

**Izabela Sołjan, Antoni Jackowski**

# **The Jasna Góra sanctuary against the background of the other pilgrimage centres in Poland**

## **Introduction**

**T**he position and status of the Jasna Góra sanctuary as one of the largest sanctuaries in the world and as the central one of the Polish people, have been undoubtedly obtained once and forever through the course of its history. It is not necessary to once again prove its leading role among other Polish pilgrimage centres. The following reflections are rather aimed to show richness and variety of Polish pilgrim life, viewing the Jasna Góra sanctuary in both historical and contemporary perspectives. Unquestionably, the Cult of Częstochowa's Holy Virgin, the Queen of Poland, has exerted essential influence on the religiousness of believers and the Church in Poland. Such evidence can be found in every Polish church or sanctuary. We might then state that, apart from many other significances of the Guide (*Hodegetria*) of Częstochowa, it is the One which attracts pilgrims to come not only to the Jasna Góra, but also to other numerous sanctuaries spread throughout the country.

## **The Jasna Góra sanctuary against the background of the other pilgrimage centres of Poland (historical outline)**

By the time the Jasna Góra monastery was founded in 1382 and the miraculous icon of the Holy Virgin was brought here, Poland had already been a Christian country for more than 300 years. Practically since Christianity took over Poland, the Cult of the Holy Virgin has been particularly prominent in Polish piety. The Gniezno Metropolis, instituted in the year 1000, received the Holy Virgin as its patron saint in the mystery of the Assumption. If we look at the invocations of metropolitan sanctuaries being founded at the same time as the Gniezno Metropolis we note that the patronage of the Holy Virgin was at that time very unusual, especially in a country newly turned Catholic. In the neighbouring countries the patronage of the other saints dominated considerably. Over all Europe in those days, to the north of the Alps and to the east of the Rhine, Gniezno was the only metropolis dedicated to the Holy Virgin. Because this metropolis included the entire

kingdom of Bolesław Chrobry (Ladislaus the Brave), the Holy Virgin became the patron saint of the Polish Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Along with the Marian trend in Polish religious culture of the early Middle Ages, the cult of saints and the saintly dead was also prominent. That was why the oldest movement of pilgrims was related to the cult centres. The Gniezno Cathedral was well advanced in this regard when the body of St. Aldabert (Wojciech) was deposited in 997. St. Aldabert was then proclaimed patron saint of the Polish people and state, and the cathedral of the Holy Virgin was jointly dedicated to the Saint (11th century). In 1000 Emperor Otto III took part in a pilgrimage to the Saint's tomb. The cult of St. Aldabert under papal and royal protection developed quickly and became one of international significance. In 1097, at the centenary anniversary of St. Aldabert's martyrdom, Archbishop Martin, in the presence of Prince Władysław Herman (Ladislaus Herman), consecrated the Gniezno Cathedral as a pilgrimage sanctuary. Among its pilgrims were kings and princes of Poland, and in 1113 it was visited by Bolesław Krzywousty (Ladislaus the Wrymouthed) during his penitential pilgrimage to Gniezno.<sup>2</sup> Another pilgrimage centre related to St. Aldabert was Trzemeszno which possessed a valuable relic: the Saint's hand.

It is a rather difficult matter in such a brief study to focus on all sanctuaries connected with the cult of relics and saints appearing in Poland before the end of the 14th century. That is why only the most important of them, no less than of regional importance, will be mentioned here: Święty Krzyż (a relic of the Holy Cross), Stary Sącz (the cult of the blessed Kinga), Trzebnica (the cult of St. Jadwiga Śląska), Góra Chełmska (Mount Chełm, later Mount St. Ann and her cult), Tropie and Oława (the cult of St. Andrzej Świerad), Mogiła (the cult of the Holy Cross). A particularly favourable place among medieval sanctuaries was unquestioningly Cracow. The pilgrimage movement concentrated there around the cult of St. Florian (dating from the end of the 12th century), St. Stanisław the Bishop Martyr (died in 1079, canonised in 1253), the blessed Salomea (the second half of the 13th century), St. Jacek (Hyacinth) (the second half of the 13th century) and the so-called Cracow saints (the cults of Bishop Pendota, Jan of Kęty, Szymon of Lipnica and Stanisław Kazimierczyk). In the 15th century, regarded as the peak period in pilgrimages, in Cracow alone there were seventeen pilgrimage centres.<sup>3</sup> It is worth mentioning, that up to the present time one cult which outlived the others is the Cult of St. Stanisław, who is regarded as one of the main patron saints of Poland. For centuries this cult has played an essential role in shaping Polish national identity. Wawel, with the Saint's confession, became a place of mass pilgrimages for Poles, especially in the years of servitude, in the trend of so-called "national pilgrimages".

According to tradition conveyed through centuries, the appearance of the first Polish sanctuaries of the Holy Virgin date back to the late 13th - early 14th centuries, or even to the end of the 12th century (Górka Klasztorna, Bardo Śląskie, Lubawa, Wambierzyce, Borek Stary, Stara Wieś, Krzeszów, Piaseczno).<sup>4</sup> One must remember that tradition often dates the founding of a given centre much earlier than is confirmed by historical sources. This is not the case as far as Jasna Góra is

concerned; its foundation in the 1382s is fully documented. However, the previous history and the date of its icon fall within the sphere of traditions and hypotheses. It is known that Władysław Opolczyk (Ladislaus of Opole) brought the icon from Belz, Ruthenia (Ruś), where it had been worshipped. The origin of the Jasna Góra sanctuary demonstrates the icon's phenomenon and exceptionality.

