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Jasna Góra in theological reflections on the Marian sanctuaries

Introduction

In his *Redemptoris Mater* encyclical, John Paul II claims that “*St. Mary is still present in the work of the Church, which introduces the kingdom of her Son into the world.*” This presence of St. Mary finds . . . “*a variety of means of expression. It also has a multiple range of influences. . .*”¹ Sanctuaries are these means and centers of St. Mary’s dynamic presence, which —by their “*appealing and radiating power*”— make “*not only individuals or milieux, but sometimes whole nations and continents seek to meet the Mother of Lord in them.*” Undoubtedly, Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa is such a sanctuary.²

I. Mystery of a sanctuary

In the common meaning, mostly of believers, a sanctuary (shrine) is a particularly sacred phenomenon, contrary to other churches or chapels. This is a place evoking interest, imagery and unique misgivings: It “*tempts*” and invites; it makes one wait for something unusual through not clearly realized, but more felt through the “*mystery of faith*,”³ which it includes. Already the history of a “*miraculous place*,” narrated events, sacral architecture, relics and votive offerings, a miraculous picture, the heart of sacredness of the whole shrine, pilgrims arriving and zealously worshipping, and also visits of different Church and State representatives, persons in the sciences and culture, all these evoke not only wonder and affection, but before all, impell thought and prayer, and call for deep religious and theological reflection.⁴ Looking for the paths leading to a deepening of our awareness about the Marian sanctuary, let us pause at the formulation given in the new Canonical Law, then in the *Redemptoris Mater* encyclical, and within the context of the history of salvation.

1. The legal-canonical definition is that “*a sanctuary is understood to be a church or other sacred place, to which —by the approval of a local ordinary— many believers make pilgrimages, for their exceptional piety*” (can. 1230).

This formulation and next several norms (can. 1231-1234), concerning the diocesan, national, and international sanctuaries, deal also with the Marian sanctuaries.⁵ The normative resolutions' statements include —important for us— the following norms:

- 1) above all, a sanctuary is a sacred place, then, not only a church, but it can be also another sacral building or even certain area;
- 2) it is a religious center of faith and worship of a charismatic character, different from the other places of ordinary and obligatory cults (e.g. from the parochial church)⁶
- 3) as a sacred place, then, it differs with its salvational presence and acts of God, where the grace is concentrated, and believers exceptionally vividly feel their nearness to God and they experience His help;⁷
- 4) because here appears a supernatural might and grace, believers pilgrimage to experience God in the mystery, which this sanctuary represents. Therefore, it can be a sanctuary famous for the mystery of Christ (e.g. of the Lord's Transfiguration), because of the relics there (e.g. of the Holy Cross), but most of all, it is a place famous for a miraculous picture of the Mother of God and her special nearness and mediation (e.g., Lourdes, Fatima), or also known for an exceptional entreaty of the Saint (e.g. of St. Anthony);
- 5) it is a center of special cult of God, different religious practices, and deepening of faith and Christian life. A center, where believers can equally take advantage of generous means of salvation, participate in solemn liturgy of the Divine Word and sacraments, particularly in the Eucharist and Atonement, and also in the other thriving and diverse practices, and services;⁸
- 6) finally, only then one can speak of a sanctuary in the proper meaning of this word, if it has received the approval of an Ordinary of that place, or confirmation of the competent Church authority.⁹ That element is important, at least because this way the Canonical Law excludes the "usurpatory" places of cults and pilgrimages (like in Olawa, in Lower Silesia, Poland), which unfortunately have their origins in the alleged private apparitions, or just religious hallucinations.

2. The next important document of the Church, which conveys to us the truth about the Marian sanctuary is the *Redemptoris Mater* encyclical of the Holy Father John Paul II.¹⁰ It is symptomatic and most noteworthy that the Pope places the Marian sanctuary, its vision, meaning, and function, in the core of his considerations about the pilgrimizing people of the Christian Church (part II, 25-37).

The Holy Father claims that the persistent presence of the Blessed Mary, the Mother of God, "*in the Church which introduces the kingdom of her Son into the world (cf., KK 13) . . . finds both in our time and in the whole history of the Church, a variety of means of expression. It also has a multiple range of influences.*" And here, among the other ways and dimensions manifesting that presence, the Pope points at the many and great pilgrimage places, where through the centuries Christian faith built magnificent temples, like in Guadelupa, Lourdes, or Fatima, and in other countries, among them "*how one cannot mention Jasna Góra in my home land?*" (n. 38).

