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THE PASTORAL ASPECTS OF THE CALL TO SOBRIETY
IN THE APPARITIONS OF THE MOTHER
OF GOD IN GIETRZWAŁD IN 1877

Summary: Addiction is among the many illnesses that modern man suffers from. One of the most extreme and dangerous addictions is alcoholism. A person suffering from alcoholism is unable – using his own strength – to stop its destructive character, both in the psycho-physical and the spiritual spheres. Many public institutions provide various forms of help, and among them the Church certainly plays a significant role. The primary task of the Church is to bring all of its members to the ultimate goal of eternal salvation. The apparitions at Gietrzwałd, which took place 140 years ago, seem to confirm the care that the Mother of God has for the salvation of every human being, especially one afflicted with the reality of drunkenness. She calls abusers of alcohol to conversion and to break with such a life. The exhortation contained in the Gietrzwałd message imposes particular tasks on the pastors of the shrine to care for those who are afflicted by any sort of addiction. The shrine, because it was chosen by the Mother of God, is equipped with special pastoral tools to undertake these tasks zealously. The effectiveness of fulfilling this sacred mission will certainly depend on cooperation with the Heavenly Mother, and in terms of those combatting sinful ailments, it will depend on the spiritual struggle, which must be accompanied by a child-like trust. After all, Mary assured all her perpetual help with these words: “Do not be sad, because I will always be with you”.

Keywords: Mary, Rosary, sin, drunkenness, alcoholism, conversion, sobriety.

One of the most well-known and respected specialists in the field of addiction in Poland, Bohdan T. Woronowicz, rightly noted that addiction plays an increasingly important role in our civilization and, unfortunately, entails more and more victims.¹ He also points to the causes of this condition² and character-

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¹ B.T. Woronowicz, *Uzależnienia. Geneza, terapia, powrót do zdrowia*, Warszawa 2009, p. 15.

² „The driving force of addiction has been the pace of life, the escape from unacceptable emotional states, the search for quick pleasure and instant gratification, and the difficulty in controlling the impulses”, in: *ibidem*, p. 15.

rises the people who are most susceptible to it.³ So are there any ways to eliminate these causes and to heal addicts? Who should really undertake this task? Yes, there are ways to help addicted people and there are institutions that offer help.

The National Sobriety Congress, which was held from 21st to 23rd September, 2017 in Warsaw, pointed clearly to those institutions, which should honestly fulfill their tasks in the field of alcoholism prevention. These institutions are the family, the Church, the State, local government and the Media. Of course, we are primarily interested in the role of the Church, and in this particular case, the role of the Marian shrine in Gietrzwałd, where 140 years ago such a concern for sobriety was expressed by Our Lady. There exist different ways to support addicts in the healing process, but they must not be deprived of pastoral support, offered especially to those who entrust their rescue to God. In other words, the Church cannot be denied the chance to fulfill her pastoral mission, especially the mission of leading all men to salvation.⁴

When analyzing the events which took place in Gietrzwałd in 1887, we would like to demonstrate, that the Marian rebuke of the sin of drunkenness continue to be valid. The custodians of the shrine and their associates have the pastoral duty of spiritual care for all who may seek the ultimate hope of being healed in that sacred place.

In this article, we would like to examine the Marian call to sobriety as it relates to the pastoral tasks within the mission of the shrine with reference to those affected by alcoholism, as well as all others afflicted by this addiction. In this context, we should first briefly review this part of the message of the Mother of God, which warns alcohol abusers, and then points to pastoral efforts to save people suffering from the evils of drunkenness and alcoholism.

1. The historical background of the apparitions at Gietrzwałd

The principle source from which we draw our knowledge of Mary's words during the apparitions are, above all, the reports of Fr. Augustine Weichsel, pastor of the Gietrzwałd parish, direct witness to these events. He compiled a rather meticulous report dated August 8, 1877 and handed it over to the then Bishop of Warmia, Philippe Kremenz. The personal records of Fr. Augustine

³ „The most susceptible to addiction are those who have, most often being unaware of it, the deficiency of certain life skills, which a particular substance or behavior helps momentarily (and seemingly) to eliminate”, in: *ibidem*, p. 15.

