November 12, 1933

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

Last week, I endeavored, my dear listeners, to explain the meaning of Christian marriage; that, in fact it was a sacrament; that it was of God's institution, and has as its characteristics, unity and indissolubility. This is not a new or unheard of teaching. The church has held it for two thousand years and will hold it to the end of the world, otherwise it would not believe God's commandments. Naturally, the world does not take a fancy to that. And there is no wonder about that. That's the way it's always been. The light can't live with the darkness and the darkness with light. Christ was crucified for teaching the truth; and for that truth, the church is ready to be crucified. It's natural that pagans reject Christ's truth; that even that some Christians do not agree with it, cynics laugh at it and that too is understandable. However, when even Catholics or so-called believers throw out certain truths of the holy faith, and stubborn less live in error - brings fort some deep thought by all who care about daily happiness and eternal existence. It is no wonder that Holy Father St. Pius XI, in his encyclical, "The Worth of Holy Matrimony" writes in words of regret, "It is painful to us when we see that God instituted marriage, especially in our age, is taken so lightly and almost thrown out openly without shame and is stepped upon and laughed at in word and writings, theatrical presentation of various kind, romance stories, in the media constantly. On the contrary divorce, adultery, shameless activity are presented without a tinge of shame. There is not a small number of books, which dare to be called didactic, are headed for a dark road. Passed as the newest findings contrary to stable tradition. Disseminated through modern media they reach each corner and poison on the pretext of illuminating the mind. And so the title of our talk:

 The Destruction of Family

About six years ago, here in Buffalo, there was a Polish family living happily and peacefully with five small children. The oldest was nine, the youngest just short of a year old. Their home was paid off and newly remodeled. The husband was sober and diligent caring about the good of his wife and children. It seemed that this was a model Polish family. The wife, however, wanted to be at an identical level with her husband as did her unmarried girl friend who was searching for a husband. The wife, responsible to this time, began to have coffee and tea and play cards with her girlfriends. Naturally, she left her children at home and when the husband came home from work he not only had nothing for dinner and found his wife absent from their home. He brought this to the attention of his wife and got angry responses, which ended in the naive response: "I didn't marry you to spend my life as a prisoner.: After a time the wife began to go out in the evening; she learned easily and was proud of herself. At a certain party she met a non scrupulous man, a crook, who also had a wife and children. They both wove the web. He complained to her and she naturally began to feel for him. They met more and more together from mutually sympathy which grew into a more intimate relationship. they formed into a unfaithful wife and a Judas husband. The two families began to be graveyards to peace and happiness. The unfaithful wife and the traitor husband began to seek escape from their marital commitments and so...divorce, the usual escape from a commitment made. Reason for divorce for the wife: brutality of the husband. The husband claimed argumentative and harping wife. The judge gave divorce on the spot. That same day, the divorced couple headed for the automobile capital, Detroit. They started living together without marrying before a justice of the peace. Do you think this is the end of the story. Not quite. The divorced wife was killed by a car. She was walking absorbed thinking about her husband and children when struck by a car and killed on the spot. The unfaithful divorced husband, despairing, began to drink heavily and ended up in a home.

Both husband and wife, children and nations lose in a divorce. Listen. On the day of the marriage. The young are faced with the question: how long will we live together? a year, two...maybe five? There is the uncertainty. Maybe one of the two already make up their mind that they will look for happiness elsewhere away from the family home? Why should the husband work, even suffer in health because of heavy work, if the wife should leave him at the first available pretext and goes for another. How can a wife live in peace and satisfaction and carry out her household obligations, taking care of the children when there is before her eyes the possible shadow of divorce which would destroy her happiness? And who can fathom what goes on in the minds and hearts of the children of the divorced parents? Thrown to relatives or neighbors, they are moral cripples and their parents will be responsible to God. Society itself suffers in the long run. Look at nations whose crippled vision of marriage and its holy state, and what has changed? History teaches us that Greece stood in its glory as a civilization when divorce was unknown. Rome ruled Europe up to the time that divorce was unknown. Both civilizations fell, when the marriage bond were untied. Why should we aim for a similar fate? We have modern examples in France, Russia and our United States. Where did divorce originate? Pundits tell us that even in old Athens, about six hundred years before the Christian Era, the wise man, Socrates, established a law when a few cases of divorce came up, Rome did not know divorce through the first five hundred twenty three years of its existence. The Romans brought the idea to Athens and to Rome. The first divorce was given in Rome to "Spurysz Ruga". The idea then spread through Rome that Roman matrons counted their years not according to the consuls, but to the number of husbands who abandoned them. The year 80 already saw easy divorces; which idea had spread throughout the world like the Great Flood, leaving disharmony, misunderstanding and even murder. In France, a Princess declared that marriage was out of fashion.

