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**EVOLUTION OF NON-RELIGIOUS
FUNCTIONS OF CATHOLIC SANCTUARIES
IN THE EASTERN BORDERLAND OF POLAND –
FROM PATRIOTIC MANIFESTATIONS TO INTERFAITH
DIALOGUE AND INTEGRATION**

**ZMIANY POZARELIGIJNYCH FUNKCJI
SANKTUARIÓW KATOLICKICH
NA WSCHODNIM POGRANICZU POLSKI –
OD MANIFESTACJI PATRIOTYCZNYCH
DO DIALOGU I INTEGRACJI MIĘDZYWYZNANIOWEJ**

Abstract

The paper concerns two significant, non-religious but social functions of Polish Catholic worship centres, namely: patriotic and integrative role. This issue is discussed on the basis of the selected sanctuaries of the eastern borderland of Poland, precisely in the Lublin province. In the past, it was multicultural and multid denominational area and presently it is famous for its rich history and cultural heritage reflected in, among other things, religious centres.

The description of the sanctuaries proves their commitment in the political and social life of Poland. The spiritual guardians of the sanctuaries always manifested strong patriotic attitude that corresponded with national events and needs. At various stages of the history, religious centres actively participated in initiatives and the matters of the entire nation. Those traditions survived until today as the current activities of the regional sanctuaries are still closely related to the socio-political situation of the country. But the essential task of the Church is not any longer to urge the Poles to fight for independence, but to work towards

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mutual knowledge, understanding as well as uniting the local, multi-faith communities.

Keywords: eastern Poland; Catholic shrines; sanctuaries' functions; multi-faith communities

Streszczenie

W artykule zostały przedstawione i omówione dwie istotne pozareligijne funkcje katolickich ośrodków kultu religijnego w Polsce, mianowicie patriotyczna i integracyjna. Zagadnienie to omówiono na podstawie wybranych sanktuariów wschodniego pogranicza Polski, a dokładnie Lubelszczyzny. W przeszłości był to obszar wielokulturowy i wielowyznaniowy, a obecnie słynie z bogatej historii i dziedzictwa kulturowego, które znajduje wyraz m.in. w postaci miejsc kultu religijnego.

Opis działalności sanktuariów świadczy o ich zaangażowaniu w życie polityczne i społeczne Polski. Duchowi opiekunowie sanktuariów zawsze przejawiali silną postawę patriotyczną, która korespondowała z wydarzeniami i potrzebami narodowymi. Na różnych etapach historii ośrodki religijne aktywnie uczestniczyły w inicjatywach i sprawach całego narodu. Tradycje te przetrwały do dziś, gdyż obecna działalność sanktuariów regionalnych jest nadal ściśle związana z sytuacją społeczno-polityczną kraju. Zasadniczym zadaniem Kościoła nie jest już jednak wzywanie Polaków do walki o niepodległość, ale praca na rzecz wzajemnego poznania, zrozumienia i jednoczenia się lokalnych, wielowyznaniowych społeczności.

Słowa kluczowe: Polska wschodnia; świątynie katolickie; funkcje sanktuariów; społeczności wielowyznaniowe

Introduction

The primary and leading function of each religious life centre is to cater for spiritual needs of people through the organisation and practicing of religious worship.¹ Next to religious activities, however, each centre has its own charisma referring also to secular sphere, manifested in the type of non-religious activity. There are several types of secular actions distinguished, such as: patriotic, integration, cultural, educational, charity, caring-safety, recreational, ecological, administrative, and economic.²

In Poland, due to historical conditions, among the non-religious dimensions of functioning, sacred places have always fulfilled a patriotic-integration function.³

¹ F. Glinister, *What is a sanctuary?*, „Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz”, 8 (1997) pp. 66–67; M. Ostrowski, *Prawno-duszpasterskie aspekty sanktuarium. Wybrane zagadnienia*, „Peregrinus Cracoviensis”, 22 (2011) pp. 65–66.

² R.O. Jusiak, *Sanktuarium religijne w kontekście środowiska lokalnego i społecznego*, „Peregrinus Cracoviensis”, 18 (2007) pp. 38–43.

