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The Millennium of Polish Pilgrimages

1.

Migrations stimulated by religious motifs have played an important role within the migration processes in many countries. Peregrinations to holy places have existed almost since the beginning of mankind. Apart from the religious values, pilgrimages have also constituted an important element in the development of the geographical horizons of societies. Also they have always been one of the main factors determining religious culture in its broadest meaning.

In Poland, the pilgrimage tradition goes back to pagan times, while the early days of Christian pilgrimages could be noted as early as the 11th century. At present, about 5-7 million people a year participate in the pilgrimage migrations. This is about 15% of the population of Poland. The pilgrims are Roman and Orthodox Catholics as well as members of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Muslim. In the past, the pilgrimage groups included the members of Jewish congregations and during the years of partitions also the Polish Protestants. The Poles now account for more than 3-5% of the Christian pilgrims all over the world and for about 20% in Europe.

At the moment, in Poland, there are more than 500 pilgrimage sanctuaries. The absolute majority (98%) of the pilgrimage centres belong to the Roman Catholic Church. Among those Catholic centres dominant position belongs to St. Mary's sanctuaries. There are about 430 of them and out of this number 200 possess crowned effigies of Our Lady.

The most important centres have acquired international fame. They include: Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, Niepokalanów, Warsaw, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, St. Anne's Mountain and Cracow. A special centre is Oświęcim [Auschwitz]. It attracts "semi-pilgrimages" of peoples of various religions and denominations from all over the world.

Diversified pilgrimage traditions are characteristic of such centres as Piekary Śląskie, Licheń, Gniezno and Zakopane. They are a group of towns that are famous within the country.

There is also a group of 25 supra-regional sanctuaries that are famous in several dioceses. The best known of them are: Bardo Śląskie, Wambierzyce, Trzebnica, Ludźmierz, Tuchów, Kalwaria Pałacowska, Kodeń, Leśna Podkowa, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Wejherowo, Swarzewo, Święty Krzyż, Dukla and Kałków-Gdów.

The group of regional centres consists of almost 135 sanctuaries. There are also 330 local ones.

The main pilgrimage centre is Jasna Góra, while Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is considered to be the second most important. Since the early 1970s, the status of Niepokalanów has become more prominent. It is a pilgrimage centre devoted to the worship of Virgin Mary and a Franciscan friar, St. Maximilian Kolbe. In the 1980s, Warsaw became a special pilgrimage and patriotic centre.

The pilgrimages to Cracow have traditionally stemmed from the worship of the martyred bishop, St. Stanislaus, the patron of Poland, as well as from the worship of St. Jadwiga and the cult focusing on the shrine of Christ's Passion in Mogiła. In the recent years, however, most religious visits have been connected with the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Łagiewniki and the worship of blessed (1993) Faustyna Kowalska. In June 1997, Pope John Paul II made a pilgrimage to that sanctuary.

For centuries St. Anne's Mountain has been regarded as a Holy Mountain by the inhabitants of Silesia, especially in the Opole region. An increased number of pilgrims has been observed there since June 21 1983, the date of Pope John Paul II's peregrination to the sanctuary on St. Anne's Mountain. The visits of pilgrims from abroad were notably more frequent in the 1990s.

The most prominent roles among the national centres play Licheń and Piekary Śląskie. Because of the constantly increasing pilgrimage movement, Licheń is referred to as the "New Częstochowa" or the "Częstochowa of the North." A sudden and intensive development of pilgrimages has been noted for the last fifteen years. Annually, Licheń is visited by about one million of pilgrims.

The pilgrimage of men to Piekary Śląskie is particularly important. It takes place on the last Sunday of May (500,000-600,000 people). Since the late 1970s there has been observed a constantly growing number of workers' pilgrimages from all over Poland.

Gniezno attracts several hundred thousand pilgrims and religious tourists. The celebrations connected with the millennium of St. Adalbert's death, which were presided over by John Paul II, in June 1997, had an immense impact on the development of Gniezno as a pilgrimage centre. During those celebrations a historic meeting of the Pope and the leaders of the countries of Central Europe took place in Gniezno.

At this point one should also mention some very special pilgrimages of the Polish people who wandered to various places in order to meet John Paul II during his Apostolic Journeys to our homeland, in the years 1979, 1983, 1991, 1995, 1997 and 1999. The major celebrations connected with the presence of the Pope

attract hundreds of thousands pilgrims, who sometimes come from very remote places. Any place visited by John Paul II becomes then the most important pilgrimage centre in the whole country. An unquestioned special feature of these meetings is their unique atmosphere, which is seldom present during other religious celebrations. In the years of the communist regime, those meetings of the Poles with the Pope filled us all with the feeling of strength and solidarity. They always generated hope and added the strength that was necessary to survive during periods of adversity.

The role of Poland in the world pilgrimage migrations is quite prominent, though not always noticed and appreciated. The tradition of pilgrimages has survived in spite of the complicated history and the times during which the political situation hindered the development of the mass forms of piety. The pedestrian pilgrimages to Jasna Góra have become a unique religious, social and cultural phenomenon on international scale, especially within Christian countries. In connection with the status of the Jasna Góra sanctuary in the history of the Polish nation and also in the history of our continent, this place is regarded as the spiritual centre of Poland and one of the most important such centres in Europe. The World Youth Day in Częstochowa in 1991 helped people to understand that pilgrimages are not just a religious phenomenon, but also a spatial, social and cultural one, which keeps evolving despite the still-existing limitations and political divisions. Its ultimate aim is to integrate the continent (or at least to facilitate this integration).

Unfortunately, we are not always aware of the status and tradition of peregrinations in Poland. The present exhibition aspires to fill in that blank in our awareness.

2.

The centres of the pagan cult suffered destruction or decline while Christianity was spreading through the Polish lands. Although locally pagan rites were still observed for some time, their main centres were suppressed. The first bishops had all the formerly worshipped trees cut down. It was almost a prevailing custom that the Church authorities invite monks to settle on the site of former pagan holy places or in their vicinity.

In the first years of Christianity, the worship of saints as well as the cult of hermits and of the Passion of Christ prevailed and developed in Poland. Roughly since the 12th century, the worship of St. Mary was growing more and more popular.

The beginnings of religious peregrinations were connected with the martyrdom of St. Adalbert and the pilgrimage to his tomb in Gniezno made by Otto III in 1000. St. Adalbert, born in 956, left Gniezno as a missionary bishop in January 997. At the end of March, after having travelled along the Vistula River, he reached Gdańsk, which was situated on the outskirts of Boleslaus the Brave's state. His companions were Radzim-Gaudenty and Bogusza-Benedykt. At the turn of March, after having



'St. Adalbert' – F. Cynk, post-card from ca. 1920
(Archives of the Department of Geography of Religion
at the Institute of Geography of the Jagiellonian
University)

spent several days in Gdańsk, in connection with his missionary activity, he left for Prussia. There, on April 23, he died the death of a martyr. The heathens let his companions free. Boleslaus the Brave bought back the body of the bishop and had it brought to Gniezno.

Adalbert soon acquired the reputation of sanctity, mostly owing to his martyrdom. Not long after his death, there appeared some reports of graces received thanks to the intercession of the Saint. He became a patron of the missionary and military campaigns setting off for Pomerania and Prussia. He was declared a saint in 999. Otto III's pilgrimage in March 1000 was particularly significant for the popularisation of St. Adalbert's worship in Christian Europe of that time.

St. Adalbert's martyrdom, his canonisation, as well as the possession of his relics, considerably emphasised the position of Poland and of Gniezno in Christian Europe. During his pilgrimage in 1000, the Emperor announced the decision of Pope Sylvester II, concerning the establishment of a metropolis in Gniezno

and of three suffragan see bishoprics in Cracow, Wrocław and Kołobrzeg. This meant that the Polish Church was rendered independent from the metropolis in Magdeburg.

Master Wincenty Kadłubek called St. Adalbert "the holiest patron of the Poles." In fact, for 250 years he was the only patron of Poland.

St. Adalbert's tomb has become the "meeting place" of Poland and the Christian Europe, the place of the internal integration of the Poles and of their integration with the inhabitants of other European countries, in particular the Slavonic ones. Thus, almost from the very beginning, the religious character of the worship of the Saint intermingled with some political strains. Various monarchs would go on pilgrimages to the tomb of the Saint and till the 13th century the successive rulers of Poland were crowned there. Being in possession of the relics of the Saint, Gniezno became the main pilgrimage centre of those days. The worship professed there had a wide reach in Europe and it greatly contributed to stimulating religiousness of the Poles, as well as of the people from other countries – in particular from Bohemia,

Hungry, Germany, Denmark and Italy. No other Polish saint has achieved such an international fame.

