**October 15, 1933**

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

This moment is a very happy one for me. The reason is obvious. Forced by financial difficulties to temporarily withhold the radio broadcasting of the Rosary Hour, I doubted if there would ever be an occasion to recommence this weekly program. But instead, something quite natural happened. Man doubts and gives up, while God’s Providence keeps watch and comes to man’s aid. So I stand today before the microphone, and by the means of this, the most wonderful of all wonderful inventions of all time, I speak to my fellow countrymen and countrywomen who are a couple of thousand of kilometers away from me. I expect that our Sunday program will be your happy guest, awaited with eagerness and joy in your households; awaited not only by the elderly, but by the young people, not only by our countrymen born in Poland, but also by American youth with Polish backgrounds. The aims of our program are well known to you. They are nothing less than truth and Polishness; the privileges, teachings and rules of the Catholic Church, the duties and rights of American citizens of Polish descent. I wish to prove to you that the Catholic Church is the only advocate of the poor and oppressed, which in spite of twenty centuries of persecution and oppression up until this very day opposes the powerful and mighty and cries boldly to them in the words of our Savior: „Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.” [[1]](#footnote-1)

As the son of Polish parents, often to lift your spirits and encourage you during everyday grayness and the unending battle for a better existence, I will move before your eyes beautiful, exquisite scenes from Polish history, from the lives of our fathers and forefathers. Thanks to these scenes you will see who they were, and who we ourselves should become! Because it is time, it is high time that we stop believing that we are worthless and good for nothing, as some would like to us to think; because I repeat that up until now in our adopted fatherland there is no part of society that is as healthy and noble; as calm and hard-working, as pious and warm-hearted as that part in which Polish blood flows and the Polish heart beats. I don’t aim to hurt or offend anyone, although I am convinced that I will not please everybody, because the teachings and principles of Christ never were understandable for everyone and still aren’t. I don’t go into reasons. In my talks, don’t bother to search for elaborate sentences or an elegant style; I warn you that your efforts will come to nothing. I will speak to your mind and your heart, with words simple and easy to understand, not only to teach you about eternal happiness, but at the same time to clear the way to earthly happiness, by improving and strengthening your everyday existence. Finally, the Rosary Hour is broadcast with permission from His Excellency, the Bishop of the Buffalo diocese. I am grateful to him for his gracious permission; only to him will I answer for these talks, which I will try to present in the word and letter of the commandment of love of neighbor. After these remarks, I come to today’s speech, which will be entitled:

**The Polish Soul**

In a collection of stories by Professor Ossendowski we read the following:   
“One evening, a worker of a great metallurgical factory in Warsaw, Walenty Sosnowski, returned home tired. He was angry and slightly tipsy. Actually, he had been drinking out of anger, as he had found out that his comrades had not voted for him, but instead had chosen another person as chairman of the factory’s socialist committee. At home, everyone was waiting with supper. His only son was there too, clean and neatly dressed. The father was proud of Władek, because he gave speeches at committee meetings, and talked about Marx and Engels as if he had known them personally. Władek read a lot, and his reading was not being wasted. Now he immediately realized, as did Mrs. Sosnowska, that his father was upset and out of spirits. At supper, the old worker talked about his disappointment and ended with these words, “Now I’m no longer good for them, when that old hand Kurkowski came! And when it was necessary to be at the owner's throat and struggle with the police, then I was good enough?” Władek smiled and commented, “Kurkowski – that barker! He hasn’t read anything except some stupid brochures of German make. He won’t keep his position long, he will go under!” “I haven’t read much either,” said his father. “Well, yes,” said the boy. “But Dad, you are a convinced socialist, brave and honest, while Kurkowski makes his career... only by his mouth”. And when he’ll be needed he’ll run off! I’ve seen such barkers before, believe me!” Sosnowski got lost in thought, and after a while said to his son, “There is a meeting on Saturday, Władek. We’ll go there together, and you can say something against Kurkowski. All right?”

