Kalwaria Zebrzydowska

For more than 400 years, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska has been attracting crowds of people who want to get to know this unique and charming sanctuary. Today, both pilgrims and tourists are tempted by the prospect of visiting this unusual place, as well as the opportunity to commune with centuries-old history and unspoiled nature while walking along the famous Kalwaria paths.

**Kalwaria in the eyes of researchers and poets**

The unique landscape was poetically presented in the 19th century by Józef Łepkowski, a well-known archaeologist and historian, rector of Jagiellonian University: *Kalwaria and its surroundings are a treasure for an artist-painter – with every step, you encounter increasingly beautiful and varied points of view that open up both incomparably beautiful clusters of landscapes, and wide and magnificent horizons. A man with a heart, as long as it is human, oh how many pleasant experiences he will find here! Nature spreads out everything that is most pleasing to his eyes right in front of him.* The unique location of Kalwaria was also emphasized by Stanisław Staszic, who visited this place on 20 June 1789, and wrote in his diary: *Kalwaria is situated in a pleasant area. There is a particularly beautiful hill with the Bernardine monastery and church, famous for miracles, founded by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, a magnate well-known for his waywardness and antagonistic nature.*

Kalwaria was an inspiration for both visual artists and poets. One of them was Maria Sandoz, publishing under the pseudonym Podolanka, who dedicated her 19th-century book to this place. The anthology begins with the poem *Góra Kalwaryjska*:

*Jako dwie siostry, dwa czarowne wzgórza*

*Rozłożyły się u Karpat podnóża.*

*Jedna z nich ziemskiej pamiątką jest chwały,*

*Z której zwaliska tylko pozostały,*

*O! ten obronny zamek dziś w ruinie,*

*To żywy obraz potęgi co minie,*

*Której istnienia policzone chwile,*

*Bo się opiera na doczesnej sile.*

*Gdzie było gwarno - dziś pusto, odludnie,*

*Gdzie były zdroje - zasypane studnie,*

*W miejscu warowni - dziś gruzy, kamienie,*

*Jako świetności minionej wspomnienie!*

*Taki u szczytu widok Lanckorony -*

*Jakże odmienny z przeciwległej strony!*

*Tu się odsłania górna Kalwarya,*

*Gdzie panią naszą, królowa Marya.*

*Tu żyje w pełni już ducha kraina,*

*Tu się prawdziwa świetność rozpoczyna,*

*Ta niespożyta, a niezwiędła sława,*

*Której wielkość świat ten nie odbierze:*

*Kościół z klasztorem w całym blasku stawa*

*I strzelające ku Niebu trzy wieże.*

*A na tej stromej, skalistej przestrzeni,*

*Wzdłuż się kaplice bielą wśród zieleni,*

*I wyglądają z po za drzew ich szczyty,*

*Gdzieniegdzie w cieniu kościółek ukryty.*

*A całość składa widok dziwnie błogi,*

*Wpośród urwiska Kalwaryjskiej drogi,*

*Gdzie te królują trzy wieże świątyni,*

*Którą w opiece mają Bernardyni;*

*Od założenia to są wierni stróże*

*Tych miejsc cudownych na wyniosłej górze.*

*Wszystko świętością tutaj promienieje:*

*Kościół na szczycie z wspaniałym klasztorem,*

*A malowniczym otoczony borem;*

*Przy każdej stacyi krzyżowej kaplica,*

*I wpośród dróżek cieniste aleje,*

*I te płynące wzdłuż Cedronu wody*

*Jak zabarwione od promieni słońca,*

*Wkoło piękności czarowne przyrody -*

*Wszystko o blaskiem nieziemskim przyświeca,*

*Żeby się chciało tu zostać bez końca...*

*To miejsce święte w czarującym gaju,*

*Zda się podobne do ziemskiego raju!*

*. . . . . .*

*Zkąd ta Kalwarya na górze jaśnieje?*

*Dawno to bardzo, a cudowne dzieje.*

The value of this unique site was appreciated by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee which inscribed the historic architectural and landscape complex of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska on the List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage on 1 December 1999. The fact was commemorated with a plaque being attached to the fence of Rajski Square. The ceremony of presenting the inscription certificate of the basilica, monastery and paths on the World Heritage List took place on 9 May 2000, when UNESCO delegate Herman von Hoof handed over the document to Fr Władysław Waśko, the prior in Kalwaria.

The place, steeped in history and full of intriguing cultural items, has been the destination of pilgrimages and visits of numerous significant Polish figures, including the pilgrimages made by Karol Wojtyla in the period preceding his election for Roman Pontiff and later, as John Paul II. Kalwaria combines the history of countless pilgrims visiting this site in the hope of being healed or a desire for contact with the sphere of the sacred, as well as the complex vicissitudes of Poland.

**Fun fact: cemetery and war stories**

We should mention that, right in front of the sanctuary buildings, on the left, when you follow the main road from the town, there is a cemetery with 62 victims of World War I. During the Great-War hecatomb, the monastery housed a makeshift hospital. Hence, apart from the tomb of the Bernardine[[1]](#footnote-1) Fathers, the nearby cemetery has the graves of 57 soldiers and 5 civilians, and importantly, not all of them were Christians – one of them was a Muslim. On the way to the sanctuary, you should stop for a moment to reflect on the graves of soldiers, to read the plaques showing the real melting pot of the army of the dualist Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska was also a silent witness to the retreat of Polish troops from the "Kraków" Army on 3 September 1939. The horror of those events is reflected in the memories of Ignacy Wielgus, a Kalwaria resident and participant in the defence of Węgierska Górka: *When I was walking through the city at 3 p.m., Kalwaria resembled a church fair on Assumption Day. The market square and streets was crowded with carts, horses, troops, refugees (...) It was difficult to get through. There was no police at all, because the policemen had already evacuated in the morning.*

**Kalwaria under close surveillance of the security services in the People's Republic of Poland**

For centuries, the sanctuary in Kalwaria occupied a fundamental role in the religious life of Polish society, which was revealed with all its might after the end of World War II. The site became a thorn in the side of the authorities that made numerous efforts to carry out surveillance of the faithful arriving in Kalwaria, and even attempts to subordinate the sanctuary to the communist authorities. That is why, on 15 August 1951, a group of the so-called ‘patriotic priests’, who were loyal to the state, appeared in Kalwaria. Previously, the state had taken over the land of the Bernardine monastery. The faithful masses, who refused to be controlled by the people's government, were unacceptable to the security services. We can mention here that, in 1984?, about 400 thousand pilgrims came to church fairs in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. The scale of the services' interest is evidenced by the fact that, in 1986, there was a diploma thesis written at the Military Academy of the Ministry of Interior, entitled *Operational support for religious events beyond the diocesan range of the Roman Catholic Church, based on the example of the Marian Sanctuary in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska.* Moreover, in 1952, the relevant services had already issued an appropriate instruction clarifying the operational activities that should be undertaken during religious ceremonies in Kalwaria.

**Fun fact: Adam and Eve's ribs**

The sanctuary in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is not only a jewel of baroque architecture with impressive mannerist interiors steeped in history, a place of a vivid religious cult, but also a focal point of numerous legends and myths. And so, some believers try to look for the ribs of Adam and Eve, as, according to legend, when they come into contact with each other, the world will end. Fortunately, the bones hang one above the other, so humanity is not at risk of the universe ending. They can be admired in the monastic garden; below, there is a symbolic date ‘1602’, which marks the beginning of the foundation of the impressive complex. They are located just in front of the road that crowds of visitors follow to see the so-called papal rooms in the monastery. Previously, they were located in the southern, outer wall of the temple, just below the sundial. That is why some of the visitors, remembering their original location, are filled with consternation, not being able to find them there. The bones are said to have been found during the construction of the friary, another version gives information about prehistoric bone remains, possibly of a mammoth.

**Stations of the Cross**

Kalwaria is a place where the faithful have participated in the Way of the Cross devotions almost continuously since its foundation in the 17th century. Initially, they were celebrated on 3 May (Feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross), 14 September (Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross) and every Friday during Lent. Over time, it became a very popular custom to celebrate the Stations of the Cross during the church fair organized in the Holy Week and on Assumption Day. The setting of the Way of the Cross (Passion of Jesus) during Holy Week attracted crowds of believers as early as in the 17th century. At each station, appropriate scenes of the Mystery of the Passion were performed (unfortunately, as researchers emphasize, their content is not known, except for "Pilate’s Decree"). The roles are played by monks, as well as lay residents of Kalwaria and the surrounding towns. The Mystery of the Passion took elaborate forms with a Passion procession on Holy Thursday lasting a few hours, with extensive sermons and performances. Only two events in the history of Poland disturbed the free access of the faithful to the sanctuary in Kalwaria: the Swedish Deluge and the German occupation during World War II.

**Pilgrimages to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska**

An interesting testimony to the popularity of pilgrimages to Kalwaria can be found in a pre-war bestseller – a term which is perfectly adequate for the erudite guide written by Mieczysław Orłowicz (president of the Polish Tourist Association in Lviv), where we read: *As a church fair site, there is no other place in Galicia like Kalwaria, and in the lands of former Poland it is only surpassed by Częstochowa. About 400,000 people come here for numerous church fairs during the year, either by rail or by road, or on foot in the so-called companies from individual villages and parishes. They are not only Poles from Galicia, but also from the Kingdom of Poland, Prussia and Cieszyn Silesia* (we should remember that this guide was compiled before World War I), *Moravians and Slovaks as well, thanks to which the larger church fairs and the processions organized during them paint an extraordinary ethnographic picture. The most important church fairs: a) during Holy Week (about 50,000 Gorals, Slovaks, Upper Silesians, and Moravians); b) in Octave of Corpus Christi, with a great procession on Sunday (about 40,000 people, mostly Slovaks); c) from 28 June to 2 July (50,000 Gorals); d) the largest church fair between 9-15 August turns Kalwaria into a huge camp; it gathers 150,000 people from all over Poland, Moravia and Slovakia; e) 4-8 September (40,000 people, mostly Gorals). Moreover, there are numerous smaller church fairs. It is difficult to find food and accommodation during that time, since it is also when a lot of stallholders, beggars, scroungers, and pickpockets gather here.*

**History of the Sanctuary – the role of the founder Mikołaj Zebrzydowski**

The history of this place goes back to the beginning of the 17th century and is related to the activities of one of the magnates, Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, the then voivode of Kraków. According to some legends, the beginnings of Kalwaria should be traced back to the Holy Week of 1595 when Mikołaj and his wife, Dorota, saw three crosses from the windows of their residence in the castle in Lanckorona, which shone on the nearby Żarek Hill. It is believed that this supernatural event inspired them to found the future Kalwaria.