Over a period of several decades the Jasna Góra monastery, not yet in possession of the status of a national pilgrimage centre, became an international centre attracting pilgrims mainly from Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>5</sup> In the Jagiellonian Library is a report, dated 1437, by the prior and custodian of Jasna Góra about the miracles experienced here. The majority of 56 people healed here were from the Opole area of Silesia.<sup>6</sup> In the second half of the 15th century among the pilgrims, Jan Długosz mentions Czechs, Slovaks, Moravians, Prussians and Hungarians. The 16th century sources mention the following nations: Lithuanians, Samogitians and other Baltic Peoples, Muscovites, Saxons, and those from Ruthenia.<sup>7</sup> The factor that attracted believers from Poland and abroad were undoubtedly the miracles that took place and the mercies received. In his letter to Pope Martin V (1429) King Władysław Jagiełło (Ladislaus Jagiello) wrote that in the Jasna Góra church "*with the power of God mysterious miracles take place...*" - "*crowds arrive there hoping to find salvation and indulgences*".<sup>8</sup> From the very beginning, Pauline Fathers and the monastery's founders looked after the cult's development. In 1393 Jasna Góra became a royal foundation. The kings of the Jagiello dynasty strived to make the Jasna Góra Holy Virgin the patron saint of the Polish Kingdom. Indulgence privileges granted to Jasna Góra by the Vatican in the 15th century strengthened its position as one of the most important sanctuaries in Poland. The pilgrimage traffic to the Black Madonna was stimulated particularly after the assault and robbery of Jasna Góra in 1430 when the miraculous icon was damaged. The painting was restored in Cracow and in 1434 was carried back to Częstochowa in a ceremonial procession.

The indulgence privilege, granted to Jasna Góra by the Apostolic See in the 15th century, established the position of the centre as one of the most important sanctuaries on Polish lands. The relationship of Jasna Góra with the ruling dynasty from its very beginning certainly influenced the formation of a strong Polish national character of the Marian cult in later centuries. In evidence of this fact, due to a privilege granted to Jasna Góra in 1450 by Zbigniew Oleśnicki it was possible to get a special indulgence here on the condition of saying a prayer for peace in the Polish kingdom as well as for the king and the bishop of Cracow.<sup>9</sup> In the middle of the 16th century Grzegorz of Sambor, a canon of St. Ann's church in Cracow, in his Latin poem "*Częstochowa*", was the first to call the Jasna Góra's Holy Virgin "*the Queen of Poland*".<sup>10</sup> Likewise P.H. Pruszczyński, in the first register of Polish sanctuaries released in 1644, addresses the Częstochowa's St. Mary, among other icons, as *Regni Poloniae*.<sup>11</sup> The heroic defence of Jasna Góra from the Swedes in 1655 and in consequence Jan Kazimierz's vow in Lvov finally confirmed and solidified the Cult of the Częstochowa's Holy Virgin as the Queen of Poland. Other evidence that clearly testifies to the development of the Cult of Jasna Góra's Icon, was the

fact that already in the first centuries of the centre's existence, from the 15th or even the end of the 14th century, there appeared numerous cult copies of this icon. Some of them became the objects of believers' worship and numerous pilgrimage centres were founded around them. The following pictures are worth mentioning: icons in Sokal, Bochnia, Stanisławów, Stara Wieś near Racibórz, Okulice, Cracow (in St. Mary's Church), Maków Podhalański, and Zbaraż.<sup>12</sup> Before leaving Poland in 1669, King Jan Kazimierz presented his picture of the Częstochowa Holy Virgin (called the Kazimierzowska Holy Virgin) to the church in Rajcza, where the Cult of the Icon is alive to the present day. The picture from Sokal, dating back to the end of the 14th century was so greatly worshipped that the sanctuary was called the "Częstochowa of Ruthenia", and in 1724 (seven years after the coronation of the Jasna Góra Icon) the image received a Papal crown. Many of those images became famous for unusual occurrences and the mercies received before them. For example, icons from Bochnia "cried"; "thick and transparent sweat" was observed on the icon of Okulice. The miraculous nature of these images was confirmed by bishops' decrees and the government's coronation procedures. A great advocate of the Jasna Góra Holy Virgin was its coronator, Bishop Christopher Szembek. After he took office over the Warmia diocese (1724-1740), he brought copies of the Częstochowa Holy Virgin to Glotów, Stoczek and probably to Gietrzwałd.<sup>13</sup> In addition, in the first half of the 16th century, images of the Częstochowa Holy Virgin began to appear not only in churches and courts but also in poor peasants' huts. For the ordinary pilgrim, only small religious images were painted, but their Częstochowa origin was essential. Up to the 1840s there was a tradition of touching and rubbing such images against the original. Later on this tradition was prohibited to safeguard the icon.<sup>14</sup> The second half of the 16th century, the 17th and 18th centuries was a period of considerable animation in religious life and pilgrim travel, not only to Jasna Góra and related centres, but also to many other parts of Poland. The Cult of the Holy Virgin was an essential religious element for a wide array of social groups. Diocesan and monastic centres tried to obtain images famous for their mercy, which increased the centre's status considerably and facilitated its development. The reasons for such phenomena can be explained by the trend of Catholic revival, a backlash to the destruction of sacred pictures by Protestants. Apart from small cult centres appearing at that time connected with the mother parish, larger places of pilgrimage of regional importance emerged. The most renowned ones were sanctuaries in: Kodeń (the Queen of Podlasia), Święta Lipka, Piekary Śląskie, Tuchów, Żyrowice, Lvov, Vilnius, Leżajsk, and Poczajów. The estimated number of sanctuaries possessing a regional status in 17th and 18th centuries is about 150.<sup>15</sup> Since the beginning of the 17th century such places as calvaries (pol. kalwaria, niem. Kalvarienberg) founded after the example of the Jerusalem Calvary, became popular pilgrimage destinations. The first calvary in Poland was founded in 1602 by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, the voivode of Cracow. The Kalwaria Zebrzydowska was followed by many others: Pakość on Noteć (1628), Kalwaria Żmudzka (1639), Kalwaria Żydowska (1640), Wejherowo (1649), Werki near Vilnius (1662), Kalwaria Paławska (1668), Góra Kalwaria (1670), Krzeszów (1672), Wambierzyce (1681-

1708), Góra Świętej Anny (1700-1709), and Ujazdów (1731).<sup>16</sup> It is necessary to emphasise that pilgrimages to calvaries were never as numerous as to the Holy Virgin's sanctuaries, so some caretakers of calvaries tried to find famous images of the Virgin to bring her mercy (e.g., Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 1641, Pałacowska Kalwaria 1679).