Almost parallel to St. Adalbert's worship, the cult of hermits developed in Poland. It was quite typical of the early days of Christianity. Among the most famous hermits active in the Polish lands was St. Andrzej Świerad (died around 1034), who lived according to the Eastern Church principle. In Poland he undoubtedly stayed in three places: in Tropie upon the Dunajec River, in Opatowiec upon the Vitula River, near the estuary of the Dunajec River, and in Oława near Wrocław. In all these three places the Saint lived in hermitages. Most probably, crowds of believers from both the nearby places and from remote locations would come to see him. Some miracles attributed to Świerad took place in the 16th century, in the neighbourhood of Tropie. Both in Tropie and in Opatowiec, there is a traditional belief that the water from the springs used by the Saint and situated near his hermitages has curative properties. In Tropie the worship of the Saint has been practised incessantly until the present time.

We should also mention the worship of some women hermits such as Jutta of Chełmża (ca 1220-1260) or a mystic, Dorota of Małowy (1347-1394), as well as the worship of Five Brethren Martyrs (also known as the Five Polish Brethren), who died in 1003 (the main places of their worship are Bieniszewo and Międzyrzecze). Some episodes of a hermit's life can also be found in the biography of St. John of Dukla (1414-1484), who was beatified in 1733 and canonised in 1997. According to the existing tradition, in his youth he is said to have led the life of a hermit (the length of that period is unknown) in the woods that surround the town, at the foothills of Mount Cergowa and Zaśpít. In 1769, a church was erected on the spot where John was supposed to have had his hermitage in his youth. This fact testifies to the strong tradition of sequestered life in John's biography.

The history of hermits' worship in Poland, especially after their death, introduces us into a very popular medieval worship of people who died in the aura of sanctity. In particular, it concerned the people who were canonised. Their tombs and relics attracted the believers, as a result of which several pilgrimage centres emerged. Their fame had different reach. Among the many distinguished personalities in the early history of Christianity in Poland some were particularly worshipped. Beside the above mentioned figures one should also mention St. Stanislaus the Bishop, St. Jadwiga of Silesia, St. Kinga, St. Jadwiga the Queen, as well as the "Cracovian Saints." Although their worship has survived until now, its culminating period occurred in the Middle Ages and in the early years of the modern era.

The worship of the chief Patron of Poland and of Cracow, St. Stanislaus of Szczepanów, is connected with his martyrdom in 1079 on the Little Rock Hill (in Polish – Skalka; in Latin - Rupella) in Cracow. Basically, it started to evolve in the second half of the 12th century. The main centre of his worship is Cracow and in particular Wawel Hill and Little Rock Hill. Since his canonisation by the Pope Innocent IV (on September 17, 1253) and after the establishment of the 8th of May as the day dedicated to the canonised bishop, solemn religious celebrations have been held



'St. Stanislaus, the Bishop of Cracow' – lithograph from ca. 1850, Cracow (Archives of the Department of Geography of Religion at the Institute of Geography of the Jagiellonian University)

in Cracow on that day (or for eight successive days). Their crucial element is the procession following the route from Wawel Hill to Little Rock Hill and back. The 8th of May 1254, which was the first Patron's day celebrated after the canonisation, was particularly solemn. That famous "Cracovian convention" attracted the representatives of the Church high-ranking clergy, including the papal nuncio in Poland, the representatives of the royal court and many other distinguished people. There also came thousands of pilgrims from Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. The "Cracovian convention" was of great importance for stimulating the feeling of national unity in the difficult years when Poland was divided into independent provinces. Since the canonisation of the bishop, Cracow has for many centuries been the most important centre of religious worship on national scale. In 1434, Ladislaus Varnensis set up a tradition of a pedestrian pilgrimage of the Polish kings from Wawel Hill to Little Rock Hill, which was to take place on the eve of their coronation. Only Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski broke off that tradition. Thus the relationship between the rulers and the

centre in Gniezno were considerably loosened. The most intensive worship of St. Stanislaus was noted in the 15th and 16th centuries.

In the 13th century, Trzebnica became an important point on the map of the medieval pilgrimage centres. The status of that place resulted from the worship of St. Jadwiga of Silesia who died in 1243. She was a Silesian Princess, wife of Henry the Bearded, the Prince of Silesia, Cracow and Wielkopolska. Most frequently she would stay in the convent in Trzebnica, which she and her husband had founded in 1202. At the end of her life she lived near the convent, in a small cottage, in which among others, she had arranged a small hospital for the poor. In order to be in constant communion with God she practised strict penitentiary asceticism. During her lifetime she was already considered a saint. Her cult started evolving soon after her death and plenty of pilgrims from Silesia, Wielkopolska, Lusatia and Misnia peregrinated to her grave in the church in Trzebnica. In 1267, she was announced a saint by the Pope Clementius IV.

Let us mention two more women, whose worship has existed continuously since the Middle Ages. The first of them was Kinga (Kunegunda) who died in 1292 and was canonised in 1999. She was a Hungarian princess, the wife of Boleslaus the Chaste. She had the titles of the Princess of Cracow and Sandomierz and of the province of Sącz since 1252. She founded the convent of Poor Clare's in Stary Sącz, which she herself joined at the beginning of 1281. After her death, her cult developed quickly and Stary Sącz became its major centre.

The worship of Saint Jadwiga the Queen also developed almost immediately after her death, in 1399, though she was canonised only in 1997.

In the 12th century, Cracow became an important centre of religious worship. The peak period of pilgrimages in Cracow took place in the 15th century, when the city had as many as 17 *loca sacra*. 15th-century Cracow was given the name of *Felix saeculum Cracoviae*. W. Schemk links this name to the fact that six people who had acquired reputation for being saint, lived and died in Cracow. They were: Jan Kanty, Izajasz Boner, Michał Giedroyć, Stanislaus the Silent, Simon of Lipnica and Stanislaus Kazimierzcyk. Many pilgrims visited also the places connected with the worship of Jacek Odrowąż, Salomea and Jan Prandota.

Among the centres of religious worship of that time, a very significant role, at some point even the most significant one, was played by the sanctuaries that were in possession of the Holy Cross relics. The most famous of those centres was the place called the Holy Cross, which was the main destination of pilgrimages in Poland from the 12th century up to the year 1655. The relics are five tiny chips of wood, which were probably brought here in the 12th century by the Benedictine monks. The pilgrims who came here were kings, magnates and the common folk, often living in distant regions of Poland. Numerous graces and miracles were reported at that time. King Ladislaus Jagiello held this place in particular reverence. He would come here before every military campaign or before taking any important decisions.

The sanctuary in Mogiła near Cracow (at present belonging to the city of Cracow) has also been connected with the worship of Christ. The object of worship is the Miraculous Crucifix to which pilgrimages have been made since the late Middle Ages till the present time. And still it is one of the most famous sanctuaries of the Crucified Lord.

3.

The worship of St. Mary emerged in Poland with the onset of the Christian era. From the very beginning, that cult has played an essential role in the history of our country and nation. It was most accurately verbalised by Pope John Paul II on June 5, 1979, on Jasna Góra, where he said that St. Mary “[...] in Her own way shapes the history of Poland.”

Appreciating the role of Our Lady in the life of the nation, Polish kings went on pilgrimages to St. Mary's sanctuaries. They went there to entrust Her with various

pleas and to give their thanks (for instance for victorious battles). Of course, almost all of our monarchs went on a pilgrimage to Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, but they would also frequently visit other sanctuaries dedicated to St. Mary.

The worship of St. Mary and the pilgrimages connected with it became even more intensive after the oath made in Lvov by King John Casimir on April 1, 1656. On that day the King officially proclaimed Our Lady the Queen of Poland. The oath was a form of expressing gratitude for the miraculous defence of Jasna Góra in 1655, which, among others, enabled the King to come back to Poland.

After John Casimir's oath in Lvov, the worship of St. Mary started acquiring a state and national character. It was particularly notable during the partitions of Poland and also in the most recent times, under the communist rule. St. Mary's sanctuaries have always been very important in the process of integration of the Poles from all over the country and representing various social and professional backgrounds. This could especially be observed during the numerous pilgrimages.