Before presenting the monuments situated in the present minor basilica, we ought to briefly outline the historical context of this imposing baroque complex. The foundation and the idea for it were a direct result of the then patterns of piety. And those, in turn, had been shaped by pilgrimages to the Holy Land, or reading works such as those written by Christianus Crucius Andrichomius (a Latinized form of the original form: Christian Kruik van Adrichem), presenting the history of Jerusalem. Those publications encouraged the construction of calvaries in mountainous areas. Hence, according to researchers, Zebrzydowski wanted to create copies of the Passion of the Christ stations on his estates, which he found similar to Jerusalem in terms of landscape, but not its climate, of course. For that purpose, the now famous stations – and later paths – were built. The popularity of pilgrimages and visits even made the magnate want to compile a prayer book for pilgrims by himself, but he failed to implement that plan. The paths and stations were visited by more and more important figures, such as Adam Wenceslaus, the Duke of Cieszyn, recently converted to Catholicism. It is worth adding, according to Fr Czesław Bogdalski, that the Duke’s courtiers wore the garments of the Holy Rosary Confraternity, even if some of them were of the Protestant denomination. However, not all of his courtiers behaved appropriately and, as the monastery chronicle notes, some Protestants consumed wine, Catholics did not make their confessions, and the precious amice disappeared from the sacristy. Luckily, behaviour like that was an exception.

The idea of erecting a Calvary, which emerged in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17th century, meant that, apart from the described Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, a number of similar concepts were developed, e.g. in Pakość, Greater Poland (1628), Kalwaria Żmudzka (1642), Wejherowo (1649), Góra Kalwaria (1657), Vilnius in 1662, and Pacław near Przemyśl (1665).

Zebrzydowski's ties with the foundation and, more broadly speaking, with the Bernardine Order were very strong. Before moving onto the chronology and the issue of the foundation, we should emphasize that, after the death of his wife, Dorota, Mikołaj Zebrzydowski stayed more and more often at the monastery in Kalwaria. The magnate went through a kind of internal transformation, he would often practise the virtue of humility and poverty, which was manifested, for example, by the fact that during his stay in Kalwaria he was accompanied by only one servant and two or three Cossacks, whose task was to deliver correspondence. The magnate himself, as emphasized by the outstanding historian of Kalwaria, Fr Hieronim Eugeniusz Wyczawski, wore a garment that differed from his social status (black and worn). For example, when going to the church in Zebrzydowice, he would borrow a cart owned by the monastery, and give the symbolic prioritised seat on the right to the monks. He would often eat meals from the monastery kitchen, sending his dinner to the friars. This is quite surprising, because modern monastic accounts of, admittedly, other mendicant orders, reveal that magnates rented rooms in monasteries. In terms of quality, their meals (meat and drinks) were significantly different from the monastic "menu", the rooms occupied by magnates, for example, were often were made of prior's cells or several rooms with their own kitchens and stables for destriers. When speaking of the nature of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski's religiousness, it is worth remembering that he was buried in a Bernardine habit. Since the Middle Ages, being buried in a monastic habit had been associated with numerous spiritual favours, including especially generous indulgences. The ties between Zebrzydowski and the Bernardines were very strong. He especially cared for the monks, as evidenced by the fact that he would purchase appropriate medicines for the fathers from the famous pharmacist from Kraków, Jerzy Pipan.

**The initial pages from the past of the future sanctuary**

It was on the initiative of Zebrzydowski that the Chapel of the Crucifixion was erected in 1600-1601, which then became the nucleus of the future extensive architectural concept. We should note that the activity of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski coincided with the Jubilee of the Redemption proclaimed by Pope Clement VIII, celebrated in the diocese of Kraków in 1603. The Chapel of the Crucifixion was modelled on the Jerusalem chapel – one of Zebrzydowski’s courtiers brought a plaster model (of both the chapel and the Holy Sepulchre) from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1597. As a side note, it is worth mentioning that Hieronim Strzała, when setting off to the Holy Land, received an explicit order from Mikołaj Zebrzydowski and his wife, Dorota, to bring the plan of Jerusalem’s Chapel of the Crucifixion so that they could erect a copy of it on Żarek Hill. Moreover, Zebrzydowski sought letters guaranteeing safe passage through the lands of the Turkish Sultan in order to facilitate the pilgrimage.

And so the construction began. The cornerstone was laid on 4 October 1600, and the consecration took place the following year. It was carried out by a papal nuncio, Klaudiusz Rangoni, and the Bishop of Kraków, Bernard Maciejowski. Initially, according to Zebrzydowski's plans, the chapel was to serve as a place for family prayer, but over time that idea turned into a desire to create a Calvary and bring there the Bernardine Order from Kraków. The idea was already evident in 1602 when Zebrzydowski suggested the establishment of a monastery to the Kraków Bernardines, and the term ‘Calvary’ was also used at that time.

Mikołaj Zebrzydowski wanted to bring the Bernardine monks to Żarek Hill and, for that purpose, he made an offer to the provincial authorities to build a monastery for 12 monks as a branch of the Kraków monastery. According to the magnate's original plan, it was supposed to be a place for elderly and sick friars. Due to the unique climate of the surrounding area, the future sanctuary was also to be a resting place for lecturers and seminarians of the school located in the Kraków friary. In addition, the new monastery was meant as a shelter for the monks from the Kraków friary, when the city would be haunted by plagues which were a common occurrence in those times. It was also a place where teachers of the monastic school would be able to spend the winter holidays together with the students.

**Foundation charter**

The magnate obtained the consent of the Bernardine Provincial Superior, Hieronim Przybiński, as evidenced by the letter of 8 August 1602. The next step was the issuance of the foundation charter by the Kraków voivode, Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, on 1 December 1602. Under the document, he certified that he would build the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre on Żarek Hill and gave the Bernardines the parish church in Zebrzydowice, which they did not take over in the end. As we read in the foundation charter: *Next to the church, God willing, we intend to build the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre of broken stone, modelled on the Jerusalem one as well. The entire hill, which was formerly called Żarek, with its forest, along the designated borders, we dedicate first and foremost to the glory of God and to Saint Francis. We promise and commit ourselves to build a monastery at the foot of the hill for the friars of this order and the adjoining Church of the Apparition of St Michael the Archangel. We put the whole Żarek Hill and all the mentioned places under the protection of Saint Michael and we entrust them to him (...). Therefore, the mentioned Church of St Cross, the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre and other chapels that have already been designated there or will be designated for construction, and finally the Church of the Apparition of St Michael together with the monastery, which, as previously said, will be built as well, with the entire Żarek Hill within the described borders, and finally with a complete set of liturgical vessels for those churches, with paintings and figures, furniture, valuables, of any material and value, is hereby legally given, offered, renounced, assigned and handed over to this very family of Saint Francis, the Order of Friars Minor, forever and ever.*

We should mention that there was a certain conflict between the powerful patron-founder and the congregation, which was associated with the shape of the very monastery that was to be built. The Kraków monks had an architectural vision that differed from the concept of Zebrzydowski who wanted to make a reference to the famous Porziuncola in Assisi. In addition, the fathers intended to build a larger monastery, but, unfortunately, Zebrzydowski stuck to his original plans, deaf even to the requests made by the Bernardine Provincial Superior.

**A problematic architect and an eccentric goldsmith coming to the rescue**

The construction of the monastery began with the laying of the foundation stone on 2 August 1603, with the architectural plans drawn up by the Italian master and Jesuit architect, Giovanni Maria Bernardoni. The implementation of the plans was entrusted to Paulus Baudaert, who also developed plans for chapels situated along the paths of Kalwaria. As a side note, we should mention that, according to Fr Hieronim Wyczawski, Baudaert noticed some inaccuracies in the architectural plans, and when asked by the aristocrat about the source of his knowledge, he replied that he had learned architecture from his father. Zebrzydowski, therefore, instructed the goldsmith from Antwerp to supervise the construction. And so Baudaert made not only false teeth for Zebrzydowski, but also numerous architectural and conceptual designs. He must have been an excellent specialist, since such a pious magnate overlooked the lifestyle of the goldsmith / craftsman, who, to say the least, was not too religious, rarely attended mass, and was also fond of alcohol. Zebrzydowski himself is thought to have said: *the best craftsman is sometimes the best drunk, and he (Baudaert), because he has mastered so many crafts, should drink for each craft.*

Apart from the issue mentioned above, the construction process encountered other problems, some of them really prosaic like cash shortages (using modern language – the transfer tranches were delayed, especially when the magnate got involved in a political conflict, which was recorded in history as the Zebrzydowski rebellion). During the construction works, the monks first stayed in nearby Lanckorona, and after some time in a specially built house located near the construction site. The unsafe area (frequented by groups of robbers) cannot have not made life easier for the pious fathers. Currently, taking into account the enormity of the architectural design, it is difficult to imagine that, initially, it was necessary to deal with such prosaic problems as the supply of food for the monks, especially during the rebellion. It is worth noting that, according to the founder's idea, the fathers were not allowed to take care of the supply base. It was only after some time that they were able to build utility rooms and set up a brewery; they were also given a farm in the village of Brody.