It has already been mentioned that pilgrimages were one of the key aspects of the rich piety of the Polish Baroque period. This period is characterised by the beginning of regular walking pilgrimages to Jasna Góra from Kalisz, Piotrków, and Warsaw.<sup>17</sup> The first pilgrimage from Warsaw took place in 1711, and up to the present day they total 280, forming a sort of religious and social phenomenon in Europe.<sup>18</sup> In the 17th century votive pilgrimages appeared, which were not only for visiting sacred places, but also for taking complex vows. The greatest number of pilgrims was registered during coronation and jubilee celebrations. The coronation of the Jasna Góra icon in 1717 alone gathered more than 200 thousand pilgrims. Other coronations, especially in Troki, Podkamień, Łuck, Vilnius and Lvov, also had large turnouts.

The period of over 100 years of national servitude was extraordinarily difficult both for the Polish Church and people. In a country divided among the three partitioning powers, devoid of its own statehood, the Church was the only institution of a nation-wide character which united the people. In those days sanctuaries became the mainstays of Polishness, conveying deeply rooted traditions and national symbols. In spite of the numerous restrictions imposed by the Partitioners, in spite of various administrative prohibitions against pilgrimages, the Polish "*loca sacra*" remained living cult centres. In all the three occupied sectors the authorities opposed pilgrimages to Jasna Góra most of all because the Cult of the Częstochowa Holy Virgin identified with the Queen of Poland, was the cult that they feared most. The Partitioners were aware that without its eradication or, at least, inhibition, all attempts to deprive Poles of their national identity would be fruitless. Already in 1754 the Prussian King Frederick II banned pilgrimages in Silesia (the ban was renewed in 1764), although generally it did not bring about the intended effect.<sup>19</sup> Movement towards Częstochowa did not decrease even after building a calvary in Piekary Śląskie. In the 19th century from several hundred to several thousand pilgrims from nearly every parish of Silesia took part in pilgrimages to Jasna Góra. In 1869 to 1914 the so-called Prussian indulgence (Ss. Peter and Paul indulgence) gathered believers from the majority of the Upper Silesia parishes.<sup>20</sup> Appointment of "substitute" sanctuaries (e.g. Kobyłanka for Galicia and Gietrzwałd for the Prussian sector) did not solve the problem of Jasna Góra. Between 1885 and 1914, 700 to 1000 pilgrimages arrived in Częstochowa annually, in total from 300 to 400,000 pilgrims.<sup>21</sup> The tsarist authorities simply called the Częstochowa Holy Virgin "the head revolutionary" of the Polish kingdom. The malevolence of authorities additionally fortified the patriotic character of pilgrimages, especially in the 1860s. Pilgrims often brought banners with the Polish Eagle and other national symbols, and sang patriotic hymns.

In the years of servitude, pilgrim traffic had a distinct national colouring which was typical not only of the Jasna Góra sanctuary but also many other centres. For

example Kobylanka dwellers still remember the pilgrimage which came from Nowy Sącz in 1861 for St. Michael's indulgence. People carried a cross with the inscription: "Let God liberate Poland" and below, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do". On the reverse side the following was seen: "To our brothers who were massacred in Warsaw and Vilnius".<sup>22</sup> Under foreign domination so-called national pilgrimages were widespread and characterised by organised marches to places closely connected with the history of Poland, such as: Gniezno, Cracow, Warsaw and Vilnius. Pilgrimages from Upper Silesia to Cracow were of special significance, thousands of people have followed this trail each year since 1840. In the 1890s pilgrims went as far as the border at their own expense and further "at the expense of Poland", financed by the so-called Cracow organising committees.<sup>23</sup>

During the second half of the 19th century, due to recognition of Galician autonomy, a distinct revival and development of religious practices was noticeable there. Aside from Cracow, principally Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, due to difficult access to Częstochowa which was situated within the Russian sector, became a nation-wide sanctuary of the Holy Virgin. Pilgrims from many parts of pre-partitioned Poland arrived here, even from Pomorze. Two hundred and forty three diocesan and monastic priests and about 230 thousand believers from Galicia, the Polish kingdom, Hungary, Moravia, Prussian and Austrian Silesia, Poznań and Lithuania took part in the coronation celebrations in 1887.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of the 20th century Kalwaria Zebrzydowska was regarded as one of the biggest pilgrimage centres in Europe, alongside of such sanctuaries as Altötting or Mariazell.<sup>25</sup> Other Galician centres also experience a revival in the second half of the 19th century. This is seen in numerous coronations of images of the Holy Virgin. Among the 14 papal coronations organised under occupation, all except one in Sulisławice, took place in Galicia. Apart from the previously mentioned Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, these ceremonies took place in Stara Wieś, Kalwaria Pałacowska, Cracow, Lvov, and Tuchów which certainly strengthened their positions among Polish pilgrimage centres.