A very intensive development of St. Mary's worship took place in the 13th and 14th centuries. It was marked by the increasing number of the centres possessing miraculous portraits of Our Lady. Certainly a breakthrough point in this development of St. Mary's worship was the settlement of the Paulite monks on Jasna Góra and their coming into possession of the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa (1382-1383). The cult of pictures famous for their miracles evolved on a larger scale only in the 15th century, reaching its peak during the Baroque era. At that time, almost in every deanery, there was a portrait of St. Mary which enjoyed a local, regional or supra-regional cult and attracted pilgrims. The developing worship of the miraculous portraits reflected to some extent the popular Polish cult of Our Lady perceived as an Intermediary, Guardian and Interceding Mother.

We have already mentioned that the pilgrimages connected with the discussed cult would foremost take the form of peregrinations of the faithful to the worshipped miraculous portraits of Our Lady. Today, some of them are only locally known, while some others have attained international fame. In the course of time, the significance of some of the centres would fade, while others would enjoy intensive development. Of course, the scale of the pilgrimage phenomenon connected with those sanctuaries was always compatible with the status of a given picture and frequently also with its provenience. The instances of miraculous revelations should also be mentioned here, although the testimonies concerning them come almost exclusively from legends.

According to traditional belief, the events which we are now discussing were supposed to have taken place in almost every century. The existing records tell us that the first revelation of Our Lady in Poland might have happened in 1079 in Górką Klasztorna, where She appeared on an oak-tree before a local shepherd. The story of the Poczajów revelation goes back to the end of the 12th century. Our Lady is believed to have appeared in many other places as well.

Among the best known and described revelations are undoubtedly the appearances of Our Lady in Gietrzwałd, which are the only ones officially acknowledged by the Church. They took place in the period from June 27 to September 16, 1877. Before those revelations, Gietrzwałd was a tiny village in Warmia, which was probably established in the mid-14th century. From the very beginning of its existence it had a parish, in which St. Mary's worship was noted as early as the 16th century and it developed in the late 17th century. This happened due to the Miraculous Image of St. Mary – the Lady of Warmia. Many a pilgrim experienced miraculous healing there. Thus, at the moment of St. Mary's revelation in Gietrzwałd, Her worship had already been well developed. This makes the Gietrzwałd revelation different from the analogous events in La Salette, Lourdes or Fatima, where Our Lady stirred the consciences of the faithful thus stimulating worship. In Gietrzwałd, in the same way as in other places, Our Lady appeared before common, poor, village children: Justyna Szafryńska (13 years old) and Barbara Samulowska (12 years old). The revelations took place in open air, on a maple-tree (in Lourdes it was in a grotto and in Fatima on an oak-tree).

Our Lady's answer to Szafryńska's question, was analogous to what She said in Lourdes and Fatima: "I am the Holiest Virgin Mary of Immaculate Conception." She strongly emphasised the need for prayer with a rosary. The fame of the Gietrzwałd revelation encompassed almost all of Europe and it even reached some non-European countries. In a very short time, Gietrzwałd became a pilgrimage centre of supra-regional status, attracting tens of thousands penitents and many sick people. They kept coming here after the revelations ceased and they still come. For over one hundred years a number of miraculous acts of healing took place. The revelations brought Gietrzwałd a nickname of the "Polish Lourdes."

The revelations and the resulting crowds of pilgrims worried the Prussian authorities, especially that it was a period of the so-called Kulturkampf. The revelations were thus perceived as giving ground to the increase of patriotic feelings in the Polish circles, which was dangerous for the Prussian authorities.

Indeed, St. Mary's revelations in Gietrzwałd raised the spirits of the Poles. It was of great importance for them, that Our Lady addressed them not in German, but in the Polish language, which was persecuted by the Prussians. She brought consolation to the Poles tormented by the cruel Kulturkampf policy. The revelations played an important role in the history of Warmia. It is believed that thanks to them Gietrzwałd became an agent stimulating the national awakening of the Poles in Warmia. It also became the primary centre of the Polish movement in Warmia.

Other events connected with St. Mary's appearances in the 19th century are only part of tradition. The places that deserve being mentioned are: Licheń and Wiktorówki in the Tatra Mountains.

Group (parish) pilgrimages from near and afar, as well as individual pilgrimages, started being a common custom among people of all social backgrounds. In the 17th

century, there emerged at least 30 new pilgrimage centres all over the country. Beside them the old centres still developed. The popularity of the best known ones (among which, beside Jasna Góra, were Sokal, Leżajsk, Bochnia, Chełm, Żyrowiec, Skępe and Tuchów) is confirmed by the descriptions of the Polish lands of those days as well as by literary sources. A popular poet, Wespazjan Hieronim Kochowski (1633-1700), sometimes nicknamed “the poet of Our Lady’s sanctuaries”, wrote the following poem in honour of Our Lady of Studzianna:

*“Loretto is famous near Ancona,
Famous is also Montserrat near Barcelona,
Aprikol, Halle, but Poland is famous
For Her Częstochowa.*

*Beautiful in Sokal, miraculous in Leżajsk,
In Bochnia She is famous for ineffable goodness,
Chełm, Żyrowiec, Skępe i Pajęczne
Are grateful for Her graces.*

*Jarosław, Tuchów, Troki, Myślenice,
Podkamień, Klewań, Zdziész and Piotrkowice,
And Gidle liberate those who have fallen
Into devilish traps.*

*Arena! Oh Arena, situated north
Of Cracow and helping the city,
What diligent reckoner can count,
Your votive offerings and oaths.*

*Seeing a number of miraculous places in Poland,
I consider Studzianna the most worthy one,
Since here crowds are visible,
In other places only houses of prayer.”*

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the number of the sanctuaries of supra-regional and regional status was estimated to be approximately 150. Apart from this, there were about 400 centres of local, mostly parish, rank. Almost each parish aspired to have “its own” Miraculous Image of St. Mary. At that time the veneration of the miraculous pictures and sculptures was the most typical manifestation of religiosity. Some of those images were obtained by not very honest means (e.g. in Kodeń).

The reach of the influences of particular sanctuaries was sometimes quite considerable. Some of them played significant roles in the integration of various social,

national and sometimes even religious groups. It could be noted both in the pre-partition period as well as in the years of national captivity. Specific role was also played by the centres situated in the border territories in the east.

The pictures venerated in the Polish sanctuaries represent two types of iconographic images: the so-called "Hodegetry" and the type of a Roman picture "Salus populi romani", known in Poland as a picture of Our Lady Greater or Our Lady of the Snow. In both of them St. Mary holds Christ on her arm and points at Him. Thus She is Mother Mary – an Intermediary and a Leader. Our Lady portrayed in the "Hodegetry" form was worshipped as a "Guiding Star." Let us pause for a moment over the miraculous images of the "Hodegetry" type. This type is represented by Our Lady of Częstochowa. It is estimated that about 65% of the pictures of Our Lady in the Polish churches and chapels are the images of the Hodegetry type like the one at Jasna Góra. Making such replicas began only in the 17th and 18th centuries. The decisions of the Cracow Synod of Bishop Marcin Szyszkowski in 1621 had a decisive impact on the development of the trend in painting concerned with making replicas of the Picture from Jasna Góra, as well as on the popularisation of its cult. The Synod declared the Miraculous Picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa a model for imitation when painting representations of St. Mary. The decisions of the Kraków Synod became the obligatory recommendations both for the painters and for the guardians of the sanctuaries. Hundreds of pictures, to a greater or lesser extent modelled on Our Lady of Częstochowa, appeared all over Poland. In numerous churches, in different remote places in this country, there are hundreds such representations of St. Mary. Some of them bear papal crowns. Among the 30 best known ones we should enumerate the pictures from Sokal, Bochnia, Stanisławów, Racibórz, Okulice, Cracow (St. Mary's Church), Maków Podhalański, Wysokie Koło, Różanystok, Łopatyn, Zbaraż. Thus, we can put forward a statement that Jasna Góra influences the reach and the forms of St. Mary's worship in the Polish lands. This also found its reflection in pilgrimages, especially those pedestrian. It can be said with certainty that the pilgrimage routes to Jasna Góra became in a way the routes through which the worship of St. Mary, particularly of Our Lady of Częstochowa, penetrates into all villages, towns and cities situated along those routes, as well as into all households, families and individual citizens, not necessarily the religious ones.