**Consecration of the Church**

One of the most important events in the history of Kalwaria took place on 4 October 1609, when the Bishop of Kraków, Piotr Tylicki, together with the Bishop of Lutsk, Paweł Wołucki, and the Suffragan Bishop of Kraków, Paweł Dąbski, consecrated the Church of Our Lady of the Angels. The relevant document reads: *(...) we consecrated the aforementioned church on Saint Francis’ Day, which happened to fall on Sunday in 1609 – the year of salvation, and we dedicated it to Our Lady of the Angels of Porziuncola. It was here that we consecrated three altars, namely the main altar, situated in a way that it was possible to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on both sides separately, from the side of the monastic choir and the nave of the church, as well as two other altars, on the left and right side of the main altar. Of course, we gave the main altar the honourable title of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and decorated it with her image carved in silver and consecrated by Pope Sixtus V. The altar that is located on the right side of the main altar is dedicated to St Anne, while the altar on the left – to Saint Francis of Assisi.*

The ceremony was really impressive – the founder took care of it, combining it with the First Mass of his nephew, Franciszek Mikołaj Zebrzydowski. Interestingly, the reconstruction of the temple began only a year later, because it could not accommodate such a large influx of pilgrims.

**Fun fact: the history of the town of Zebrzydów and the laws regulating the life of its inhabitants**

Another breakthrough in the foundation took place in 1611, when Zebrzydowski defined the boundary of the land handed over to the monastery (the town of Zebrzydów itself had not yet been formed around the Skawinka River, also known as the Cedron), the seed for the future Kalwaria Zebrzydowska founded thanks to the influx of pilgrims. We should remember that in 1617 Mikołaj Zebrzydowski founded the town of Zebrzydów, which was commonly known as Nowy Zebrzydów. The process of the town’s development differed greatly from the founder's plans, and that is why the son of the voivode, Jan Zebrzydowski, decided to re-locate it. It is worth noting that, as Bartłomiej Wołyniec mentions, under the laws written for the Nowy Zebrzydów townspeople, Jan Zebrzydowski ordered membership in one of the three religious fraternities: of St Francis, St Anne (both led by the Bernardines) or St Michael the Archangel in the parish church in Zebrzydowice. What is more, participation in processions was obligatory, which was regulated in Article 1: *(...) should any of the husbandmen or housewives miss Sundays and holidays or the processions established by the Church without a just and valid reason, they will pay the fine according to the provisions, six groszys for wax, which sacristans are to supervise and the office is to execute; they shall also exercise appropriate behaviour, especially on Sundays and holidays, as stated in Article 7: they should not engage in drunkenness and rowdiness – innkeepers are to report such people to the office. Such excess is punished with half a fine for the church lighting, which the municipal office is supposed to execute; in a similar manner, [they should not perform] any work on Sundays and on public holidays under the above-mentioned penalty.*

**Fun fact: Kalwaria in the light of the modern compendium of knowledge about Europe**

The sanctuary under construction was mentioned in a work published in Cologne -*Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. In six volumes, the authors Georg Braun and Frans Hogenberg presented the most important information on the topography of Europe, with over 500 representations of cities and towns. The work gives a description of Kalwaria: *A map of Mount Kalwaria in Poland, similar to the one in Palestine.* After demonstrating the importance of getting to know the places related to the Redeemer, the authors presented Zebrzydowski's motivation: *However, since not everyone's assets allow them to personally go to visit these places, the noble Mr Mikołaj Zebrzydowski from Zebrzydowice, the Kraków voivode general, and the Śniatyn starosta, designated a certain place four miles from Kraków, very similar to the one in Palestine around Mount Calvary, and equipped it with everything related to the remembrance of the Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the location and dimensions of the object in Jerusalem, with rare generosity and at enormous cost, he erected the Franciscan Monastery of Friars Minor and the beautiful building of the temple, as well as various chapels, together with the pilgrims’ house. This place, rich in the most abundant indulgences from the treasury of the Church, is honoured by votive deposits and offerings of many faithful, both locals and pilgrims. You, the reader, admire and compete with the piety of such a great man, and pray for him as one should.*

**Fun fact: pilgrims and minor construction problems**

The expansion of the complex and the influx of significant figures (e.g. the future king, son of Sigismund III Vasa, Władysław visited in 1623) meant that the initially desolate place became increasingly crowded. One of the works, published in 1632 in Kraków (by Fr Mikołaj of Skarbimierz), emphasizes the exceptional influx of pilgrims with these words: *On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the fathers living here had to call out to the Kraków fathers to save them and to hear confessions from such a large community of more than six thousand. And what is more – even heretics themselves [...] by strange divine intervention, leave this place and head home as Catholics.*

The details of the construction are provided by an exceptional source: *Chronografia albo Dziejopis Żywiecki*. It is a work written by the mayor of Żywiec, Andrzej Komoniecki. The work is extraordinary and extremely important for the entire region. It contains both the content of the entire privileges and smaller pieces of information which would have been lost long ago if not for the work. And that is exactly the case in the context of the expansion of the congregation itself and its famous paths. Recalling the events of 1612, the author noted: *And the masons were governed by a Belgian named Paulus Baudaert, who was rarely sober but always drunk, and who erected this monastery, church and chapels so well people were greatly surprised, and who worked unanimously with the founder.*

**The history of the sanctuary in the context of the Swedish Deluge**

The development process of the monastery of the Bernardine Fathers was disturbed during the Swedish Deluge, when their fortune was significantly depleted. As emphasized by the historian of the sanctuary, Fr Hieronim Wyczawski, it is difficult to even estimate the valuables deposited in Kalwaria that were irretrievably lost. He meant both liturgical vestments and precious jewels offered as votive deposits, and precious fabrics then transformed into chasubles, dalmatics or copes. It was customary to donate even wedding dresses for that purpose. Moreover, we should not forget about the unique form of the then Sarmatian religiosity involving the organization of extremely elaborate funerals. People would put in the church the so-called castles of grief adorned with velvet or satin. In addition, the nobility would often put their private valuables in the form of deposits for safekeeping in a holy place that guaranteed their inviolability and safety. All that fell prey to Swedish soldiers stationed in the monastery. At first, there was no sign that history would take such a turn. The situation changed when local peasants, under the command of Wojciech Karwacki, fearing that the pious monks would be harmed, attacked the Swedes at night. Those convinced that the Bernardines had something to do with the matter robbed the monastery and imposed a contribution on it.

**Description of the Sanctuary**

The entrance to the impressive Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels is preceded by two large squares. The first one, Pilgrimage Square (also known as Fair Square), in a way separates the two spheres; the sacred and the profane, thus creating a kind of symbolic border, which is a fence with figures of saints. This is where, for almost 400 years, crowds of visitors and pilgrims have set off on the tour around the sanctuary. The space is marked by a fence leading to Rajski Square and two-storey buildings situated on the right side (when facing the basilica), with balconies on the first floor. They were built in the 18th century, when the sanctuary was under the care of the powerful Czartoryski family and, more specifically, they should be linked to the figure of Józef Czartoryski. It was already in the 2nd half of the 17th century that the Zebrzydowski family, in the absence of male lineal descendants, stopped playing its role in history, and Kalwaria was given to the Czartoryski family, as the daughter of Michał Zebrzydowski, Anna, married Jan Karol Czartoryski. Let us, however, go back to the history of Kalwaria in the 18th century: the aforementioned Józef Czartoryski, who was not as involved as his mother in taking care of the sanctuary, tried to clear up certain problems the monks had been facing for years. Seemingly minor and prosaic matters such as: grazing cattle on the premises belonging to the monastery (more specifically, on the paths), cutting trees, and rent arrears etc. caused disturbances in the peaceful relations between the monks and townspeople. Interestingly, the fathers were given a certain guarantee of care from the family, because Czartoryski erected a palace in the immediate vicinity of the monastery. And the watchful eye of the heir of the founders was useful in solving everyday problems.

**Fun fact: ‘the plague air’ in Kalwaria**

The 18th century was also a time of unrest in Kalwaria because of the plague, which was a name used for all serious infectious diseases. The influx of pilgrims carried the risk of bringing the disease, and the danger lurked not only in the crowds of pilgrims. As we are informed by the invaluable source *Chronografia* *albo* *Dziejopis Żywiecki*, one of the monks was unknowingly the one who made the ‘plague air’ appear. He participated in the general chapter, during which 30 provincial superiors from the territory of the Commonwealth and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were debating. It is impossible to determine whether he got infected there or on his way back. The plagues decimated the inhabitants and pious Fathers, but they were also troubled by military activities, especially during the wars of the first decades of the 18th century. Muscovite troops, apart from the destruction, once again brought along an unwanted memento in the form of another plague.

**In front of the entrance to the basilica**

Let us now return to the square itself: it is worth noting that it has a centrally located wooden mission cross erected in 1968 and a statue of the most famous pilgrim in Kalwaria, John Paul II. The statue was made in 2000 by Czesław Dźwigaj. One of the corners of the square (north-eastern) is the starting point for visitors who walk along the Paths of Jesus - it is the Chapel of St Raphael, who is, after all, the patron saint of wanderers. The square also has an interesting baroque column topped with a cross. It is situated below the chapel in the seminary grounds. The cross itself is dated to the 1st half of the 17th century, and the column is dedicated to the Bar Confederates – after all, we should remember Kalwaria and Lanckorona were the sites of multiple battles.

**Rajski Square**

Once you go through the gate in the fence, you enter Rajski Square. This space was arranged during the thorough reconstruction and renovation of the friary, when Fr Gaudenty Thynell was the guardian. The fence itself is noteworthy, sine its stone pillars have figures (funded by the Wielopolski family ruling Sucha Beskidzka at the time) of the following saints: John of Dukla, Bernardino of Siena, Louis, Clare, Mother of God, Jesus, St Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure, Anthony of Padua, and Blessed Szymon of Lipnica. Most of them were made by Tomasz Gałuszczyński in 1823 (some studies mention 1822). The statues showing the figures of St Anthony and St Francis, standing on both sides of the square, are not as old, and associated with the 300th anniversary of the monastery’s foundation: Francis is on the right (when looking towards the façade), and Anthony was made as a votive offering for saving two monks. From the perspective of visitors coming to Kalwaria, the cloisters separating Rajski Square, erected in 1823 and 1824, are of great importance, as they have confessionals. Initially, the faithful would go for confession on one side, and communion was administered on the other.

**Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels**

When entering the Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels, you go through a stone portal, with a cartouche with the coat of arms of Magdalena Czartoryska (Vytis) above. We should go back to the times of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski's foundation plans and mention that he wanted the church to be dedicated to St Michael the Archangel. Taking into account the fact that it was intended for the Bernardines, St Francis of Assisi would be more suitable. The monks themselves chose a compromise solution, suggesting Our Lady of the Angels. The proposal was not immediately accepted, but, in the end, after his pilgrimage to Jasna Góra Monastery, Mikołaj Zebrzydowski agreed.

The façade of the basilica itself is saturated with historical elements. You can find here a statue of the Mother of God from 1837 (placed above the coat of arms) along with other architectural details from the time of reconstruction in 1934-36. The whole is completed by four figures of the evangelists, made in the 2nd half of the 19th century. Before introducing the most important cultural property items inside the basilica, we should at least introduce the most important pages from its complex history. And so, the original construction project for the church from the times of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski was significantly expanded during the times of Magdalena Czartoryska, the sanctuary’s guardian. It is worth mentioning here that she supported the monastery back in the times when she was in her estate in Klevan in Volhynia. As a widow, she moved into a cottage near the sanctuary. She did not live to see the implemented expansion plans she had financed, because she died in 1694. It was thanks to her that the nave of the basilica was enlarged and more chapels were added. The church founded by Zebrzydowski corresponds to the current concept of the chancel. Before entering the nave, every visitor should at least skim the architectural plan of the temple showing the nuances of each construction stage – it can be found in the corridor leading to the sacristy and the monastery courtyard, and, almost opposite, there is a truly moving painting depicting an important topic in historical piety, i.e. *danse macabre*.

The expansion from the times of Magdalena Czartoryska meant that the existing altars had to be dismantled, with the exception of the main altar, and as a result the altars of St Francis, St Anne, Michael, and John of Capistrano were closer to the monastery, while the altars of St Mary Magdalene, Catherine and Dydyk ended up in the other part. The increasing influx of believers meant that even the cloisters added by Jan Zebrzydowski, where the monks could hear confessions, were not enough to accommodate everyone. Understandably, the guardian Henryk Gincell was also involved in the reconstruction – in 1680, the monastic chapter appointed him as the supervisor of the church’s construction. The construction of the nave itself was completed in 1702, then two towers of the front façade were erected and finally completed in 1720. Certain problems with the quality and durability, which unfortunately characterize modern construction, came up at the time as well – there was a real threat of the vault collapsing as early as 1740. Fortunately, the attitude of the then guardian, Fr Jan Kapistran Połaniecki, and Prince Józef Czartoryski saved the building, because the pious monk convinced the prince to transform the sacred foundation for the purpose of saving the building. From the next stages of the renovation, we can mention the replacement of the basilica floor with marble in 1780 and, interestingly enough, the material had been purchased from the Discalced Carmelites. Speaking of technical problems, we should mention that, in the 18th century, there was also a risk of the clock tower collapsing, also saved through the efforts of Fr Połaniecki, and then dismantled.

**Inside the basilica – from the sacred sphere to searching for traces of Adam and Eve's ribs**

Now let us go back to modern times: when crossing the threshold of the temple, we enter the spacious nave added to the chancel thanks to the efforts of Magdalena Czartoryska, her son-in-law, Józef Bogusław Słuszko, and Magdalena's son, Józef Czartoryski. The interior is decorated with even pilasters and blind arcades with altars: on the north wall – of St John Capistran, St Michael the Archangel, and St Joseph, on the south wall – of St Dydyk, and Catherine of Alexandria. In addition, the interior is decorated with the altar of St Francis of Assisi and on the opposite – of St Mary Magdalene with a painting by Jan Majer from around 1754. The whole is completed by a polychrome depicting scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary: the Nativity, the Annunciation, and the Coronation. The chancel arch, on the other hand, is covered with a polychrome showing the funeral of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Kalwaria. Both were created by an outstanding artist, Włodzimierz Tetmajer, who made them around 1914. What is noteworthy, the remaining interior decorations were made by Karol Politykański in the interwar period, based on Tetmajer's work. An insightful researcher and expert in art history will also find traces of stucco decorations from the 18th century – above the rainbow and the choir. The interior of the basilica is not only a treat for art historians, but also an example of an interesting interpenetration of various patterns of religiosity: folk and elite. It is worth mentioning that the faithful visiting the sanctuary followed an interesting practice regarding certain huge bones that were originally within their reach. It is said that people would break pieces off, then rub them to powder and use as medicine. Researchers are uncertain who placed them in the temple and when that happened; the memory of the event had already been lost in the 19th century, as mentioned by Fr Firmin Czepiel. In order to make this medical practice impossible, during the reconstruction carried out by the guardian, Fr Gaudenty Thynell, the bones, probably of mammoths, were moved much higher. Then the thought associated with them started evolving until it formed a view of Adam and Eve's ribs, and they also changed their place of display in the sanctuary.

**The first temple funded by Zebrzydowski – the chancel of the Basilica**

The original building founded by Zebrzydowski was located in the present chancel, with its vaulting dating back to 1604-1609. Initially, there were only three altars inside, in the main one there was a statue of Our Lady of the Angels, while the side ones were dedicated to St Anne and St Francis. The contemporary appearance is quite different from the original plan. The baroque main altar comes from 1732 and separates the chancel from the monastic choir. In the centre, there is a silver statue of Our Lady of the Angels that comes from Loreto. It was purchased by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski in 1590 through Bishop Bernard Maciejowski. The statue was specially consecrated by Pope Sixtus V. Before it found its way to the future Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, it went on a long and interesting journey. Zebrzydowski decided to put it in the Jesuit church in Lublin, which he was co-funding with Bishop Maciejowski. Then it was moved to the Zebrzydowski Chapel at Wawel, from where it found its way to a place near the present sanctuary, i.e. the castle in Lanckorona. It was only in 1605, when the aristocrat became involved in the rebellion, that it was handed over to the Bernardines. Initially, it was a kind of deposit, as Zebrzydowski wanted to avoid a situation where such a valuable statue would end up in the hands of his political opponents. Luckily for the monastery, after the end of the confederation, he decided to let it stay in the hands of the monks.

In the part from the side of the choir, we can find the oldest early baroque cross that, interestingly, reflects the outline of the Kalwaria paths. Originally, it was located in the first Chapel of the Crucifixion. The main altar is enclosed by a balustrade made of marble at the end of the 18th century. Pews dating back to the beginning of the 19th century are noteworthy as well. Above them, there is a painting by Karol Polityński, depicting the coronation of the image of Our Lady of Kalwaria, which took place in 1887. The exceptional events – and the visits of rulers could definitely be described as exceptional – were commemorated by Jan Jerzyczka at the beginning of the 19th century. One of them shows Prince Władysław (the future King Władysław IV), who went on a thanksgiving pilgrimage to Kalwaria in 1623, after the victorious Battle of Khotyn. Another work depicts the Emperor of Austria, Francis I, who came here in 1817. It is also worth recalling that, when he travelled from Bielsko through Andrychów and Wadowice towards Kraków, he made a stop to admire the founding of Kalwaria and probably devote himself to a moment of prayer.

Other elements decorating the chancel, which were made in the 2nd half of the 20th century, are also worth mentioning. They include a painting commemorating one of John Paul II's pilgrimages to Kalwaria, i.e. the one made in 1979. The work was created by Jerzy Kumala. The chancel windows are decorated with stained glass referring to the Polish past: there are representations of St Stanislaus and St Maximilian Kolbe – both made by Wiktor Ostrzołek. He also decorated the window above the choir with stained glass which shows the Virgin Mary surrounded by angels, St Francis, and St Anthony.

Among the most important factors that have made crowds of pilgrims come to Kalwaria are the Marian devotions that are strongly promoted here. They are focused, among others, on the silver figure of Our Lady of Loreto. As mentioned before, it was purchased by the founder of the sanctuary, Mikołaj Zebrzydowski. It is also thanks to him that the temple is dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. The monks put the statue in the main altar in 1609. The cult was born gradually and dates back to the period preceding 1641, when the altar’s statue was replaced with a painting donated by Stanisław Paszkowski.

**Fun fact: the monastic choir, i.e. the former sacristy and infirmary**

The space behind the main altar is occupied by the monastic choir. It was once part of the monastery building and was then incorporated into the church around the mid-17th century. Initially, it housed a sacristy and one of the most important rooms for the functioning of each congregation, i.e. the infirmary, or monastic hospital. We should mention here that, in one of the 17th-century works, the entire Kalwaria was compared to a kind of pharmacy containing priceless medicines. And so, the guardian of Kalwaria, Fr Mikołaj of Skarbimierz, wrote: *The Kalwaria area is like a pharmacy filled with the fragrance of the Passion of the Christ. Here you will see the various ingredients that belong and are given to you as a medicine, such as crosses, whips, brooms, thorns, nails, and other instruments. You will be filled with great fragrance when you are looking at the instruments gathered here.* It is worth mentioning, according to the words of Jerzy Szablowski, that the hospital room was connected to the chancel by a window so that sick monks could participate in the services.

