

Introduction

Jasna Góra is one of the largest and most important religious cult centres in the whole world and not only of the Catholic faith. It is also the second, after Lourdes, centre of the cult of Saint Mary. And in addition to this, Jasna Góra is the biggest Christian centre of the cult of Saint Mary, whose the origin and development were not connected with any revelations of the Saint. Presently Jasna Góra is visited by four to five million pilgrims yearly, among them approximately four hundred thousand foreigners from more than eighty countries.

From the very beginnings of its existence Jasna Góra played an important role in Roman Catholic Church; both in a local, Polish sense and in the Church as a whole. Numerous visits of the representatives of various Churches from throughout the world and also, at the end of this millenium repeated pious pilgrimages of the Holy Father John Paul II are one of the manifestations of this. The significance of Jasna Góra was stressed in the past by John Paul II's predecessors (among others Martin V , Alexander VI, Clement XI, Pious X, Pious XI, Pious XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I). The edict of Clement XI, allowing the coronation of the miraculous picture of the Mother of God of Częstochowa (in 1717, the first coronation outside of Rome) allowed the Queen of Poland to become widely known throughout the Christian world. Jasna Góra has always played an important role in the spirituality and religiousness of Pope John Paul II.

The traditions of pilgrimages to Jasna Góra go back to its beginnings in the year 1382. Soon after, the sanctuary gained international renown (the beginning of the 15th century). Almost all Polish kings made pilgrimages there. In the 16th century a tradition of regular pilgrimages to Jasna Góra developed. Since the year 1711, a Varsovian walking Pilgrimage has set out yearly to Jasna Góra. In the period between the wars, the Sanctuary of Jasna Góra finally strengthened its position as an international centre of pilgrimages. An outstanding feature distinguishing Jasna Góra from other great Christian (and other) sanctuaries is the large scale character of the pedestrian pilgrimages. Each year more than two hundred thousand people, i.e. about five per cent of all pilgrims, come with

such groups. This fact places the Jasna Góra centre at one of the highest ranks on an international scale. In Europe, Jasna Góra has played the role of a place promoting and reviving the idea of pedestrian pilgrimages. These ideas of Jasna Góra have already reached other continents. The large scale character of the pedestrian pilgrimages to Jasna Góra causes them to be considered as migration movements on a mass scale, both in Europe and in Poland.

A holy icon is the object of the cult at the Jasna Góra Sanctuary. This picture of the Mother of God on one hand, charms with its extraordinariness and on the other, the Black Madonna spreads maternal warmth which can be immediately felt by each pilgrim at his first meeting with her. The popularity of the cult is the result of the fame of the Mother of God of Częstochowa and her role in the history of the Polish nation. Close bonds between the cult of Saint Mary and patriotic matters caused, that during the times of partition or totalitarian regimes, Jasna Góra to become a symbol of national unity for all Poles. The Holy Picture is often seen to play the role as the second emblem of Poland. One should stress that in the case of Poland, religious consciousness became connected with national consciousness, a phenomenon unknown in other European countries. The cult of the Mother of God of Częstochowa developed simultaneously in almost all countries of Europe and outside it. Polish immigrants and missionaries added to the popularisation of this cult beyond Polish borders. During the celebrations of the millennial anniversary of the baptism of Poland (1966), pictures of the Black Madonna could be seen in all Polish churches around the world. Consecutive peregrinations of the copies of Jasna Góra icon are another important element in preserving the importance of the centre, incomparable with any other in Poland. The peregrinations of the pictures of the Black Madonna promoted the example of the motherland abroad as well.

Following the history of Jasna Góra, one pays particular attention to its influence on Polish and European culture. Such manifestations can be seen mainly in fine arts, literature and music. These traditions go back to the very beginnings of the sanctuary. Almost all of the greatest Polish writers and poets made pilgrimages to Jasna Góra. This strong connection between national culture and the place of religious cult is a phenomenon on a world scale.