In the 17th century, there appeared Warmian votive pilgrimages (the so-called "łosiery"), whose development is particularly notable in the 18th and 19th centuries. Warmia suffered a particularly difficult period in the early 18th century. The Swedish wars, the raids of the Swedes on Warmia, harsh winters, famine, an epidemic of bubonic plague, maladies of horses and cattle made the people inclined to resort to prayers. At the same time, as it is written by W. Piwowarski, they made "promises of offerings, or pilgrimages, which in the Warmian dialect are called "łosiery". "At first they were supplicatory pilgrimages and later also thanksgiving ones. The pilgrimages to the miraculous images of Our Lady had a wider aspect – of worship, making pleas and thanksgiving.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Carpathian Mountains became a developed macro-region of pilgrimages. There were more than 100 centres of St. Mary's cult. Soon Kalwaria Zebrzydowska became a dominant one.

It should be emphasised that already at that time the centres of religious worship (not only of St. Mary's) played an important role in the ethos of the country. The peregrinations enhanced the broadening of interests, allowed to become acquainted with other environments, customs, regions and towns. A person who had not visited some particular miraculous places, or had not undertaken a longer pilgrimage was considered a "simpleton."

From the beginning of the 17th century, Calvaries became popular pilgrimage destinations. The worship of the Passion of Christ very quickly became linked to the worship of St. Mary. We are going to discuss that further on.

The popular religious celebrations were the coronations of the miraculous images of Our Lady. A coronation act was always an icon of the status of a given sanctuary and image. Among the many venerated images a particular position belongs to the pictures and figures crowned according to the papal law. The first coronation in Poland was that of Our Lady of Częstochowa. A decree by Pope Clement XI granting permission for the coronation reached Jasna Góra on July 22, 1717. The solemn coronation took place in September 8 of that year. It was also the first coronation of a miraculous image of St. Mary outside Rome. In the 18th century there were 29 coronations altogether – among others in Troki, Kodeń, Sokal, Podkamień, Żyrowiec, Leżajsk, Berdyczów, Lvov (in the cathedral), Chełm and Poczajów. They usually attracted tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. The last coronation in the 18th century was connected with the picture of the Holy Family in Kalisz. Afterwards, because of the partitions of Poland, no coronations took place for over 80 years.

Towards the end of the 18th century, some regress could be observed in the pilgrimage movement. It resulted from the political, social and economic situation after the 1772 partition of Poland and its loss of Independence. Already in 1754, the Prussian King, Frederick II, issued a prohibition of organising pilgrimages in Silesia, which was renewed in 1764. Similar prohibitions were introduced by the Austrian authorities almost immediately following the first partition of Poland (in the so-called "Josephian" epoch). The third partition of Poland in 1795 had a decisive significance for the functioning of the centres of religious worship and for the pilgrimages connected with them, till the country regained its Independence in 1918. The countries that partitioned Poland, especially Prussia and Russia, aimed meticulously at the annihilation of anything that was Polish or connected with Poland. It was also true about the religious life.

The political changes of borders often determined the future of particular sanctuaries. The prohibitions concerning pilgrimages to those parts of the country that were under the rule of other invaders led to the situation in which religious functions of various centres, especially the ones situated in the border zones, started fading.



'For a happy return to the free Fatherland we beseech you, Lady, 1914-1916' made in 1916, zincography V. M. Dovbni, Charkov, *Tipografija Torgovago Doma A.M. Sychano i A. M. Ivanov' v' Charkovi* (28.5 x 42 cm), (Archives of the Department of Geography of Religion at the Institute of Geography of the Jagiellonian University)

The majority of the centres of worship of St. Mary's integrated the local, regional and supra-regional communities and sometimes this integrating function could even be observed in the international dimension (as is the case of Jasna Góra). They integrated the nation, often in spite of the religious and social divisions. Further on we will also discuss the patriotic impact of different sanctuaries. For example, we should mention that both Polish Catholics and Protestants visited Gietrzwałd, while Leśna Podlaska, Chełm and Żyrowice attracted Catholics and Uniates. Under the Russian partition, for instance, such common pilgrimages were sometimes continued even if a given church was closed or taken over by the Orthodox Church. Severe persecutions would not discourage the people from "visiting Our Lady," even if the punishment involved deportation to Siberia.

Many pilgrims were still attracted by the celebrations connected with coronations of Our Lady's pictures. The first of them, after the interval of many years, took place in Galicia, in Stara Wieś (1877). Later, by 1918, as many as 11 coronation ceremonies were held. Nine of them took place in the territories occupied by the Austrians. All of them had a very solemn character. Particular significance was attributed to the coronations held in Kalwaria Paławska (1882), Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (1887), Tuchów (1904) and St. Anne's Mountain (1910). Those religious gatherings, which attracted uncountable crowds of pilgrims, were transformed into mighty patriotic manifestations.

At the turn of the 19th century, the main pilgrimage centre in the Polish Kingdom (and in all Polish lands) was Jasna Góra. The analogous functions in Silesia were performed by Piekary Śląskie, St. Anne's Mountain, Wambierzyce, Bardo Śląskie, in Galicia by Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Sokal, Stara Wieś, Kalwaria Paławska, Cracow, Tuchów, Kochawina and Borek Stary, in Warmia by Gietrzwałd and Święta Lipka and in the region of Vilnius by Ostra Brama and Troki. Jasna Góra was then a sanctuary of national character, but pilgrims from all Polish lands and from Silesia could also be met in Gietrzwałd, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and in Vilnius.

An important, though not always fully appreciated role, was also played at the turn of the 19th century by two Silesian centres – Piekary Śląskie and St. Anne's Mountain. At that time Piekary Śląskie became a Polish religious, patriotic and educational centre in Upper Silesia. The centres became even more attractive after the construction of a Calvary in the years 1862-1896. It was founded by the Silesian population, especially by miners and metallurgical workers. On St. Anne's Mountain, on the other hand, the number of pilgrims who visited the place every year amounted to several thousand. A majority of them (about 65%) were visitors from Silesia. The other pilgrims came from various parts of Poland and also from Bohemia and Moravia.

Regaining of independence in 1918 contributed to the wider distribution of pilgrimages, which were prohibited or restricted under partitions. The system of transport underwent some change and railway was more intensively used for that purpose. The formerly dominant parish pilgrimages, involving all social groups, would

more and more often be replaced by “group” pilgrimages (e.g. of men, women or children) and professional pilgrimages (e.g. academic, teachers’, workers’, lawyers’). There would also appear organised groups of pilgrims from abroad – consisting mostly of people of Polish descent.

By far the biggest number of pilgrims came to Jasna Góra, but such centres as Vilnius, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Tuchów, Górka Duchowna, Kalwaria Pałacowa, Troki and Dąbrówka Kościelna also played an important role. Groups of pilgrims from all over Poland would come to Vilnius at all times. It was then that Vilnius assumed the role of one of the major “national shrine.” Some enlivening of worship could also be observed in many other sanctuaries that were not well known in the past.

In Warmia, especially after the 1921 plebiscite, pilgrimages would encounter obstacles. Nevertheless, votive pilgrimages to Gietrzwałd were still organised. They continued even after the Nazis came to power in Germany. Only in 1940, taking advantage of the martial law, did the German police surround Gietrzwałd with a tight cordon. Under the pretext of a scarlet fever epidemic in the village they turned back home about 20 thousand pilgrims. During the interwar period, the pilgrimages from Wielkopolska and Silesia to Gietrzwałd practically ceased to be organised. Gradually, the custom of Polish votive pilgrimages began to fade there as well. The same concerned also Święta Lipka. Despite this, both those centres remained important centres of St. Mary’s worship for the population of Eastern Prussia and for the Polish emigration circles in Germany.

Of course, Jasna Góra continued to be the main pilgrimage centre in the country. The largest numbers of pilgrims would come to the major religious celebrations (especially on August 15 and 26 and on September 8). In 1932 over 700 thousand of pilgrims came to the Jubilee of the 550th Anniversary. The peak period of pilgrimages was the year 1938, when about 1 million people visited the place.

During the discussed period, Jasna Góra enjoyed world-wide fame, while Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and Vilnius (Ostra Brama) were known all over Europe. It was then that the cult of St. Mary started losing its polycentric character and acquiring a monocentric one, with the centre in Częstochowa.

Like in the past, many pilgrims would be attracted by the celebrations connected with the coronations of miraculous images of St. Mary. The first of them took place in Borek Stary, on August 15, 1919. In total, during the inter-war period, 22 such coronations were held. Among others they took place in: Rudki near Lvov (1921), Gidle (1923), Piekary Śląskie (1925), Vilnius (Ostra Brama, 1927), Żółkiew (1929), Chartupia Mała (1937), Stanisławów (1937), Swarzewo (1937) and Jazłowiec (1939). In Vilnius the coronation celebrations on July 2, 1927, were an event of national importance. Among the visitors, were many notables, including Marshal Józef Piłsudski and the President of the Republic of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki.