Suddenly the boy started and went pale, as if he had something to say, but he remained silent. After supper Sosnowski realized that his wife’s eyes were teary and that her lips were trembling. “What’s wrong, Momma?” asked the husband. She kept silent, so the old man, busy with his own thoughts, didn’t inquire further. The family had begun to prepare for bedtime, when suddenly, Władek, lifted his head from over a book and said to his father, “Father, I wanted to tell you that I have joined the Volunteer Army.” “What?” exclaimed his terrified father. “You? The Army?” “Yes, they are calling young people, because otherwise the Muscovites will take Warsaw, and then everything will be over!” replied the boy. The old man kept silent. He walked across the room, sat down, then again jumped up and came up to his son. “You will fight for the landowners, for the intelligentsia?” he asked. “For Poland, Father!” replied his son, lifting his eyes up to his father’s face. “And socialism, and the party?” Sosnowski kept asking. “Everything is as it always was,” smiled his son. “How so?” “First, we have to have a country where we can spread socialism,” replied his son. “If we don’t defend our Poland, than Muscovite communists will show us socialism!” He laughed, and seeing that his father was listening to him intently, added, “We must wait long until Polish socialism will come alive. Father, you cannot ‘socialize’ poverty. You have to lift yourself up, get richer, and only then talk about justice in wealth distribution. It’s obvious!”

His father remained silent. He dropped his eyes, and sat down, deep in thought. Władek walked around the table, came up to his father and, putting his hand on his arm, said with growing intensity, “All of this is meaningless! Socialism, the party, the class struggle, Marx, Kurkowski, and we ourselves! This is all worth nothing in the face of what is happening now. Poland, for whom so many have given their lives, both workers and lords, nationalists and socialists, Poland is dying, drowning, because she is being overrun by gangs from Moscow! And when she will be completely overrun, Germany will also attack, and that will be the end, the end until the end of time! Do you understand, Father, do you understand?” “Heaven forbid,” the old man whispered. “You see?” the son brightened up. Now every Pole should go forward, and leave their accounts to be settled later, when we crush the Muscovites.” The son sat down to his books, while his father was left in a state of deep thought. It was 1 AM when he finally went to bed, but he was unable to sleep, he tossed and turned until morning, he sighed and he thought. Sometimes he muttered, „Damn, they filled Siberia and prisons with our Poles and now they feel like taking over Warsaw too!” It was morning when he finally fell asleep. When the family was drinking their morning coffee and the father was getting ready to go to the factory, his son came up to him and said, “I am going to the barracks today, father. I wanted to say goodbye. Take care!” The old man hugged his son; suddenly he rested his forehead on his son’s arm, and his wide shoulders started to tremble and shake. He cried and through his tears he said, “Go, in the name of God! Go! And fight like a Pole. Give it to them for torturing us, for our blood and our anguish! Go! Go!”

Władek Sosnowski, whom his friends had nicknamed „Socialist”, because he liked to go on and on about Marx and about class struggle, had been in the regiment for a long time already. He fought in rain or shine, and he was always cheerful and made light of everything. “Honored sir,” he said jokingly to a volunteer like himself who was a nobleman. “Remember about the need for social justice.” “Go on?” asked his comrade, smiling. “Because, you see, I’ve been shooting mightily at Muscovites today and I have only 15 cartridges left. I see that you still have a fair share of those nuts left – share them in the name of social justice!” His comrade gave him a package and said, “So how would you ask a Bolshevik? In the name of what?” Cheerful Władek replied immediately, “That would be easier! I’d put the rifle butt in the head in the name of communism; nothing for you, and I would take everything by the handful!”

