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RELEVANCE OF THE APPARITION OF OUR LADY AT LA SALETTE (SEPTEMBER 19, 1846) FOR THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD FROM THE BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Summary: This article focuses on two main issues. In the first part, the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary at La Salette is briefly recounted. This is a necessary ground to foster in the second part of the article the main investigation on the relevance of the La Salette apparition for the contemporary world. The methodological procedure applied in the paper aims to demonstrate how the vital theological motives in the narrative circumstances of the La Salette event and in the content of Our Lady's message are rooted in God's revelation bequeathed in the Old and New Testaments.

Keywords: apparitions of Mary, La Salette, biblical theology, Mariology, Christology.

Introduction

La Salette is one of those once forgotten places on our planet that Mary chose to visit her people. On September 19, 1846, she appeared in the high French Alps to two shepherds: fourteen-year-old Mélanie Calvat and eleven-year-old Maximin Giraud. This time, she visited her people as a Mother who was weeping for the fate of her children. La Salette begins a series of so-called "great" Marian apparitions. Twelve years later, Our Lady would appear in Lourdes and 71 years later in Fatima. Her motherly call to repentance and conversion sounded so strongly and firmly for the first time at La Salette. The next "great" Marian apparitions are a continuation of this call.

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1. Presentation of the apparition at La Salette¹

Two teenagers, Maximin and Mélanie, were grazing cows on a high plateau (1800 meters above sea level) located in the municipality of La Salette.² In the afternoon they ate the meal, lay down on the grass and fell asleep. When they woke up after a while, having no cows within their own eyes, they ran to the neighbouring hill, from where they saw that they were lying peacefully on the other side of the hill. When they came back to collect their belongings, they saw a strange phenomenon. In the place where they had eaten a moment ago, they saw a luminous sphere, which slowly began to dissolve. Their surprise intensified even more when they perceived inside of the sphere the figure of a woman sitting on a bench made of stones by shepherds. Her elbows were resting on her knees and her face was hidden in her hands. She looked like a weeping mother, whom the children had thrown out of the house. This strange phenomenon filled them with fear and distrust.

This enigmatic lady got up, took her hands from her face and walked a few steps towards the astonished children and said: “Come near, my children, do not be afraid, I am here to tell you great news!” In her attitude there was something so attractive and charming that the children came immediately from the hill and stood so close that, as they later said, no one could squeeze between her and them. Her face was covered with immense sadness combined with kindness and maternal concern. The beautiful Lady – as her children called her – was weeping. Mélanie describes this phenomenon later: “I saw her tears flowing out of her eyes. They flowed and flowed; I rubbed my eyes and looked at her again, and I could see how they were flowing, but I did not see them falling – they were disappearing in the light before falling to the ground”.

While the children enchanted by her heavenly beauty could not tear their eyes away from her, she said to them: “If my people will not submit, I shall be forced to let fall the arm of my Son. It is so strong, so heavy, that I can no longer withhold it. For how long a time do I suffer for you! If I would not have my Son abandon you, I am compelled to pray to him without ceasing; and as to you, you take not heed of it. However much you pray, however much you do, you will never recompense the pains I have taken for you. Six days I have given you to labour, the seventh I have kept for myself; and they will not give it to me. It is

¹ Most comprehensive collection of the archival documentation concerning the apparition at La Salette is collected in the three-volume publication: J. Stern, *La Salette. Documents authentiques: dossier chronologique intégral*, vol. 1–3, Paris 1980–1990.

² Broader exposition of the La Salette apparition can be found for example in: M. Schlewer, M. Sublet, *The Message of La Salette*, in: *La Salette Reflections* [online], access: 27.04.2018, <<https://www.lasalette.org/about-la-salette/apparition/the-story/705-the-message-of-la-salette.html>>. See also: G. Barbero, *La Salette. Storia dell'apparizione*, Cinisello Balsamo 1996.

this which makes the arm of my Son so heavy. Those who drive the carts cannot swear without introducing the name of my Son. These are the two things which make the arm of my Son so heavy. If the harvest is spoilt, it is all on your account. I gave you warning last year with the potatoes but you did not heed it. On the contrary, when you found the potatoes spoilt, you swore, you took the name of my Son in vain. They will continue to decay, so that by Christmas there will be none left”.