The outbreak of the Second World War and the Nazi occupation, as well as the Soviet occupation in the East, hindered the mass pilgrimages. Despite numerous

obstacles and hazards, however, pilgrims continued to visit some of the sanctuaries either in small groups or on an individual basis. This concerns mostly Jasna Góra, but pilgrims could be met also in other centres, even those situated in the Reich, such as St. Anne's Mountain, for instance.

After 1945, the pilgrimage phenomenon in Poland underwent various phases. There could be noted its vivid development immediately after the war and an obvious decline in the 1950s and 1960s. Then a vehement outburst took place in the mid-1970s.

In the first years, after the military operations were over, the pilgrimage movement was relatively quickly revived. The major sanctuaries dedicated to St. Mary, which enjoyed international or national fame, were among the most frequently visited ones. Yet pilgrimages to local centres were also numerous. The majority of those peregrinations were motivated by the desire to thank Her Ladyship for survival during the years of war and occupation. Another motive was to implore Her for well-being during the difficult period of rebuilding the country and the family life. In 1946, the highest attendance – amounting to about 2 million people – was noted at Jasna Góra. This was connected with the celebration of sacrificing the Polish nation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, on September 8. There were many pilgrims in other centres as well. In total, immediately after the war, there were more than 60 sanctuaries dedicated to St. Mary, which enjoyed at least regional fame. The year 1947 saw the beginnings of the famous pilgrimage of “men and youths” in Piekary Śląskie. 100,000 men participated in the first such pilgrimage. Let us eventually mention two centres of St. Mary's worship, in which for some time the communist authorities kept imprisoned the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. They are: Rywałd Królewski (from September 26 to October 11, 1953) and Stoczek Warmiński (from October 12 1953 to October 6, 1954). It was there that on December 8, 1953, the Primate performed the act of his spiritual sacrifice to Our Lady. The memory of Cardinal Wyszyński's stay in both those places is still vivid and it also has its reflection in the pilgrimage movement connected with them.

As a result of the territorial changes, some centres of worship which during the interwar period used to be situated abroad found themselves in Poland. They were for example: St. Anne's Mountain, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Bardo Śląskie and Wambierzyce.

A number of miraculous images of Our Lady or their replicas came to Poland from its former eastern territories, which after the war became part of the Soviet Union. For instance, the miraculous, crowned pictures of St. Mary came to: Gdańsk (from Bołszowce, Lvov – from the Dominican church – and from Stanisławów), Warszawie (from Berdyczów and Żółkiew), Wrocław (from Lvov – from the Jesuit church in Podkamień), to Gliwice (from Kochawina), Jasień (from Rudki near Lvov), Kraków (Sokal), Szymanów (from Jazłowiec), Lubaczów (from the cathedral in Lvov) and Lublin (from Latyczów).



'Jasna Góra Hill. The Yard', post-card from ca. 1905 (Archives of the Department of Geography of Religion at the Institute of Geography of the Jagiellonian University)

Coronation celebrations became a more widespread phenomenon only in 1962. Before that date there took place only two such events: in Piotrkowice Chmielnickie in 1958 and in the parish church in Poznań in 1961. About 130 coronations were held in the years 1962-1999. The celebrations connected with the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland had some influence on the number of coronations. In the years 1965-1967 almost 20 such celebrations were held. Among others, the coronations of Our Lady's images took place in Ludźmierz (1963), Leśniów (1967), Obory (1976), Wambierzyce (1980), Limanowa (1983), Szczyrzyc (1984), Czerna (1988), Dziekanowice (1991), Dębowiec (1996) and Krzeszów (1997).

In the early 1950s the pilgrimage migrations suffered a visible decline. Arrangement of pilgrimages became difficult and was connected with various limitations of political, social and cultural nature. For a long time the communist authorities would not issue permits for organising group pilgrimages and in particular pedestrian ones. The only exception was the Warsaw Pilgrimage. In spite of all those limitations pilgrimages were frequently organised illegally.

The pilgrimages held in the late 1970s and in the 1980s not only constituted a significant factor in tightening the local and regional relationships, but above all they accounted for one of the most important elements of national integration of the

Polish people. A very special role here has been played by pedestrian pilgrimages, especially by those whose destinations are St. Mary's sanctuaries. The pilgrims, for whom covering the entire pilgrimage route often takes a dozen days or so, meet the inhabitants of villages and towns in different regions of Poland and of various professional backgrounds. This creates an invisible thread of reconciliation and stimulates the feeling of religious, social and national unity. At present one can even claim that the integrative function of pedestrian pilgrimages connected with St. Mary's worship has encompassed the whole European continent. The large-scale participation of young people from abroad (not necessarily of Catholic background) in the 1991 pedestrian pilgrimages to Jasna Góra to the meeting with Pope John Paul II, during the VI World Day of Youth, can serve as an example here.

Particular intensity of the pilgrimage movement can be observed during the major religious celebrations, which are usually connected with important indulgence days. Altogether, in Poland, in the major centres of St. Mary's worship there are 450 such indulgence days. Usually, each sanctuary has the privilege to organise solemn celebrations of several indulgence days and this custom dates back from the early days of Christianity in Poland. In general, among those indulgence days only a few are the so-called "great indulgence days" or "main indulgence days." In minor centres there is one such day or two. These feasts gather the largest number of pilgrims and the celebrations connected with them last up to several days. They usually take place in the summer. The most important and popular indulgence days are connected with the holidays of the Visitation of the Holy Virgin Mary (May 31), Assumption of the Holy Virgin Mary (August 15), Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary (September 8) and in Poland also the holiday of the Queen of the Polish Crown (May 3) and of Our Lady of the Scapular (July 16). They are celebrated in the majority of religious centres. The celebrations during the holidays connected with particular sanctuaries and images of St. Mary have special character. The best known among such indulgence days is connected with the holiday of Our Lady of Częstochowa (August 26), which is popular worldwide. But well known are also other indulgence days connected with holidays dedicated to Our Lady of: Kalwaria (Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, August 13), Piekary (September 12), Kodeń (July 2), Gidle (the first Sunday of May), Gostyń (June 25), Gietrzwałd (September 8), Tuchów (July 2), Leśniów (July 2 and the closest Sunday that follows). Altogether, in the case of almost 20 sanctuaries, there were established separate holidays connected with the images of St. Mary situated there. In some of those centres, apart from the indulgence days connected with St. Mary's cult there are also celebrated indulgence days connected with holidays dedicated to Our Lord – e.g. in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Piekary Śląskie, Kalwaria Paławska, Góra Świętej Anny and Wejherowo. Some of the major indulgence days are sometimes connected with saints. In most centres of St. Mary's worship indulgence days are also celebrated on Pentecost.

Beside the religious connotations, indulgence days present a specific spectrum of regional customs. They are always notable for their ritual aspects, as well as for the richness of folk costume, folk ensembles, etc. Their authenticity is still fascina-

ting. Indulgence days play a special role in the life of villages and little towns, in which they frequently resemble folk festivals, during which religious and secular elements intermingle. Many religious people come to the celebrations of the indulgence day in large groups (the so-called “companies”) led by clergymen. Each such “company” carries a cross, banners or feretories. Quite often it is accompanied by an orchestra or a folk band of musicians and many pilgrims wear regional costumes. Throughout the centuries great fairs or markets were organised on indulgence days (e.g. in Częstochowa, Kalwaria Pałacowska or Kalwaria Zebrzydowska).

Some of the sanctuaries dedicated to St. Mary or, to be exact, the miraculous images of St. Mary that are worshipped there, have been commemorated by poets, writers, artists and musicians. Of course, the most numerous are the works dedicated to Our Lady of Częstochowa and to the Jasna Góra Monastery, but one can also find similar works pertaining to other sanctuaries, such as Vilnius with Ostra Brama, Kodeń or Ludźmierz.

4.

Jasna Góra belongs to the largest and most important centres of religious worship of Christendom and beyond. It is the second most important place of St. Mary’s cult beside Lourdes. It also has one more unique feature. It is the largest centre of St. Mary’s worship of Christendom, whose establishment and development are not related to any revelations of Our Lady. At the same time, it is the largest pilgrimage centre in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the largest Christian sanctuary in the territory extending from France in the West to the Russian Far East. The object of worship in the Jasna Góra Sanctuary is the Holy Icon. The popularity of this worship was a result of the fame of Our Lady of Częstochowa and Her role in the history of the Polish nation, especially during the long periods of captivity and under the communist regime. This worship has had a significant influence on the religiosity of the Poles and on the life of the Church in Poland.