Considering the essence of sanctuary, the Holy Father speaks about the internal space, in which “*hic et nunc*,” here and now, in an exceptional way the Holy Spirit acts. Through the pleading of Mary, His Betrothed, he summons believers to reconciliation with the Father, by the might of the Christian mystery of the Redemption. Participating in the faith of St. Mary, “*the Lord’s Servant*” always leading the pilgrimaging People of God, the Church has been continuously urged to co-realize “*the New and Eternal Testament*” and to struggle for “*the reunion of all humanity with Christ, the Head in the unity of His Spirit*” (cf., KK 13; RM 28).

We can also find here an ultimate foundation, which Marian piety, and the pilgrimage of the People of God to all those exceptional places of the Mother of God’s presence arise from; “*to find the strengthening of one’s own faith within the reach of the motherly presence of she, who believed*” (RM 28). From this point of view —the Pope observes further— “*one can speak about the specific geography of Marian faith and piety,*” having its definite appearance in sanctuaries dispersed all over the world, to which pilgrimage “*not only individuals or milieux, but sometimes whole nations and continents seek to meet the Mother of Lord*” (RM 28). One has to acknowledge with the deepest veneration and openness that until now, no one showed the ultimate source of “*specificity*,” non justified the simply irreplaceable role of the Marian sanctuaries in the Church among the pilgrimaging People of God, as did John Paul II in his Marian *Redemptoris Mater* encyclical.

3. Excepting of theological and legal considerations about the notion of Marian sanctuary, it is worth —at least generally— to ponder it also from the perspective of salvational economy. Realization of the immemorial divine plans concerning man are fulfilled through time. The revelation of the Old and New Testament reveals to us the entire divine plan of salvation that is fulfilled at subsequent stages of human history.¹¹ The Incarnation of the Son of God, and His Accomplishment of Redemption, are the apex of that “*entering*” of God into human and world’s history. This “*coming*” of Christ that was fulfilled is still going on, it continues through the salvational mediation of the Church, and it molds the history of salvation (cf. CC 2; CO 2; DM 3).¹² Within this history, although omnipresent, God chooses certain places to act in a specific way.¹³

Undoubtedly, Marian sanctuaries belong to these places. Although always present in the Church, St. Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, by predilection of God, attains her spiritual maternity in a specific way in her sanctuaries, to which believers pilgrimige all over the world.¹⁴ This idea was also presented by K. Rahner in his reflections on the genesis and mystery of the Marian sanctuary. Namely, he says that one should look for the origins of Marian sanctuary anywhere apart from the history of salvation, which only God Himself creates and orders. It is enough to review the history of both the Old and New Testaments to ascertain that God chooses not only specific persons, but also times and places, to realize His salvational ideas. For instance, he appeared to Moses in the burning bush,

He made the covenant with the “old testament” people on Mount Sinai, He chose Bethlehem for the birth of His only Son, and Golgotha for the place of His salvational death.

Following the line of these considerations, one should admit that Marian sanctuaries, like Lourdes, Fatima, Jasna Góra, and others, He chose on His own as the places of His exceptional mercy. More than in other temples, He wants to demonstrate there His benevolence, and to grant His grace to man through the mediation of St. Mary the Blessed Mother of God. That is why believers tangibly experience exceptional acts of God in Marian sanctuaries. They experience their contact with St. Mary more profoundly, and they become participants of exceptional salvational events. Those events often have their genuine expression in miraculous healings and conversions, or in great interventions of divine grace, which induce an extensive transformation of individuals or whole groups.

As K. Rahner continues, such a concept of the Marian sanctuary results with important conclusions of a pastoral nature. On the one hand, the Church has been obliged to carefully watch “*the signs of time*,” to accomplish necessary corrections in the sanctuary pastoral work. On the other hand, what is more important, one has to analyze interminably the essence, uniqueness, and mission of a given sanctuary, to allow it to remain an authentic work and means of God’s intervention, faithful to the divine plans of salvation.