Until that point, Our Lady spoke only in French. The children did not go to school and did not understand French. Maximin understood only a few words. Mélanie almost nothing. When the girl wanted to ask the boy what it all meant, the Blessed Virgin interrupted her by saying: “Ah, my children, you do not understand? Well, wait, I shall say it another way”.

She then continued her discourse in the local dialect of their region. “If you have wheat, it is no good to sow it; all you sow the insects will eat, and what comes up will fall into dust when you thresh it. There will come a great famine. Before the famine comes, the children under seven years of age will be seized with trembling and will die in the hands of those who hold them; the others will do penance by the famine. The walnuts will become bad, and the grapes will rot”.

Here the Beautiful Lady addressed the children separately, confiding to each a secret. She spoke first to Maximin, and though the little shepherd did not perceive that her tone of voice had changed, Mélanie at his side could not hear a word, though she still saw the Beautiful Lady’s lips moving.³ Then came Mélanie’s turn to receive her secret under similar conditions.⁴ Both secrets were given in French.

Again addressing the two children in an idiom familiar to them, the Lady continued:

“If they are converted, the stones and rocks will change into mounds of wheat, and the potatoes will be self-sown in the land”.

“Do you say your prayers well, my children?”, she asked the shepherds. Both answered with complete frankness: “Not very well, Madam”. “Ah, my children”, she exhorted them, “you must be sure to say them well morning and evening. When you cannot do better, say at least an Our Father and a Hail Mary; but when you have time, say more”.

³ The secret conferred to Mélanie was published after encouragement by Popes Pius IX and Leon XIII in Rome in 1906.

⁴ The issue of the secrets conferred to the two shepherds is extensively treated by: R. Laurentin, M. Corteville, *Découverte du secret de La Salette. Au-delà des polémiques, la vérité sur l'apparition et ses voyants*, Librairie Anthème Fryard 2002. But the line of argument presented by the two authors is often misleading.

“There are none who go to Mass except a few aged women. The rest work on Sunday all summer; then in the winter, when they know not what to do, they go to Mass only to mock at religion. During Lent, they go to the meat-market like dogs”.

“Have you never seen wheat that is spoiled, my children?”, the Beautiful Lady then asked them. “No, Madam”, they replied. “But you, my child”, she insisted, addressing the little boy in particular, “you must surely have seen some once when you were at the farm of Coin with your father.⁵ The owner of the field told your father to go and see his ruined wheat. You went together. You took two or three ears of wheat into your hands and rubbed them, and they fell into dust. Then you continued home. When you were still half an hour’s distance from Corps, your father gave you a piece of bread and said to you: ‘Here, my child, eat some bread this year at least; I don’t know who will eat any next year, if the wheat goes on like that’”. Confronted with such precise details, Maximin eagerly replied: “Oh yes, Madam, I remember now; just at this moment I did not remember”.

Then the Lady, again speaking French as at the beginning of her discourse and when giving the secrets, said to them: “Well, my children, you will make this known to all my people”.

Then she turned slightly to her left, passed in front of the children, crossed the brook Sezia, stepping on stones emerging from it, and when she was about ten feet from the opposite bank she repeated her final request, without turning around or stopping: “Well, my children, you will make this well known to all my people”. These were her last words.

Meanwhile the two witnesses were still standing motionless at the spot where the conversation had taken place, when suddenly they realized that the heavenly Visitor was already some steps away from them. In their eagerness to join her again, they ran across the brook and were with her in a moment. Thus, in the company of Maximin and Mélanie,⁶ the Lady moved along, gliding over the tips of the grass without touching it, until she reached the top of the hillock where the children, after their sleep, had gone to look after their cows. Melanie preceded her by a few steps, and Maximin was at her right.

On reaching the summit the Lady paused for a few seconds, then slowly rose up to a height of a meter and a half. She remained suspended in the air for a moment, raised her eyes to Heaven, then glanced in the direction of the southeast. At that moment, Mélanie, who had been standing at the left of the Lady, came in front in order to see her better. Only then did she notice that the celestial Visitor had ceased weeping, although her features remained very sad.

