November 9, 1947

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

 The reasons for poverty as well as for misery in the world are various. One on the most important, without doubt, consists of the many and various illnesses. Therefore it is our obligation, every one of us without exception, on the strength of the love of neighbor, to carry relief and assistance to the sick and the suffering without consideration of where they came from, their race or belief. The commandment of love is general and pertains to all; all are covered and included. It is no wonder that the Catholic Church from its inception, created homes for the rejected, orphans, and homes and hospitals for the elderly. It even created special congregations of religious whose specific aim was to be the care of the sick. Health, without doubt is one of the most worth and important and valued gifts of life, as well as, at times, one of the neglected considerations in life. In hospitals, those who do not demand care and are ailing need to be brought back to health or strengthened physically for daily work, for assisting family life. Hospitals ought to get rid of pain, restore the bread giver to the family, care for the mother, childcare. Hospitals return the will to live, to work, to be satisfied, to good fortune. The Lord’s Wisdom: “Son, give way to your doctor for restoration of your heath for his work is necessary and his gifts are to be used in curing. How noble are the works of a hospital and a doctor, nurses and those who work in hospitals. The work of the hospitals it is important because they are an important part of society. The removal of disease removes privation and dearth of productive lives. It creates inner peace in society. Now to our talk:

 “CHRISTIAN MERCY

One of the many arguments which the Church gives the whole world for its validity and need for society in its quests for a spirit of mercy, love and almsgiving in regard to the poor and suffering. Christ himself maintained that the world recognizes true teachers by the merciful and good works of his disciples Love was always the word, mercy always the banner of the Catholic Faith. Besides, already in the Old Testament God proclaimed the directive: “I tell you, open your hand to your brother in need, who lives in this world with you.” The Jews did not know of nor had institutions of good works. The institutions began with Christianity which called intensely to mercy for the weak and the care of the elderly and sick. Christians began to create one institution after an other which took on a variety of names. Some examples were: “Brchotrohia”, homes for babies; “Orphanotropia”, Orphanages; “Nosocomia”, hospitals for the sick; “Xenodochia”, protection for travelers; “Gerantocomia”, Old Age homes, “Ptochotrophia” Poor Houses. All of these institutions from their beginnings had their connections with the Church. They were financed by almsgiving. In the sixth and seventh centuries with the relaxation of disciplines, the good deeds waned a bit. At that time the cloisters did not end trying to help the poor. We could name some here who cared for the poor or sick: Anonines, Joannitines, Elizebetans, Aleksians, Sharites, Dorotki, Hospitalers, Anastasians and others. In our times there is not as much to say about acts of Mercy. It is true that faith is the essential element for our salvation. True, hope is the helping hand, and paves the way. It endows us with good fortune. Did not the Savior call out: “This is the way they will know that you are Christians: If you love one another and have mercy. The Apostle of the nations said it succinctly: “whoever says that he loves God and hates his neighbor is a liar; who does not love his brother whom he sees, cannot love the God whom he does not see, My children, let us not love only with the word but with deed and in truth. “ From the above we could gather that, 1. Mercy is needed and demanded by the Savior and the Apostles. 2. Without works of mercy, a person cannot be saved. 3. No person can call himself the son of God unless he has mercy. 4. No one can get into heaven, unless he unlocks the door through the golden key of mercy. Eternal glory and eternal happiness depend on the mark of mercy on the brow and in the heart or on the works of mercy. You have reason to ask how this is demonstrated in Christ? What are the characteristics of this mercy? There are essentially three: First, mercy needs to be lasting and never failing. Second; it needs to be felt and pitied. Third, it needs to be expressed in deed, and effective. Fourth, it ought to be all inclusive, touching all with one and the same healing way. If someone’s mercy was common, catholic – there is no doubt that it was like Christ’s mercy. Love had to be the motive for Christ to hasten from heaven to earth.; mercy had him survive on earth for thirty three years; mercy finally nailed Him to the cross. His purpose to come to earth was the salvation of mankind. He devoted all his effort for this reason. The general purpose for all of His activities was solely the redemption of man. He gave totally to the goal of salvation. Salvation was his principal thought. The purpose for all of Christ’s activity was – mercy! When He taught he spoke from mercy, wishing to enlighten the dimmed intelligence of people. When He cured the sick, when he fed them, when he brought the dead back to life, he acted from mercy. For all thirty three years he was on earth. Did the salvation of mankind demanded so much and such long years? No! but it was necessary for Jesus to accomplish all that he had to do in daily living. People came to him without stopping and in all seasons. Even when he sat at table to eat as was the case of Magdalen. They came to Him at times when He needed rest, as in the case of Nicodemus who came to talk to Christ at midnight. Did he ever refuse to hear them? Did he turn them away? Did he refuse to serve them? Not even once did he turn them away and he said that any time and any season, He was there for them. Did he ever make an objection or hesitation in his boundless mercy? Never. Without the smallest taking into consideration who came, when they came close to him, in all circumstances – the Savior always was at the service of all. He was always available to be of service to the people.