In the Prussian sector in the 1870s, Gietrzwałd unexpectedly gained popularity, due to the appearances of the Holy Virgin which occurred there from June 27 till September 16, 1877. On ordinary days the number of pilgrims reached 2,000 and 8,000 on Sundays. Priest F. Hipler who witnessed these revelations, estimated the number of pilgrims from the middle of July till the middle of September in 1877 to be from a quarter to a half million: "They were Germans and Poles, Lithuanians, Mazovians, Kashubes, highlanders, Poles not only from the Prussian sector and Galicia but also Russia, despite the cordon and border guards".<sup>26</sup> In the following years the number of people visiting Gietrzwałd gradually decreased and before World War I was estimated at 40 thousand each year.<sup>27</sup> In the second half of the 19th century the Holy Virgin was to reveal herself again in other parts of Poland. The cult initiated at that time led to the foundation of numerous sanctuaries in these locations, suffice to mention Licheń (the cult of the Holy Virgin, the Queen of Poland) or Szczyk (the Częstochowa Wspomożycielka na Górcie, Our Lady of Help on the Hill). The occupying authorities tried not to publicise these events mainly because Polish national tones were starting to appear. During the period of

Fig. 1.  
Pilgrimage movement in chosen centres of religious cults in Poland in 1938  
(in thousands of persons)

national servitude Poles willingly made further pilgrimages to Piekary, Góra Świętej Anny, Wambierzyce, Bardo, Vilnius, Święta Lipka, Stoczek Warmiński, Święta Góra near Gostyń and many others. Arguments of a national nature sometimes occurred on Góra Świętej Anny, so separate pilgrimage times were arranged for German and Polish groups in 1861.<sup>28</sup>

Freedom of religious practices was restored after regaining independence in 1918 and the development of cult centres and pilgrim traffic were typical of Polish piety during the period of the Second Republic. On June 6, 1918, General Józef Haller visited Jasna Góra at the end of his thanksgiving pilgrimage for regained freedom. In 1920 to 1921 the whole nation came here with the same intention. In August 1920 after “*the miracle on the Vistula*”, lying prostrate on the Jasna Góra square, countrymen once again acclaimed the Częstochowa Holy Virgin as the Queen of Poland.<sup>29</sup> A new form of worship became the taking of oaths: Polish bishops (1920), women (1926), students (1936), teachers and husbands (1937). In 1932 to 1933, throughout the year people celebrated the 550th anniversary of Jasna Góra, when more than 1.5 million pilgrims came.

The *Mariological map of Poland* published in 1937 became an interesting source of information about Polish sanctuaries and Jasna Góra’s role.<sup>30</sup> It was com-

piled and based on works by Nowakowski<sup>31</sup> (description of 1,111 miraculous images of the Virgin in Poland), Fridrich<sup>32</sup> (373 miraculous likenesses) and Barącz<sup>33</sup> (463 likenesses). The sanctuaries are marked on the map according to the following criteria: places of miraculous images, miraculous images privately and officially coronated and pilgrimages places with miraculous images, attributing the highest rank to the latter. Miraculous victories gained with the help of Our Lady the Queen of Poland are also marked on the map. The most significant victories in the history of Poland, such as Grunwald (1410), Chocim (1621), Vienna (1683) and “*the miracle on the Vistula*” (1920) are attributed to the Częstochowa Holy Virgin. It is also interesting that the network of pilgrimage centres shown on the map is the densest especially in the west, centre and southeast of Poland. The authors suggest that, “*The density of these miraculous images of the Holy Virgin is not only evidence testifying to Her merciful love for the Polish people, but they are also fortresses protecting Poland from its internal and external enemies... These fortresses are foundations of the most beautiful and noble love of God and the Fatherland*”. If we add the words of one of Poland’s greatest enemies, Governor H. Frank: “*when all stars for Poland went out, there was still a light shining from Częstochowa and the Church*”. After this comment, a summary of the above reflections seems superfluous.

### **The Jasna Góra sanctuary against the background of the other pilgrimage centres in Poland**

Even superficial studies of the fates of the Church and the Polish people in the postwar period allow one to observe an earlier unprecedented blooming of Marian piety, to a decisive degree inspired by the cult of Our Lady and the Queen of Jasna Góra. All the meaningful events of a religious or national-religious nature have their source here, developing and strengthening through the ages the position of Jasna Góra as the “*spiritual capital of Poland*”, and irreparably inscribed into the consciousness of the broad masses of Polish society. Similarly to earlier difficult periods, as in the years of Communism, the Jasna Góra “lights”, allowed the weathering of successive historical upheavals. In reply to the Fatima proclamation and the appeal of Pope Pius XII, Primate August Hlond together with the Episcopate, the presence of a million pilgrims, on the 8th of September 1946 summited, on Jasna Góra, the whole nation to Immaculate Heart of Mary. An enormous service for the Church as well as for the nation and Jasna Góra itself were performed with certainty by the Millennium Primate, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who not for nothing is called the Father of the Nation. Through his whole life his was patronis by the Częstochow Mary, never parting from its likeness. So it was on his initiative that in 1956 the Jasna Góra Vows of the Nation were renewed, and next the initiation of the Great Novena, which lasted 9 years, and was a preparation for the Millennium celebrations of 1000 years of Polish Christianity. In their preparation the entire nation was involved, every diocese and every parish. Around the marvellous image on Jasna Góra gathered diocesan and parish delegations in connection with the so-

called “acts of kindness” for the Church and the fatherland. Returning, they took with them symbolic hosts, rosaries, gorgets and pictures, that were to emphasize the direct contact of Jasna Góra with the parishes.<sup>34</sup>

An unprecedented fact on a world scale, became the peregrination of a copy of the Częstochowa Lord’s Mother image round all the Polish parishes and homes. The celebrations connected with the pilgrimage started on the 26th August 1957 at Jasna Góra, while the pilgrimage itself set off on the 29th August of the same year from the Warsaw archdiocese and in the course of 23 years wound its way through all the parishes. The visitation was broken in the millennium year of 1966 so that the copy could be present in the twenty five diocesan towns on the “Millennium Route” (from April to August). Despite the difficulties created by the Communist authorities e.g. the ‘imprisoning’ of the copy at Jasna Góra from 2nd September 1966 to 18th June 1972, when, instead of the image, empty frames made the rounds - the first great pilgrimage was continued and finished at Częstochowa on the 12th of October 1980. During those twenty three years Primate Wyszyński greeted and took leave of the Jasna Góra Visitation in almost every diocese, saying to all “*Do not fear the acceptance of Mary*”.<sup>35</sup> The great pilgrimage was accompanied by so-called small visitations, during the course of which a copy of the Jasna Góra Icon was seen by religious orders (from 10th May 1962 to the end of December 1965) and families (during the period between 15th October and 8th December 1965, 6282 parish delegations received on Jasna Góra images of the Lord’s Mother of Częstochowa with the inscription: “*Every Catholic family in your parish I submit to the maternal servitude of the Mother of God Incarnated and the Mother Church on earth and our Fatherland. With God’s blessing Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, Primate of Poland. Jasna Góra 26.08.1965*”<sup>36</sup>). The fruits of the pilgrimage displaying themselves in the spiritual and moral renewal of the nation encouraged the Episcopate to repeat it. The second great visitation began on 5th May 1985 in Drohiczyń and is still in progress.

