not understand. The result of which the following scene ensued:

"Mother, I don't know what that means," I said.

"Hm, but you, Father, are here to know everything"

"I know a little, but not everything. Maybe it's better that I don't know everything. But what is this American wedding?"

"It's the kind that the sheriff in Pennsylvania gives. When my older daughter was getting married, the sheriff had them give each other their hands and say, 'So help me God. Two dollars, please.' And that was it."

After this farce I found out that the wedding was to be in an office because the husband was not Catholic. My advice to the contrary was to no avail. The mother insisted on this American wedding, explaining that the older daughter was fortunate to have him and that she lives peacefully. I made an attempt for a dispensation and on the established day this American wedding took place, as one would say "sine crux et sine lux", as in without a cross or candle, like a Friday night event. No more than seven or eight months later, I am called to the office, I see, someone is sitting and crying. I look, it's the patron of the American wedding. She is crying as though she broke both of her legs. I wait. After a long time of misleading and yelping, she relates how both of her son-in-laws left their wives, her daughters, took the money and ran from Buffalo, without saying goodbye or letting them know the destination of their trip. To this day, no one knows where or for what they left. The mother was left with two widows; currently, she cleans different offices at night in the city so that the victims of the "American weddings" do not starve to death.

Once more, I turn to our Polish ladies. I don't remember where, but I read a warning about mixed marriages which the author titled "Christ or Diana". This title is taken from a certain painting in which the main role is played by a beautiful Roman virgin, accused of being secretly a professor of the faith of Christ. She stands in the presence of the judge and witnesses. Off to her side there stands some incense in honor of the goddess Diana; on the other side there stands a wealthy man from the Roman aristocracy, her pagan fiancé, who says: "Throw just one piece of incense in honor of the goddess and show that you do not believe in Christ. This will give you freedom and later a happy marriage with me." I do not know what she picked, Christ or Diana! I don't know if she found torture and death with Christ, if she abandoned her faith, renounced Christ, and gained freedom and the promised happiness in marriage with a pagan. I only know that today the victims are many and unhappy who renounce Christ, resent the principles of Christian marriage and enter into marriage with people of other faiths! Next to the path of life, on which mixed marriages go, there lie numerous victims: husbands, wives, and children. From their mouths there run complaints of pain and sorrow, for the carelessness and imprudence of those who should know better. I call out to our youth: if you love God and your faith, if you want to be joyful and happy, guard yourselves from mixed marriages.

We have one more type of mixed marriages: those of different nationalities. Naturally, both of the sides are Catholic. A Pole with a German woman, a Polish lady with a Frenchman, etc.. In such circumstances there is no prohibition in the Church, as the faith is one and the same on both sides. But here it is an issue of nationality. Not all Polish priests look at this issue the same way, even though they admit that marriage of mixed nationalities causes enormous holes in the walls of Polishness. Some claim that it is a natural thing, so what is there to worry about? Maybe this would be right if we didn't have so many of our own youth, or if among these youth there were no candidates willing for marriage. Maybe one could also agree to this if our youth was morally bankrupt, but thanks to God this is not the case either. After all, this youth, mostly healthy morally and physically stands above the level of the youth of other nationalities. Why seek beyond one's own nationality? God the Creator himself established the borders of nations , why should man reach his hand out to gradually erase these borders or to sometimes to completely destroy them? The farmer in his field does not sow his wheat with the rye; he does not place the lettuce with the carrots, but each separate so that his field shows such a pretty and beautiful sight. So too does God do. He created various nationalities; if you plant the wheat and the rye in the same piece of land, what will come out of that? Plant the lettuce and the carrots in the same rows, what will grow out? Does the natural law not oppose such mixing? Others claim that from marriages of mixed nationalities there comes a better and more excellent generation. In this issue I am a skeptic. The best example we have is the so called Nordic aristocracy, whose blood, in spite of Anglo-Saxon origins, was mixed with various nationalities.

How is this generation morally or physically? Moral and physical weaklings and dwarfs; further explanation is not necessary. There are those that teach that America is a "pot in which all the nationalities melt into one." What kind is it to be? I don't know! I cannot understand it. Are we not exemplary citizens like others because we try to keep the language, customs, and traditions that are unique to us only? America is like one giant pot in which all the tribes and nationalities melt into and lose their national characteristics. Man is not a bullion or an animal. Man has reason, a will, and an intellect. What happened with the pot of Prohibition should also happen with this Melting Pot with respect to mixed marriages.

Every nationality has its strengths and weaknesses, which not only disagree with other nationalities, but indeed enter into an open conflict. How can a Polish woman agree with a Frenchman in marriage; a German with a Pole: a Pole with an Englishman, and so on? I don't speak of only exceptional cases. A Polish lady, marrying a foreign nationality, exposes herself to unpleasantness and disagreement which starts with name-calling, abuse and suspicion, and finally end in court. I speak from experience, as I have to admit in shame that I have a great example in my own brother, who for many years is heavily doing penance for taking on a non-Polish wife! More than once, I cry a little when my eighty-two year old father writes to me that a man of foreign nationality has stolen from our family my youngest and most beloved daughter who for this treachery is no longer a sister!

Our nationality, here in America, is hurt and wounded by mixed marriages in both in religion and nationality. They cause loss to both the Church and Polishness, the Polish traditions die, our youth abandons all that smells of Polishness, and eagerly take on whatever contains foreignness. They do this because that is what is demanded of us in our times, principles, circumstances, and surroundings. We lose, others gain. May our priests look into this, may our parents be in attention; may our youth seek happiness amongst its own and not beyond the boundaries of both faith and Polishness.