For a number of centuries, Jasna Góra has been an important link in the process of the mutual influences of two major trends within Christianity – both Western and Eastern. The Jasna Góra centre is situated in the middle of Europe. This location can be described as “ecumenical.” Its central position, as well as the easy access to the Sanctuary, determines its special role of a centre whose influence spreads in all geographical directions of Christian Europe, especially to the East and West.

For the Poles, regardless of where they live, Jasna Góra is the most important holy place. Many centres of religious worship were even given additional names connected either with Jasna Góra or with Częstochowa, which were to emphasise the status of those centres. At present, Jasna Góra accounts for 80% of the entire pilgrimage movement in Poland.

The beginnings of the Jasna Góra sanctuary seem to confirm its unique character. Not yet a centre of national status, within a period of several dozen years, Jasna

Góra became a centre of international status, attracting crowds of pilgrims, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe.

Several dozen thousand of pilgrims, from the territory of the Republic of Poland and from other countries and regions, used to come to the major celebrations held there. According to the chronicles which have been preserved, in the 16th century, the pilgrims came from more than 200 different places. A fragment of a poem by Grzegorz of Sambor, entitled *Censtochowa* (1568) testifies to the fame that Jasna Góra enjoyed at that time:

*“Częstochowa is small, but its rank
Surpasses all other towns in the world.
Not only the Poles come to these holy premises,
And not only the pious Lithuanians come in crowds:
The inhabitants of our mountains and of the whole Polesie,
The people of Kaszuby and the people of Moscow pay their homage here.
The people of Kujawy put up their canvas tents here,
While the people of Mazury built their woollen booths.
There come brave Moravians and rich Hungarians,
People of Podolia and Germans, Slovenians, Russians.
Many people come here from Pomerania, Volhynia, Trakia,
Livenia, Samogitia, Saxony, Prussia, Bohemia and Silesia.”*

The status of Jasna Góra also finds its confirmation in the fact that all Polish kings (except for Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski) came here as pilgrims, some of them even several times. It clearly had a dominated position among the remaining 400 centres of St. Mary's worship in Poland. A particularly vivid pilgrimage movement could be observed at the sanctuary after the famous defence of Jasna Góra during the Swedish siege in 1655 and after King John Casimir's oath in Lvov on April 1, 1656. It was also then that the worship of Our Lady of Częstochowa as the Queen of Poland was established.

In the 17th century, the pilgrimages to Częstochowa became such an important religious practice that no one even dared to forbid villeins [peasants forced to villein service their feudal lord] from taking part in them. At that time Częstochowa also became a centre of religious painting.

Special pilgrimage trails started to emerge then as well. In the 17th century, the tradition of pedestrian pilgrimages to Częstochowa was beginning to take shape. The number of such pilgrimages increased during the subsequent centuries. Among others, since 1711 until the present, the Warsaw Pilgrimage has been held every year. The coronation of the picture, in 1717, additionally enhanced the worship of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Poland.

The Jasna Góra centre played a special role during the partitions of Poland, contributing considerably to strengthening the national feelings within the Polish society.

During the time when Poland was partitioned, pilgrimages became an important form of both religious and patriotic manifestations, which are discussed further on. The turn of the 19th century saw the beginning of pilgrimages of professional groups (e.g. of workers) and of classes (e.g. of men) to Jasna Góra. Jasna Góra was also visited by many distinguished representatives of Polish culture, such as Zygmunt Krasiński, Stanisław Moniuszko, Jan Matejko, Jan Chęłmoński, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Władysław Stanisław Reymont, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Władysław Syrokomla or Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz. Poets, writers, painters and musicians dedicated their works to the sanctuary at Jasna Góra.

In the years of the Second Republic, Jasna Góra enjoyed worldwide fame. Apart from the religious objectives, the pilgrimages were also supposed to constitute an important factor in the integration process of the Polish society, which was no longer divided by the borders established as a result of the partitions. In August 1920, after the "Vistula Miracle," the Poles who were lying prostrate on the square at Jasna Góra again called St. Mary of Częstochowa the Queen of Poland. In the 1930s, the most popular pilgrimages were professional and class pilgrimages. In 1938, Jasna Góra was visited by approximately one million pilgrims. By way of comparison it should be said that in the same period Lourdes was visited by 1.2 million pilgrims.

During the Second World War the pilgrimages to Jasna Góra did not cease. In spite of numerous hazards, small group of pilgrims visited the holy place. Many people would also come on their own. During the entire occupation period, even at the time of the Warsaw Uprising, the Warsaw Pedestrian Pilgrimage was continued. Each time it consisted of a group of about 60-80 people. There were also organised academic pilgrimages, in which students and professors from Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin and Lvov took part. The first of them took place on May 26, 1940. Later they were held until 1944. Karol Wojtyła, now Pope John Paul II, took part in the pilgrimages of 1942 and 1943 as a representative of the Jagiellonian University, which then functioned in conspiracy.

After the Second World War, the pilgrimages to Jasna Góra, in the same way as other pilgrimages in Poland, underwent various phases, depending mostly on the political and social situation. Soon after the war, the pilgrimage movement was relatively quickly revived.

In the first decade after the war, there were around one million pilgrims a year. It must, however, be stressed that in the early 1950s the pilgrimage movement started to decline. The number of pilgrimages, especially the pedestrian ones, dwindled. Because of propaganda, the authorities gave their permission to organise the Warsaw Pilgrimage only, but in 1963 attempts were made to ban it as well. Since

the communist authorities did not allow the organisation of any diocese pilgrimages to Jasna Góra, the Warsaw Pilgrimage was soon transformed into a religious event of national character, and gradually also an international one. The later diocese pilgrimages stemmed from the Warsaw Pedestrian Pilgrimage.

A breakthrough moment for enlivening the pilgrimages to Jasna Góra was connected with the 1966 celebrations of the Millennium of Christianity in Poland. Another stimulus was brought about by the year 1976, when the celebrations of the Jubilee of the 600th anniversary of Jasna Góra began. Because of the situation in the country, the authorities were in a way forced to respect to a greater extent the requirements of the religious people who wanted to go to the Black Madonna in organised groups, especially in the form of pedestrian pilgrimages. The culminating moments in the history of the pilgrimage movement were connected with the successive visits of Pope John Paul II at Jasna Góra, in the years 1979, 1983, 1987, 1991 (VI World Youth Day), 1997 and 1999, as well as with the celebrations connected with the 600th anniversary of the existence of the monastery held in the years 1982-1983. In connection with that important anniversary, some new pedestrian pilgrimages were initiated.

Since the first visit of the Pope, Jasna Góra has been visited by the average number of 4-5 million pilgrims a year.

There are about 10 days out of the year, when Jasna Góra is visited by more than 100 thousand pilgrims a day. This happens, in particular, during the major holidays dedicated to St. Mary: May 3 – the day of Our Lady the Queen of Poland, August 15 – the day of Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, August 26 – the day of Our Lady of Częstochowa and September 8 – the day of the Birth of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Other such days are connected with the prayer meetings during several major pilgrimages organised by the Renewal in the Holy Ghost Movement in June (since 1985), by Radio Maryja Family in July (since 1995), by farmers in September (in connection with the Harvest Festival, since 1982) and by the working people in September (since 1981).

Since the late 1970s, we have been able to observe a vivid development of pedestrian pilgrimages to Częstochowa. From June to the end of September, around 175-200 thousand groups of pilgrims come to Jasna Góra on foot. In the 1980s, the patriotic aspect of that phenomenon was almost as important as the religious one. Participation in a pilgrimage was a special form of protesting against the regime, against the martial law established in 1981 and against the political persecutions connected with it.

More than 50 trails of pedestrian pilgrimages meet in Częstochowa. They cross the whole country and their length is anything between several and several hundred kilometres.

The role and position of Jasna Góra in the world pilgrimage migrations is quite considerable, though it is not always noticed and appreciated, either in the foreign or national writings.

Let us conclude our discussion of Jasna Góra with the words of John Paul II, uttered in the welcoming address to the young people from all over the world, during the 1991 meeting. Talking about the role of the Jasna Góra Sanctuary he emphasised the fact that “... it is deeply inscribed in the history of one nation and at the same time it is wide open towards all nations and people of Europe and of the whole world.”

5.

In the late Middle Ages, new pilgrimage destinations connected with the Passion of Christ emerged in Western Europe. They were Calvaries representing symbolically those places in Palestine which were connected with the passion of Christ and His death on the cross.