**Eye-catching monastic stalls**

In the monastic choir, we can easily notice stalls decorated with scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to some researchers, they were made after 1632, but more recent studies suggest that the date of their creation should be moved back to the 1620s. Older literature on the subject believed that they were made by friars working under the direction of Fr Teofil Bereza. The monument was renovated at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries by Brother Jan Tuliński. As mentioned by Jan Samek, an outstanding expert in the history of art, the decoration of the stalls is unique, as they are decorated with as many as 26 scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary. The uniqueness of the stalls is associated with the fact that they are among the oldest cultural items containing multi-figure scenes. As Elżbieta Pytlarz emphasizes in her study, the sculptors modelled the scenes adorning the stalls on the engravings of Hieronymus Wierix from the work of Hieronymus Natalis: *Evangelice Historiae Imagines*. The stalls are double-row, while the lower ones are placed directly on the floor, and the upper ones are accessed by two steps. It is precisely above the rear seats that the backrests, richly decorated with bas-reliefs showing Marian scenes, were placed. In small niches between the backrests, there are statues of St Francis and the Virgin Mary. As Elżbieta Pytlarz mentions, the arrangement of Marian scenes is chronological when looking from the altar towards the window; they are as follows: *Rejection of Joachim's Sacrifice, Annunciation to Joachim, Meeting at the Golden Gate, Nativity of Mary, Presentation of Mary, Marriage of the Virgin, Annunciation, Visitation, Adoration of the Shepherds, Homage of the Magi, Circumcision of Jesus, Flight into Egypt,* and *Adoration of the Mother of God and Child by St Francis and the Franciscans*. Another group situated from the window leading towards the altar shows the following scenes: *The Mother of God Blessing St Francis, Return to Jerusalem, Jesus Teaches in the Temple, Holy Family at Work, The Meal of the Holy Family, Marriage at Cana, Crucifixion, Resurrected Christ Appearing to Mary, Risen Christ Appears to the Disciples, Dormition of the Mother of God, Funeral of the Virgin Mary, Assumption of Mary,* and *Coronation of the Virgin*. It should be emphasized that this complex monument has been remodelled multiple times. In the light of the conservation works carried out in 2010, it was proven that the backs of the stalls were carved as a whole. The shape of the gallery was then transformed and trimmed; further decorations, such as the coats of arms of the founders, mascarons and angels, are younger. On the back of the backrests, apart from the date (*1617 in Augusto*), there were also other elements discovered: the names of *Tomasz Barwinek Crac[oviensi], Sieciechowiensis, Tobias Pokorny,* and *Alensa Crac[oviensi]*, as well as *Anno Domini 1696 die 22 Mai* added in different handwriting. The state of preservation did not allow Elżbieta Pytlarz to fully identify the surnames and link them to a specific workshop in Kraków; they might have been monks, but probably not from Kalwaria itself, because their names cannot be found in the monastery chronicle.

The above-mentioned people were most probably contractors, and the date refers to the reconstruction of the temple at the time when the Czartoryski family took over the legacy of the Zebrzydowski family. Recent studies have proven the longer pedigree of the stalls, and they should be linked to the events of the choir reconstruction in 1624. They are probably even older, because in that year the stalls were arranged in a different manner. Elżbieta Pytlarz, when making a series of stylistic comparisons and analysing the relationship between iconographic representations and Pope Paul V granting an indulgence with the *Splendor Paternae Gloriae* bull (1612) for the faithful participating in the Passion service at Kalwaria stations, dates the stalls after 1612. A careful analysis of the decorations allowed her to link the features of Northern Mannerism to the presence of Paulus Baudaert, who stayed in Kalwaria in the years 1605-1617, and to whom Mikołaj Zebrzydowski entrusted the task of implementing and supervising the construction of the original church. Perhaps Baudaert designed the backrests’ ornaments.

Above the stalls, there is a gallery supported by 10 columns, decorated with a balustrade and wooden vases with flowers. There is also a beautifully decorated (inlaid) lectern with a box for the books necessary for prayer, situated in the middle of the choir. The stalls and the lectern also come from the 1630s. It should be mentioned that this space, which was the central sacred space in the temple, housed an underground tomb, where the mortal remains of the monks and, importantly, the benefactors of the monastery were deposited. It was practised until 1784.

**Chapel of Our Lady of Kalwaria**

The description of the temple would not be complete without mentioning its chapels. And so, on the left side of the chancel, there is the Chapel of Our Lady of Kalwaria. Its construction was initiated by Michał Zebrzydowski, dates back to 1658-1667, and was created in order to house the miraculous image of Our Lady, which was placed there as early as 1667, in the still unfinished chapel. Unfortunately, to this day, researchers have not been able to determine the name and surname of the architect responsible for the project. The very process of building the chapel is quite characteristic of the then and, unfortunately, current Poland, as it reflects the ever-present financial difficulties. Due to his problems with financial liquidity, Zebrzydowski had to stop funding the construction. The monks were forced to donate over 180 grzywnas of silver from the offerings made by the faithful. According to the initial plans, those votive offerings were to serve as a decoration of the altar. The founder did not forget about his work and, in his will, he reminded his family to finish the chapel and decorate it properly: to make the gilding of the dome, as well as *the bottom grates and side epitaphs, and cover the tops of the dome with any durable metal*. The altar was to be made of ebony, and the silver statues were ordered by Zebrzydowski in Augsburg, who ordered his family to add a few hundred more grzywnas to the aforementioned 180.

Unfortunately, the widow and her daughters remained deaf to those requests of the deceased. The attempt to cover the dome of the chapel with an iron sheet was successful, and then a rather modest altar was placed inside. The silver, which was to be used for ornaments, was returned to the monks in 1673. Currently, the chapel has the form of an octagon, decorated with eight pairs of columns and pilasters supporting the entablature. The decoration reflects the changes that Kalwaria underwent, the interior is decorated with late-baroque stucco. Additionally, there are cartouches and images of angels with bundles of fruit, as well as cartouches with images of saints and angels. The space between the stuccoes is filled with paintings made by Antoni Gramatyka in 1887. In the basement of the chapel, there is a tomb of the founders, Jan and Michał Zebrzydowski, Magdalena Czartoryska, Józef Czartoryski, and Józef Klemens Czartoryski. During his memorable 1979 pilgrimage to his homeland, John Paul II said some very personal words about the chapel. *What is particularly endearing is the discretion with which Our Lady lives in her sanctuary. The fact that she lives in a side chapel like this.*

**The complicated history of the miraculous image of Our Lady – from the "arrest" to veneration by crowds of believers**

It is impossible not to mention the fate of the image of Our Lady, at least briefly. The speculations about the history of the painting were somewhat put to an end when, as a result of conservation carried out in 1990, the inscription *Imago B.M.V. Mislimicensis*, which confirmed the connection between the image and the Madonna of Myślenice, was discovered. That representation also has an interesting history, because it was created in Italy in the 2nd half of the 16th century. At first, the painting was owned by Pope Sixtus V, who passed it on to a relative who served as an abbess in a convent in Venice. It came to Poland together with Prince Jerzy Zbaraski, the future voivode of Kraków. He received it as a gift from that pious woman. At first, Zbaraski put it in his palace in Kraków in 1596, from where it was handed over to Marcin Grabysz from Myślenice, who was a member of the court of Prince Zbaraski. Grabysz’s progressing eye disease meant that, around 1629, he moved to his family home in Górne Przedmieście near Myślenice and, importantly, the painting was moved there as well. On 2 May 1633, tears appeared on the image of the Virgin Mary and people also noticed that it was foggy or, on the contrary, glowing with a supernatural glow. It is also important that the said image was responsible for the first healing. Understandably, Grabysz who regained his sight was at the top of the list of the cured. The news of the healings meant that, on 8 May 1633, the image was transferred in a solemn procession to the parish church in Myślenice.

In 1641, the image of Our Lady of Kalwaria was donated to the sanctuary by Stanisław Pazskowski from Brzezie. It is a copy of the painting from Myślenice. The very circumstances by which it found itself in Kalwaria were quite complex. At first, it was probably in the hands of the parish priest of Krzywaczka (located near Myślenice), Adam Brylowicz. Then, it found its way to the parish priest in Marcyporęba, Mikołaj Dobrocieski, who was associated with the court of Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł, and was also a multiple rector of the University of Kraków and its lecturer. It might have temporarily found itself in Kraków, but, unfortunately, the circumstances are unknown. According to some researchers, Dobrocieski bequeathed the Marian image in his will to his sister-in-law Magdalena Dobrocieska, née Paszkowska, and she is believed to have given it to her brother Stanisław Paszkowski of the Radwan house.

The place owned by Paszkowski - Kopyczka, is not far from Kalwaria itself, so this long journey was slowly coming to an end; the painting just needed some further supernatural interventions in order to be transferred to Kalwaria. And so, on the Feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross in 1641, Paszkowski's wife, Elżbieta, noticed that bloody tears appeared on the image. Of course, the parish priest in Marcyporęba was notified and the next day a special commission of clergy gathered to examine the Marian image. The parish priest Paweł Sierosławski, the vicar Hieronim Sadłowski, and the parish priest from Tłucznia, Wojciech Marszowicz, all confirmed that there were traces of tears. Father Sierosławski suggested not only informing the bishop of Kraków about the matter, but also temporarily depositing the painting in Marcyporęba. The key moment in the story took place on 4 May, when information about the events reached the congregation of the Bernardine Fathers in Kalwaria, and the guardian, Fr Walerian Kaliński, went to Paszkowski to find out more about this unusual event. Interestingly, the painting was probably in Marcyporęba. The guardian must have had a lot of power, because he managed to convince Paszkowski to hand it over to Kalwaria, which was preceded by confession, and the image was carried to the sanctuary on foot.