⁵ Coin was a hamlet near the town of Corps.

⁶ Life of the two visionaries from La Salette was described for instance by: L. Torre, *La Belle Dame en Pleurs et ses deux fidèles Messageres*, Editions Force et Clarte 1993.

The radiant vision now began to disappear. “We saw her head no more, then the rest of the body no more; she seemed to melt away. There remained a great light”, related Maximin, “as well as the roses at her feet which I tried to catch with my hands; but there was nothing more”. “We looked for a long time”, added Melanie, “to see if we could not have another glimpse of her”, but the Beautiful Lady had disappeared forever.

The little shepherdess then remarked to her companion: “Perhaps it was a great Saint”. “If we had known it was a great Saint”, said Maximin, “we would have asked her to take us with her”.

The whole vision lasted about half an hour.⁷

2. Relevance of the La Salette apparition – biblical and theological perspective

The first listeners of the message, which Our Lady gave to Maximine and Mélanie on Mount La Salette, already drew attention to the fact that it is permeated with Biblical motifs from both the Old and the New Testament.⁸ It was also noted that not only the words of the Mother of God contain biblical themes, but they can also be seen in all circumstances of this extraordinary event.⁹ Private revelations, such as the apparition of Our Lady at La Salette, do not bring new content to the deposit of God’s revelation, which was closed with the writing of the New Testament. The apparitions are, however, an element of the living tradition of the Church.¹⁰ The Mother of God is revealed at La Salette to sensitize the world to the saving truths revealed in the Bible that have been rejected or dismissed by people. We will attempt to briefly recall these biblical revealed truths that resound in the La Salette event. First, we will extract the most important biblical content contained in the entire apparition of La Salette, and then look for it in the words of the Beautiful Lady.

The time and place in which Mary appeared at La Salette set out a significant theological context which should not go unnoticed. Mary appeared at an alpine retreat on the day of the liturgical year which preceded the feast of Our

⁷ Textual comparison of various written can be find for example in: Ch. Rahier, *Le fait de La Salette d’après les premières relations*, “L’Apparition de La Salette. Histoire – Critique – Théologie” vol. 2, 1933, p. 20–63.

⁸ Some good insights are given in: A. Avitabile, G.M. Roggio, *La Salette. Significato et attualità*, Milano 1996, p. 37–99.

⁹ It is well exposed in: E. Ritz, *La Salette. Die Botschaft einer Marienerscheinung*, Mörschwil 1985.

¹⁰ Broad explanation of the issue is given in: *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, ed. M. Miravalle, Amazon Digital Services LLC 2013, passim.

Lady of Sorrows¹¹ in the afternoon hours, in which the Church recalls the Passion and the death of Christ. Mary in the New Testament is, first of all, God's Mother¹² – She who, thanks to her *fiat*, became the Mother of the Son of God.¹³ But Mary of the New Testament is also a suffering Mother who, standing under the cross, sees the dying of her only Son and receives from him the message of accompaniment (*Here is your son*) to Jesus' disciples on the paths of faith.¹⁴ Mary, who appears at La Salette, is the Mother of Jesus who fulfils her mission from under the cross. This is the weeping Mother of the Church of all times who suffers from the deviation of her children from faith in God.¹⁵

La Salette, the mountain of the apparition of Our Lady, directly refers to the biblical mountains that are the places where God is revealed in the Old and New Testaments.¹⁶ A few of them will be recalled here. One of the most important mountains of the Old Testament is Mount Horeb, on the Sinai Peninsula, a place where the revealing God gave the Israelites, through the mediation of Moses, the Law, constituting their national and religious identity.¹⁷ Mount La Salette is the place where Mary reminded the world that preservation of God's law is a condition of survival and a happy life. Another of the most important mountains of the Old Testament is Mount Sion in Jerusalem, on which the temple was built – the only dwelling place of God (Yahweh) in the world.¹⁸ The mountain of the apparition at La Salette also refers to the mountains associated with the work of salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ: the Mount of the Transfiguration¹⁹ of Jesus and the mountain of His death – Calvary.