For many centuries now, Jasna Góra has been an important link in the process of mutual influence between the two main currents of Christianity - Western Christianity (Catholicism) and Eastern Christianity (Orthodox and Greek Catholics). Let us recall that in 1813 the Orthodox Church of Russia introduced a liturgical holiday of the Częstochowa Icon on the 6th of March. The Jasna Góra centre is situated in the middle of Europe. This geographical position can be described as an ecumenical position. The wide and easy access to the sanctuary allows it to play a special role as a central point, influencing all geographical directions of the one, fundamentally Christian, Europe, especially to the east and west.

One should also remember that Jasna Góra is the most important pilgrimage centre in Central and Eastern Europe and the greatest Christian sanctuary to the east of France. We have not always been aware of the great significance of Jasna

Góra. The task of this number of the periodical "*Peregrinus Cracoviensis*" is to show Poles and foreigners the unique role of the Jasna Góra centre. It is entirely devoted to Jasna Góra as a world centre of pilgrimages. It is rather surprising that, despite a six hundred year tradition of pilgrimages to the sanctuary, thus far no works dealing with the "*phenomenon of Jasna Góra*" in its international aspect have been published.¹ With this publication we desire to fill in this gap, at least in part.

The present issue of "*Peregrinus Cracoviensis*" is the second publication devoted entirely to one particular sanctuary. The first was published in 1995 and devoted to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (*Kalwaria Zebrzydowska: Its Past, Present and Future as a Pilgrimage Centre*)². This volume is connected with Jasna Góra. In this way the two greatest and most important centres of the Marian Cult in Poland are described monographically by a group of outstanding specialists. We are happy that "The Jasna Góra number" will be published just before the opening of The 12th International Mariological Congress, which for the first time is being held in this part of Europe.

The authors of our publication are either Pauline Fathers or academic teachers of Jagiellonian University. This fact has symbolic meaning for me and I see it as a spontaneous declaration of the renewal of traditional bonds between Jasna Góra and our Alma Mater. The symbolism of this publication results, first of all, from the fact that it will be published immediately before the 600th anniversary of the restoration of Jagiellonian University (in the year 2000). The restoration was possible thanks to Queen Jadwiga's (Hedwig) personal involvement at the papal court in Avignon and the fact that she bequeathed her jewellery to the Alma Mater. Let us recall that a few years before, at the initiative of the same queen Jasna Góra became a royal foundation. In 1393 King Władysław Jagiełło (Ladislaus Jagiello), fulfilling the request of his wife, validated the foundation of Prince Władysław Opolczyk and increased the payments order to "*simplify the redemption of Ourselves and Our beloved wif*"³. Thanks to Queen Jadwiga, the Faculty of Theology was opened at the University in 1397. Thus traditionally the relations between the sanctuary and Jagiellonian University (also Cracow in general) have always been close. Let us recall that Grzegorz from Sambor, the author of the first known poem about Jasna Góra and Częstochowa ("*Censtochova*", 1568) was a professor of the Cracow Academy (precursor of the university), while Szymon Starowolski, a propagator of the cult of the Black Madonna, was its student. In modern times these bonds have become even closer. This is thanks to the Holy Father John Paul II who joined, as if with a clasp, these bonds of many centuries between Jasna Góra and the University. The Most Outstanding alumnus of the University, the last assistant professor of the Faculty of Theology before its closing by the Communist authorities in 1954, the holder of an honorary doctorate of the Cracovian Alma Mater (1983), is at the same time the Most Dignified Pilgrim to Jasna Góra. Let us not forget that Karol Wojtyła came here as a child, then as a student of Jagiellonian University (as a member of secret academic pilgrimages during the Second World War), then as a

priest, bishop, cardinal, and pope. After he had been elected Pope he said to Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński: *“there would not be a Polish Pope in St. Peter’s capital if there had not been Jasna Góra”*⁴. After obtaining his honorary doctorate he stressed his close bonds with the University, repeating several times the words: *“My Alma Mater”* and turning the listeners attention to the great role of Jagiellonian University *“in the history of Poland and in the history of Polish, European and world culture. Once again I want to thank Jagiellonian University for being my Alma Mater. I want to stay forever united and in solidarity with everything with which your Institution is engaged, for the sake of Polish culture and for the well-being of the Nation and humanity”*⁵. We hope that this short reminder of the common relations between Jasna Góra and Jagiellonian University through the person of John Paul II will inspire scholars to undertake studies of this fascinating problem.

