November 12, 1944

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

On September 7, 1941, on the British Isles, a National Day of Prayer was legislated. On that day, the British of their respective religious traditions, headed to worship places for a talk with God. There, where before stood churches, today they lay in rubble; even there, prayerful people gathered. People stood in the middle of shells of burnt out buildings. They stood solemnly and composed. There was hardly a person in their midst who hadn’t lost a relative, in-law, or acquaintance in the war, especially in the time of the bombings of London the preceding year; they gave thanks that they were spared. On the Day of Prayer, Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Hinsley spoke via the radio. Among other things, he said, “Let us pray for our allies who sacrificed their lives at the invasion. Let us pray for our friends, compatriots who help us in the time of our difficulties. We do not forget the people of Europe who became involved; those thrown into fear and deprivation because of those who wanted to rule the world. .

We ought to send up special prayers for Poland. Never before was a nation so mercilessly and brutally invaded. The former Cardinal Mercier, Primate of Belgium, whose country was attacked by the last war, said this about Poland, “Always true to its faith and true to its word, Poland never led any wars outside its own territory and always fought to free peoples and the European civilization. Poland suffers like we do in our country. She now suffers more than Belgium. The tyrants of the war had as their goal to erase Polish culture and faith and ruin a life of freedom for the entire nation.

“BE ON GUARD AND PRAY”

The obligation to communicate to God in fortune and misfortune, in happiness and sadness, in health and illness is not for one person, nor for some group or class of people, but is an obligation of every person. God seeks communication and tells us to pray. No one but Christ said, “Be on guard and pray in order that you do not fall into temptation.” In another place in Scripture, he says: “Ask, and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it shall be opened for you.” – St. Paul, the Apostle of the Nations understood the directive of the Teacher, because he often repeated: “Pray without ceasing.” - And one of the greatest Fathers of the Church, the highly educated St. Augustin, spoke thus: “He knows how to live well who knows how to pray.

Besides, all pray always and without break…pray out of necessity. Things pray, not knowing that they ***are***praying. The sun prays with its rays. The moon prays with its reflectiveness. Stars pray with their blinking properties. Storms pray with the lightning and thunder. Mankind is thrown to its knees to the ground with its blasts. Man prays with fear at the storm’s blast. All nature converses with the Creator day and night. Forests pray with the hum of their leaved trees. Fields pray with the waves of grain. Birds sing. Animals pray with their varied voices. War and Peace warns, “Mankind, pray! Fortune and misfortune needs prayer. It is just man that understands the need of prayer. A child, watching the elderly pray, folds it little hands and begins to murmur the words of prayer. The ninety year old man, when dying, prays with fervor. Who is it, then, that does not pray? The tyrant who, in his self-aggrandizement, preys on the weak and the helpless. Another who does not pray who deems himself as an arch-human and lord and looks at another human being as a prisoner. Or, the one who hangs, poisons, and murders not only men but even women and children. Or the one who creates concentration camps or work forced labor camps. Or the one who robs and cheats, and crushes the truth, the right, and virtue with iron fist and hard boot.

He also does not pray who is immersed in material matter, in the dollar, in the stomach or the amenities of personal pleasures. Or who maintains that one’s intellect is sufficient. Sooner or later, it dawns upon those who do not pray and then have recourse to prayer. Personal tragedy, loss of their treasure or their health brings them to their knees. The self-lover and cockscomb intoxicated and drunk on his own abilities and strength of reason, in time comes across certain darkness in his life from which he cannot extricate himself. He desperately seeks a way out. It is then that he cannot continue on his ill-chosen road. He must kneel and pray.

A human being must pray, Families must pray, Nations must pray. And it is understandable. – In London where I was in 1948, at the invitation of the former premier and noted leader, Sikorski, I had the opportunity to meet and converse with various important personages. Among them was a certain educator who had spent 18 years in prison. He awaited death. The sentence was already given. Luckily, thanks to certain negotiations, the sentence was not carried out. Before meeting the professor, the Premier told me smilingly, “Father, ask the professor about his experiences” – I thought I would not get to ask about the particulars in the case. I felt I would hear something interesting. I was not disappointed. I looked at the professor who was sitting on the other side of the table. An elder almost seventy years old. His face was gaunt; his figure wasted. Nevertheless a certain peacefulness and goodness reflected in serious yet very peaceful face. At my first opportunity in a midst of very animated talk, I asked: “Professor, Sir, what have your learned in the course of your journey in enemy lands?” – The old man smiled and replied in a tired demeanor, “In these 18 years of forced travel, I learned a great deal! Above all, I learned to pray. What my wife and children could not do, the imprisonment did for me. In prayer, I discovered God and understood the abilities and worth of man. In prayer I found strength and peace. And because of that I persevered. My time in jail proved to be a mission, a recollection. – The professor continued. I tried to listen. The one sentence of the professor that I kept thinking about was: ”I learned to pray!”

I don’t know if you are familiar with the name, Ignatius Domejka. Domejka was born in 1801 in Niedzwiadce, on Polish land. He was a world-renowned chemist and mineralogist. He was active in the revolution of 1831. At the end of the revolution, he escaped to Paris. From there he went to Chile in South America. Here he was known as a traveler, a writer, and a professor. He received a professor’s chair in chemistry and mineralogy. He had fantastic success. He advanced quickly. After being an ex-patriot for 35 years on alien soil. After a few years the government of Chile named him rector of the University of Santiago. After thirty five years stay out of the country, he came back to his fatherland for a visit. Everywhere receptions were given to him. He was heaped with praise. On one of those receptions given by the Academy of Krakow, someone from the gathering asked: “Rector, how did you manage being in the mist of unknown people and not hearing your native tongue, retain the purity of your native tongue?” Listen to his reply: “I prayed my daily prayers, morning and evening, in my native tongue, Polish.”