The painting’s odyssey was not over yet, because the Bernardines originally placed it in the altar of St Anne. The cult associated with the statue of Loreto and the miraculous representation of the Blessed Virgin Mary given by Paszkowski were then combined. The diocesan authorities, however, had to take a stand against the emerging cult, since, under the decrees of the Council of Trent, such spontaneous events were to be approached with caution and each case carefully examined. To that end, the Bishop of Kraków, Jakub Zadzik, commissioned a special investigation, sending over the canon of Kraków, Fr Andrzej Falkowski. After arriving in Koptówka, he called witnesses for questioning. Unfortunately, neither the guardian Kaliński nor anyone from the monastery responded to that order, and some researchers believe that he was afraid that the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary would be taken from him. The testimonies of the local nobility and residents were written down and forwarded for further proceedings in Kraków. The commission appointed by Bishop Zadzik found no explanation, and proceeded to acknowledge those events as miraculous. The body included ten Kraków theologians (associated both with the university and the Carmelites, Conventual Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, and Canons Regular of the Lateran), three painters (including the court painter, Tommaso Dolabella), and the physician Maciej Woniejski (according to Prof. Ryszard Gryglewski, an expert in the history of medicine, he was the first known professor of anatomy in Kraków). The doubts of the participants were raised by the one-time appearance of tears. If it had been a repeating situation, that would have been irrefutable proof of the supernatural nature of the phenomenon. Until then, it was decided that the painting should not be displayed publicly, it should even be sealed and closed in the treasury at the monastery sacristy, as reported in the decree of Bishop Zadzik of 31 July 1641. The verdicts was not to the liking of the Bernardine Fathers, who started an intensive campaign to prove that it was a miracle and the painting could be considered miraculous. Hence, for example, the apology of the image, remaining in the manuscript, but pasted to the monastery chronicle. On the other hand, the Bernardine chapter debating in Opatów wanted to raise the issue of the Kalwaria image at the general chapter and seek support in Rome. Those efforts also had the support of Michał Zebrzydowski; as a result, the suffragan bishop, Tomasz Oborski, crossed the threshold of Kalwaria on 9 September 1642 in order to verify the doubts raised. He blessed the painting, but did not allow it to be displayed in the church. The monks could put it in the altar in the sacristy, which in a way sanctioned the already existing cult. In 1658, after years of efforts, the monks obtained permission to transfer the image to the church.

**Coronation of the image of Our Lady**

When describing the history of the image of Our Lady, it is necessary to mention the ceremonies related to its coronation in 1887. Those events should be put in a broader context because, after the partitions, the Austrian doctrine of Josephinism did not favour the monks' plans to develop Marian devotions and pilgrimages to the sanctuary. Fortunately, Austria transformed into a dualistic monarchy, and the efforts of the Bernardines got the support of the Bishop of Kraków, Albin Dunajewski, who encouraged the then prior, Fr Elzear Widzisz to undertake efforts in the Roman Curia. Appropriate letters addressed to the Vatican were written by Fathers Stefan Podworski and Czesław Bogdalski. In 1886, Bishop Albin Dunajewski renewed his request for the coronation of the painting in the Holy See. And so, in March 1887, the answer came: *Pope Leo XIII allowed the solemn coronation of the Miraculous Image of Our Lady in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. If God permits, the solemn placement of the golden crowns will take place on 15 August 1887, and will be made by the most reverend Fr Albin Dunajewski, the Bishop of Kraków.* The coronation ceremony of the image attracted over half a million believers from the territories of all three partitions. Participation in them was not only a manifestation of religious beliefs, but also a manifestation of patriotism. For those reasons, a delegation of 10,000 Silesians led by Fr Ignacy Świeży came; they were greeted by the Provincial Superior of the Bernardine Order, Fr Łukasz Dankiewicz. In response, Fr Świeży recalled the pilgrimage of Adam Wenceslaus, the Duke of Cieszyn, probably without mentioning the less edifying behaviour of some of his courtiers. Such a large influx of believers was certainly facilitated by the fact that, since 1884, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska had been connected with Kraków and Sucha Beskidzka by a railway. Stanisław Witkiewicz described that picturesque route, with the train making numerous turns, in the following manner: *Near Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, the rail route becomes so winding that it leaves a memory of some strange and fabulous dream. The monastery and a whole lot of chapels, shrines and churches are dancing (...), and the ruin of Lanckorona Castle on the hills, protruding from the black forest like a rotten tooth, is running away from right to left, then stays behind and rushes in front of us again.*

**Fun fact: the few trips of the image of Our Lady and the pilgrimages of John Paul II**

During the coronation ceremony, the pilgrims took part in a procession, when the image of Our Lady was transferred from the main temple to the nearby Church of the Tomb of the Virgin Mary, where it remained until the coronation. Since the image of Our Lady was first placed in Kalwaria, it has only left its original place a few times. The first time was related to the coronation ceremony, then, in 1987, when during the pilgrimage of John Paul II it found itself at Kraków’s Błonia Park, and again when John Paul II, during his pilgrimage in 1999, could not attend the mass at the Błonia Park for health reasons, the image was transferred to the Kraków Curia, and the last time – in connection with the 31st World Youth Day in Kraków in 2016. We should also mention the third pilgrimage of John Paul II to his homeland in 1987, when Kalwaria was not included in the plans of his visit to Poland. Since it could not go on a pilgrimage on the initiative of John Paul II, the image of Our Lady was taken to Kraków’s Błonia Park. It was there that, on 10 June 1987, the Pope not only presided over the coronation ceremony of the image of Our Lady, but also offered a golden rose as a votive deposit, while saying a very personal message: *I would like to lay this papal rose at the feet of Our Lady of Kalwaria as a token of gratitude for what she has been in my life.* The papal golden rose, which has a very long and interesting history and symbolism, represents special recognition from the Holy See.

**Fun fact: the Polish coat of arms during the coronation of the image**

Now let us get back to the image’s coronation ceremony itself, which took place in the 19th century. It is worth mentioning that the image of the White Eagle (from the coat of arms of the Republic of Poland, which did not exist at the time of the coronation of the Marian image in 1887) was placed on the altar, and the solemn procession with crowns was led by Bishop Albin Dunajewski accompanied by the Archbishop of Lviv, Seweryn Tytus Morawski and the Archbishop of Lviv (Armenian Rite), Izaak Mikołaj Isakowicz. Those events contributed greatly to awakening the spirit in Polish society.

**Basilica – History of the Chapels**

**Chapel of St Anthony**

Let us get back now to the layout of the chapels themselves inside the sanctuary. The Chapel of St Anthony of Padua was created in 1687. The spot used to be occupied by a fountain decorated with a sculpture of Christ, which had been removed before the construction of the chapel, because due to some leaks the water reached the temple’s foundations, which might have contributed to the disturbed stability of the building. It is worth mentioning here that the sanctuary was struggling with serious problems associated with an insufficient water supply for the arriving pilgrims. Jan Zebrzydowski tried to remedy that by creating two fountains: next to the church (where the present Chapel of St Anthony is situated) and near the Chapel of the Virgin Mary. In addition, wells were dug, extended and deepened, e.g. in 1902 Fr Stefan Podworski built 5 more water intakes near Gethsemane, Annas, House of the Virgin Mary, Pilate, and the fifth Chapel of the Triumph of the Mother of God. Water from the source in the so-called Garden of Thorns was delivered in barrels, with the carts pulled by oxen, hence the name: the Ox Garden.

The chapel is a joint work of the nobility from the Duchy of Oświęcim and Zator. The person who made the greatest contribution was Teresa Rusocka, a land official from Oświęcim. The pious woman made the most generous financial contribution. It was her contribution that allowed a crown, dress, belt, and sandals, all made of silver, to be added to the painting of St Anthony, which is the work of Franciszek Lekszycki. We should mention here that the painter, born around 1600 in a Kraków bourgeois family, was probably educated in the monastery studio of the Bernardines in Stradom, and is considered by experts on the subject as one of the best Polish Rubensists. His numerous works have survived to this day. As Cyprian Janusz Moryc OFM mentions, such a great artistic legacy (e.g. in Kraków, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Leżajsk, Opatów, Przeworsk, Lviv, Vilnius, and Dubno) was a consequence of the destruction after the Swedish Deluge. At that time, many temples were rebuilt from the ruins of the war conflagration. He represented the group of religious artists, so characteristic of the Counter-Reformation period, who created only religious art, which was determined by the charism of the order, as well as liturgical norms and post-conciliar law. In his works, researchers find traces of references to outstanding works by Rubens or van Dyck.

Apart from the centrally located altar of St Anthony, in the 17th century, other side altars were set up in the chapel: the Flagellation of Christ and St Adalbert. They were then changed to Bl. John of Dukla and Bl. Simon of Lipnica, and finally in 1902, the side altars were abandoned. The main altar is now decorated with figures of St Bonaventure and St Louis of Toulouse.

**Chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

The interior of the basilica also houses the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is located behind the altar of St Dydyk on the left, when we go from the main entrance towards the altar. It used to have a different name – the Friars’ Chapel. It was erected in 1749, thanks to the general of mercenary troops, Mateusz Ferdynand Stolz. The construction process was quite complex – he had already applied for permission to build the chapel and place there a tomb for himself and his wife as early as 1720, but the construction work began almost 30 years later. The interior of the chapel is decorated with pilasters, blind arcades, and once there was also a side altar of Our Lady of the Rosary. The chapel basement hides the family tomb of the founder – Mateusz Ferdynand Stolz.

**Inside the basilica: the pipe organ and inscriptions**

The pipe organ placed in the matroneum, directly opposite the main altar, is also worth mentioning. Its history goes back to the 18th century, when it was funded by Teresa Kamocka of Brzezie, and it was built by Fr Euzebiusz Pasierbski. The case was gradually enriched with wood carving works from the beginning of the 19th century, among others. The statue of St Francis of Assisi watches over the entirety of that impressive and complex instrument. The baroque benches dating back to the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries are also worth mentioning.

Connections with the Zebrzydowski family are visible almost everywhere in the temple, for example, on the early baroque bronze candlesticks, you can find the Radwan coat of arms and the initials of Michał Zebrzydowski. The interior also hides important Old Polish inscriptions, e.g. the tomb of Marcin Raciborowski, a tribune of Zator and Oświęcim, who died in 1664. Some of the historical inscriptions were removed from the church during the reconstruction and expansion of the chapels, among others. Luckily, in 1656, they were written down by Fr Tomasz Dygon, whose work was later published in the treatise by Fr Norbert Golichowski. In his erudite treatise on the history of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Fr Hieronim Wyczawski included a list of people buried in Kalwaria. It shows us how important the sanctuary’s sepulchral role was.