⁴ M. Ostrowski, *Prawno-duszpasterskie aspekty sanktuarium. Wybrane zagadnienia*, “Peregrinus Craoviensis”, Journal, 2011, 22, p. 61.

Weichsel, covering the period of the apparitions from July 30 to August 21, also provide valuable information on the content of these apparitions.

Additional important information can be found in the protocols of the Episcopal Commission, which was created on August 18, 1877. It was composed of clergy and lay people (physicians). The protocols produced by this commission detail the apparitions themselves, but also shed light on the effects of the apparitions and their impact on religious and moral life.

Other, direct or indirect witnesses of these extraordinary religious phenomena have also made mention of the Gietrzwałd events. Worth mentioning is the outstanding figure and greatest scholar of Warmia of recent times, Fr. Francis Hipler. This priest was a member of the Polish Academy of Learning and became a regent of the seminary in Braniewo.

From the very first days (the apparitions begin on June 27, 1877), the visionaries Justyna Szafrzyńska and Barbara Samulowska learned who the beautiful Lady (as they called Her) was, as she appeared to them on a maple tree and what she expected from the girls and all the faithful. On June 30, on Fr. Weichsel's explicit instruction, Justyna Szafrzyńska was to ask the unusual, shining figure what She demands of them. In response she heard: "I desire that you pray the Rosary every day."⁵ The next day, in answer to the question "Who are you?", She answered: "I am the Blessed Virgin Mary, Immaculately Conceived."⁶ A few days later, the girls heard very significant words from Mary: "There will be a miracle – later the sick will be healed". So the children asked what the sick people should do to regain health. Mary answered: "The should pray the Rosary."⁷ The sick also received the assurance that cloth that was blessed and applied to them would bring healing.⁸

At the end of the apparitions, Our Lady blessed the spring located at the edge of the Parish forest. This took place on September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the presence of the visionaries, priests and a dozen or so lay people.⁹

Much earlier, on August 12, Fr. Augustine Weichsel asked the girls to pray during the apparitions for the conversion of drunkards. The sisters presented the request, and Our Lady sighed deeply and loudly said these words: "They will be punished."¹⁰

⁵ J. Obłąk, *Objawienia Matki Boskiej w Gietrzwałdzie. Ich treść i autentyczność w opinii współczesnych*, „Studia Warmińskie” vol. 14, 1977, p. 17; see also: *Objawienia Matki Boskiej w Gietrzwałdzie dla ludu katolickiego podług urzędowych dokumentów spisane*, reprinted version edited by K. Pelec, Olsztyn 2005, p. 15.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 17.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ J. Obłąk, *Objawienia Matki Boskiej w Gietrzwałdzie*, p. 22.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 20.

2. The historical and social situation in East Prussia in the 19th century

The first half of the 19th century in Europe was a time of rapid growth in the consumption of alcoholic beverages produced from surplus potatoes. Alcohol abuse was accompanied by ubiquitous poverty among the lower classes of the rural and working population. Governments in countries that were affected by the plague of drunkenness confined themselves to making declarations against it, but at the same time were eager to capitalise on the taxes levied on alcoholic beverage manufacturers. The reaction to the scourge of drunkenness was the social anti-alcohol movement. In Poland, the first significant Sobriety Fraternity was established in Upper Silesia by Fr. Aloysius Fick, with the co-operation of Fr. Stefan Brzozowski OFM, on the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pope Pius IX approved its statutes on July 28, 1851.

The chief initiator of the anti-alcoholic campaign in Warmia was the Provincial Governor of Prussia, Teodor von Schon, in co-operation with the then-Administrator of the diocese of Warmia, Bishop Antoni Frenzl, who warned the population of the disastrous effects of potato vodka.¹¹ The first Temperance Fraternities were established, but their activity over time began to collapse. A new impetus in the activities of the sobriety movement was given by a young vicar from Olsztyn, Fr. Walenty Tolsdorf, who in his sermons fought with determination against drunkenness and rebuked those who contributed to the insobriety of the people. The activism of Fr. Tolsdorf eventually led to the creation of numerous Sobriety Fraternities, which at their peak managed to have 26 000 members. Our Lady was chosen as patroness and they always addressed Her in the prayer of St. Bernard, asking for help in maintaining abstinence. They did this every Sunday and on feast days. The patron feast day was the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and on the Sunday preceding the feast, the members renewed their vows.¹²

Unfortunately, after a period of dynamic activism, there was a sharp decline in the work of these groups: this seems to be mainly due to Otto von Bismarck's policy of *Kulturkampf*, which led to an absolute war against the Catholic Church, the Germanization of the Polish lands,¹³ and the destruction of

¹¹ J. Jasiński, *Ruch trzeźwości na południowej Warmii w połowie XIX wieku*, „Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie” 1977, no. 3–4, p. 357; see also: E.A. Sokołowska, *Organizacje społeczne i kościelne na Warmii w latach 1848–1914*, Szczepiwo 2014.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 316.