Looking at the Marian sanctuary from this point of view, it appears as “*given*” (God’s gift) and “*set*” (responsibility). From the position of the economy of salvation, a sanctuary has been the act of an unfathomable decision of God. From the perspective of the pilgrimaging people of God, it is a place of the unique experiences, religious feelings, and spiritual transformations. These salvational events are saturated with particular presence and maternal pleadings of St. Mary, the Mother of God.¹⁵

The biblical dimension is only one more, but still an important dimension relevant to see the meaning and functions of a Marian sanctuary. However, this topic has been already partly elaborated and therefore the tentative bibliography is presented here for those interested.¹⁶

II. Activity of the Marian sanctuary

After the insight given to theological-salvational dimensions of those holy Marian places, one should follow by providing a set of at least elementary pastoral activities they should provide, to realize themselves as centers of the formation of a lively faith, genuine cult, and of Christian life and proper Marian piety.¹⁷

1. Sanctuaries were and are still the places of prodigious prayer and divine cult. Pastoral care is directed there to enable the arriving pilgrims to participate without any difficulty in the holy Eucharist Liturgy, to hear the Living Word of God, most of all about the Virgin Mary, to approach the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion, to pray freely and at will, individually and in groups. Therefore, one

should continuously cultivate and enrich the accomplishment of the Eucharist in the sanctuary, taking into account both the current liturgical year, including holidays occurring, and also participants present, with their specific, religious-moral level, existential position, and motives for arrival.

One should take pains for the Holy Eucharist to become not only a central and high point of every ceremony and pilgrimage, but also for the participants to experience it in the unity with St. Mary as present in the mystery of the Church, and the worship of God devoted to Him entirely. The whole her concern is to move people to participate in salvational sacrifice of Christ and the adoration of the Heavenly Father.

Similarly, the Sacrament of Atonement and Communion should be performed with a spiritual preoccupation that here present and close St. Mary the Mother of Mercy will obtain the gift of forgiveness of sins to every penitent, will elicit trust in the unrestricted mercy of God, will arouse one's repentance. Considering this, there penitential sermons, special teachings and religious practices in the Marian sanctuaries are necessary so that, believers could experience more deeply their meeting with the forgiving God, and could convert sincerely, and begin a new life.

2. Another meaningful function of the Marian sanctuary is its comprehensive influence both on the personality and character of an individual, on his or her faith and moral life, and on the development of social life, culture, and Christian creativity. Therefore it is not incidental that sanctuaries have been situated mostly in the captivating hollow and landscapes, that they impress with their architecture and sacral expression, and that the interiors of the temples are the masterpieces of art. Already the combination of nature and art prepares human soul and heart to open up to the transcendent extraterrestrial beauty, to God. Therefore, there is much care in the aesthetic ensemble of sanctuaries, in the artistic level of not only the walls, but also the celebrated liturgy or services.

However, the heart and mystery of any sanctuary is the picture of the Blessed Mary Mother of God in it. This is that which focuses sight, thoughts and desires. This is that which arouses admiration, which is then transformed into the adoration of God and contemplation of St. Mary's mysteries. This is that which results in considering one's own life and invites appreciation of all that is beautiful, noble, divine, and holy.

Therefore, it is absolutely correct to disseminate the whole truth about St. Mary in these sanctuaries (cf. RM 48), to show her person in the richness of grace and privileges, spiritual depth, fascinating life of virtues and distinction. The Apostolic See simultaneously suggests that symposia and Mariological and Marian congresses should take place in the sanctuaries, and that multiple complexes, tokens of remembrance, libraries and lecture rooms should be available, and that meetings and artistic shows, religious film shows, and the other events of this kind should take place. All this in order to deepen the comprehension of the person and mystery of St. Mary, and to stimulate a courageous yearning to follow her in one's own life.

3. Many pilgrims arrive at the Marian sanctuaries hoping that in a holy place, and under the maternal sight of St. Mary, they can find a solution of their, often very difficult, problems in life, the proper path of life, profession, direction, the meaning of their life and of the future. According to the Church, the Marian sanctuaries are predestinated by their nature to reveal in full illumination to those arriving, human dignity, women's role, the value and meaning of family, and to help them face their problems and find solutions. Marian sanctuaries are in particular those places, where vocations to priesthood and consecrated life are awoken. Then, the vocational actions cannot be foreign to any sanctuary. Hence, from every sanctuary the Our Lady as she who heard the voice of God, believed and remained faithful to the end.

4. For centuries, sanctuaries and pilgrimage shrines have been known also for the diverse forms of charity, philanthropy, bringing help to those in need, for the concern about the ill and suffering. This task, although to a different extent, should be fulfilled by the Marian sanctuaries. Humans in need to experience and feel willingness and help in that place of the exceptional presence and awe for Our Lady. Moreover, in the contemporary world, sanctuaries have been called to give testimony of Christ's life through the Gospels, to justify it and to turn it into a deed of the embracing love for one's neighbor. In the Marian sanctuaries, there must be cultivated—more than elsewhere—a climate of warmth, reciprocal goodwill, helpfulness, concern, hope, and exhilaration.