**Kalwaria during World War II: supporting the poor during the war, ties with the Home Army, and rescue of Jews**

When speaking of epigraphic inscriptions, we should mention the plaques commemorating the times of World War II. They are fixed to the wall of the chancel and the easiest way to reach them is when leaving the Chapel of St Anthony. And so, in the cloisters, the fathers commemorated the names of monks killed in the camps in Dachau (Fr Wiktoryn Rudolf; Brother Władysław Gołębiowski, Fr Anastazy Pankiewicz) and Auschwitz (Fr Paweł Ryszka) by the German occupier, and those murdered by the UPA (Fr Witalis Borsuk, Fr Joachim Szafraniec, Fr Roch Sołek, Fr Stanisław Mucha). We should also mention the following plaque: *We dedicate this plaque to the memory of our units fighting for this land, enforcing the spiritual protection and patriotic attitude of the Bernardine Fathers – soldiers of the 12th Infantry Regiment of the Home Army.* Taking into account the times of the Polish People's Republic when the plaque was placed (1981), its overtones are very telling. Between them, there is a plaque paying tribute to those brutally murdered in Katyn, Kozielsk, Ostaszków, and Starobielsk. On the wall of the cloisters, right behind the plaques commemorating the Kalwaria guides, there are inscriptions documenting the deeds of armed soldiers from this land, the first one: *In memory of Stanisław Pająk, born in May 1915 in Zebrzydowice, soldier in the September 1939 campaign, interned in a camp in Hungary, participant in the 1940 French campaign, a soldier of the 2nd Division of the Polish Army in Great Britain, participant in the campaign for the liberation of France and Belgium in 1944. Wounded in the fields of Belgium in September 1944. Died in May 1977 in Scotland. Siblings 1979.* The other plaque commemorates Józef Migdał, born on 10 November 1911 in Dunlo (USA) – died on 1 April 2001 in Stekene, Belgium – veteran of World War II, soldier of the 1st Armoured Division of General Maczek, liberator of Belgium and the Netherlands, honoured with Polish, English and French decorations and the Knight's Cross of Polonia Restituta.

Now is a good time to mention a certain fact from the Second World War. The Bernardine Fathers supported the poor. They supplied flour, since the monks had their own mill. It was the responsibility of Fr Wenanty Leja and Brother Justyn Komasa. In addition, Fr Leja was the chaplain of the nearby units of the Home Army, for whom masses were celebrated on Sunday nights in the Church of the Crucifixion of Jesus. The scene of the night service for partisans was commemorated by Fr M. Dubiel who painted the picture entitled *Pasterka partyzancka odprawiona w 1944 r. w kościele Ukrzyżowania in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska* (“1944 Partisan Midnight Mass celebrated in the Church of Crucifixion in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska”). It is located in a kind of mini-gallery of paintings around the monastery courtyard, showing both portraits of the founders and the events related to the cult around the sanctuary in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. It is impossible to miss this place, because it is where the route leading to the papal rooms starts; in the courtyard of the garden, there are the famous ribs of Adam and Eve.

As Fr Hieronim Wyczawski mentions, the circle of conspirators expanded to include the following monks: the cook Sebastian Kusy (he baked bread for partisans, and kept the deposited money), blacksmith Bartłomiej Mazurek (the smithy housed a point for accepting weapons that were then passed on to the “forest people”), shoemaker Konrad Trznadel (he made shoes for partisan units), and the gatekeeper Urban Wigdorczyk (due to his occupation, he was predestined to organize a contact mailbox). Importantly, those activities were carried out so efficiently that the other monks, including the prior, were not aware of them. And so, the farm building and the mill were the places in which the partisans resided, specifically the staff of General Olbrycht, who was the commander of the Cieszyn Silesia operational group, while the hermitage of St Helena had a radio station, and there were staff maps produced in an improvised photo studio. It should also be reminded that, in 1943, the Jewish Bik family was hidden in the monastery, and in 1945 – Professor Józef Feldman. The monks from the monasteries in Alwernia and Skępe also found refuge here, from the autumn of 1941 – Ursuline nuns from Zakopane with a group of 30 orphans, and in 1943, the Pallottines, expelled from Kopiec near Wadowice, came here.

**About defensive (and other) cloisters**

The contemporary Basilica of Our Lady of the Angels is surrounded by cloisters from the west and south (erected in the years 1624-1632). Initially, they had a function that was completely different from the present one, i.e. a defensive function. They were the walls that protected the sanctuary in the event of an attempted attack and robbery. The defensive walls have not survived to this day, but their original appearance can be seen in one of the iconographic representations from 1617. The founder himself decided to fortify the monastery to increase security against robbers. In addition, within the walls, there were to be rooms for laypeople, he might have also planned to locate a hospital there, and to obtain space that could be used for various religious ceremonies. That was also important. They were then rebuilt in 1624 or 1632.

The cloisters served a defensive function until 1747, when they were adapted to the needs of the increasing number of pilgrims. The relatively high placement of windows in the monastery, the newly installed iron grates, the defensive wall and *avant-corps*, as well as small windows in the bastions made it possible to fire at the enemy. The foundation of the sanctuary had those defensive features, but now they are not so apparent, e.g. some windows have already been bricked up, although some researchers see the monastery's similarities with 16th-century Italian castles.

The defensive bastions were, therefore, transformed into chapels, their basements were used for burial purposes, since that is where deceased monks were buried. In front of the entrance to the Chapel of St Anne, there are plaques commemorating the deceased friars.

To this day, two of the four defensive bastions have survived – they were demolished when Michał Zebrzydowski decided to enlarge the monastery. In the eastern corner, there is the Chapel of St Anne with a baroque-classicist altar from the 18th century, while in the western one – the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows. The cloister space is filled with baroque confessionals (they come, however, from the 19th century) and the Stations of the Cross with paintings made by Brother Kasper Szybal in 1640. The square inside the cloisters has also changed its function. Originally, it was a cemetery where those who died during church fairs, newcomers and the monastic service, as well as monks in the period between 1784 and 1920, were buried. The cloisters are situated next to an arcaded courtyard (monastery yard). This place best reflects the great changes that have taken place within the buildings of the entire sanctuary. Originally, it was where the monastery farm was located (between the 18th century and 1950). The last reconstruction in the 1970s changed its appearance, adapting it to the needs of pilgrims, hence the dormitories, the shop with devotional articles, publications about Kalwaria and souvenirs, as well as a restaurant and a cafe. The entrance gate (from 1774), located in the middle of the courtyard resembling a tower, covered with a mansard roof, is a reminder of the former defensive functions.

**A few words about the Bernardine monastery: the monastic library, papal memorabilia, and John Paul II’s rooms**

We should also make a short summary of the most important pages from the history of the Bernardine monastery that adjoins the chancel from the north. It was built in several stages. The construction began in the years 1604-1609, when the first four-sided building was erected, and then extended in 1654-1656. Currently, the whole complex consists of the ground floor and two upper levels. The last stages of expansion took place at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. On the first floor, apart from the rooms for monks, there is a monastery library and an oratory, i.e. a private chapel, whose window leads to the chancel of the basilica. It is where Karol Wojtyła would often pray during his many pilgrimages to Kalwaria. The oratory has an altar from the 17th century, where the oldest representation of the Suffering Christ, also dated to the 17th century, was placed, while originally it was located in the chapel of Lanckorona Castle. On the ground floor, there are the so-called papal rooms, where John Paul II stayed during his visit on 19 August 2002. It was the last visit of the Polish Pope to Kalwaria. Those modest rooms hide a rich collection of John Paul II memorabilia, as well as an intricately decorated coronation dress made by nuns from the Felician Sisters' congregation on the occasion of the coronation ceremony of the Miraculous Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Kalwaria, on 15 August 1887. The rooms are made available to visitors to Kalwaria. Before entering them, you can admire an interesting collection of papal memorabilia related to the figures of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

The ground floor of the monastery is also occupied by the refectory, i.e. a dining room. The sanctuary's library boasts an exceptional collection; there were 499 works there as early as 1617. Gradually, the collection grew, expanded both through purchase and pious legacies, like those made by Michał Zebrzydowski in his will in 1667, when the book collection from Pieskowa Skała went to Kalwaria. That expansion was halted during the period that was difficult for the monks in Josephinism times (the reign of Emperor Joseph II, who carried out a policy of liquidation of "unproductive" religious congregations). The intellectual boom dates from the Golichowski reforms in 1882. It was then that the book collection was supplemented and the monastery chronicle continued. The library collections include a number of incunabula (early printed books, after the invention of Gutenberg's movable type and up to the year 1500). There are 18 Polish incunabula in the monastery library. There is also a beautifully decorated Psalter from 1483, which originally belonged to the Observants in Cieszyn – it was donated to the library in Kalwaria by Adam Wenceslaus, the Duke of Cieszyn. We should also mention two graduals from the beginning of the 16th century – they were a gift from Wojciech Sokołowicz, a resident of Kraków, who lived in the 17th century.