¹³ In this respect, he was somewhat obsessed, as evidenced by a letter to his sister on March 26, 1861. He wrote in it: “Beat the Poles until they won’t want to live any longer. I have all the compassion for their situation, but if we want to survive, then we can not do anything else other than to exterminate them,” *Otto von Bismarck – polityk doskonały*, in: *Polskie Radio* [online], access: 21.11.2017, <<http://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/1089053,Otto-von-Bismarck-%E2%80%93-polityk-doskonaly>>.

Christian morality,¹⁴ which led to the weakening of the sobriety movement in Warmia.

The revival took place only after the apparitions in Gietrzwałd. The people of Warmia, fortified by the content of the apparitions, and above all admonished by the pernicious effects of drunkenness and alcoholism, gave this movement a new impetus and a new strength. This strength undoubtedly came from Mary.¹⁵ It was She who took care of the drunkards, who sin and risk losing their souls, and who came to the aid of those who fought against alcoholism. Mary showed in the Gietrzwałd apparitions that She gives protection to all people, because Her Son died for all on the Cross. The Church understands this maternal concern for Her children and expresses it in pastoral activities, especially in places marked by Mary's presence.

3. Direct results of the Gietrzwałd apparitions

From the notes and minutes of Fr. Augustine Weichsel, we learned that the apparitions had a tremendous impact on the religious and moral life of the people of Warmia, as well as on the faithful, who made pilgrimages to Gietrzwałd from various corners of Poland. The pastor of the Gietrzwałd Parish described these fruits in the following way: "Among all those, who speak Polish, joyful progress can be observed in the recitation of the Rosary and in the zealotness of the sobriety fraternities."¹⁶ The repeated demands of Our Lady to recite the Rosary and to abstain from drunkenness proved to be very effective throughout Warmia and even beyond her borders, which was confirmed by Fr. Augustine Weichsel in these words: "Everyone here renounces vodka and promises always to pray the Rosary",¹⁷ and further writes: "Millions pray the Rosary, thus confirming themselves in the Catholic faith and a huge number of drunkards is being saved from temporal and eternal ruin. In this I see the best evidence for the authenticity of the apparitions."¹⁸ These are not the only fruits of the apparitions of Our Lady. The morality of the youth of Warmia changes significantly, the number of religious and priestly vocations begins to rise and there is ob-

¹⁴ And who really was Otto von Bismarck in his youth? Let another passage testify from a letter written in 1834 to his school friend Scharlach: "I will be playing for a few years, swinging my sword over harsh recruits, then I will take my wife, breed offspring, cultivate the land and undermine the morale of my peasantry with an untampered production of vodka...". Ch. Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947*, trans. J. Szkudlinski, Warsaw 2009, p. 455–456.

¹⁵ J. Jasiński, *Ruch trzeźwości na południowej Warmii*, p. 364.

¹⁶ J. Obląg, *Objawienia Matki Boskiej w Gietrzwałdzie*, p. 35.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

served a growth in the number of people making use of the sacraments, and as a consequence, the number of converted people rises.¹⁹ In short, from Gietrzwałd, from the spiritual center, there begins a rebirth of moral life and religious life as such in the diocese of Warmia and even beyond its borders. Another account by the pastor deserves attention, and it pertains to the impact of the Gietrzwałd apparitions outside of Warmia. "The fruits of the apparitions are extraordinary. Throughout Polish Warmia, almost in all households the Rosary is commonly recited. Similarly in many Parishes of the Diocese of Chełmno, Poznań and Wrocław. Sobriety Fraternity especially has flourished throughout Poland. The middle and upper Polish nobility are leading by a good example. [...] Pastor Łomnicki from the Diocese of Chełm and pastor Wątróbka from Dębnie in the Diocese of Wrocław [...] informed us both that some mysterious force was attracting pilgrims there."²⁰

This was how Fr. Augustine Weichsel reported on the meaning of the Gietrzwałd apparitions to the local Church and the whole of Poland. The content of the Gietrzwałd message has certainly not lost its meaning in modern times, and especially in the area of the various forms of enslavement, to which great multitudes of people all over the world are subjected to.

