

## 2<sup>nd</sup> International Marian Conference in Częstochowa

### **“There is your heart where the treasure is.” Jasna Góra - a treasury of Polish and European culture**

For centuries the Jasna Góra Monastery has been described as a treasure of the Polish nation, but the overall value of the monastery and its rank in Polish and European culture lies not only in the architectural shape of the monastery, its historical significance, wealth of equipment, precious manuscripts and works stored in the library or collected over the centuries but above all, in the miraculous image of the Mother of God. Crowned in 1717, the Black Madonna, called the Queen of the Polish Crown by king Jan Kazimierz, from the very beginning of Her stay at the Jasna Góra Monastery, i.e. from 1382, has attracted both ordinary people and distinguished royal pilgrims. Throughout the year, and especially during the Marian and national holidays, the monastery was being visited by crowds of worshipers, bringing their prayers, paying tribute, giving thanks for the grace they had received. Kings and hetmans, writers and artists, catholics and representatives of other faiths, representatives of all states and professions were coming to the monastery and seeking consolation and confirmation in faith. While praying to the Holy Virgin Mary, they united in respect for the Catholic faith, national tradition, history and culture, cherished at the monastery.

To express appreciation of the Mother of God, pilgrims often donated precious objects to the Holy Lady. The broader meaning of the Jasna Góra treasury was known already in the seventeenth century - it was not only a collection of material wealth, but also a valuable spiritual deposit, made by the faithful at the feet of the Holy Mary. As father Jan Golonka OSPPE writes, “in 1618, Father Andrzej Zimicius, a Paulin, published his work entitled *The Treasury of the Jasna Góra church ...*, in which he did not deal with the description of expensive jewels kept in the monastery, but told the story of the miraculous painting, and of the miracles, and he taught about the pilgrimage to the Jasna Góra Monastery.”

An expression of the meaning of Mary in terms of love and adoration, and of the Jasna Góra Monastery as a national treasure are countless poems by Polish poets, one of which is the poem *Częstochowska* by Wiktor Gomułicki:

“You’re burdened with silver and gold,  
Pearly dresses,  
But your dearest jewel  
The love of our entire earth.”

During the years of national captivity, the objects of worship and gratitude gathered at the feet of Our Lady gained additional value - not only were they the expression of religious feelings, but they became symbols of the magnificence of a country subject to partitions, and a trace of the great history of Poles and their identity.

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz wrote in his book *Historical Travels in Polish Lands between 1811 and 1828*, “This treasury is a gathering not only of riches but of memorabilia worthy to our history.”

Such a way of thinking about the Jasna Góra Monastery as a treasury is an expression of a specific cultural formation, which was based on respect towards traditional, based on the Decalogue moral norms and grew out of religious beliefs about the order of the world. It was also a well-established practice in thinking about objects (including books and souvenirs), which - as Krzysztof Pomian wrote in *The Past as a Subject of Knowledge* - constituted historical but also religious value to the owner.

The proposed way of thinking expressed in the topic of the conference is not intended as a return to the past or a reconstruction of the world that no longer exists. The title of the conference - a quote from the poem by Franciszek Karpiński, being a fragment of a Marian song, to which father Franciszek Walczyński wrote music in the fiftieth anniversary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - aims to define the contemporary hierarchy of values and the place of Mary and of the Jasna Góra Monastery in Polish and European culture. The words "There is your heart where the treasure is" are a paraphrased fragment of St. Matthew's gospel, and mean, as we believe, "For where your treasure is, there will also be your heart" (Mt. 6:21). It refers to the universal need of men that the world in which we live has a specific order, with a designated and uniquely identified center at which our values are focused. The location of this center in the Bible and its transposition - as one of its many varieties - in the form of the Marian cult, which - especially due to *genius loci* - occurs at the Jasna Góra Monastery, is a clear premise to propose to the participants of the conference a spiritual and religious values-oriented quest stored in theology and philosophy, history, literature and language, music and iconography, as well as any other discipline related to God, man and the world.

We would like to invite historians and literary scholars, linguists and cultural anthropologists, theologians, philosophers, musicologists, art and theatre historians, religion experts, archivists and museum workers, as well as all those interested in the topic of the conference to contribute and participate in the conference.

The conference will be organised by Jan Długosz University in association with the Jasna Góra Monastery, and will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 in Częstochowa. It will be inaugurated by the celebrations on the occasion of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, which will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December at the Monastery. During the conference our Guests will be invited to a concert of Polish classical music.

The organisers cordially invite scholars at all stages of their careers to submit proposals on any aspect related to the topic of the conference in one of the fields: literature, linguistics, history, theology, culture, art, concerning (but not restricted to) the following issues:

- The Bible as a spiritual value ordering reality
- Marian cult in religion and culture as a repository of values
- the Jasna Góra Monastery as a treasure in literature, memoirs, documents, theatre, film, mass culture
- The wonderful icon of the Mother of God - a treasure for believers
- Relics of saints as a treasure
- Treasures of prayers and songs - representations, their place in culture
- The material dimension of the treasure - artefacts, devotional articles, votive offerings and their meaning in history

- Treasure, souvenir, exhibit, prop - transforming the meaning of things in culture, literature and language