The Peregrination of the copy of the Image of The Lord’s Mother of Częstochowa caused keenness in individual dioceses and deaneries to organise similar shrines to the Lord’s Mother of Częstochowa. As an example one could mention the pilgrimage of the Ludźmierska Lord’s Mother’s image or that of Kodeń (both of a regional range) and also the wanderings, local in character, of the Assumption Virgin Mary from Rzeszów, or the Leżajsk Lord’s Mother of Comfort. Another telling effect of the Jasna Góra Image’s pilgrimage has been the establishment of new sanctuaries to the Częstochowa Lord’s Mother (e.g. in Dąbrowica in Lower Silesia) or churches under her invocation. In many other churches there are numerous indulgences observed in honour of the Częstochowa Lord’s Mother. At present there exist in Poland about 270 churches and chapels dedicated to the Lady of Jasna Góra, the most in the former: Wrocław archdiocese (33), in the Gorzów archdiocese (27) and the Kielce archdiocese (24).<sup>37</sup>

The work of Primate Wyszyński continued and significantly developed probably the greatest Mary admirer of recent times - the present Pope John Paul II. Already at the beginning of his pontificate he declared that, “*There would not be a*

*Pole in Peter's Capital if it had not been for his faith, heroic hope and trust completely in the Mother Church, if there had not been Jasna Góra*".<sup>38</sup> During his first pilgrimage to Poland, 4th June 1979, on the feast of the Mother Church, on the summit of Jasna Góra he composed to Mary an Act of Devoting to Her of he himself, the fatherland, the Christian Church and the world.

On that day the Pope spoke words still historic today: "*Jasna Góra is not only a place of pilgrimage for Poles from Poland and the whole world. Jasna Góra is a sanctuary of the nation. One must place one's ear to this holy place so as to feel how the heart of the nation beats in the Heart of Mary*"<sup>39</sup> The second papal pilgrimage in June 1983 was a thanksgiving pilgrimage for the six-hundred-year maternal presence of Mary in the Jasna Góra image. The Pope has visited the Jasna Góra sanctuary twice more: in 1987 during his third pilgrimage to the fatherland as well as in 1991 when he led the 6th World Youth Day. How close His Holiness is to the Jasna Góra Lady and her Częstochowa sanctuary is best borne out by the fact that millions of people the world over know Her just as the Pope's Madonna. The Pope's attitude undoubtedly has led to the further flowering of Jasna Góra. From the moment of John Paul II's first visit in 1979 the centre is visited annually by 4-5 million people, which makes Jasna Góra one of the chief Marian centres in the world. Among the pilgrims, around four hundred thousand are foreign from close on 100 countries. To Częstochowa annually are organised pilgrimages from almost 70% of Catholic parishes in Poland. The record number was noted in 1991 on the occasion of World Youth Day. Then seven million pilgrims from all the continents were registered.

Since 1977 a decisive rise in walking pilgrimages to Częstochowa has been noted, linked, among others, to the celebrations commemorating 600 years of the cloister (1982-1983). For the commemoration of this anniversary several walking pilgrimages were initiated, as an example the Kaszuba pilgrimage from Swarzew ("*600 kilometres on the 600th year*"). The greatest number of pilgrims arrive during church fair days: The Lord's Mother Queen of Poland (3rd May), the Assumption of the Holiest Virgin Mary (15th August), the Częstochowa Lord's Mother (26th August) and the Birth of the Holiest Virgin Mary (8th September). The faithful at that time numbered between 300,000 to 500,000.

Over 50 footpaths wind their way to Częstochowa, covering the whole of Poland, the lengths of which range from several to several hundred kilometers. En route to Częstochowa pilgrims usually take in other sanctuaries on the way, for example the Highlander's Pilgrimage stops off at Ludźmierz, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Maków Podhalański, Leśniów; the Warsaw Academic Walking Pilgrimage passes through Niepokalanów, Miedniewice, Smardzewice, Gidle, Mstów; the Przemyśl pilgrimage sees the sanctuary in Borek Stary and the Zielona Góra - Gorzów Diocesan Pilgrimage visits Święta Góra in Gostyń. Annually around 150 groups, totaling between 175,000 to 200,000 people take part in walking pilgrimages.

Jasna Góra is certainly its own religious and social phenomenon on a world scale, especially in the Christian world. It is important to remember that in Poland

Fig. 2  
Directions of pedestrian pilgrimages to Jasna Góra between 8 and 15 August 1995.

pilgrimages on foot are typical solely to Jasna Góra, though the tradition, at times equalling several hundreds of years, concerns the majority of Polish places of pilgrimage. Pilgrims on foot from the local neighbouring parishes or deaneries for major religious celebrations, church fairs and anniversaries, arrive at even small centres of a local scale. A particularly strong tradition of pilgrimage has been preserved to the present day in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Ludźmierz, Piekary Śląskie, Wambierzyce, Bardo Śląskie, Kodeń, Gietrzwałd and Wejherowo. Here it is worth mentioning just one more sanctuary to which pilgrims travel exclusively on foot. This being Wiktorówki - a centre devoted to Queen Mary of the Tatra Mountains, situated in the mountains at a height of 1150 metres above sea level.

