

The Jasna Góra monastery - pilgrimage tourism centre in Poland (1975 - 1998)

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Abstract. For hundreds of years The Jasna Góra Monastery has been the most important pilgrimage centre in Poland. Its origins date back to 1382, when Prince Vladislaus of Opole brought and placed Pauline monks from Hungary at the former parish church of the Blessed Virgin Mary [8]. The presentation of pilgrimage movement to the shrine of The Jasna Góra Monastery in the years 1975 - 1998 is the main aim of the paper. Both the participation of domestic and foreign pilgrimages in pilgrim's traffic that visited the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Jasna Góra Monastery in the period has been discussed.

Key words: Częstochowa, The Jasna Góra Monastery, pilgrimage tourism

INTRODUCTION

Pilgrimage tourism is one of the most important areas of tourism. Its main purpose is to visit sites that are associated with the cult of saints and blessed. It is Marian shrines that have a special place in this journey.

The aim of the paper is to show the popularity of The Jasna Góra Monastery with pilgrims and tourists. The dividing line is the years 1975-1998. At that time a two-tier administrative division of the country was in force [1]. The division, which came into force on 1st June 1975, included basic units (communes, cities, districts, municipal communes) and provincial units (49 provinces) [2].

METHODS AND RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The basic research method used in the writing of this paper was an analysis of historical sources. Also, a method of induction, deduction, and a statistical one has been applied. The following research areas have been put forward:

1. Did the years 1975 - 1998 see the development of tourism movement to The Jasna Góra Monastery?
2. From which countries, taking into account the years 1975 - 1998, did the most pilgrim groups come?

RESULT

Table 1. Number of pilgrims who came to The Jasna Góra Monastery in the years 1983 – 1997

Year	Number of pilgrims
1983	6,000,000
1984	about 5,000,000
1985	about 3,500,000
1986	more than 2,500,000
1987	more than 4,000,000
1988	more than 4,000,000
1989	about 4,000,000
1990	about 4,000,000
1991	about 5,000,000
1992	about 4,000,000
1993	about 3,500,000
1994	about 4,000,000
1995	about 4,000,000
1996	more than 3,500,000
1997	about 5,000,000

Source: Compiled from: "Jasna Góra " [*The Jasna Góra Monastery*]. the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Jasna Góra Monastery Shrine monthly from the years 1984 - 1998 [in Polish]

Table 2. Number of vigils in front of the Miraculous Icon in the years 1983 – 1997

Year	Number of vigils in front of the Miraculous Icon
1983	173
1984	198
1985	187
1986	185
1987	192
1988	194
1989	183
1990	182
1991	156
1992	167
1993	162
1994	190
1995	181
1996	179
1997	201

Source: Compiled from: "Jasna Góra " [*The Jasna Góra Monastery*]. the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Jasna Góra Monastery Shrine monthly from the years 1984 - 1998 [in Polish]

DISCUSSION

The largest pilgrimage centre, recognized as one of the four pilgrimage centres in the world, is Częstochowa. In turn, the most renowned centres in the world that are associated with the cult of Our Lady of Częstochowa, are, among others, Berrima - Penrose Park (national coverage, Australia), Borong (regional coverage, Indonesia), Carfin (national coverage, Scotland), Centocow (regional coverage, South Africa), Cleveland and Eureka (regional coverage, USA), Doylestown (national coverage, USA), Fiquil (regional coverage, Cameroon), Curitiba (supra-regional coverage, Brazil), Merrillville (regional coverage, USA) and Nyabyeya (regional coverage, Uganda) [3].

In addition to Częstochowa, which in the years 1975 - 1998 was the "capital" of the province of częstochowskie, the shrines of the Marian cult in the afore-mentioned province were also in Gidle, Leśniów (supra-regional coverage), Święta Anna and Mrzygłód (regional coverage). Apart from the centres mentioned, which had crowned images of Mary, pilgrims also stopped at shrines situated near the Jasna Góra Monastery: in Kłobuck, Lelów and Mstów [4].

Since 1977, there had been the biggest development of walking pilgrimage movement to Częstochowa. Every year (since the beginning of 1980s), from May to late September, from 175,000 to over 200,000 pilgrims came to The Jasna Góra Monastery [3]. Most of the faithful gathered at the shrine of pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II (1979, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1997). During the first pilgrimage of the Holy Father to Częstochowa there came 3,500,000 pilgrims. Subsequent pilgrimages gathered even more of the faithful [5]. In 1983 6,000,000 pilgrims came to The Jasna Góra Monastery, in 1987 - more than 4,000,000, in 1991 - about 5,000,000 and in 1997 also approximately 5,000,000 (table 1).