5. Closing those anthology of adjectives and functions that, according to the Church, should distinguish the Marian sanctuaries, one should list one more task, namely the openness to ecumenism, new movements and evangelical initiatives. Owing to the miscellaneous charamata, fulfilled duties and unifying might, Marian sanctuaries participate in the exceptional path of the mission of the Universal Church. It is expected that they should be open to interdenominational dialogue, to the apostolate of the laity, to new evangelization. Preserving their identity, they are to support all that serves to improve of the Church and spirituality, and the culture-forming movements. Thus the Marian aspect of Catholicism, and the spirit of unification of everyone into one family of the children of God grows.

III. The Jasna Góra Marian Sanctuary

After considering the phenomenon and mystery of the Marian sanctuaries in general, let us focus our attention and thoughts exclusively on Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, for in this reflection it is primary importance.¹⁸

"Jasna Góra! How many feelings in the heart of each Pole evoke those words! What deep contents they include! Why, this is the heart of the religious life of the nation, it is the superb Sign in the Polish sky; the throne of particular mercy, which St. Mary has chosen in that place. There is no sanctuary, to which any nation would so indivisibly joined its lot; its past, present and future, its longings and hopes . . . the people of God go to Częstochowa to say all of their

prayers . . . For, the miraculous picture of she, who defends Jasna Częstochowa captivates it, and attracts like a magnet. There the Polish nation leaves its tears and troubles, and it draws new strength from it. If the Jasna Góra walls could speak, how many mysteries of joy, pain, and pride of individual hearts, and of the whole Polish nation, they would unveil."¹⁹

According to our previous assumption, we tried to see Jasna Góra from the position of general theological considerations about Marian sanctuaries in the salvational plans of God, in the mystery of the Church, and its pastoral activity, in the experiences of pilgrims and expectations of the believers. Now in the third part of this reflection, one need to concentrate on and present those characteristics and elements that distinguish Jasna Góra from other sanctuaries, individualize it, and describe its character. It is understandable that within this article one can mention only a certain number of the features relevant to Jasna Góra and its greatness.

1. The spiritual capital of Poland

Undoubtedly, Jasna Góra has been an exceptional chapter in the history of the Church and the nation, in the history of successive generations, Polish families, hearts, and souls.²⁰ For almost six hundred years, the influence of Jasna Góra slowly enveloped the nation, and even neighboring countries. Since the time when the King of Poland Jan Kazimierz, after the "Swedish Deluge," ceremonially elected Our Lady the Queen of the Crown of Poland, and after he took an oath, Jasna Góra became definitely the first and chief sanctuary of the nation, and at the same time, the spiritual capital of Poland.²¹

Likewise, it is enough to take a glance into the *Kalendarium Jasnogórskie* to convince oneself of the successive increase in significance of this holy place. For events and act, both religious and national-patriotic of the utmost significance, happened there.²² There were periods when the improving integration of the cult of the Jasna Góra Mother of God with the nation and the Polish state has been apparent in an exceedingly salient way. The examples are the huge thanksgiving-beseeching pilgrimages of believers to Jasna Góra intended to give praise for the victory over besetting evil and misery, and those of the leaders of Poland and their families. Plenty of individual and private votives, and flags captured in wars, that have been the votive-thanksgiving gifts of the Polish kings and princes or hetmans, were brought to Jasna Góra too.²³ The pilgrimages and arrivals of the great men of the Church and the Nation, the eminent creators of culture, men of the worlds of science, medicine, of charity and evangelical works, are further evidence of the exceptional character of Jasna Góra as the capital, the spiritual capital of Poland. Nonetheless, to this exceptional character also contribute the annual groups of a professional character, the meetings of religious, charity, and social communities, and of numerous societies, associations, and groups. Although to a different extent, they all form their comprehension and life in relationship with that sacred place, with the mystery of the presence of the Mother of God in the Church.

One must emphasize that aside from the unifying religious values and the growth of the cult of the Mother of God Queen of Poland, Jasna Góra was a medium of rich

substance, which one may call “*Polish traits.*” The national consciousness has been closely related to the religious consciousness. As nowhere else, the matters most important to the nation, primarily the concern for an internal freedom of spirit and sovereignty, and the desire to regain lost independence, have been combined with the efforts of the Church to form the faith and morality of Polish society. Then, thanks to Jasna Góra, the three prodigious values, for the Nation: Polish traits (separateness and independence), the Church (religion and morality), and Marian traits (cult and the pattern of a good life), have been integrated into the united reality of the national entity. Jasna Góra has been always the place of a better realization of everything that serves the motherland, what is right, what forms unity. Looking more carefully, one should say that God Himself founded the center of unity of the Polish nation in Jasna Góra. This is He who “*gave the genuine might and defense in the person of Our Lady the Virgin Mary, and praised her sacred Jasna Góra picture with the extraordinary awe of the faithful ones.*” (fragment of the prayer from the Holy Mass of August 26).