4. Pastoral care for addicted and alcohol abusing persons in the shrine of Gietrzwałd

Evil constantly pervades human life, and it takes on various forms, including the form of addiction. Alcoholism is one of them. As such it is subject to moral evaluation.²¹ It is no wonder then that sobriety of the human person and of society as a whole is a primary concern of the Catholic Church in its salvific mission upon Earth. This concern was expressed by John Paul II during his pilgrimage to Jasna Góra in 1987.²² The Church, using a variety of instruments in its activities, desires one thing: to sanctify and save all men. This goal is realised very effectively in the shrine, where a person can find himself in a special way present before the Face of God and delve into His won Heart to start a saving dialogue with Him. The sacred place and proper time allow one to experience

¹⁹ *Objawienia Matki Boskiej w Gietrzwałdzie*, p. 95.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

²¹ Alcoholism is a moral issue because it detracts from human dignity, lowers the level of mental and moral life and religious sensitivity. It is the source of many offenses against the moral principles of family, social and economic life, in: *Teologia pastoralna. Teologia pastoralna szczegółowa*, ed. R. Kamiński, vol. 2, Lublin 2002, p. 379.

²² John Paul II, *Apel Jasnogórski. Częstochowa 12 VI 1987*, in: *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny. Przemówienia, homilie*, Kraków 1997, p. 503.

the depths of one's conscience, where he meets with his Creator. "Conscience is the most intimate center and sanctuary of man, where he resides with God, whose voice resounds in him."²³ The salvific mission of the Church is realised in a special way in shrines, a truth John Paul II expressed during a plenary gathering of the members of the Congregation for the Clergy in these words: "These sacred places attract many faithful who seek God and therefore are open to the call of conversion and a more decisive proclamation of the Good News. It is therefore important that priests, who are distinguished by their particular pastoral sensitivity and apostolic zeal, endowed with the spirit of fatherly openness, having experience in the art of homiletics and catechesis, work there."²⁴ In the pastoral field of sobriety, this recommendation applies especially to confessors. They should be well acquainted with the problem of addiction. This gives them a better chance of properly utilizing the Sacrament of Penance during an encounter with an abuser of alcohol or someone who is addicted to it. For example, an addicted person should be treated differently than his or her family.

In the case of an alcoholic, he must be treated as the "Gospel paralytic", who was not able to be presented to the Lord by those carrying him due to the large crowds, and who therefore lower him from the roof. The same approach must be applied to the alcoholic: "take the roof down and put before the Lord a paralyzed soul, immobilized in all its limbs, weakened by morbid lustfulness."²⁵ There is a chance that the physician will manifest himself in his soul and he will be healed. In the same sermon, he reproaches the pastors who neglected to minister to the wounded sheep: "You have not strengthened the weak one, you have not attended to the wounded". The pastors are to hurry with help and bring the words of comfort to those who are wounded by a mortal sickness, assuring them that God never leaves the person who is afflicted.²⁶

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation should be properly administered. An appropriate place of Confession is required (visible to all), in keeping with the provisions of Canon Law; the preparation for the Sacrament should be preceded by reflecting on the Word of God, which will allow the penitents to prepare themselves for the confession of sins, and above all, to arouse sincere repentance and conversion from a sinful path; choosing the proper rite, for example Form II of the "Rite of Penance", and the head of the shrine will take care that confessors are available throughout the day.

²³ GS, n. 16.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Przemówienie do uczestników zgromadzenia plenarnego Kongregacji ds. Duchowieństwa* (4.08.2002), in: *Currenda* [online], access 21.11.2017, <<http://www.currenda.diecezja.tarnow.pl/archiwum/2006/06-03/art.-22.php>>.

²⁵ St. Augustine, *Kazanie „O Pasterzach”*, in: *Liturgia Godzin. Codzienna modlitwa ludu Bożego*, vol. 4, Pallottinum 1988, p. 217.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 217–218.