Under Radzymin the volunteers passed their time with such kind of jokes, and during difficult and fierce battles the young people, sons of landowners, farmers and workers fought equally hard. The worker pierced the Muscovite attacking the landowner with his bayonet, the nobleman and future heir to a fortune saved the live of a farmer’s son, and he carried off the battlefield the son of the worker, a Socialist party member. There was not and there could not be any difference, because each of them stood before the one and the same common grave. Władek under Radzymin in one skirmish distinguished himself especially. He beat up the Bolsheviks and two who were slightly wounded he took captive and brought back to the camp. „So you have been hard at work!” said to him the officer who commanded the whole division! “For our torment, our ill-usage and blood, Captain!” replied the worker. “I remember how my father told me this when he said goodbye. And if he, a socialist through and through had said so, it means that our torment was truly great. So let the Muscovites pay for it!” “The ‘Virtuti Militari’ medal will surely not pass you by, I’ll see to that!” said the officer upon departing. Half an hour later, the division was transferred to counterattack. In the first rank, beside the captain, ran Władek Sosnowski, a smile on his face. From the Russian ranks came cries of “Long live socialism!” “I’ll show you socialism!” Władek replied. Then the Bolsheviks fired a volley.

The captain staggered and fell on his left side. The soldiers, seeing this, stopped in their tracks and began to retreat. The Muscovites ran forward to capture the wounded officer, who with difficulty rose to his feet and pulled out his revolver. ”Stay!” the loud command was heard. Those retreating stopped, and Władek Sosnowski cried once more, “Forward. We will not give up our commander!” And he ran forward. He reached the wounded man in time, just as he was being surrounded by the Muscovites. With his bayonet and the butt of his rifle he threw off a few assailants, and then a few volunteers ran forward. It seemed as if the battle would start again. The Bolsheviks had put forward a new company. The Poles, after a desperate defense, were forced to retreat. They came back, carrying the officer and defending themselves from the enemy, who was in pursuit. Yet again and again a volunteer fell, and with each step the group of Poles became smaller and smaller.

Two volunteers fell at the same time, and the seriously-wounded captain, whom they carried, fell to the ground. Władek ran up to him, lifted him up and took him on his back, crying out, “Cover the captain, boys!” The Bolsheviks shot more and more, furthering the damage among the Poles, who took a few hundred more steps until a volley sounded. And suddenly, as if swept away by the wind, this handful of brave men was gone. Everybody fell to the ground, only Władek Sosnowski was left. He stopped as if shocked, for suddenly the wounded captain grew very heavy on his back. He carefully let him down to the ground and had enough time to see that the officer had his head smashed to pieces, but at that moment he himself fell onto the captain’s chest and remained stiff, tense. After a moment Władek’s body started to move slightly, as if flattening itself, pushing into the Polish soil, which he had loved more than socialism, because this was his land, Polish land, the land of his fathers, fed by their blood and torment until the beautiful moment of rebirth.”

Dear Radio Listeners:

One more time, and with emphasis I repeat the words of Władek, “All of this is meaningless! Socialism, the party, the Socialism, the party, the class struggle, Marx, Kurkowski, and we ourselves! All of this is worth nothing in the face of what is happening now. Poland, for whom so many have given their lives, both workers and lords, nationalists and socialists, Poland is dying, drowning, because she is being overrun by gangs from Moscow! And when she will be completely overrun, Germany will also attack, and that will be the end, the end until the end of time! Do you understand, Father, do you understand?” “Heaven forbid,” the old man whispered.

Can we not apply this scene, and especially Władek’s wise questions to the situation and behavior of our emigrants? Our emigrant group is built on the foundation of suspicion – the lack of trust in others, as well as outright hatred. Our fathers came here from under three partitions; they had been tortured by Muscovites, persecuted by the Prussians, oppressed by the Austrians. The Russian tsar – the German and Austrian emperors turned the native Pole into a Russian, a Prussian and Galician. The Polish soul, once so humble, hard-working and God-fearing, adorned itself with feathers of conceit and arrogance. It took native vices with itself to the adopted fatherland and planted them there. The emigrants here have grown Russian, Prussia and Austrian roots. Some of them blew the Russian horn, others the Prussian, still others the Galician one. Whole Russian, Prussian and Galician settlements grew up. It went even further. Even parishes were divided in this way.