Many events have entered into the history of Jasna Góra, as Jasna Góra has entered into many other events. This shows how the theology of this sanctuary intersects with and carries out the theology of the nation.²⁴ This is confirmed by the fact that Anniversary Year during the 600th of Jasna Góra it was labelled in the official documents and in the program of the Church in Poland as the Jasna Góra Magnificat of the Nation.²⁵ This is a rare occurrence for any, even a national, sanctuary in the world.²⁶

These are only the marks of some powerful means causing that only Jasna Góra caused the national consciousness to unify and to intermeditate closely with the religious consciousness, and to join social and cultural values with Christian ones. This way spiritual, religious, and national prestige, and the integrative meaning of the Jasna Góra sanctuary grew.²⁷ Through the centuries, Jasna Góra formed and grew as the spiritual capital of Poland, and correspondingly, as an abode of the Queen of the Nation. There have been past and present generations to worship her, there the Poles look for light and strength, there successive generations experience religious and patriotic mysteries under the blessing and mediation of their Mother and Queen.²⁸

2. The Most Sacred Place of the Nation

This is a second, alternative name for Jasna Góra. According to common and deeply held beliefs, there is no other so sacred or more lofty place, church temple, as Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. It is perceived as the Spiritual Capital of Poland, but together with the premise that Jasna Góra is also, and likely most of all, a place of the sacred presence of the Blessed Mother of God, Mother and Queen of the Nation.²⁹ Thanks to her presence, pilgrims arrive there, the sacred Divine events occur, and the peculiar spiritual might, attracting all Poland and also pilgrims from abroad to this place, beams from the sanctuary. Jasna Góra is considered the only sanctuary as sacred as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Can-

na of Galilee, as Golgotha. There is no other place or sanctuary in Poland, which is so sacred is due to the presence of St. Mary,³⁰ which is a greater pilgrimage center and greater source of grace, and at the same time, of conversion and might, as is Jasna Góra.

Jasna Góra is the sacredness of the whole nation; as apparent in naming it *“The Home of the Mother and Queen of All the Poles.”*³¹ Rev. Cardinal S. Wyszyński used this expression with particular predilection, emphasizing that pilgrims from different places in Poland, and of the world, come to this house because they feel here most comfortable and safe. The Nation comes here, for it knows that here is the Truth, because there is the Mother of Truth; that justice is here, because the Mother of Him, who has been called the Son of Justice, because here is the Mother of Beautiful Love, who carried the very essence of Love in her heart.³² *“When you return to your homes —the Primate said— take from Jasna Góra this grace, to take the best, maternal, careful, and attentive eyes of our Jasna Góra Lady and Mother with You.”*³³ Jasna Góra is the home and sanctuary of the whole nation, vigorously emphasized The Holy Father John Paul II during his first pilgrimage to the motherland: *“You need to put your ear to this Sacred Place to listen how the Nation’s heart beats in the heart of Mother... And if it beats in a tone of worry, if trouble and a call for conversion, for strengthening your conscience, for harmonizing the life of families, individuals, and milieux, sounds from it, you need to welcome this call”* (Jasna Góra, June 4, 1979).

Jasna Góra is, in the full meaning of this word, the place of salvational meeting of God with all His people living in the Polish land, the meeting, which is present in and will be with it its Mother and Queen. These great meetings happen most of all during the large walking pilgrimages, annual Prayers, Holidays, and assorted ceremonies.³⁴ The Jasna Góra evangelization is also peculiar and singular. It is claimed in Jasna Góra that St. Mary is not only present in this place, but among the pilgrimaging Church, in the history of the nation, in human affairs, in a family, and in culture. She is the genuine Guide to faith of human generations, communities, and societies, in their paths leading to an eternal homeland.³⁵ This maternal feature of the Holy Mother of God from Jasna Góra overwhelmed all Polish Christianity, the whole activity of the Church. It introduced reverence and feeling of sacredness for everything that combines with human dignity, with religion and morality, with family life and education, into all dimensions of human life and activity. Across centuries, the Jasna Góra evangelization and pastoral care have been leading Polish generations to internal freedom from evil and sin, toward a sacred freedom of the children of God.³⁶