At the end of the 16th century, various forms of worshipping the Passion of Christ were well-known and established in this country. However, there were no Calvaries, which were already popular in Western Europe. In Poland, the first such place was the monumental project implemented in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. It was to commemorate the places of Christ's passion and death. Its establishment greatly enhanced the development and popularity of the Via Dolorosa service in Poland. The name Calvary, on the other hand, was used for a number of similar complexes that came into being in the 17th and in the next centuries. Altogether, over 60 Calvaries were built in Poland, but only some of them have survived until now. As a result of the territorial changes after the Second World War, Kalwaria Żydowska (Jewish Calvary), Kalwaria near Werki and Kalwaria in Samogitia remained in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, such Silesian Calvaries as Wambierzyce, Krzeszów and St. Anne's Mountain found themselves in Poland.

Chronologically, the first calvaries in Poland were: Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (1600), Pakość upon the Noteć River (1628), Kalwaria Żydowska (1640), Kalwaria Żmudzka (1642), Wejherowo (1649), Werki near Vilnius (1664), Paclaw (1668), Góra Kalwaria (1670), Krzeszów (1672), Wambierzyce (1681-1708), St. Anne's Mountain (1700-1709) and Ujazdów (1731).

The spatial arrangement of the Calvaries, including the arrangement of the chapels, was to resemble the topography of Jerusalem. In the case of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, this similarity in location accounted for the fact that the centre was commonly referred to as “Polish Jerusalem.”

It has to be clearly stated that pilgrimages to Calvaries in Poland never attained the scale of the pilgrimage movement connected with the sanctuaries dedicated to St. Mary. It resulted mostly from the special reverence the Poles always had towards Our Lady. Probably, this also accounts for the fact that in the 17th century the guardians of Calvaries would try to obtain for their sanctuaries some grace-bestowing images of Our Lady (e.g. in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska - 1641, in Kalwaria Paclawska - 1679). When the worship of St. Mary was already dominant in a given Calvary

centre, indulgence days connected with St. Mary's holidays and special services dedicated to Our Lady [in Polish called "Dróżki" - English meaning - "Paths"] started to be celebrated there. For the first time they were introduced to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska in 1613. However, they acquired their final form, after 1630. The co-existence of Calvaries and the miraculous images of St. Mary, as well as the special services dedicated to Our Lady, stimulated the development of the pilgrimage movement. Also the passion mystery plays, which were performed, for instance in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, as early as the first half of the 17th century, contributed to that effect.

Because of the religious status of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, the Poles began to call it Częstochowa or Jasna Góra of the South. Special infrastructure, connected mainly with the religious function of the town, developed there. During the interwar period, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska was the second biggest pilgrimage centre in the country beside Jasna Góra. It has kept this status until now. Pope John Paul II was connected with the sanctuary in Kalwaria since his childhood. During his 1979 visit there he said: *"There is some power of attraction about Kalwaria."*

Every year, about one million pilgrims come here. The visits are most numerous during the Holy Week, as well as during the August celebrations dedicated to St. Mary.

Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is also famous for the special "Paths" services dedicated to Our Lady. It is worth reiterating that the "Paths" dedicated to Lord Jesus are oriented eastwards from the basilica and they consist of 28 Stations (in 24 buildings), while the "Paths" dedicated to Our Lady go southwards and they consist of 24 Stations (in 11 separate buildings). Altogether, there are more than 40 sacral buildings situated on the area of about 6 km².

We have devoted much attention to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, but its significance for the Polish pilgrimages and the religiousness connected with the Passion of Christ, as well as for the religious culture is quite exceptional. As the first Calvary in this country, it greatly influenced the later Calvary foundations. Instances of copying the model of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska could be noticed in particular in the successive 17th-century establishments. The contemporary international status of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is confirmed by the fact that on December 1, 1999, it was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska was granted this distinction as the only pilgrimage centre in Poland and the only Calvary in Europe.

Establishing new Calvaries is a continuous process. The "newest" ones are the Calvaries in Leżajsk and in Kalków.

6.

Analysing the history of the Polish nation, one can clearly distinguish the periods, during which some of the religious practices were closely related to the patriotic trend. That was true about many services as well as about the pilgrimages whose destinations were scattered all over Poland. Carrying banners with St. Mary's ima-

ges, especially with Our Lady of Częstochowa, our army fought many victorious battles with the enemy. After the Swedish invasion and the defence of Jasna Góra (1655), this centre became also a national symbol. It held that function during the partitions, under the Nazi occupation, after the war till the downfall of the communist regime in 1989 and it still holds it. After the famous oaths of John Casimir (1656), in which he announced Our Lady the Queen of Poland, the worship of St. Mary acquired a national character. The sanctuaries situated in the border zones played an important role in the integration process of the Polish people. It also frequently occurred that some centres became more popular, because the patrons of the sanctuaries supported the community in difficult times. By way of example we can mention here St. John of Dukla, whose supernatural intervention, according to the popular belief, helped to save Lvov in 1648, when it was besieged by Chmielnicki's army.

The patriotic trend in pilgrimages was most notable during the times of partitions. From the very beginning of the occupation, the partitioning powers (initially all of them, and later mostly Prussia and Russia) consequently aimed at annihilating anything that was Polish or connected with Poland. That policy also applied to religious life and it manifested itself, among others, through hindering or prohibiting pilgrimages. Sometimes, undertaking a pilgrimage could even be dangerous. In 1792, for instance, the participants of the Warsaw Pilgrimage, including the priests, were killed by Prussian soldiers near Wola Mokrzeska. Their common burial ground, the so-called "Pilgrims' Graves," is situated on the route to Częstochowa, 10 kilometres away from St. Anne's. Until now, the pilgrims going to Jasna Góra make a stop near those Graves to pray there.

In all partitioned lands, the anti-Polish and anti-religious policy of the authorities manifested itself also in the liquidation of monasteries carried out on a large scale. It should be reminded that a considerable number of pilgrimage centres were connected with monasteries. The liquidation actions were carried out almost throughout the entire occupation period. An exception was the territory annexed by Austria, where the police was abandoned at the end of the second decade of the 19th century. The last great wave of the liquidation actions, of an obvious political and national character, took place in the years 1864-1879, in the territories annexed by Russia and Prussia. In the territory annexed by Austria, on the other hand, most actions carried out in the era of the so-called "Josephism" were anti-Polish in nature. That ideology consisted in the absolute control of religious life by the state. In the Polish lands it was eventually abandoned before 1820. In the territories annexed by Prussia the repression policy was called "Kulturkampf." It was particularly prominent after 1878 and it consisted in the escalation of the Germanisation policy. The actions directed against the centres of the Roman Catholic Church were parallel to the persecutions of the Greek Catholic Church. It was so in the eastern territories annexed by the Russian Empire, as well as in the Kingdom of Poland and in Eastern Galicia.



'Poland at the feet' Christ
 – by T. Butkiewicz, post-card (Archives of the
 Department of Geography of Religion at the Institute
 of Geography of the Jagiellonian University)

In spite of these difficulties, and perhaps because of them, Polish churches, especially those which played the role of pilgrimage sanctuaries, acquired some special force of attraction. Despite the policy of persecutions, the Church became the most important link uniting the nation. The combination of the religious and national awareness which thus came into being was a phenomenon unknown elsewhere in Europe. Apart from religious aspects, pilgrimages involved some patriotic undertones and they frequently constituted a kind of demonstration directed against the enemies. The process of national integration was enhanced thanks to the meetings of the Poles in various pilgrimage centres. Some of the pilgrimage destinations were the centres strongly connected with the history of Poland (e.g. Gniezno, Cracow, Warsaw, Vilnius). This phenomenon was referred to as “national pilgrimages.” The partitioning powers forbade organising official pilgrimages to particular sanctuaries, especially to the best known ones. The Polish community often

reacted to such prohibitions by organising night pilgrimages (e.g. to St. Anne’s Mountain or to Święta Lipka) or “substitute” pilgrimages. Particularly strong persecutions were directed against pilgrimages to Jasna Góra. At various times, the authorities issued ordinances limiting pilgrimages only to the territories annexed by a given state. In Russia many Catholic and Uniate churches were handed over to the Orthodox Church. The repression actions of the tsarist authorities directed against monasteries and Uniates resulted in the fact that some of the miraculous images of Our Lady were taken to other sanctuaries within the diocese or to other regions, even outside the territories annexed by Russia. For example, in the years 1875-1927, the picture of Our Lady of Kodeń was kept at Jasna Góra. The ordinances of the Russian authorities in the annexed territories became even more severe after the January Uprising. Only the holders of valid passports could cross the border of the province and pilgrimages to Jasna Góra additionally required special permits issued by the civil administration. That situation changed to some extent only in 1905, as a result of the so-called “tolerance law.” Thanks to it some enlivening of the pilgrimage movement in from the territories of Russia became possible.