This is a strange phenomenon in our history. It is a natural law that unhappiness and misery bring people closer together, even enemies give in and take a turn for the good. But in our case, misery seems to have divided us and continues to do so. God only knows how deeply we have harmed ourselves by this, and how we have exposed ourselves and our affairs to public derision and humiliation. – We suffer these vices to linger with constantly; or rather we suffer from them. Let us look at our emigrants. It is right to cry bitter tears over ourselves, like once the Jews did over the devastated holy city! In numbers – we are a giant. But this giant is powerless – morally bankrupt. The Polish Samson is helpless; instead of looking to the future with trust and hope, he has let his hands fall to his side and waits as if for God’s mercy. This is not the way to go! No individual can do much. We need the nation to wake up from the dream of mistrust, suspicion and brotherly hatred! We can’t pull the wool over our eyes and convince ourselves that we are safe, that our enemies will not hurt us. The outside enemy is only part of the problem. We can deal with him. But the inside enemy is a greater evil and much more dangerous. – He fights for our whole existence.

We can forgive our ancestors a lot. In spite of their natural vices or those acquired under slavery, they had one self-preserving virtue. In spite of disputes, arguments and misunderstanding, they understood that in order not to drown in the overpowering sea, they needed to organize and unite in societies, parishes and larger associations. The nobleman, the learned professor, the worker and the priest gave each other helping hands, went forward together, paying no attention to obstacles and unpleasantness, because they knew Polish affairs were at stake. They sacrificed their talents and their time so that the present generation would have a higher position in American society. More than one of them paid for his efforts by his health or life. In spite of this, being aware of the present situation of our emigration, we must admit that it is drowning in the waters of carelessness and indifference; we are flooded with lack of belief and doubt in our own powers and efforts. What will become of us if we go along like this? “Then the end, the end until the end of time.” I hear many sighs and whispers, “Heaven forbid.” – I cry out, “Heaven will not allow this, Heaven does not want this!” Our future depends on us, on our ability to cooperate.

First of all, let us not divide ourselves into parties and camps in general matters. We are talking about our existence and our life! Hand in hand, arm in arm. When we divide into factions, we lose our power. A unanimous and united army is always sure of victory! Second of all, let us put aside disputes over politics in the country of our forefathers, it is none of our business. Poland does not ask this of us. Let us be interested in her affairs, let us defend her fame and honor, but let us remember that we are citizens of the Great and Noble America, that we live here and that here is where we expect our bodies will be laid to rest. Third of all, let us want to understand the importance of the ballot and let us learn to vote wisely. Our power is in the ballots. Let every citizen realize this.

Fourth of all, let us be more tolerant and let us not be one-sided. I remember how, years ago, as a young priest, I fulfilled the duties of assistant at the St. Josephat parish in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In one of the hospitals I met a young atheist and Socialist doctor. When he saw my Roman collar, he began to speak to me in an unapproachable and unfriendly manner. I replied to his aloofness kindly. Unaware that I was Polish, he frequently began to severely criticize Poles and Polish affairs. I replied calmly to his accusations, explaining as best I could. Soon he became my close, faithful friend. After two years of friendship, one day he told me, “Reverend, I completely changed my opinion both about the Catholic Church and about the Poles, from my very first and interesting talk with you. Your kind and mild language made an everlasting impression upon me, and I am sorry indeed for my rude and perhaps cruel remarks.” – We should remember that our people hold different religious as well as political convictions. People do what they believe best. We should take this into account and be understanding towards them. A drop of honey will attract more flies than a barrel of vinegar!

Finally, let us have more trust in our people and show them less jealousy, especially towards our priests. The people with the priest, and the priest alongside the people! Then let us support our countrymen in every field, in every area. The professional with the farmer, the farmer with the professional, then the Polish soul of the emigration will revive and then various prophets who for years have been ready to sing out a gloomy „Requiescat” will never get what they are waiting for. Instead of a funeral march, all of America will hear one mighty and cheerful cry: “Alleluia, the Polish soul has resurrected!”

1. James 5:4. New American Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)