Repentance and penance make the penitent ready to participate in the Eucharist, which Our Lady in Gietrzwałd placed before the Holy Rosary. The fruits of the Holy Mass cannot be overestimated in the spiritual struggle for sobriety. The Eucharist cannot be deprived of the Word of God. The shrine is a place of constant evangelization. The preacher of the shrine must take into account the evangelical call to sobriety,²⁷ and himself, in order to be effective in preaching, must recall the personal example of sobriety.

Concrete actions are born thanks to preaching in the form of the sobriety apostolate. In the Gietrzwałd shrine, such forms of apostolate already exist, such as the Marian Center for Family Help, in which the Sisters from the Congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary are involved in. The Congregation was founded by Blessed Honorat Kozmiński, the great propagator of the Gietrzwałd apparitions in the Kingdom of Poland, and a tireless activist of the sobriety movement. The Center works with the Municipal Committee on Alcohol Problem Solving and contributes to the reduction of alcohol abuse in the local area. The Center also provides expert advice on addictions and co-dependencies. As a result of the work of the Center, a dynamic AA community has been established called “Źródełko”. In the field of sobriety activities, the Marian Shrine in Gietrzwałd goes beyond the boundaries of the local municipality, working together with the Private Detox Center of Masuria, in Stare Juchy near Ełk.

The Shrine, because of the Marian apparitions, should first and foremost remind and show Our Lady, who is the goal and model for all the pilgrims, and here especially for addicted people. If a person takes Mary’s hand and clings to God’s plan, he will fulfill it in Her image. The task and vocation of Mary is to give to Her children Her Son, to give birth to Him within us, to make us one with Him, to shape us in His image and likeness. When Mary works in us, Her Son is also in us. She sets Her children on the right path.²⁸

For people struggling with issues of alcohol abuse, the Gietrzwałd shrine is sometimes the last place, where aid can be sought. This was the case with Mark, an alcoholic, co-founder of the Community of Catholic Families with an Alcohol

²⁷ Teachings must show the truth about the possible role of alcohol in lives; to emphasize the importance of voluntary abstinence to young people and to create a desire for life without alcohol.

²⁸ St. Pius X in the encyclical *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum* teaches: “For can anyone fail to see that there is no surer or more direct road than by Mary for uniting all mankind in Christ and obtaining [...] the perfect adoption of sons, that we may be holy and immaculate in the sight of God [...] Nobody ever knew Christ so profoundly as she did, and nobody can ever be more competent as a guide and teacher of the knowledge of Christ. Hence it follows [...] that the Virgin is more powerful than all others as a means for uniting mankind with Christ”, excerpt from L.J. Suenens, *Kim jest Ona? Synteza mariologii*, Warsaw 1988, p. 109; see also: *The Holy See* [online], access: 23.04.2018, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_02021904_ad-diem-illum-laetissimum.html>.

Problem. In his testimony, he reveals the fact that during his meeting with the Holy Father John Paul II on May 8th, 1996, he was confirmed in the belief that Gietrzwałd was the place where he was supposed to recover from alcoholism.

He was convinced by the blessing he received from the Holy Father through Mrs. Wanda Póltawska “with an oral command to go to Gietrzwałd.”²⁹ The community held its first retreat in Gietrzwałd in December 1996. The first experience of the encounter with Mary was described in the book “The light and shadows of the family.”³⁰ Since 1996, the community has been meeting at the Gietrzwałd annual retreat under the unchanging motto “A family strong in God”.

It is not without reason that we give the Virgin Mary the titles included in the Litany of Loreto: “Health of the sick” and “Refuge of sinners”. St. Stanislaus Papczyński in his “Writings” explicitly defines the role of the Mother of God in God’s plan of salvation and in one of his sermons refers to Her in the following manner: “The Most Gracious Virgin Mary is the Mother of sinners, they were entrusted to Her in the person of John [the Apostle] as a son³¹ by the Saviour”. Due to Her special concern for sinners, the Virgin Mary is to be worshipped through a variety of devotions and pious practices, such as the Hours of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary³² or the Rosary.