In August 1991, during the 6th World Youth Day around 1,500,000 pilgrims gathered in the Jasna Góra Monastery. They represented 77 nations from all continents. The group of pilgrims from the USSR was quite numerous. There were 200,000 of them (including 20,000 from Ukraine and Lithuania). There were also the faithful from Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Russia and Siberia [5].

The greatest pilgrimage which arrived in Częstochowa in the years 1975 - 1998 was the Warsaw Walking Pilgrimage (dating back to 1711). Until 1980s the nature of this pilgrimage was nationwide. Each year its participants were pilgrims "(...) from different regions of Poland, including Białystok, Gdańsk, Olsztyn, Opole, Płock, Siedlce or Podhale." This situation resulted from the fact that the then government authorities did not allow the Roman Catholic Church to organize new diocesan pilgrimages. It was not until the 1980s that the situation changed. Then diocesan pilgrimages emerged, e.g. the one of Białystok, Kielce, Płock, Podlasie and Warmia [3].

In walking pilgrimages to The Jasna Góra Monastery in the period 1981 - 1989 about 300,000 - 450,000 of the faithful participated annually [5]. It is also worth mentioning that in this period (1980s), the number of diocesan pilgrimages of secondary-school graduation youth was on the rise. In 1987, almost all dioceses organized these types of pilgrimages. The increase in the number of participants in these pilgrimages followed the collapse of the communist system. In the years 1989 - 1995 the numbers even doubled. In 1989, there were 44,770 participants in diocesan pilgrimages of secondary-school graduation youth (421,143 students graduated in 1989 from secondary schools of general education and vocational education), and in 1995 - 82,697 secondary school graduates (from among 373,702 graduates) [5].

It is worth mentioning that in the years 1983 - 1997 various prayer groups held all-night vigils in front of the Miraculous Icon. Most vigils, taking into account the period of the years 1983 - 1997 only, took place in 1997 (201 vigils), and the fewest in 1991 (156). In 1980s the

number of vigils ranged between 173 – 198 (table 2).

An important role in the pilgrimage movement was played by pilgrims from abroad. In 1980s approximately 100,000 - 200,000 foreigners came to Częstochowa. In 1988, 1,985 foreign groups were entertained in the Jasna Góra Monastery. The number of foreign pilgrims increased after 1989, when about 400,000 pilgrims came to the Jasna Góra shrine each year. This was due to disappearance of visa difficulties [5]. In 1989, the Jasna Góra Monastery was visited by 2,353 groups from 91 countries (among others 387 groups from Germany, 356 from USA, 272 from Italy, 182 from USSR, 122 from England, 121 from France, 119 from Austria, 95 from Spain, 69 from Switzerland and 53 from Denmark) [6]. In the following year (1990) Jasna Góra Monastery guides showed the shrine to 1,933 foreign groups (64,820 people from 50 countries) [7]. Three years later (1993), The Jasna Góra Monastery was visited by 1,672 groups (53,563 people from 53 countries). Most groups came from: Germany (360 groups - 12,002 people), Italy (223 groups - 8,671 people), USA (246 groups - 7,587 people), France (172 groups - 4,763 people) and Austria (77 groups - 3,800 people) [8]. In 1994, the shrine was visited by pilgrims from 68 countries (2,449 groups). Most pilgrims came from Germany (14,469 people), Italy (11,797), USA (10,926), France (8,175) and Austria (4,416) [9]. Of the 1,717 foreign groups of pilgrims who came to the shrine of The Jasna Góra Monastery in 1995, 498 groups were outside of Europe [5].

In 1996, the services of The Jasna Góra Monastery Information Centre guides were used by the following number of groups from abroad: USA - 364 (10,079 people), Germany - 316 (8,523), Italy - 175 (4,917), France - 116 (3,006) and Austria - 66 (2,054) [10]. A year later (1997) the services of the guides were used by 2,471 foreign groups (66,871 people) from 63 countries (including USA - 641 groups, Germany - 465, Italy - 251, France - 175, and Austria - 74) [11]. In turn, in 1998 The Jasna Góra Monastery Information Centre reported 3,593 groups of pilgrims (tourists) from 68 countries. Of these, most were from: USA (957 groups), Germany (659), Italy (290) and France (202) [5].

CONCLUSION

Based on the results presented it can be concluded that the years 1975 - 1998 saw the development of the pilgrimage movement to The Jasna Góra Monastery. Since 1977, the walking pilgrimage movement developed rapidly. In the years 1981 - 1989 the number of diocesan pilgrimages of secondary-school graduation youth was on the rise. In 1990s this number even doubled.

During the period discussed, most foreign groups of pilgrims to the Jasna Góra shrine came from Germany, USA and Italy. A lot of groups were also from: Austria, Denmark, France, Spain, Great Britain and Switzerland. Outside of Europe (except for USA) the Chinese, Filipinos and Koreans came to The Jasna Góra Monastery.

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