 That love, that mercy which was the essence and goal of the Savior and in whom all eyes turned was the reason why the people came to him, with some kind of deep hope and unsullied faith, brought before him the sick, the blind the ill, the paralyzed, those convinced that His Love and mercy toward people will effect miraculous cures. They under stood that His love and mercy were not theoretical in nature but real life action and situation; a form and effected clear merciful love. The heart of Christ was a wellspring of the deepest mercy, feeling, and pity. Every one of his acts of mercy was connected with caring, sweetness, and feeling. For example: Having before Himself 5 thousand people He blessed five loaves of bread, he said, “I have pity on this crowd, and I won’t abandon them to fall along the roadside if they left without something to eat; they have been with me for three days. He does not take stock in his miracles but teaches his disciples, but demonstrated his mercy and feeling for the hungry crowd. Or when he was nearing the town of Naim, his disciples with Him, they came upon a large crowd. They were in procession with the remains of a widow’s son. Death had bereft the mother of here remaining support in her old age. She walked expressing her deep sorrow loudly that this happened in her old age. The crying reached the ears of the Lord, as he came upon the visage of this emaciated old mother. He came up to her and said: “Do not cry!” He touched her and uttered: “Young man, I say to you “Rise!” And he rose and began to talk and the Lord gave him to his mother. And after that? He probably stood for a while to note the mother’s joy. Such was the Heart of the Savior.

 At another time, he came to Bethany. Lazarus had been dead for four days, His remains in the mausoleum. At the home of Mary and Martha there were a gathering of friends and sympathizers. The Lord was approaching the site. They told them of the arrival. Martha came out to meet him. “Lord, she said, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. The Lord had tears when he confronted Martha. Are there any more moving words in the scripture than
And Jesus cried!” Is it no wonder that the Jews said, “Look, how much he loved him,!” They had not seen, in their lives, such an outpouring of feeling at the circumstance of a human being. That was indeed the heart of Christ. He cured ills of the body, and poured out his mercy upon the unfortunate. He served all kinds of needs, and soothed the hearts of the unfortunate. And in that soothing he served with love and to such an extent that his effulgent mercy was more than the factual healing.

 The Lord does not rejoice in telling the mother not to cry, but he brings her son back to life and into his mother’s arms. He is not satisfied with shedding a tear with Martha at the death of Lazarus but says to her: “I am the resurrection and the life “ as he had said, “Lazarus come out of the grave! And Lazarus comes out immediately. The mercy of Christ was constant - a joy at His expression. He was victorious in all suffering He encountered. He returned the sight of the blind man; healed the cripple; and returned the strength of the paralytic; He cleansed the lepers, and surprised the learned of His time with his Wisdom; He acted in contrast to the Pharisees with His humility. He receives the sinful woman with words of forgiveness: “Your sins are forgiven you”…He sends her away cleansed.

 These and similar characteristics of the mercy held in our Lord’s heart. When Christ instituted his Church, and when he instituted Christianity he showed that he did that in all his strength and beauty in his holiness and in His truth. His Church was to imitate him. He said to his disciples: “I am the light of the world, of all who come into this world, and I send you out into the world to spread the good news.” Among the various gifts with which the Lord blessed His Church, there is one lifetime gift, namely mercy and compassion. For it is written: “I wed you forever; and I wed Justice, mercy and compassion in judgment. At the time of Christ, the world did not know these virtues. There was no meaningfulness for them in the world. True history tells us that in pagan times, here and there, figures of noble character with a compassionate heart concern for the downtrodden. There were people of sacrifice willing to help those of working classes. However we ought to remember that all of this is just an embellishment on human nature. There is nothing praeternatural here, nothing Godly. Christ, from his works and his disciples demands a different mercy, a come redemptive love which takes life from hope. Such is the lesson that the Apostle refers to in the following caution: “There are three things that last forever: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love! – Love in the sense of the Latin, “Charitas”, which literally means mercy. Mercy in the Polish language is nothing more than pity, compassion and demonstrated in action. If the underpinnings do not come from faith, then the deeds can have a mark of gentleness of heart. They can be variously named – but they cannot be called works of Christian mercy. What kind of stipulations does faith give us? There is the obligation of all of us to serve the Lord Christ, giving honor and praise to Christ in His teaching without regard to the form and figure. Our faith teaches us: Blessed are those, who serve the Lord, for the Lord himself will reward them a hundred-fold for their service. “When served, the Father will reward the server.” Lord! When were we your guest, or naked or hungry or in prison, and did not serve you? Then He would tell them, “Whatever you did to those who were in jail, or hungry or in jail you have done to the least of your brethren, you have done unto me.” It is not necessary far and wide to translate the words of Jesus? Where and under which circumstances does Christ demand and at the same time be the object of our mercy as well service in our deeds of mercy.? Probably in heaven. There He can be the object of deep honor and glory. In the tabernacle on the altars? There, we could go in awe and pleading. There is another form Christ in which He comes to us hidden. He takes on the form of the poor, the abandoned and the sick. – “I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was your guest and you took me in, in prison and you visited me!” This is what our faith teaches us. therefore, to serve the sick and the poor, we serve Christ, our Lord. Serving the sick and the poor, we work out our own personal salvation. What does hope have to say in the matter of mercy? Hope tells of future glory and eternal happiness which is bound with mercy and belongs to acts of mercy. God admonished the king: “May you take my words to heart; redeem my sins with alms, my errors with mercy toward the poor. Perhaps God will forgive my sins!” The Lord’s prophet called out: “Give the hungry some of your bread, bring into your home the poor and the homeless. Then your holiness will shine brightly, and your health will go ahead of your justice and the Lord will take you unto Himself.”

 I pause here. I ask that all strive to take this talk to heart. Let all be sincere with self and ask his conscience: Did I take the idea of mercy to my heart? Buffalo and the vicinity in these two weeks will have the occasion and time to generously respond whole-heartedly in the matter of mercy, taking into account the collection on the building of the new hospital.