5. Prayer of the Rosary as a form of rescue for those who are afflicted with the sin of drunkenness and addiction

In numerous inquiries and requests presented to Our Lady during Her apparitions in Gietrzwałd, Mary assured us, that the recitation of the Rosary, after the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is the most effective prayer that brings consolation to the human heart.³³ The Rosary has for centuries been the cause of miracles, conversions, personal victories, and in times of danger for entire nations. Where does this great power of prayer come from? There can only be one answer: from Mary, the Divine Mother. This a commonly accepted truth in the Church. This is how the great saints and teachers of the Universal Church presented her. Proof

²⁹ *Blaski i cienie rodziny*, ed. B. Pietruczanis, M. Balwain, E. Świerczyńska, from *Wspólnota Rodzin Katolickich z Problemem Alkoholowym*, [n.p.], [n.d.], p. 34.

³⁰ As we entered the shrine, I saw the statue of Our Lady Immaculate. It was the place where the apparitions occurred. I became hot, I do not know why, in the space of a second, I saw the action of the Mother of God in my life ... Tears were in my eyes, I felt great gratitude and emotion for leading me through all these years and for the fact that Our Lady led me to Gietrzwałd. I felt this was my place and not just mine”, *ibidem*, p. 35.

³¹ St. Papczyński, *Pisma zebrane*, 2nd edition, Warszawa 2016, Promic, p. 1061.

³² It is said, that there, where the Hours are sung, the Devil retreats. How powerful must be this invocation: “O Lady, make speed to befriend me – From the hands of the enemy mightily defend me”.

³³ J. Obłąk, *Objawienia Matki Boskiej w Gietrzwałdzie*, p. 20.

of this are the numerous statements of the popes contained in the encyclicals, apostolic letters, and other documents of the Magisterium of the Church.³⁴ Particularly worthy of attention is Pope Leo XIII, who devoted much of his teaching to the Rosary. The Holy Father pointed to the private and public benefits of this prayer. They come from the fact that Mary has a unique role in God's plan of salvation.³⁵ In achieving salvation, and before that the sanctification of one's life, one should place hope in the Rosary.³⁶ The mystery of the Rosary lies in the fact that Mary, being at the side of Her Son became, as St. Bernard of Clairvaux taught, the channel of Divine grace, and the Rosary is Her chosen prayer to grant these graces. This reflection on the Rosary has been developed further by John Paul II in the Apostolic Letter "Rosarium Virginis Mariae", who called the recitation of the Rosary "the contemplation, along with Mary, of the face of Christ"³⁷, or in other words the invoking of the saving works of Christ. Recalling them "with an attitude of faith and love means opening to the grace that Christ has gained for us through the mysteries of His life, death and resurrection."³⁸ The Pope points to Mary as the best teacher, who teaches us to "read Christ" and to become like Him.³⁹

The process of recovery, for example in alcoholism, is the gradual rebuilding of a previously lost identity and the image of man created in God's image and likeness. It is the effort of the human person, which as a consequence will allow for the 'clothing of oneself with Christ'.⁴⁰ This is done through the Rosary.⁴¹ "The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary's side as She is busy watching over the human growth of Christ in the home of Nazareth. This enables Her to train us and to mold us with the same care, until Christ is "fully formed" in us (cf. Gal 4:19)."⁴²

³⁴ Leo XIII, encyclicals *Iucunda Semper*, *Octobri mensae*, *Adiutricem populi*; Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam*; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*.

³⁵ Leo XIII, Encyclical *Iucunda Semper*, Warszawa 2014, p. 6: „The recourse we have to Mary in prayer follows upon the office she continuously fills by the side of the throne of God as Mediatrix of Divine grace; being by worthiness and by merit most acceptable to Him, and, therefore, surpassing in power all the angels and saints in Heaven. Now, this merciful office of Hers, perhaps, appears in no other form of prayer so manifestly as it does in the Rosary”; translation available from *The Holy See* [online], access: 23.04.2018, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_08091894_iucunda-semper-expectatione.html>.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

³⁷ John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter "Rosarium Virginis Mariae"*, n. 3, 9, 10, in: *Opoka* [online], access: 21.11.2017, <https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/listy/rosarium_virginis_16102002.html>; translation available from *The Holy See* [online], access: 23.04.2018, <https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae.html>.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, n. 13.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, n. 15.

⁴⁰ Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27.

