

November 2024 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Arlington-our Golden Jubilee!! We are in Year 2 of preparation for our Jubilee. Theme for Year 2: "My soul rejoices in the Lord!"



## *Our Lady of Gietrzwałd*

*Poland 1877*

Feast day September 8

In the 1870's, control of Poland was split between the Prussian Hapsburg Empire and Russia. In their efforts to force a unified German state, the Prussians, who were Protestant, suppressed Catholicism and the Polish culture. It was a crime to speak Polish. There were very few priests left in the area.

On Wednesday, June 27, 1877, thirteen-year-old Justyna Szafryńska was on her way home from the Church of the Nativity of Mary in Gietrzwałd, Poland. She had been preparing to make her First Holy Communion and had just taken and passed an exam given by the parish priest Fr. Augustin Weichsel. Justyna heard the Angelus bells and stopped to pray. Suddenly, a mystical light and a figure dressed in white appeared over a maple tree. Justyna said it was the Holy Mother and that she was the most beautiful lady she'd ever seen! Then, the Child Jesus descended from the clouds and appeared to the left of his mother.

The next day, Thursday June 28, Justyna and her friend Barbara Samalowska were on the church grounds. Again, the Holy Mother appeared above the maple tree. She was sitting on a throne, two angels brought Baby Jesus in a heavenly glow and placed Him on the left knee of Our Lady; the Child was holding a brilliant orb with a cross on top. Other angels were raising a crown above Mary's head. Yet another angel brought a gold scepter and held it above the crown. One more angel hovered above the entire scene, pointing to a cross.

On Saturday, June 30, Justyna and Barbara saw the Blessed Mother again. This time she spoke. She told them that they must pray, pray, pray. Pray the Rosary, everyday! She spoke to them in their beloved Polish, forbidden by the Prussians. On Sunday, July 1, Justyna made her First Holy Communion, then prayed the Rosary under the maple tree. The Blessed Mother appeared and told Justyna: "I am the Most Holy Virgin, Immaculately Conceived." Our Lady appeared to Justyna and Barbara five more times. She told them that they must not sin. Those who lie and spread false things are induced to do so by Satan. They will not go to Heaven.

Below the maple tree was a spring of water. On September 8, 1877, Our Lady blessed the spring and said that those who have faith and are sick, may come to the spring to receive healing. The Holy Mother said that if people pray the Rosary with great zeal, then the Church will not be persecuted and priests will fill the parishes again. Word of the apparitions attracted many people. Many pilgrims have reported healing miracles at the spring at Gietrzwałd. The Blessed Mother last appeared on September 16, 1877. She said, "Pray the Rosary zealously!"

Mary, [the Mediatrix of All Graces](#), the model disciple, shows us how to receive and bear the Word to the world. For more on Year 2 preparation, visit: [www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/) - Office of Religious Education