3. The Bright Mount (Jasna Góra) of hope and trust

This is not to prove how dramatic our was history; how much our nation experienced suffering, ordeals, victories, and defeats. And *“when all lights for Poland went out, then there was still the Saint from Częstochowa and the Church.”*³⁷ Actually, since the victorious defense of Jasna Góra in the seventeenth century, in all its torments, reverses, and storms of history, the Polish Nation looks toward Jasna

Góra of Victory with more hope than before, trusting that help will come from there to us in time. The prayer from the Holy Mass of the ceremony of Jasna Góra Mother of God on August 26 reminds us that *“The Almighty God gave us the unique help and defence in Our Lady Virgin Mary.”* Her help and care remains, and the trust in her maternal mediation and the grace of successful intervention does not diminish. For centuries, the Jasna Góra chapel with the Miraculous Picture of the Mother and Queen of Poland was the place for generations to derive strength, for Catholicism to consolidate, for the Nation to survive the partitions and occupation.³⁸ *“There, in Jasna Góra, the flame of hope has been burning across centuries for all the country. The light of Jasna Góra never gone out. The hearts of Father Kordecki, of the Bar Confederates, of the insurgents of national uprisings, were burning with this hope. The great supernatural ‘Hope’ wanders through all parishes of the motherland inside the Jasna Góra Picture of Blessing,”* preached the Rev. Primate of Poland, J. Glemp before the 600th anniversary ceremony of the sanctuary celebrated together with the Holy Father John Paul II on June 19, 1983 in Jasna Góra.

Really, from the very beginning, Jasna Góra was a sign of the unbroken hope, strength, and consolation for Polish generations, leaders, kings, knights, suffering people, for the ill ones striving for healing and for a particular grace.³⁹ The Jasna Góra chronicles, the votives, the requests and thanks sent in, and the beseeching-thanksgiving pilgrimages tell of it. Testimonies of the victories, the oaths taken, and the arriving pilgrimages reveal the truth about the role played by the Jasna Góra Sanctuary, and the cult of Mother of God the Queen. They were giving the might, courage and zeal to fight for independence, to overpower various forms of violence, tyranny, imposed nihilism, and the consumer lifestyle. Jasna Góra possessed fortitude against the different *“floods”*⁴⁰ of Russification, Germanization, and atheization of society. Also today, it waits for new heroes of the motherland and for the apostles of the Church.⁴¹

Truth about the exceptional presence and maternal mediation of St. Mary for the Polish Nation, and about the royal dignity of our Lady is the integral part of the message of Jasna Góra’s service. This truth not only distinguishes Jasna Góra from the other Marian sanctuaries, but it is also a base for Hope and cult, trusts and oaths taken by the Nation all over the country for *“Great Mother of God Incarnate.”*⁴²

It is impossible to consider here causes of the oaths or trusts taken, nor to analyze the contents and expectations included in them. One should then only pause to mention them. The oaths of King Jan Kazimierz are the first official evidence reported by history. This was the highest class of tribute, and the first obligation of royal dignity and state authority toward Mary the Mother of God, which finally granted her the title of Queen of the Crown of Poland. The most significant to us are those trusts and oaths, which the Episcopate of Poland offered during the gatherings in the post-war period. The first was on September 8, 1946, then on August 26, 1956 the Oaths of the Nation that have been repeat-

ed every year until now; next on May 3, 1966 the Millennial Act of Submitting into Maternal Servitude of Mary the Queen of Poland; finally, on September 12, 1971 the Act of Giving the World to the Mother of the Church.

The entrustments that the Pope John Paul II offered to the Jasna Góra Mother of God during his pilgrimages to the motherland, deserve particular attention. In the Jasna Góra sanctuary, he entrusted to the Mother of the Church all of his evangelical and ecumenical matters, and our Native Land with its “*difficult present*,” and the young generations to overcome all atheism and build a new world order with the Gospels in their hearts, and with the power of the descending Holy Spirit. One should emphasize that all these offerings, oaths and trusts had always an all-Polish, all-Church, Biblical, and charismatic character. In consequence, they certify Jasna Góra’s all-Polish character, its superiority over other Marian sanctuaries, and its revitalized tie to the Apostolic See, continuously approaching the universality and mission of the Church of Christ.

Conclusion

The above reflections on Jasna Góra on a background of theological premises and accounts stating what the Marian sanctuaries are, have given us insight into the phenomenon and mystery of the sacred place. One must admit that Jasna Góra is from its dawn an exceptional gift of the redeeming God for generations of Poles, and all pilgrims attending it. Most of all, one should consider the greatness and significance of that place from the position of faith, analyzing its vertical dimension (presence of God and maternity of St. Mary), considering its horizontal dimension (presence of a sanctuary in the history of the Church and of the Nation), and include its personal dimension (personal reply of believers to God’s call for cooperation with the grace of salvation).