In the territories annexed by Austria, the “Josephism” policy resulted in obstacles as far as the activity of the sanctuaries and organisation of pilgrimages was concerned. Under the pretext of fighting “superstitions,” the authorities confiscated votive offerings, silver robes and crowns from the images of Our Lady. Those restrictive measures limited the range of influence of some of the worship centres. Some enlivening of religious migrations was only possible in the period of the political autonomy in Galicia, that is, in the late 1860s. Also at that time, the conditions for a large-scale development of the activity of the Church became more favourable as compared to the situation in the remaining annexed territories. Thus, pilgrimage migrations became more active. This situation also accounted for the fact that almost all coronations of St. Mary’s images held in the Polish lands at the turn of the 19th century took place in the sanctuaries located in the territories annexed by Austria.

Each of the existing sanctuaries contributed to strengthening the religious, local, regional and national bonds between people. For instance, according to J. Górecki, the Silesian pilgrimages to the sanctuaries dedicated to St. Mary were “a means of sustaining the Polish ‘substance’ and faith during the Kulturkampf period.” Many of those sanctuaries (e.g. St. Anne’s Mountain, Piekary Śląskie, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka or Wejherowo) were vital educational and cultural centres, in the broadest possible sense. They popularised the Polish language and Polish culture among the local population and among the pilgrims, using for that purpose the hymn books, prayer books or popular historical publications. St. Anne’s Mountain was considered to be a Polish stronghold, whose status in Silesia was comparable with that of Wawel Castle (“*Here Silesia has its Wanda and its Holy Wawel*”).

The close relationships between the worship of St. Mary and the patriotic trends, existing since the 17th and 18th centuries, made the Poles from all the annexed territories perceive Jasna Góra as a symbol of national identity and unity. Similarly, national undertones could be discerned in the constantly developing pilgrimages to Ostra Brama in Vilnius, Gietrzwałd, St. Anne’s Mountain, Piekary Śląskie or Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. The celebrations connected with the coronations of the miraculous images of Our Lady changed into great religious and patriotic manifestations.

Throughout the centuries, Jasna Góra has always been a focal point in the history of Poland and was connected with the major events. The fact that the Black Madonna was also referred to as “Mother” or the “Queen of Poland” also testifies to the status of Her cult. The most important victories in the history of Poland, such as Grunwald (1410), Chocim (1621), Vienna (1683) or “the Vistula Miracle” (1920), are attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Częstochowa. According to J. Rożej, the tendency to link the worship of the Lady of Jasna Góra with the fate of the Polish Nation appeared quite a long time ago. The Miraculous Picture, on the other hand, has been perceived as an alternative national emblem of Poland. The cult of the Madonna of Częstochowa, identified with the Queen of Poland, was the worship

which was a source of fear for the enemies of Poland. The partitioning powers, and later the Nazis and the communists, were well aware that without eradicating or at least limiting the worship, any attempts of depriving the Poles of their national identity would be fruitless. That is why, those authorities always intended to ban the pilgrimages to Jasna Góra or at least to limit them as much as possible. The prohibitions to organise pilgrimages to Jasna Góra, which were issued by the enemies at various times, did not bring about the anticipated results. The tsarist authorities even called Our Lady of Częstochowa the “chief revolutionary” in the Kingdom of Poland. The pilgrims would always carry banners with the Polish Eagle and other national icons and they sang patriotic songs. That “patriotic” *genius loci* was emphasised by the creators of the national culture who went there as pilgrims. After the loss of independence, Jasna Góra became the second spiritual capital of Poland besides Cracow. In 1903, this idea was summed up by Henryk Sienkiewicz, when he wrote the following words in the visitors’ book at Jasna Góra: *“In Częstochowa, at Jasna Góra, beats the immortal heart of the Polish people...”*

Pope John Paul II has often stressed the significance of the Jasna Góra sanctuary in the history of Poland. Among others, he once described Jasna Góra in the following words: *“Jasna Góra is ... not only a pilgrimage destination for the Poles from Poland and from all over the world. Jasna Góra is a national shrine. Put your ears to that holy place to hear how the heart of the nation beats within the Heart of the Mother”* (1979).

Eventually, we would like to discuss briefly the Polish phenomenon of the “national pilgrimages” connected with Cracow. In 1912, K. Borelowski wrote: *“Trips to Cracow are becoming an equivalent of the pious pilgrimages to Częstochowa, Kalwaria and other places famous for miracles. In one case the prominent factors that are involved here have a religious character, in the other a national one, but in its essence this is the same phenomenon in both cases.”* The phenomenon as such emerged in the second half of the 19th century and lasted till the First World War. At that time Cracow was again assuming the status of the spiritual capital of Poland. Throughout the centuries it had also become the most important national necropolis. During the captivity of Poland the concentration of the sacred and the necropolis function, made Cracow the most important basis of Polish life, or, as it is written by Franciszek Ziejka *“it assumed the role of a “Polish centre,” which one should visit, come to know and love.”*

It was almost a tradition that Cracow attracted the intelligentsia, and in particular the representatives of the intellectual elite. They were able to feel the Polish character of the city, and here they were looking for inspiration for their artistic or academic activity. More enlightened Poles were also concerned with attracting other social groups, especially peasants, to Cracow. In F. Ziejka’s opinion, creating favourable conditions for their stay in the city, as well as providing them with a proper religious and patriotic programme was supposed to *“... start the great work at the grass-roots level, working to “transform” the Emperor’s peasants into Poles. ...*

Here the peasant pilgrims were to undergo their final transformation into Poles."

At the turn of the 19th century, more visits from Upper Silesia were observed. According to J. Górecki *"a pilgrimage to Cracow ... enhanced the faith, as well as the love of the mother tongue. In the mentality of the People of Upper Silesia it became almost a religious and national commandment. ... The religious and national pilgrimages to Cracow played an important role in their way towards the national awareness."*

The post-war period, when Poland was under the communist rule, confirmed the fact that the co-existence of the religious and patriotic motives in pilgrimages had a timeless character and that it became more intensive in response to the increase of political, social and economic persecutions.

Jasna Góra played a special role in the communist period. The pilgrimages to the sanctuary, especially the pedestrian ones, became a unique symbol of the identification of the Church with the nation. Peregrinations to Jasna Góra were at the same time a form of religious and patriotic manifestation, as well as a form of protest against the communist system. Such manifestations were particularly prominent in the years of the martial law. Gradually, some inhabitants of other countries of the "communist block" started joining that protest through their participation in pedestrian pilgrimages. In the time of the martial law, the regime tried hardest to suppress the Pilgrimage of the Working People, organised since 1982, out of the initiative of Priest Jerzy Popiełuszko.

One can by no means neglect the patriotic trend that was always present during the pilgrimages of John Paul II to Poland. It was present in his preaching during numerous services and meetings.

A specific centre in which the religious and the patriotic trends overlapped most notably was Warsaw and in particular the sanctuary dedicated to St. Stanisław Kostka in the district of Żoliborz. The tomb of Priest Jerzy Popiełuszko, who was killed in 1984 by the communist secret police, is situated there. Pilgrimages came here from all over Poland. They were both professional and class pilgrimages. Among the pilgrims were people from abroad. In the years 1984-1994, Priest Jerzy's tomb was visited by 12 million pilgrims. The visits of the leaders and politicians from the "free world" to Priest Jerzy's tomb, during their official visits to communist-ruled Poland, were a form of a political demonstration. The visit paid there by John Paul II during his pilgrimage to Poland in 1987 was of particular significance.

7.

The ending millennium of the Polish history is encompassed by two important religious events connected with pilgrimages. In the early days of Christianity in Poland, our lands were visited by the German Emperor, Otto III, who made a pilgrima-

ge to St. Adalbert's grave in Gniezno. This date is accepted as the beginning of Christian pilgrimages in Poland. And then, at the end of this millennium, in 1991, instead of a ruler and his court, almost 2 million young people from all over the world come to Poland with a religious goal in mind. They wanted to meet the Polish Pope, expecting him to support their aspirations and the efforts they made in order to enter the third millennium as one community, free of any divisions and political boundaries. Both the above-mentioned events clearly mark the timeless character of the pilgrimage phenomenon, which is a special testimony of the cultural unity of our country and the continent.

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