The figures of the witnesses of the apparition at La Salette, Mélanie and Maximin should also be interpreted in a biblical matrix. The visionaries of

¹¹ Mary's activity in Jesus' salvific passion is exposed in the article: N.Y. Roy, *Mary and the Liturgical Year*, in the monograph: *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarists, and Consecrated Persons*.

¹² More see in the collection of essays: *Maryja Matka Jezusa*, ed. J. Kręcidło, „Studia Salettensia” vol. 3, 2008 and in it my article: *Tożsamość Matki Jezusa według Ewangelii synoptycznych*, p. 13–37.

¹³ See: S. Witkowski, *Maryja i Jej Syn w świetle Łk 1,26-38*, in: J. Kręcidło (ed.), *Maryja Matka Jezusa*, „Studia Salettensia” 3, 2008, p. 38–61.

¹⁴ See: J. Kręcidło, *Jezusowy testament z krzyża (J 19, 25-27). Propozycja polifonicznej interpretacji*, „Scripturae Lumen” vol. 3, 2011, p. 241–258.

¹⁵ More see M. Caterini, *La Madre che piange*, Roma 1981.

¹⁶ Symbolism of biblical mountains is well exposed in: M. Lurker, *Słownik obrazów i symboli biblijnych*, Poznań 1989, p. 62–63.

¹⁷ See Exodus, especially chapters 19–24.

¹⁸ Cultic organization and theology of the Jerusalem temple is extensively treated in: Y. Eliav, *God's Mountain: The Temple Mount in Time, Place and Memory*, Baltimore 2005; R. Elior, *The Jerusalem Temple: The Representation of the Imperceptible*, “Studies in Spirituality” vol. 11, 2001, p. 126–143.

¹⁹ See more in: M. Gilbert, *Why Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration?*, “Rivista Biblica” 2009, no. 57/2, p. 217–222; J.C. Poirier, *Jewish and Christian Tradition in the Transfiguration*, “Revue Biblique” 2004, no. 111/4, p. 516–530.

La Salette are children. Mary chooses as witnesses of her revelation, innocent children, reacting spontaneously, unaware of the event that has happened to them. This situation evokes the words of Jesus, “let the children come to me.”²⁰ The children of La Salette were shepherds of cows. Their occupation brings to mind the shepherds who are often mentioned in the Bible. Shepherds in the culture in which the Scripture originated are people who do not enjoy social authority – they are looked down on and considered to be simple, and naive in matters of faith. From the Bible, however, a different image of the shepherd emerges. In Psalm 23, God Himself is called the Shepherd: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”²¹ In the Gospel according to Saint John, Jesus says about herself, “I am the Good Shepherd”, “The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep.”²² From the perspective of the biblical image of God as Shepherd, the apparition at La Salette should be seen as a gift for humanity, resulting from the Savior’s pastoral care. Mary comes to La Salette to remind the world that her Son is a Good Shepherd who constantly cares for his sheep.

In the setting of the apparition at La Salette, several times the motif of water reappears: after a meal the children are drinking water from the spring, Sezia stream flows nearby, a new miraculous spring flows out of the place of the apparition of the Mother of God. Water has a very rich symbolism in the Scriptures. The waters of the Flood in the days of Noah, referred to in the Book of Genesis, symbolize the complete annihilation of all that is sinful and not subject to God. The same waters of the Flood, however, have a purifying and regenerating value for a new life. Biblical authors most often use the metaphor of water in the latter sense. But that is not all. In the New Testament, water is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, which is the inner strength of rebirth in believers: for example, the words of Jesus in John 7:39 “Streams of living water will flow from within me” followed by the commentary of the Gospel author: “And he spoke about the Spirit, that were to receive those who believe in him.”²³ The theme of water in the La Salette apparition should be read against the whole spectrum of hundreds of biblical references in which it appears.

A very important motive in the apparition at La Salette is “light”. On that sunny September day the sun shone with full splendour. The visionaries first noticed the luminous sphere in which they then saw the figure of the Beautiful Lady woven from light. According to their accounts, the source of all this light

²⁰ See Mk 10:14; Lk 18:16.

²¹ See explanation in the commentary: *Psalms 1-72*, ed. H.J. Selderhuis, IVP Academic 2015, p. 186–195.