Besides the main August fair (15th August) several thousand highlanders wind their way here equally on Christmas Eve for the Pasterka mass as well as on New Year's Eve.

As has been already mentioned, the whole nation prepared itself for the main religious celebrations, the main historical commemorations, as a rule, on Jasna Góra. They have found a wide response in the priestly programme of all Catholic dioceses and parishes. Thousands of the faithful visited at that time not only Jasna Góra but a range of other sanctuaries of various influences. It widely became the practice to dedicate individual parishes to the care of the Lord's Mother. After the Second World War the first act of this kind took place in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska when Cardinal Adam Sapieha, before the wonderful image of the Kalwaria Lord's Mother, devoted the Cracow Archdiocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (1946).<sup>40</sup>

An important indication of religious life in the aforementioned period was the numerous coronations by grace of the celebrated Marian images. During the years 1958-1992 in the Polish lands over one hundred Marian Cult images were crowned, which is definitely an amazing event on a world scale. And in this case the services of Primate Wyszyński and the present Pope, John Paul II, remain invaluable. Primate Wyszyński personally oversaw 42 of these coronations, and the Pope 17 (of which 5 while he was Archbishop of Cracow). The coronation celebrations always drew crowds of pilgrims, and became huge religious demonstrations and often national as well. Papal crowns were received, during the period that interests us, by the images, to mention a few, in Myślenice, Gietrzwałd, Święta Lipka, Ludźmierz, Licheń, Leśniów. Of a special ceremonial character were the coronations in Okulice (in 1962, present were the Polish Primate, 16 bishops, 500 priests, 100,000 pilgrims); Nowy Sącz (the ceremony was in 1963 in Zawada, 6 kms from Nowy Sącz, as the town authorities had refused permission for the coronation to take place on any of the town squares, present were 17 archbishops and bishops, 700 priests, 300 nuns and 300,000 of the faithful); Licheń (in 1967 with the participation of the entire Polish Episcopate and pilgrims from all over the country); Wambierzyce (1980, over 30 bishops including Cardinal Raggio from Rome and Bishop Tomaszek from Prague) as well as the coronation performed by Pope John Paul II (as an example the coronation of the image from Maków Podhalański on Cracow Błonie in 1979, and the coronation on Jasna Góra of the images from Brdów, Zielonice, Stoczek Warmiński during the Second Papal Pilgrimage in 1983)<sup>41</sup>.

Coronations, jubilees and indulgences are the most important moments marking the rhythm of life of the majority of the sanctuaries. In each of the 500 registered at present places of pilgrimage in Poland they are held extraordinarily ceremoniously. The majority of the indulgences are connected with the Cult of Mary, especially with the Feast of the Lord's Mother Queen of Poland (3rd May), the Assumption of the Holiest Virgin Mary (15th August), the Birth of the Holiest Virgin Mary (8th September) and the Sorrowful Lord's Mother (15th September). In the case of almost 20 sanctuaries the established Feasts are connected with the concrete images of Mary located there. Among those indulgences, the best known are connected with the Feast of the Częstochowa Lord's Mother (26th August),

Fig. 3

Directions of pedestrian pilgrimages to Jasna Góra between 22 and 30 August 1995.

introduced in 1956 to all Polish dioceses. Many pilgrims arrive also for the Kalwaria Lord's Mother's Fair (Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, 13th August), Piekary Śląskie (12th September), Kodeń (2nd July), Leśna Podlaska (26th September), Różanystok (the last Sunday of June), Gidle (first Sunday of May), Gostyń (25th June), Święta Lipka (11th September), Gietrzwałd (8th September), Tuchów (2nd July), Leśniów (2nd July), Rokitno (15th August). As far as indulgences connected with Lord's feast-days are concerned, with the exception of the celebrations connected with the period of Holy Week, the most frequently held are the festival of the Raising of the Holy Cross (14th September), the Finding of the Holy Cross (4th May) as well as the Holiest Blood of Christ (1st July). In the majority of cases they appear next to the Marian feasts (e.g., Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Piekary Śląskie, Kalwaria Pałacowska, Góra Świętej Anny, Wejherowo), but sometimes they are the only main festivals in

the given centre (e.g., in Pakość nad Notecią, Kobylanka, Ujście). Noticeably less often are main church-fairs connected with the cult of saints. The best known that are linked with saints (or the blessed): with Stanisław the Bishop Martyr, patron of Poland (8th May, central celebrations in Cracow and Szczepanów), Adalbert (Wojciech), patron of Poland (23rd April, Gniezno), Jadwiga Śląska (16th October, Trzebnica), Maksymilian Kolbe (14th August, chiefly Niepokalanów), Stanisław Kostka (18th September, Rostkowo near Przasnysz), Kinga (24th July, Stary Sącz, Wieliczka) and also with the yet to be canonized priest Jerzy Popiełuszko (19th October, Warsaw). On the whole in a given centre in the course of a year several main church-fairs are held, and sometimes even a dozen or so (e.g., in Częstochowa, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Leżajsk).

In certain centres the “pilgrimage” celebrations last several days, sometimes even a week. This is the case especially where the Mysteries of the Passion of Christ take place (e.g. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska) or celebrations of the Passing Away and Funeral of the Lord’s Mother (e.g., Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Kalwaria Pałacowska, Leżajsk). An indication of the enormous standing enjoyed by the pilgrimage celebrations is the fact that often (especially in cases of smaller centres - local or regional) during the course of the main fairs come between 70% and 75% of those pilgrims registered in the course of the year.

There is obviously no way that, in such a short work, all the important aspects of the religious life and activities of Polish sanctuaries in the postwar period could be presented. It is necessary, however, to devote a few lines to the most important centres of pilgrimage, of the greatest influence (besides the already mentioned Sanctuary of Jasna Góra). Marian sanctuaries dominate decisively among Polish sanctuaries - around 430 of which over 160 possess crowned images of the Lord’s Mother. Taking into consideration the range of influence it is possible to distinguish five groups of sanctuaries: those of an international range (Jasna Góra, Niepokalanów, Warsaw, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Oświęcim), of a range (Piekary Śląskie, Góra Świętej Anny, Licheń, Gniezno and Cracow), inter-regional sanctuaries (around 25 centres), regional sanctuaries (134 centres) as well as centres of a local character (330 sanctuaries).

Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is regarded as the second sanctuary in Poland after Jasna Góra, called often as a consequence “*Jasna Góra or Częstochowa Małopolski*”. The Passion Mystery like the Marian August celebrations draw tens of thousands of pilgrims, awakening at the same time increasing interest among foreigners. The pilgrim traffic to this sanctuary has animated in recent years with an annual attendance of between 800,000 to 1,000,000. Since the beginning of the 1970s the range of Niepokalanów as a centre of pilgrimage has started to extend, initially nationally, and later internationally. This centre, founded by Maksymilian Kolbe in 1927 was, for many years, the centre of the Niepokalanów cult. From the time of his beatification (1971) and canonisation (1982) beside the Marian Cult there has grown up a strong cult around the Saint. The numerous sanctuaries are visited by pilgrims from various European countries, as well as from the United States of America, Canada and Japan, which is linked, among other things, to the

Fig. 4  
Pilgrimage movement to the centres of religious cults in Poland in 1992  
(in thousands of pilgrims)

activities in these countries of Niepokalanów Militia centres. Annually, Niepokalanów is visited by 600,000 to 800,000 pilgrims, 2% of which are foreign. Many pilgrims, beside Niepokalanów, also reach Zduńska Wola (the saint's birth place) as well as to Oświęcim (his death cell).

In Warsaw the movement of pilgrims is concentrated on, firstly, the vicinity of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's tomb, the Millennium Primate who died in 1981, as well as the grave of Father Jerzy Popiełuszki murdered in 1984 by the security services. During the years 1984-1994 Father Jerzy's grave at Warsaw's Żoliborz Cementary was visited by 12 million pilgrims altogether, including known personages

like Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Margaret Thatcher, George Bush, and Wilfried Martens.

In the group of sanctuaries of a national scope, the main role is played at present by Licheń (the Cult of Mary - the Sorrowful Queen of Poland), Piekary Śląskie (the Marian Cult, the Way of the Cross) as well as Cracow (the Cult of St Stanisław Bishop, Blessed Jadwiga as well as the most dynamically developing cult of the Lord's Compassion and Blessed Faustyna Kowalska in the sanctuary in Łagiewniki).

Among centres of pilgrimage in recent years an increasingly greater role has been played also by centres propagating the Cult of the Lord's Mother of Fatima, Lourdes and Saletin and so linked to the greatest Marian revelations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Living centres of pilgrimage are first of all the sanctuaries: "Fatima" in Trzebinia, Turza Śląska, at Krzeptówki in Zakopane, Szczecin; the Weeping Lord's Mother's sanctuary of La Salette in Dębowiec and the Polish Lourdes of the Cracow missionaries. In the Katowice diocese in 1949 a pilgrimage procession of a figure of the Lord's Mother of Fatima was initiated. Many diocesan centres of the Cult of Fatima arose after the assassination attempt on John Paul II as a sign of thanks for the deliverance of the Holy Father. With this same intention the new sanctuary church in Krzeptówki was erected, in which today continues an unceasing prayer for the Holy See and Pope John Paul II.

The conclusion of these reflections on the phenomenon of Jasna Góra and equally on the phenomenon of Polish piety, expresses itself, among others things, by the existence for centuries on the Polish lands of numerous, living centres of pilgrimage. In the words of the Marian Millennium Primate, Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński: *"As if with a ring of border defence towers, Mary has surrounded the Polish land with capitals of miracles and grace, where she invigorates the heart, wipes away tears, heals, gladdens. From the distant initial north, where the "star of the Polish sea" - Maryja Swarzewska keeps watch, through Tuchola, Chełmno, Gostyń, Jasna Góra, Gidle right to Piekary, where the Silesian people with a Marian song defending their native tongue, through the sea of blood revealed itself to a free Poland: and earlier - via a southern path - from Kalwaria Zebrzydowska through the Podhale capital - Mary Ludźmierska, through Tuchów all the way to Jazłowiec, where the orders give "Hetman Jazda Polska" from the feet of Mary Latyczowska, the Holy Exile, who in the Łuck cathedral found refuge and due adoration, right to the capital of the Great Lithuanian Princess - who shines in Ostra Brama. And with the heart of hearts - Jasna Góra"*<sup>42</sup>.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Source: Rev. B. Kumor, *The Historical Background of the Cult of St. Mary in Poland*, in: *Theological Studies of Tarnów*, vol. X, pp. 259-263.

<sup>2</sup> Rev B. Przybyszewski, *Roman Pilgrimage Churches*, Cracow 1979, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> A. Witkowska, *Pilgrimage Cults of 15th Century Cracow*, Lublin 1984, p.104.

<sup>4</sup> A. Jackowski, *The Development of Pilgrimages in Poland*, in: A. Jackowski, et al, *Space and Sacrum. The geography of the religious culture in Poland and its changes from the 17th to the*

20th century on the example of centres of cult and pilgrimage migration, Cracow 1995, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński OSPPE, *Jasna Góra is in Europe*, in: *Thou Art the Greatest Pride of Our Nation*. Edited by K. Kunz, Częstochowa-Jasna Góra 1991, p. 324.

<sup>6</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>7</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>8</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński OSPPE, *The History of Jasna Góra as Seen through Important Events*, in: *Thou Art the Greatest Pride of Our Nation*, p. 278.

<sup>9</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński OSPPE, *Jasna Góra is in Europe*, in: *Thou Art the Greatest Pride of Our Nation*, p.235.