The idea of preparing a number of *“Peregrinus Cracoviensis”*, devoted to Jasna Góra as an international centre of pilgrimages originated late 1995 - early 1996. The initiative originated simultaneously at Jasna Góra and at the Geography Institute of Jagiellonian University. The decision was made to prepare, in addition a Polish version, an English version (e.g. for the use of foreign guests of the Congress). I am particularly grateful to all the Pauline Fathers. Were it not for their kindness and help, this work would probably never have been published. The assistance of the Paulines concerned both intrinsic and technical matters. And above all, they financed the cost of printing. I address my special thanks to the Superiors of the Monastery and the Jasna Góra Sanctuary past and present; that is to Generals Jan Nalaskowski OSPPE and Stanisław Turek OSPPE and Priors Szczepan Kośnik OSPPE and Izydor Matuszewski OSPPE, also Fathers: Zachariasz S. Jabłoński, Jan Golonka, Kazimierz Maniecki, Jan Pach, and the editorial staff of the *“Jasna Góra”* monthly who were of incredible help to me. Heartfelt thanks to all of them!

I would also like to thank Brother Andrzej Kryński FSC, Rector Magnificus of The College of Foreign Languages and Economics in Częstochowa, for his participation in many discussions concerning the future shape of this publication.

The authorities of Jagiellonian University were also very friendly to us. Professor Doctor Aleksander Koj, Rector Magnificus of the University honoured us with his foreword. A Vice-Rector of the University, Professor Doctor Franciszek Ziejka wrote one of the most important texts of this volume. We find it a great honour to obtain the consent of the University authorities to use the symbol of the Jagiellonian University on the title page .

I was moved by the friendliness of Father Pious Bełch OP from the Sanctuary in Borek Stary who gave his consent to publish a unique map of Saint Mary Sanctuaries from the year 1937.

I deeply appreciate the help of my closest co-workers, especially Mr. Marian Drażek, technical editor. His editorial experience and an excellent, almost perfect knowledge of modern equipment resulted in the creation of this wonderful publication. I would like to thank Mrs. Elżbieta Bilska who spent many hours editing the texts and preparing them for publication. Also words of thanks to Mrs. Alicja Mar-

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Finally, I want to thank Mr. Tomasz Drażek whose intuition and a perfect know-how of computers made it possible to repair a serious defect of the computer on which we were preparing the publication.

I am grateful to all authors who honoured this exceptional volume of "Peregrinus Cracoviensis" with the results of their research work which widen our knowledge about the international pilgrimage function of Jasna Góra.

Antoni Jackowski

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Notes:

¹ The authors of the work *Tyś wielką chlubą naszego narodu* (*You are a Great Praise of Our Nation*) deal with these problems only to a limited extent. Group work under K. Kunz, Częstochowa - Jasna Góra 1991, Pauline Edition .

² *Tradycje, współczesność i przyszłość pielgrzymek w Kalwarii Zebrzydowskiej*. Ed. by A. Jackowski, Kraków 1995, Institute of Geography of the Jagiellonian University ("Peregrinus Cracoviensis", vol . 2).

³ After Jabłoński, Z. S. *Rzeczywistość Jasnej Góry ważniejszymi wydarzeniami pisana*, in: *Tyś wielką chlubą naszego narodu*. Ed. by K. Kunz, Częstochowa - Jasna Góra 1991, p. 277.

⁴ *Tyś wielką chlubą naszego narodu ...*, *op. cit.*, p. 147 .

⁵ *Pokój Tobie, Polsko, ojczyzno moja*, Paryż 1985, pp. 242-243.