²² See J.D. Turner, *The History of Religious Background of John 10*, in: *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and its Context*, eds. J. Beutler, R.T. Fortna, Cambridge 1991, p. 49–51.

²³ See L. Nereparampil, *Holy Spirit as Living Water*, “Bible Bhashyam” vol. 2, 1976, p. 141–152.

was Christ dying in agony on the cross hung on Mary's chest. In biblical language, light is an element that accompanies the revelation of God. The antithesis of light is darkness, symbolizing the forces of evil.²⁴ The light was accompanied, for example, by the revelation of God to Moses on Mount Sinai. God himself is sometimes called the "light" in the Bible: for example, the words of the Psalmist "the Lord is my light and my salvation", or the statement of the author of the First Letter of Saint John "God is light and there is no darkness in Him."²⁵ This vivid presence of the motif of light in the apparition of Our Lady at La Salette makes us see it as an expression of the saving theophany of God, whose purpose is to invite man to accept the salvation offered in the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.

Mary appeared at La Salette as a weeping mother. Looking for biblical references for her crying, two associations come to mind immediately: the weeping of Jesus over the future tragic fate of Jerusalem²⁶ and his weeping at the grave of his friend Lazarus.²⁷ The tears of Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives and weeping over the Holy City, which would soon be completely destroyed by the Romans, and its inhabitants would be enslaved, are tears of compassion for the sinful people of the non-converted city – people who preferred to listen to themselves rather than Jesus' call to conversion. Mary's tears from La Salette were also tears of sadness and compassion over sinful humanity, which had rejected the call to conversion, and had chosen the path of self-destruction.²⁸ The crying of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus of Bethany are heartfelt tears of compassion after the death of a close friend. This dimension of "tears of friendship" should also be seen in the apparition at La Salette. Mary convinces us that she is close to her people, that she sympathizes with us in our life's misery, that she wants to lead us out of the tombs of our enslavements. After all, she is the "Reconciler of Sinners", the wonderful Emissary and Messenger of her Son, the Mother who constantly strives for the happiness of the children entrusted to her protection under the cross.

Significant biblical analogies can also be seen in the figure of the appearing Mother of God, called by Maximin and Mélanie "the Beautiful Lady, woven from light." Her sparkling robe refers to the Woman of the Apocalypse of Saint Jana (Chapter 12), clothed with the sun, on whose head there is a crown of

²⁴ See more in: J. Kręcidło, *Jesus' Final Call to Faith (John 12,44-50). Literary Approach*, Częstochowa 2007, p. 45–70.

²⁵ 1 John 1:5.

²⁶ Lk 19:37. See comment in: L.T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Collegeville 1991, p. 298.

²⁷ John 11:35. See commentary in: S. Mędała, *Ewangelia według świętego Jana, rozdziały 1–12*, Częstochowa 2010, p. 808.

²⁸ See E. Ritz, *La Salette*, p. 39–45.

twelve stars.²⁹ A woman from the Revelation of John is New Eve (reference to Genesis 2) who, through complicity in the saving work of her Son, saves the New People of God from the slavery of sin. The crown of roses on the head of the Beautiful Lady is a sign of her royal dignity and authority over the People of God, which she shares in the reign of her Son, for whom she is an Emissary at La Salette.³⁰ The white apron in which the Beautiful Lady is dressed is a reference to the shimmering white robe of Jesus during His transfiguration on the mountain (Gospel of Mark, chapter 9)³¹ and to the white robes of martyrs from the Revelation of John (chapter 7).³² In spite of the bloody death of the martyrs, they kept their white robes, because they were bleached in the blood of Christ the Passover Lamb. The white robe of the Weeping Lady of La Salette symbolizes her suffering and “pains which she constantly undertakes”, struggling for the salvation of her people.