**Gallery of portraits of the Zebrzydowski family**

When briefly introducing selected cultural items of the monastery, it is impossible to ignore the unique gallery of portraits of the Zebrzydowski family. In addition to those paintings, we should also mention the portraits of distinguished monks and a collective representation of the Superior Generals of the order. Those portraits hang in the cloisters of the courtyard of the monastery area that was built by Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, and in the part that is inaccessible to visitors, because they were put behind the enclosure in the cloisters added by Michał Zebrzydowski. They have continuously attracted the attention of researchers for over 170 years. According to the 19th-century author of the church monograph, Fr Czesław Bogdalski, the first two portraits of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski and his wife, Dorota née Herburt, were made shortly after their death. Initially, they were placed in the chancel near the main altar, as if replacing the tombstones of the founders. The next portraits (5 paintings), showing the children and grandchildren of Mikołaj, might be from the times of Michał Zebrzydowski, who died in 1667. According to Bogdalski, the last portraits depicting Jan Karol Czartoryski, his wife Anna née Zebrzydowska, and Magdalena née Konopacki are most probably associated with the activities of Magdalena Czartoryska or her son, Józef Czartoryski. It is worth mentioning that, as early as the 19th century, Bogdalski complained that mistakes in the restoration of the works resulted in the loss of their original value. The excellent quality of those representations, abundant in a multitude of costume details, made the paintings an inspiration for Jan Matejko. He redrew them in the popular and often reissued *Dzieje ubioru w Polsce* (“Style of Dress in Poland”). As Agata Dworzak mentions, those were the portraits of Grand Crown Marshal Mikołaj Zebrzydowski, Barbara née Lubomirska, Kraków voivode Michał Zebrzydowski, his wife Marianna née Stadnicki, and their daughters: Anna Czartoryska and Helena Opalińska. It is worth recalling that, in his youth, Jan Matejko was a frequent guest in Kalwaria, which was associated with visiting his uncle Kazimierz Stankiewicz, who lived in the nearby Izdebnik.

This kind of genealogical gallery of magnates associated with Kalwaria Zebrzydowska is full of symbolism. For example, female representations contain small-sized books – probably prayer books – which, according to Agata Dworzak, emphasized their religiousness, as well as prudence and wisdom. Details, such as the gloves that Helena née Zebrzydowska holds in her left hand, were a very popular motif in 17th-century portrait painting. Other symbolic elements of the portrait include a small, white dog symbolizing fidelity, and a small clock on the table referring to the features typical of high culture; it was also a symbol of the passage of time. As an aside, we can mention that the symbolism of animals in historical art is very complex. Initially, small white dogs symbolized the court culture and its features (which were not always assessed positively), and it was only over time that their significance changed. In male portraits, their symbolism is equally interesting and complex, but it is worth emphasizing, as mentioned by Janina Dzik, that in the case of the Sarmatian portrait, which these works represent, there were certain canons and norms of representation. For example, Jan Zebrzydowski was portrayed in an armour of the type described by art historians as *miles Christianus*. The above-mentioned unfortunate renovation, combined with the repainting of some of the images, carried out in 1876 by Brother Dydak Baturyna, makes it difficult to determine the exact dates of the portraits. Assuming that they were made in the 18th century (as mentioned by the author of their catalogue, Janina Dzik), as a result of a one-off commission, as Agata Dworzak emphasizes, they would be an example of exceptional propaganda of the Zebrzydowski family. It would put them on a par with the preserved works created by such powerful families as the Sapieha and Rzewuski families.

The gallery of portraits of benefactors also contains a representation of Mikołaj Zebrzydowski made by Jan Jerzyczka in the 19th century – it is probably a copy of the 17th-century original that used to be located in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Other portraits that should be mentioned are as follows: the portrait of Pope Paul V, who enriched the Kalwaria sanctuary with generous indulgences; a 19th-century image of Stanisław Paszkowski of Brzezie, associated with Kalwaria through donating the image of the Mother of God, another portrait of that nobleman dating back to 1994 drawn up on the basis of a 19th-century image; a portrait of Cardinal Albin Dunajewski, who placed the crown on the image of Our Lady of Kalwaria, made by Jerzy Kumala in 1994. Moreover, as mentioned by the 19th-century authors of works about Kalwaria, in the corridors on the 1st floor of the monastery building, one could admire the portraits of monks associated with the Bernardine Order in Poland and the saints of the congregation. Researchers mention 27 portraits. As Janina Dzik mentions, the collection includes 22 oval portraits made in the 18th century, and 9 rectangular portraits from the 19th and 20th centuries. According to the researcher's findings, the following monks living in the 15th century were commemorated that way:

* Antoni Marcin from Radomsko, professor at the University of Kraków and lecturer at the Bernardine monastery in Kraków, provincial superior
* St John of Dukla, famous confessor and preacher
* St Simon of Lipnica, preacher from Kraków, a representative of the so-called *felix saeculum Cracoviae*
* Blessed Ladislas of Gielniów, provincial superior, advocate of the cult of Passion
* Jan Tarło of Opatów, associated with Lviv and Opatów, guardian of the convent of St Catherine in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, died during a pilgrimage through the Holy Land

17th-century monks:

* Franciszek Zarzecki, provincial superior
* Ludwik Skrobkowicz, professor of the University of Kraków, guardian in Kalwaria, (he made efforts to expand the sanctuary in the times of Michał Zebrzydowski), promoter of the cult of Simon of Lipnica
* Stanisław Borkowski, guardian in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska
* Władysław Chomentowski – this monk, famous for his piety, died in Kalwaria
* Arnulf Ożarowski – died in Kalwaria as a paralysed old man
* Bonawentura Jankowski, famous confessor
* Antoni Stefanowicz, author of works and numerous sermons that he preached in Wawel Cathedral, among others; provincial superior, he edited the acts of the Małopolska ecclesiastical province

18th-century monastic fathers:

* Michał Krutkiewicz, died in an odour of sanctity
* Antoni Bykowski, provincial superior, theology expert
* Michał Pociszowski, provincial superior, author of scholarly works on logic and metaphysics
* Bernardyn Zebrzydowski, lecturer of theology, guardian in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, among others
* Marian Wietrowski, provincial superior, guardian of the convent in St Anne’s
* Augustyn Motulski, provincial superior and general preacher
* Tomasz Glatz, provincial superior and guardian in Kraków
* Aleksander Małyński, provincial superior and general preacher
* Jan Józef Rusiecki, provincial superior and monastic administrator
* Eukarpiusz Weigel, guardian in Gwoździec and provincial superior
* an unidentified friar
* Gwidon Kucharski, provincial superior, economic reformer of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska

19th-century monks:

* Izydor Chmura, provincial superior
* Gaudenty Thynell, guardian and curator in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, he supervised the thorough expansion of the monastery
* Filip Kapkowski, provincial superior
* Feliks Pruski, provincial superior, curator in Kalwaria, he supervised renovation works in the church and chapels
* Apolinary Garguliński, provincial superior, sought to restore the rule of observance

friars living at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries:

* Felicjan Fierek, outstanding prior of the monastery in Kalwaria, the restoration of the sanctuary he initiated was carried out within the guidelines of the Kraków Monument Conservation Group
* Stefan Podworski, curator, carried out renovation works in preparation for the 300th anniversary in 1902
* Łukasz Dankiewicz, provincial superior.

As emphasized by Janina Dzik, the collection also included the portrait of Franciszek Lekszycki, an outstanding Bernardine painter, currently exhibited at the Museum of the Bernardine Province in Leżajsk. The entire art gallery in Kalwaria was completed with a dozen or so small portraits, as mentioned by Fr Bogdalski, who was active in the 19th century. They showed saints of various congregations, superior generals, and hierarchs of the Church associated with the Franciscan Order. What is noteworthy is the unique canvas depicting 89 superior generals of the Franciscan Order, made in 1819 by Jan Zamoyski from Kraków.

**The pilgrimages of John Paul II**

The historical outline of the Bernardine sanctuary and the most important cultural items hidden in the walls of the basilica would not be complete without mentioning the pilgrimages of John Paul II to this place. The Pope's words about Kalwaria are well-known, and it is worth recalling some of them. And so, during his 1979 visit, on 7 June, John Paul II said these words in Kalwaria: *You know well that I am a mountain man and I know different slopes, but this one, which leads to the Mount of Crucifixion, is the holiest of slopes in the whole Polish Beskids. (…) Whenever I had any problems or difficulties, I would come to Kalwaria. And I had to come here more and more often: because, first of all, there were more and more difficulties, and second of all - a strange thing - they usually got resolved after my visit to Kalwaria.* During a short stay in 1991, the Pope emphasized that it was where his heart would remain forever. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska played an important role in the family of the future pope. Karol Wojtyła's grandfather and great-grandfather guided groups of pilgrims coming to Kalwaria. As he recalled years later, the tradition of pilgrimages to Kalwaria had been alive in his family home – in times of trouble, they would come to Kalwaria. Frequent pilgrimages to that place are a characteristic trait of Karol Wojtyła's religiousness. During the time when he was the Kraków metropolitan bishop, researchers counted over 70 visits to Kalwaria related to the most important celebrations. It is difficult to say exactly how many times he came to Kalwaria privately. As the researchers mention, he would always go there before his more important trips, e.g. to Rome. He paid a longer visit before being appointed cardinal, it was in Kalwaria where he spent the Day of Recollection. Karol Wojtyła would often celebrate mass in the Chapel of Our Lady, and when he wanted to recollect, he would go to the room in the monastery, spending time on reflection and meditation.

The history of the sanctuary is constantly unfolding before our eyes. It includes not only important events, such as renovations and reconstructions of the building, anniversaries, and pilgrimages, but even such seemingly prosaic matters as, for example, electrification carried out in 1936 or the installation of megaphones, that were so necessary during the influx of crowds of pilgrims (the 1947 event). The cruel events of the 20th century also left their mark on the sanctuary. For example, during World War I, there was a hospital here. Moreover, the bells (Stefan and Łukasz) made to commemorate the great jubilee of the foundation in 1902 were confiscated for war purposes following a decision of the Austrian Ministry of War (1916). The military even took 130 kg of copper cookware. Another bell looting took place in 1917. During World War II, the occupant was persuaded to agree to leave two bells at a fairly high price, moreover, the friar Bartłomiej Mazurek saved the older bells by hiding them. The history of Kalwaria is also the history of unrealized expansion plans, such as projects from the period preceding the outbreak of World War I. Speaking of the unrealized project to rebuild the temple by the Kraków architect Jan Sas Zubrzycki, it is worth mentioning that if it had been implemented, a completely new temple to the left of the nave would have been built.

1. The name ‘Bernardines’ in Poland refers to the Polish Order of Friars Minor [translator’s note]. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)