Taking these aspects into account, one can state that Jasna Góra has deeply permeated the Polish soul, and religious and moral life of the Poles. Comprising the love for God and a love for the motherland, through the unlimited trust and entrusting to the Blessed Mary the Mother of God, Jasna Góra became and is continuously becoming and improves as the Marian sanctuary of primary significance for the history of the Church and the Polish nation. This fact is the unique opportunity, which not only encourages one to further studies, but most of all, obliges one to involvement and multilateral cooperation with St. Mary the Mother of God and the Queen of Poland.

Notes:

¹ Cf. Card. K. Wojtyła, *U podstaw odnowy. Studium o realizacji Vaticanum II* (At the Foundations of renewal, A study on realization of Vatican II), Cracow 1972, pp. 139-141.

² Cf. Card. K. Wojtyła, *U podstaw odnowy. . . , op. cit.*, pp. 139-141.

³ Cf. Bishop J. Ablewicz, *Słowo wstępne* (Foreword), *Tamowskie Studia Teologiczne*, 1983, Vol. IX, p. 5.

⁴ Cf. M. Borzyszkowski, *Z pielgrzymką do Częstochowy. Pamiętniki i wspomnienia* (With a pilgrimage to Częstochowa. Diaries and memories), Olsztyn 1985.

- ⁵ Cf. F. Pasternak, *Status prawny sanktuariów w Nowym Prawie Kanonicznym* (The Legal Status of sanctuaries in the New Canonical Law), *Prawo Kanoniczne*, 1985, 28(1-2), pp. 222-28.
- ⁶ Cf. J. Majka, *Rola Jasnej Góry* (The Role of Jasna Góra), "Tygodnik Powszechny," 1960, 49 (9), p. 3.
- ⁷ Cf. Ibidem, P. Anzulewicz, *Wiadomości wstępne* (Introductory information). In: *Z dawna Polski Tyś Królową. Przewodnik po sanktuariach maryjnych* (You are the Ancient Polish Queen. A Guide to Marian sanctuaries), S.M. Grażyna od Wszechpośrednictwa, M. Bm. S.M. Gizela od Niepokalanego Serca Maryi (eds.), Szymanów, 1984. p. 11.
- ⁸ Cf. J. Dudziak, *Prawno-kanoniczna koncepcja sanktuarium* (The Legal-Canonical Concept of Sanctuary), "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne," 1983, Vol. IX, pp. 61-69.
- ⁹ Cf. Ibidem, p. 70.
- ¹⁰ The Redemptoris Mater encyclical of the Holy Father John Paul II about the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of pilgrimaging Church, on the March 25, 1987.
- ¹¹ Cf. W. Lydka, *Historia zbawienia* (History of salvation: an entry). In: *Słownik teologiczny* (A. Zuberbier, Ed.), 1985, Vol. 1, pp. 206-298.
- ¹² Cf. Card. K. Wojtyła, *U podstaw odnowy . . .*, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-141.
- ¹³ Bishop J. Ablewicz, *Pielgrzymka jako znak święty* (Pilgrimage as a sacred sign), "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne," 1983, Vol. IX, p. 14.
- ¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ¹⁵ The reported thoughts come from the conversation, which I personally had on the theology of Marian sanctuary with Rev. professor K. Rahner, at the Osterreichischer Pastoraltagung in Viena-Laintz, on December 28, 1976. Cf. J. Nalaskowski, *Jasna Góra. Marienshailigtum und Wallfahrtsort*, Częstochowa-Jasna Góra, 1983, pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Bishop J. Ablewicz, *Pielgrzymka . . .*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-24; M. Bednarz, *Znaczenie sanktuarium w Piśmie św.* (The meaning of sanctuary in the Holy Write), pp. 25-36; T. Brzegowy, *Izrael pielgrzymujący* (The pilgrimizing Israel), Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne, 1983, Vol. IX, pp. 37-51; R.J. Abramek, "Jasnogorska" mariologia Kardynała Karola Wojtyły Papieża Jana Pawła II (The "Jasna Góra Mariology" of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła the Pope John Paul II), *Studia Claromontana*, Jasna Góra 1981, Vol. I, pp. 7-38. In the listed editions one can find the further lists of bibliographical references.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Wskazania i Propozycje Obchodu Roku Maryjnego, wydane przez Kongregację Kultu Bożego w Notitiach (Suggestions and Proposals Concerning Celebrations of the Marian Year, published by the Congregation of Divine Cult in Notitia), 1987, 251, pp. 342-396; and suggestions of the Committee Consilium Primarium Anno Mariali Celebrando, E Civitate Vaticana, di 7 X 1987, Prot. N. 467/87.
- ¹⁸ It is understandable that because of the scope of predicaments and the number of existing elaborations, we will stop only at the most characteristic features of the Jasna Góra sanctuary. It seems to be justified to employ mostly the opinions of two great theologians and admirers of Jasna Góra Lady: Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, and Pope John Paul II.
- ¹⁹ W. Zaleski, *Jasna Góra 1382-1982*, Łódź 1981, pp. 5.
- ²⁰ *Matka Boża w moim życiu* (Mother of God in My Life), Cracow 1984; and *Z pielgrzymką do Częstochowy. Pamiętniki i wspomnienia* (With pilgrimage to Częstochowa. Diaries and memories), Olsztyn 1985. Some impressions and memories about Jasna Góra are also included in the monthly "Jasna Góra."
- ²¹ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *Teologia sanktuarium jasnogorskiej Bogarodzicy* (Theology of the sanctuary of Jasna Góra Mother of God), In: *Jasnogorski Ołtarz Ojczyzny* (The Jasna Góra Altar of the Motherland), Częstochowa 1991, pp. 12-15.
- ²² *Kalendarium Jasnogórskie* (The Jasna Góra Diary) In: *Panno Święta co Jasnej bronisz Częstochowy*, Paris, 1982, pp. 8-10; and Z.S. Jabłoński, *Rzeczywistość Jasnej Góry ważniejszymi wydarzeniami pisana* (The reality of Jasna Góra, written with the most important events), In: *Tyś wielką chlubą naszego narodu*, Częstochowa 1991, pp. 277-318.