<sup>10</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński OSPPE, *The History of Jasna Góra as seen through Important Events*, in: *Thou Art the Greatest Pride of Our Nation*, p. 279.

<sup>11</sup> P. H. Pruszcz, *Floods of God's Mercy which God the Father Bestows at Various Places in the Polish Kingdom before the Pictures of Christ and His Mother*, Cracow 1662, pp. 17-22.

<sup>12</sup> D. Łuszczek ZP, *Crowned Copies of the Picture of the Mother of God of Częstochowa in Poland, from the 15th till the 17th centuries*, *Studia Claromontana*, vol. 10, 1989, pp. 184-203.

<sup>13</sup> Rev. W. Nowak, *The History of the Picture and the Cult of the Mother of God of Gietrzwałd*, *Studia Warmińskie (Warmian Studies)*, vol. 14, pp. 111-113.

<sup>14</sup> A. Kuszczynska-Iracka, *Folk Pictures of the Mother of God of Częstochowa*, *Studia Claromontana*, vol. 2, 1982, pp. 276-287.

<sup>15</sup> H. Żerek, *Social and Geographical Range of the Influence of Marvellous Pictures in Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries*, *Acta Univ. of Łódź, Zeszyt NaukowyUL: Social and Humanistic Sciences*, series I40, 1978, pp. 3-19.

<sup>16</sup> E. Bilska, *Kalwaria Zebrzydowska as an Example to Other Centres of Pilgrimages in Poland*, *Peregrinus Cracoviensis*, 2, 1995, p.149.

<sup>17</sup> J. Glemp, *National Pilgrimages to Jasna Góra*, in: *Thou Art the Greatest Pride of Our Nation*, p.187.

<sup>18</sup> A. Jackowski, *The Development of Pilgrimages in Poland*, p.24.

<sup>19</sup> Rev. J. Myszor, *The Place of Jasna Góra in the Religiousness of the Inhabitants of Silesia in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries*, *Studia Claromontana*, vol. 7, 1987, pp. 93-94.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. J. Górecki, *Pilgrimages in Silesia between 1869 and 1914*, Katowice 1994, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Rev. D. Olszewski, *The religiousness of pilgrims in Polish religious culture at the turn of the 19th century*, *Studia Claromontana*, vol. 7, 1987, p. 72.

<sup>22</sup> Rev. W. Pasiut, *The Sanctuary of Jesus Christ in Kobylanka*, Kobylanka 1986, pp. 21-22.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. J. Górecki, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>24</sup> *Historia Calvariae seu...descriptio situs, foundationis privilegiorum...Conventus Zebrzydovicensis...collecta anno Domini 1613, 1600-1904*, pp. 59-60, The Archives of the Bernardine Monastery in Cracow, Call no. IV-a-1, pp. 507-512.

<sup>25</sup> A. Hoppe, *Des Oesterreichers Wallfahrtsorte*, Vienna 1914, p.56.

<sup>26</sup> Rev. W. Nowak, *op. cit.*, p.124.

<sup>27</sup> Rev. W. Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>28</sup> Rev. J. Górecki, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>29</sup> Z. S. Jabłoński OSPPE, *The History of Jasna Góra as Seen through Important Events*, in: *Thou Art the Greatest Pride of Our Nation*, p. 288.

<sup>30</sup> *A List of Some Miraculous Pictures of St. Mary, the Queen of Poland and Victories Attributed to Her Intervention*, edited by H. & J. Szymański, Toruń-Podgórz 1937; *The Archives of the Dominican Monastery in Borek Stary*.

- <sup>31</sup> (Nowakowski W.), Waclaw of Sulgostow, Capuchin, *Miraculous Pictures of The Mother of God in Poland: historical, bibliographic and iconographic information*, Cracow 1902.
- <sup>32</sup> A. Fridrich, *The History of the Miraculous Pictures of the Virgin Mary in Poland*, Cracow 1903-1911.
- <sup>33</sup> S. Barącz, *Miraculous Pictures of the Holy Virgin Mary in Poland*, Lvov 1891.
- <sup>34</sup> J. Zbudniewek ZP, *Wokół przemian i ewolucji kultu Matki Bożej Jasnogórskiej* (On the Transformations and Evolution of the Cult of Our Jasna Góra Lord's Mother), "Ateneum Kapłańskie", 1982, No 440, page 41.
- <sup>35</sup> J. Tomziński ZP, *Prymas Polski spod znaku Jasnogórskiej Pani* (The Polish Primate Under the Sign of the Jasna Góra Lady) "Ateneum Kapłańskie", 1982, no. 440 page 80
- <sup>36</sup> J. Tomziński, *ibidem*, pp. 80-81.
- <sup>37</sup> *Encyklopedia Katolicka* (The Catholic Encyclopaedia), vol. 3, Lublin 1991, J Zbudniewek page 865.
- <sup>38</sup> *Matka Odkupiciela Matką Kościoła* (The Mother of the Saviour is the Mother of the Church) Documents, Warsaw 1990, page 182.
- <sup>39</sup> John Paul II's Pilgrimage to Poland, Poznań 1979, p. 55.
- <sup>40</sup> U. Janicka-Krzywda, *Materials for the Popular-Academic Conference "Our Intercession"*, Kraków 1995, page 7.
- <sup>41</sup> L. Balter SAC, *The Coronations of Images of the Lord's Mother in Poland 1962-1987*, "Guide. The Lord's Mother Cult in Poland from Lumen Gentium to Redemptoris Mater 1964-1987" Act VI of the All Poland Mariology and Marian Congress. Częstochowa-Jasna Góra 20-23 IX 1990, pages 118-122.
- <sup>42</sup> Quote taken from: *Z dawna Polski Tyś Królową. Przewodnik po sanktuariach maryjnych. Koronowane wizerunki Matki Bożej 1717-1990*. (From long ago You have been Queen of Poland. A guide to the Marian Sanctuaries. The Coronation of Images of the Lord's Mother 1717-1990) Szymanów 1990, p. 33