Two chains hang on the shoulders of the Beautiful Lady. The first of them, consisting of large links was overwhelming the Beautiful Lady with her burden. It symbolizes the power of sins enslaving humanity. Mary, the Reconciler of Sinners, takes the sins upon herself, participating in the saving work of her Son. On the other chain, the small one hung on the neck of the Beautiful Lady, a cross is hung, on which the dying Jesus is writhing in pain.³³ On one side of the horizontal beam of the cross there is a hammer, and on the other pincers – tools used during crucifixion.³⁴ The first of the tools symbolizes sins and the second good deeds. The visionaries of La Salette had the impression that Christ dying on the cross was the source of all the light from which the figure of the Beautiful Lady was woven. This fact refers us to the most important truth of the whole Bible – to the kerygmatic truth, which is the basis of Christian faith: through the passion, death and resurrection (light!) of Christ, the world has been saved. This is the pivotal motif of the biblical idea of reconciliation.³⁵ This is also the basic truth that the apparition at La Salette expresses. Mary of La Salette points to her

²⁹ See A. Romero, *La Donna Ravvolta dal Sole, Madre di Cristo e dei Cristiani, nel Cielo (Ap 12)*, “Rivista Biblica Italiana” vol. 4, 1956, p. 218–329; R.P. Marquez, *La Donna Avvolta nel Sole (Ap 12,1-17). Il dogma dell’ Assunzione di Maria, problemi attuali e tentativi di ricompreensione*, XVII Simposio Internazionale Mariologico, Roma 2009.

³⁰ Compare E. Ritz, *La Salette*, p. 46–48.

³¹ See J. Kręcidło, *Przemienienie Jezusa (Mk 9,2-8) w perspektywie judaistycznej, hellenistycznej i antropologicznokulturowej*, w: *Studia nad Ewangelią według św. Marka. Nowy Testament: geneza – interpretacja – aktualizacja*, eds. J. Kręcidło, W. Linke, Warszawa 2017, p. 112–129.

³² See commentary: G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids 1999, p. 436–438.

³³ See E. Ritz, *La Salette*, p. 51–55.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 56–58.

³⁵ See P. Stuhlmacher, *Versöhnung, Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit. Aufsätze zur biblischen Theologie*, Göttingen 1981.

Son. At the centre of this apparition is the crucified and resurrected Christ. The theology of apparition at La Salette is thoroughly kerygmatic. The kerygma, as the basic biblical truth of salvation, also stands at the centre of the apparition at La Salette (the dying Jesus is the source of all light). In the framework of this central motif, all other aspects of the apparition at La Salette should be interpreted (also the Mariological thread).

The words spoken by Mary to Maximin and Mélanie – Her message – are also permeated with biblical themes. Theologians – representatives of the Church commissions who studied the apparition at La Salette – immediately noted that the way the message was conveyed by the Beautiful Lady resembles the way the biblical prophets taught.³⁶ Prophets are not fortune-tellers, but individuals called by God to go to the people with the appeal to conversion.³⁷ These individuals do not act on their own behalf, but in the name of God. They are messengers of God's words and gestures. Similarly, Mary – the Prophetess of La Salette – comes in the name of her Son to announce to the world the Good News, and to call for conversion, that is, to return to the path of faith in her Son.³⁸ The manner in which Mary speaks to children resembles the style and content of Yahweh's speeches to the people of the Old Testament transmitted through the prophets. Mary, the Prophetess speaks in a similar way to Jesus the Prophet:³⁹ Her very concrete, even slightly “mundane” language resembles Jesus' parables or, for example, the Sermon on the Mount.

The subject matter raised by Mary in the message of La Salette is also very prophetic.⁴⁰ Mary uses the metaphorical language of biblical prophets. Her first words addressed to Maximin and Mélanie, “Come near, My children, do not be afraid” should be read on two levels – as an encouragement to come closer and metaphorically. It is an encouragement that fearful and distrustful children come closer to her, and at the same time – on the spiritual level – it is a call that all humanity, to which her message is addressed, approach God. These initial words of the Beautiful Lady sets us a two-level way of interpreting everything that she will say next during the apparition. When Mary says “Do not be afraid”. she wants the children to trust her and come as close as possible, but at the same time it is a call to all mankind that it ceases to be afraid of God, draws close to him and trusts him completely. The themes of approaching God and getting rid of fear of him are the key appeals of the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus.

³⁶ See A. Avitabile, G.M. Roggio, *La Salette. Significato et attualità*, p. 37–61.

³⁷ See A. Heschel, *Il messaggio dei profeti*, Roma 1981; A. Neher, *L'essenza del profetismo*, Casale Monferrato 1984.