- ²³ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- ²⁴ Cf. Z.S. Jabłoński, *Jasna Góra, ośrodek kultu maryjnego 1864-1914* (Jasna Góra, the Center of the Marian Cult 1864-1914), Lublin 1984, p. 365.
- ²⁵ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ²⁷ Cf. Z.S. Jabłoński, *op. cit.*, p. 40, 365.
- ²⁸ Cf. John Paul II, Homilia na Jasnej Górze, 4 czerwca 1979 (Homily at Jasna Góra, June 4, 1979).
- ²⁹ Cf. J. Pach, *Jasnogórska Maryja według kazan Prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego wygłoszonych w latach Wielkiej Nowenny (1957-1966)* (The Jasna Góra Mary, in the Sermons of Primate Stefan Wyszyński, preached in the years of the Great Novenna, 1957-1966), unpublished M.A. thesis, Kraków 1982, pp. 65-68.
- ³⁰ Modlitwa z 28/29 V 1961 (The prayer of May 28-29, 1961), non-authorized manuscript, APP 1961.
- ³¹ Cf. J. Pach, *Jasnogórska ...* (The Jasna Góra ...), pp. 88-90.
- ³² Cf. Rev. S. Card. Wyszyński, *W światłach Tysiąclecia* (In the spotlight of the Millennium), Kraków 1981, p. 11.
- ³³ Sermon of August 26, 1963, manuscript APP, Vol. 15 (1963), pp. 99-102.
- ³⁴ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
- ³⁵ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
- ³⁶ Cf. John Paul II, Homilia podczas jubileuszowej Mszy św. na Jasnej Górze, 19 czerwca 1983 (The homily at the anniversary Holy Mass in Jasna Góra, on June 19, 1983).
- ³⁷ *Pamiętniki Franka gubernatora* (Diaries of the Nazi Governor Frank), quoted in the Letter of the Episcopate of Poland for tercentenary of the death of the Abbot A. Kordecki of Jasna Góra, January 25, 1973. In: *Panno Święta co Jasnej Bronisz Częstochowy*, 1981, p. 92.
- ³⁸ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- ³⁹ Father Melchior Królik, *Cuda i laski Matki Bożej Jasnogórskiej* (Miracles and Graces of the Jasna Góra Mother of God). In: *Tysią wielką chlubą naszego narodu* (You are the Great Pride of Our Nation), Częstochowa 1991, pp. 381-404.
- ⁴⁰ Prayer on May 28-29, 1961, unauthorized manuscript, APP 1961.
- ⁴¹ Cf. R.J. Abramek, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.
- ⁴² *Op. cit.*, p. 11.