November 5, 1933

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

Throughout the years of broadcasting the Rosary Hour, I took great personal interest in the many letters written to us by our listeners. I am grateful to all. Some letters made me happy, others sad. If I were to publish the letters, they would be read with great interest and with benefit to the reader. I never before was beset with so many marital questions as I have in the past several weeks. And so they were questions about civil marriages, divorces, and birth control; is it possible to marry a divorced person, or ride with married men in their cars, or attend certain activities? These letters clearly demonstrate the fact that our youth is beset with contemporary problems and therefore with paganism, so much so that although youth it is healthy, it nevertheless shows the fever of mind and heart, its turmoil and its lack of peace, its doubt and its lack of will power in this most important community, the family. Wives and mothers, bewail their situation; men and fathers of families, sadly relate their problems with the behavior of their wives and mothers. I am asked about the reasons and sources of this state of affairs. and it is not too hard to trace the sources. Our forefathers obtained for themselves the name "The Bulwark of Christendom". The merited that name meaning by it the virtues of heroism, dedication, focus and knighthood. At that time, the Polish nation was healthy. And it was in good shape because the family was a healthy institution and the family was healthy because marriage was based on healthy principles - that is, Christian and so Christ driven. These marriages were the cause of heroes, saints and martyrs. The entire world tips its hat to these historical personages: writers, historians, poets, musicians, artists and sculptors, imitated their virtues. When I think of the lives of our forefathers, and realize the wonderful traditions and ways of my contemporary countrymen, I ask myself: Why have we not been steadfast in our observance of these traditions and national observances which lifted our forefathers and made them models for our altars and churches. I do not wish to be maudlin and so on to the title of today's talk:

THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Pope Pius XI, in the encyclical "The Integrity of Christian Marriage", issued on December 31, 1930 writes: "We declare this untouchable foundation: marriage is not instituted by people, but by God; not from humans but from the nature of the creator, from God and the Restorer of that Nature, Christ the Lord, from whom it received its laws, its confirmation and its elevation to a sacrament. These laws cannot depend on human seeming or ideas contrary to them even if coming from the very participants. This is the teaching of Holy Scripture, such is the permanent and ordinary tradition of the Church; it is the testimony of the Council of Trent, which in the same words as Scripture claims "let no man put asunder," It reflects the unity of God as a Creator Principle.

Marriage is not only a mutual contract but a sacrament according to the Catholic Church. Marriage is not a figment of man's imagination, nor a civil institution but a institution of natural law and directly a divine institution. In the first chapter of the book of Moses, verse 27 we read: "God created man and woman" because he decided to give the first man a companion similar to himself. He brought her before Adam, blessed them and said: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." This is the way God instituted the first marriage in which the objective of marriage is evident. In the words of Holy Scripture: "For in this a man will leave his father and mother and join with his wife and they shall be one flesh." here we find yet two characteristics of marriage: unity and permanence. Marriage is a religious institution. All people in general and each individual person has immediate goals of various nature but the ultimate and most important goal is the glory of God. So too, marriage serves for the procreation of children and through that effort promotes the glory of God. As a result of the institution of marriage as a contract between a baptized couple was raised to the dignity of a sacrament. In 1852 the Sardinian parliament introduced civil marriages. Pope Pius XI in a letter to King Victor Emmanuel II, wrote: It is an article of faith that Christ the Lord raised marriage to the worthiness of a sacrament and the Catholic Church teaches that a sacrament is not a haphazard accompaniment to the state of marriage, but is of the very essence of marriage, so much so that the marriage knot between Christians becomes a law, in view of its sacramental nature; otherwise it is simply concubinage. Civil law which separates the sacrament from the contract for Catholic and wishing to rule about the correctness of the marriage bond, is contrary to Church teaching, and usurps the Churches law and makes concubinage equal to the sacrament. Again in October 27, 1852, Pius IX said: "That marriage is truly and essentially one of the seven sacraments of the New Testament and instituted by Christ, cannot be a secret to any Catholic. Otherwise there is no marriage even if it were not a sacrament, is essentially concubinage. From this stems the fact that the marriage bond cannot be separated from the sacrament and subsequently it is the right of the Church to establish the Sacrament as an institution of Christ." Pope Pius IX condemned the following statement: "The sacrament of marriage is only something added on and is but a blessing in front of a priest." By the power of civil authority marriage may take place between Christians and it is a righteous marriage; it is wrong to claim that the marriage contract between Christians is always a sacrament, or that there is no contract given through the sacrament." I repeat that the above assertions were condemned by Pius IX. From these assertions, the following conclusions are drawn: Among the baptized there cannot exist an essential marriage bond which would not be a sacrament, and of which the Apostle wrote in the letter to the Ephesians: "It is a great sacrament, and I speak in
Christ and in the Church." Our first parents were obligated to marry from the natural law and from a command by God: "Grow and multiply". In common parlance, marriage is a necessary institution. The question now arises: Is marriage is absolutely necessary for all people? The Angelic doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, teaches that marriage is not absolutely necessary for ALL people and is not so ordered. The argument is as follows: Everyone has the obligation to be concerned about things which are ordained for the personal good; but not everyone is obligated to be concerned about things needed in general but not necessarily needed by the individual. After all, human society cannot do without agriculture, without houses skillfully built, without clothing, health regimens; also needed are teachers, judges, buyers, leaders etc. Not everyone has the obligation to occupy himself with these occupations; it would be impossible. The same goes for procreation of children; not everyone is obligated; it has been so ordained that some will be single and not get married, contributing in other ways to the building of society. - However, one note of caution, there are times when marriage becomes a necessity to remedy a wrong that was done. In contemporary times, various teachers maintain that a country for its own protection has the right to legislate marriage. Some countries have already made the law. The teaching of the church is such: Every individual has the preternatural right to marry. That right cannot be taken away, unless the individual has himself revoked the right in the case where marriage would hinder vocation. Unjust laws would be those which forbid marriage to the individual, e.g. the poor or the sickly since lawmakers cannot cancel the laws of the creator. In regard to these considerations, let me read a letter received:

Detroit, Mich.

Dear Father,

I am twenty years old and brought up as a Catholic. I met a Polish gentleman at work. He left his country leaving a wife and child. Here, he civilly married a Polish girl. The lived together for three months and sued for a divorce because they couldn't live compatibly. I have known him for two years and love him. I asked a pries if we could get married in church, and was surprised to hear that it was not possible. Is this just? I really don't care. We will get married in court. That's also legally acceptable. I know Catholics who have married in court and are as happy as those married in Church. Because of this I lost faith and will believe no longer. It is better to live without the church, since it negates what civil law permits. Is this not a curious outlook on the sacrament of marriage for a Polish woman and a Catholic. The woman says that she is losing her faith; I dare to say that she has long ago lost her faith, because having faith, she would speak and think differently. The gentleman left his legal wife and child; was Americanized seeing that he could not marry in church, and that he could take on a legal wife according to civil law easily. He persuaded her to get married before a judge. Now he has confused the girl who ostensibly was brought up a Catholic in whose eyes the church is unjust and unreasonable. In here temporary blindness she sold out peace of conscience and the faith of her mother and father. No dear child, in the eyes of the church, your marriage is not valid. For non-believers, marriage in front of the justice of the peace are important; for Catholics, it is not.

Buffalo, N.Y.

Dear Father,

In these days, you need to live among the people, to know their poverty and needs. Despite that, the Catholic Church teaches people that they need to live married and have many children. But that teaching obligates only the poor and uneducated. The rich and the aristocracy could do what they want. For them there is divorce and a comfortable life. My father and mother life in discord for ten years, they curse each other, fight a home, and we their children, eight of us, have to listen to it all. If I ever get married, it will be in court because I know that it doesn't work out, I'll get a divorce.

Truly, that's a sad scenario but thank God, that it is not representative of all marriages. There are families and that in the large majority that are peaceful and industrious, even saintly. The Church teaches that marriage is inseparable, because that is what the Savior taught: " What God has put together, let no one put asunder." In addition the spouses in good faith and unforced will, take the solemn pledge: "till death do us part." As far as the assertion that the church forces couple to have the most children - it is not the truth. The church teaches that good judgment and mortification are important to the married couple; and the consequence of that teaching are evident. The teaching of the church is one and the same for all, the rich and the poor, for the learned and ordinary people, for rich men and plain men. History teaches us the church has encountered persecution, schism and heresy because of its stance. The church, nevertheless, stands firm as the rock of Gibraltar, in defense of its faith and traditions. Is it the fault of the church that your parents live in disagreement. Is it the church's fault or the teaching of the church? The church remands and teaches that husband and wife should be angels of peace, agreement and patience; that they ought to suffer and be joyous together. The church did not force your parents into marriage, but once that made promises to each other, the shut the door and locked it and threw the key in the well. You claim that if you get married it will be before the justice of the peace, so that you can get a divorce easily - and I say:"you will not find happiness and peace!" Because that is the way of thought of the young, they do not get married with conviction. Divorces, the shame of today's society, attract the woman to the altar of honor and love, take away from her the essential wonder of marriage at the divorce. The results are sad looking at marriage through that way of looking at life itself. Disasters to the family they become disastrous to nations, society, God and the Church.

Finally, I will read an event from a letter sent to me: "I don't know what to do. A year ago I got married in court. In the factory where I worked, my girl friends were convincing me that marriage outside of the church could bring happiness. My husband, right after we got married, started attending "Town Social Club" for entertainment; six months later, he bribes the sheriff and got a divorce and a month later got married in another state. I am devastated and have no peace. It seemed that God punished me for what I had done in marrying civilly. My parent cried and warned me against it. I am a nervous wreck and ill. Sometime I sit for hours looking at my little baby and despair. Abandoned and without work, what can I do? " I leave this sad tale and fruitless endeavor at marriage. I responded to this letter personally and will not reveal more for the person is well known in the hamlet she is in.