³⁸ More see H. Voilin, *La Salette, montagne prophétique*, La Tronche-Montfleury 1969.

³⁹ The notion of Jesus as prophet was elaborated for instance by: G. Theissen, A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, Minneapolis 1996, p. 240–280.

⁴⁰ See A. Avitabile, G.M. Roggio, *La Salette. Significato et attualità*, p. 50–62.

Mary's statements such as "My people", "submit", announcements of God's punishments, hunger etc. belong to the basic biblical repertoire, especially prophetic teaching.⁴¹ The same should be said about the other topics raised in the message of Our Lady of La Salette. Mary speaks several times about prayer: Early in her message she says: "However much you pray, however much you do, you will never recompense the pains I have taken for you". Then she asks children "Do you say your prayers well, my children?", and after their negative answer she teaches them "you must be sure to say them well morning and evening. When you cannot do better, say at least an Our Father and a Hail Mary; but when you have time, say more". It is needless to say that the issue of prayer is one of the most important threads of the Old and New Testaments.

Another important biblical theme in the La Salette message is the holy day: "Six days I have given you to labour, the seventh I have kept for myself; and they will not give it to me", the complaint: "There are none who go to Mass except a few aged women. The rest work on Sunday all summer; then in the winter, when they know not what to do, they go to Mass only to mock at religion. During Lent, they go to the meat-market like dogs". Celebration of the Christian Holy Day is not only the third commandment of the Decalogue, but also one of the biblical leitmotifs.⁴²

The subject of the corrupt harvests demonstrated by Mary as a punishment for sins and the consequence of the lack of conversion refers very clearly to the teachings of the prophets. As if from the mouths of the Old Testament prophets, there is also a final promise: "If they are converted, the stones and rocks will change into mounds of wheat, and the potatoes will be self-sown in the land". This beautiful, metaphorical, understandable language is a carrier of very deep theology.

The final, twice repeated call of Mary at La Salette, "Well, my children, you will make this well known to all my people". This sounds like God's command transmitting to the Old Testament prophets the mission of proclaiming his word.⁴³ One can also hear in them the echo of the words of the risen Christ sending the disciples on a mission of evangelization (Gospels and Acts of the Apostles 1:8).

⁴¹ See A. Heschel, *Il messaggio dei profeti*, passim.

⁴² See doctoral thesis written under my supervision: J. Wojcieszki, *Od szabatu do niedzieli. Studium historyczne, egzegetyczne i teologiczne*, Górna Grupa 2014.

⁴³ More see G. Fohrer, *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie*, Berlin 1967.

Conclusion

The limited formula of this article only allow us to signal the biblical references found in the apparition of Our Lady at La Salette. We have highlighted only the most important biblical motifs enclosed in the La Salette event. Each of the above-mentioned parallels required in-depth study. We only touched the tip of the iceberg here, but what has been presented in the article empowers us to say that since the La Salette apparition is woven from biblical motifs, they have the same relevance for the contemporary world as they had in the middle of the nineteenth century. The relevance of the message of the Mother of God given to the world as “the grace of La Salette”⁴⁴ is indispensably connected to the unceasing relevance of Jesus’ Good News.

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⁴⁴ Allusion to the title of a very important monograph containing theological exposition of the La Salette apparition: J. Jaouen, *La grâce de La Salette au regard de L'Église*, Paris 1974.

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Aktualność objawień maryjnych w La Salette (19 września 1846 r.) dla współczesnego świata z perspektywy teologiczno-biblijnej

Streszczenie: Autor skupił się na dwóch głównych kwestiach. Po pierwsze krótko opisał objawienie Błogosławionej Dziewicy Maryi w La Salette. Dało to podstawę do wysnucia głównych wniosków badawczych, odnoszących się do objawień w La Salette. Po drugie metoda badawcza przyjęta przez autora została ukierunkowana na uwypuklenie wagi teologicznych motywów, które można odczytać z samych objawień w La Salette, a zwłaszcza z orędzia maryjnego, zakorzenionego w Objawieniu Bożym, zapisanym w Starym i Nowym Testamencie.

Słowa kluczowe: objawienia Maryjne, La Salette, teologia biblijna, mariologia, chrystologia.