The Creator instilled into every human being a power which urges him or her to prayer. That unseen tendency is felt by both the learned and unlearned, philosopher and farmer, believe and unbeliever. And that in every instance. Without regard to the fact that misfortune pulls him down to earth or joy and happiness is present in the emotions, whether the soul sings or the soul is in pain, always something pulls man to prayer with thankful prayer or worshipful prayer or prayer of petition. Sometimes we hear the prayer of praise: “Glory to God in the Highest.” - Another time: “Before your eyes, Lord, we place our faults.” The man who prays not, lives not. He exists! And nothing more. Prayer is for every human being “air, food and drink”. Further, unless prayer is not necessary for every human being, it is not less necessary for the family! Families consist of individuals who constitute society. Someone once wrote “prayer cements the family together. Do you know what putty is? Let me explain. Putty is a cohesive matter. That’s what prayer does: it makes the whole of the individuals in the family stick together. The family that prays together, stays together. It creates unity, a whole in which paves the daily life of the occupants, irons out the individual wants, and accentuates the dedication and sacrifices of all. The home in which a prayerful family resides is a tower of Christian and civic virtues and brings blessings on the mother, father and children. But more about this in a future program.

From the family, I go to the nation. I have no thought here about any individual family. I speak generally about the residents of a nation with common language, origins, traditions and a sense of common good. All nations need to pray and in reality do so. Primitive peoples, pagans, and the uncivilized pray because they feel that they have an obligation to pray and can see the results of a prayerful attitude. Some worship the sun, some the moon or the stars. In some cultures, they worship animals. They gather in forests, fields and under the sky, under the aspect of communal worship. In some countries they build magnificent temples, pagodas, or basilicas. In all lands prayer structures are devoted to worship of one kind or another. In some countries they raise tall structures to the sky. It all speaks to the fact that there is a national urge to pray or worship. Woe to the nation which forgets to pray and has the outlook that it is not responsible and self-sufficient in regard to God. Then it is for it, the beginning of the end. Then the nation ceases to exist as a nation, there is strife in the fabric of its society. It is for this reason that in our current look at the nations of the world. There is a disintegration of the social fabric of the German nation. God’s justice and the vengeance of nature are operative. The nation is at risk because it has forsaken God and prays no more. Nations need peace, under the shadow of which can bloom industry, skills,, and the effects of beautiful, in a word, universal prosperity. Nations cannot evidence peace if they don’t pray. Just like the prayer of the individual can bring peace to the mind, so too the prayer of a nation, can bring peace to the nation. Prayer protects the buyer from the thief. Prayer changes the thief into a working citizen. Under the umbrage of prayer, citizens will be spared rebellion and storm. Prayer overwhelms social feuds and class envy. Workshops and salons, factories and steel mills, underground, schools, businesses and prisons will be transformed into temples under the blessed breath of prayer. The good of the nation shall thrive, because prayer will bring forth peace and creativity.

The effects of the current war are startling. The causes were varied for this world conflict. Among the reasons is the failure to pray. It is true that children prayed, although not all. It is true that women prayed. Also, not all. But did the nation pray as a nation? Where were those who stood as heads of the nations? Did the politicians and the diplomats pray? Did the military geniuses pray? Did the educators, professors, and writers, those who had the obligation to for the character of the youthful generation pray? Yes, they formed and built on shaky foundations, on materialistic principles; on neo-paganism; on principles totally in contrary to God the Creator’s teachings. In the end, who knows if God, looking on the perversity of the human race and say, “I will leave them alone by themselves! They wish not to ask me for light, counsel and help, let them rule by themselves on the earth!” And the Creator hid himself from His creation. Thus the impoverished and proud earth fell like a pagan god, like a golden calf with clay feet. For five years the oak lays rotten, eaten up by ugly insects. And today, on this earth, there is no corner where peace can be found. This beautiful earth was turned into a hospital of pain, and a cemetery of the dead. There, crying and lamentation; here, a great silence which hurts and saddens.

And now I turn fondly to all those who, like myself, are or Polish persuasion. The first blitz, the first attack at our homeland occurred. We know that our losses were great. We still do not know the full extent of the damage. There was left a skeleton crew of soldiers. Those who got across the border fought wherever they were able to. 

In the land of our fathers, however, there were masses, people from the plow and the clergy. The common folk, hard-working and having faith, remained. They stayed because he had to stay to soothe the national faults and take away the national suffering and sacrifice. Those who were left behind were the foundation of the social structure or to put it in a better way, the bedrock of the nation. No enemy, whoever they may be, cannot crush an entire culture of the nation. Therefore today, despite the brutal effort put forth by the enemy, this people lives, works, and prays. Inimical shackles forcefully put on, are not able and will never be capable of separating the Polish people from their God. Evidently the Providence of God wanted this culture to remain in place as long as their sacrifices, work and prayer were evident and with the help of God reestablish again the great culture and fatherland upon the ruins perpetrated by the enemy.

Today, everyone in the country prays… everyone! Every tear, every drop of blood, every breath is a prayer. The people pray for themselves, for their relatives even though they do not know where they are because of the separation occurring by the war. The people pray for the successful ending of the war. They pray for national freedom. For cooperation and a just government. They pray for the living and the dead. Let us now offer our prayers with this courageous people:

We lay our faults before you, Lord!

Make level our crooked way!

And

Do not abandon us, do not abandon us

Dear Jesus, do not abandon us!