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, n. 15.

⁴² *Ibidem*, n. 15.

The Rosary, according to the Pope, is not only meditation, but also a request to the Mother of God for intercession with Her Son.⁴³ Reassured in this truth, the visionary of Fatima, Sister Lucy, after many years in a lengthy interview, said “The Blessed Mother in these last times, in which we live, gave a new strength to recite the Rosary to such an extent that there is no such problem, no matter how difficult or temporary, or primarily spiritual, in the personal lives of each of us, our families, families of the world, or religious communities, and even in the lives of peoples and nations that cannot be resolved by praying the Holy Rosary. With the Rosary we will save ourselves; we will comfort Jesus Christ and obtain the salvation of many souls.”⁴⁴ Let these words be a consolation and a hope for all who fight against drunkenness, alcoholism and any other addiction.

Conclusion

The Gietrzwałd shrine, among the aforementioned pastoral activities and other pastoral forms not mentioned here, may undertake sobriety retreats for addicts. The model for such activity could be a center founded in 1968 by Fr. Benignus Sosnowski in Zakroczym. In addition, properly trained pastors could conduct formation activities for lay people, who are involved in the apostolate of sobriety. There could be organized regular meetings of sobriety pastors, in order to ask Our Lady of Gietrzwałd for the necessary strength and power in the conduct of the diocesan sobriety activities. Finally, the Gietrzwałd shrine is a place of comfort for families afflicted by the scourge of drunkenness; it is a sort of ‘sanatorium’, where the wounded return to health. Giving them pastoral care would certainly help to strengthen the family and to alleviate much suffering. Family pastoral care should aim to form the young generation in the spirit of sobriety, pointing also to total abstinence. Let us remember that the practice of complete abstinence is justified by the love of neighbour. Love of neighbour, in turn, is the supreme command of the Christian faith.

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⁴³ “When in the Rosary we plead with Mary, the Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35), She intercedes for us before the Father who filled her with grace and before the Son born of her womb, praying with us and for us”, in: John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, n. 16.

⁴⁴ A.M. Jacques, *Różaniec jest Ewangelią na klęcząco*, „Michael”, edycja polska, 2017, vol. 18, no. 91, p. 7.

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Pastoralne aspekty wezwania do trzeźwości w objawieniach Matki Bożej w Gietrzwałdzie w 1877 roku

Streszczenie: Spośród wielu schorzeń, na które cierpi współczesny człowiek, dotkliwie są różnego rodzaju uzależnienia. Jednym z nich i wyjątkowo groźnym jest alkoholizm. Człowiek dotknięty chorobą alkoholową nie jest w stanie, o własnych siłach, zatrzymać jej wyniszczającego charakteru i to zarówno w sferze psychofizycznej, jak również w sferze duchowej. Z pomocą przychodzi mu

różne instytucje publiczne, a wśród nich znaczącą rolę spełnia Kościół. Pierwszorzędnym zadaniem Kościoła jest doprowadzenie wszystkich jego członków do celu ostatecznego, jakim jest wieczne zbawienie. Gietrzwałdzkie objawienia sprzed 140 lat wydają się potwierdzać troskę Matki Bożej o zbawienie każdego człowieka, a w szczególności pogrążonego w grzechu pijaństwa. Nadużywających alkoholu wzywa do nawrócenia i zerwania z grzesznym życiem. Upomnienie zawarte w gietrzwałdzkim orędziu nakłada na duszpasterzy sanktuarium szczególne zadania w zakresie otoczenia pasterską troską ludzi dotkniętych w jakikolwiek sposób problemem uzależnienia. Sanktuarium z racji szczególnego wybraństwa przez Matkę Bożą wyposażone jest w specjalne narzędzia duszpasterskie, aby podjąć się gorliwie tych zadań. Skuteczność wypełnienia tej świętej misji będzie z pewnością zależało od współpracy z Niebieską Matką, a po stronie zmagających się z grzeszną dolegliwością – od podjętej walki duchowej, której winna towarzyszyć dziecięca ufność. Wszak Maryja wszystkich zapewniała o swojej nieustannej pomocy tymi słowami: „Nie smućcie się, bo Ja zawsze będę przy was”.

Słowa kluczowe: Maryja, różaniec, pijaństwo, alkoholizm, trzeźwość.