Take a look at government statistics to see what is happening in these United States. The statistic demonstrate alarming numbers. From 1888 to 1932 in our courts there were three million three hundred and forty eight, eight hundred and six divorces annually. Each year the sum increases. In 1888 there were only twenty eight thousand six hundred sixty nine divorces etc. The statistics indicate that year after year as a result of divorces, one hundred thousand children lose their father or the care of the mother. No wonder that among us we have people without honor, who life and are beset with robbery and murder. American family winds sow the seed of discord and we suffer the storm. Children instead of being raised in a family circle, with the strict eye of the father and the caring hand of the mother, are brought up in the streets of our cities. A cow cares more for its calf than a divorced father or mother about their children. The grow up like trees in the forest. Our society pays the price for divorces. However, divorces are not only called a sign of civilization but a true blessing of the twentieth century despite the fact that divorce is the traitor of families and nations, and an enemy of the most merciful father, wife and children; that it leads to a variety of excesses even against the natural law. One of our listeners sent us a letter with the following concerns: "My married life is like hell on earth." I have nine children and an alcoholic husband. He drank a lot before we got married but he promised that he would shape up. Up until now he has not done so. He drinks more than ever before. I fear for my life and am concerned about my children. He beat me more than once without mercy. Do I have to live this way with someone who is inhuman like cattle. Is it possible for me to get a divorce in church?"

I am interested, whether before you married, you took counsel with your parents or with a confessor? How many of our young women are bamboozled in blindness and then, when they cannot break the bond, cry and lament over their state. The Catholic Church fully understands that some families will lead unfortunate loves, and that divorce is not permitted. You need to understand, however, that there are instances the church permits a separation, with the understanding that until the spouse dies, one cannot get married, on the basis of St. Paul the Apostle's writing in the first letter to the Corinthians, chapter seven, verse ten: "and for those who are married, the directive is, not from me, but from the Lord: that the wife should not leave the husband but live without one or be reunited with the husband." I reiterate: this is not a divorce. These situations are not common but can be phrased in this manner: If the common life is so deleterious to the innocent party that there is danger of losing life, or ultimately losing one's soul, or there is no hope for the situation to improve, there is possibility of separation from table and bed. The innocent party should have recourse to the bishop, who will investigate the allegations and permit the separation or death of the other party or for a temporary time. If the threat of life is so convincing and there is imminent danger the innocent party can be separated and not wait for the diocesan decision in the case.

My dear readers: It is clear that the Catholic Church does not permit did not permit divorce and will not permit it. There is one other question: is it lawful for a "Catholic to strive to get a civil divorce? The answer may be clarified by the following letter sent to me:

 Buffalo, NY

I listened to your program last week on Sunday and I send a question: Three years ago, I got married before a justice of the peace, not in church because my intended did not wish to go to confession and that he would leave me. Today I regret the decision I made. My husband does not work; he only walks the streets and stays out late at night. I am forced to go to work because he doesn't. He talks to me with terrible words and even hit me with his fist. Will I sin if I sue him for divorce?

It is not my aim to judge you for your thoughtless actions. You were afraid of losing him. Now you weep and grit your teeth. Instead of finding happiness you have stepped into the mud. In marrying civilly instead of church you have committed a sin. Your civil marriage, as a Catholic, in the eyes of the church is not a valid marriage, only a civil bond and in this case the church allows a divorce. The innocent party could strive to be divorced civilly without taking on other marital commitments which would lead to more serious matters.

Finally I will read the answer from the pastoral Polish Bishops about marriage in 1921: All the faithful again, sacred, sacramental unions call holy; should with no less frankness and courage, call unlawful unions, illegitimate unions. Catholics who obtains a civil divorce from civil authorities, and in church with a free woman or an illegal divorce, and try to cover it up, should not be welcomed into your home. The act of deception is not a way out of a Catholic marriage. They are false prophets. The entire nation does not wish to have solely civil marriages and divorces, just a small portion, who mislead people in the truth. Civil marriages and divorces are similar to usury which benefits a small segment of degenerates. It is true that some nations have brought civil marriages and divorces into their culture, but it is also true that it did not bode well for the society. We seek the education of the experienced in the good and not evil, because it is easier to take care of it now than uproot it later.