³ A. Jackowski, *Rozwój pielgrzymek w Polsce*, in: *Przestrzeń i sacrum*, eds. A. Jackowski, A. Witkowska, Z.S. Jabłoński, I. Sołjan, E. Bilska, Kraków 1996, pp. 25–33; K. Marciniak,

Polish historians of the Church frequently emphasise the co-occurrence of two trends of its operating: basic – referring to religious values and dedicated to spreading faith and developing moral attitudes of the believers, and the second one, patriotic – developing and maintaining the Polish identity of the population. Religious centres have always very actively participated in the development of national awareness and propagating of national values. They have been places reminding the history of Poland – frequently glorifying it, and fostering national traditions and cultural heritage.⁴

The patriotic activity of the Polish Church was associated with the integration function of religious centres. It usually referred to the Polish Catholic community, and involved unification and consolidation of Poles in the name of common religious and national values, contributing to the development of a community of not only religious, but also political character.⁵ In difficult moments in the Polish history, however, the integration measures also covered other nations or denominations whose existence and independence were threatened similarly as those of the Poles. Currently, the term ‘integration function’ can be supplemented by an additional dimension of ‘connection,’ understood as dialogue, striving for agreement and cooperation, and development of a community, not only within the Catholic community, but between different religions or denominations. In such cases, the integration activity gains features of ecumenism.

The patriotic and ecumenical function of religious centres becomes especially important in the areas where, due to their location, interests of various countries or nations intermingle and influences of different cultures merge together. Such regions are more prone to weakening of national identity, loss of autonomy and emergence of various disputes and tensions of political, ethical or religious character. In such circumstances, religious centres face specific challenges and tasks, in response to which they can assume a positive role as centres of patriotic activity, negotiators or initiators of agreement in situations of conflict.

Without doubt, good illustrations of such activities can be found in the eastern part of Poland, especially in the Lublin province. In the past, within the contemporary province, representatives of various nations and faiths have lived there side by side. This neighbourhood was not always easy because the relations between particular communities and denominations were shaped largely under the influence of politics. The local Churches: the Catholic Church, both Latin and Greek,

Patriotyczno-polityczne aspekty funkcjonowania miejsca świętego i jego percepcja, „Sensus Historiae”, 15 (2014) no. 2, pp. 159–160.

⁴ R. Bender, *Katolicka myśl i działalność społeczna w Polsce w XIX i XX wieku*, in: *Z dziejów katolicyzmu społecznego*, t. 1, eds. by R. Bender, J. Kondziela, Lublin 1987, pp. 17, 29–31; D. Olszewski, *Motywy maryjne w polskiej religijności w XIX w.*, in: *Niepokalana. Kult Matki Bożej na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, eds. B. Pylak, C. Krakowiak, Lublin 1988, pp. 69, 72–73; A. Witkowska, *Ośrodki kultu maryjnego na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, in: *Niepokalana. Kult Matki Bożej na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, eds. B. Pylak, C. Krakowiak, Lublin 1988, pp. 97–102.

⁵ Marciniak, *Patriotyczno-polityczne aspekty*, p. 160; E. Nowicka, *Polak-katolik. O związkach polskości z katolicyzmem w społecznej świadomości Polaków*, in: *Religia a obcość*, ed. E. Nowicka, Kraków 1991, pp. 117–119.

the Orthodox Church, but also other religious groups frequently got involved in events occurring in the region.

The primary objective of this paper is to present the initiatives of the selected religious centres just from the area of the current Lublin province illustrating their involvement in patriotic and integration activities at various stages of Polish history. These functions were highly significant especially in the past, in the time of various forms of enslavement of Poland and the Polish nation. Therefore, the paper gives a concise description of the most important events from the history of Christian Churches in the region, as a background for presented activities and in order to depict their circumstances in the broader context of Poland's history.

Even though the religious landscape of the Lublin province is very rich in temples, the sanctuaries are the most significant in its spiritual space, owing to the value of objects worshipped there and due to the role they have played throughout centuries. In the paper, the sanctuaries serve as the most important illustration of the discussed issues, especially because these are often the meeting places of the faithful from various Christian denominations. For the presentation, the author has chosen those shrines which have a particularly rich history and well-documented patriotic and integration activity.

In the article, the author uses two terms for the area under study. When the term 'Lublin province' is used, it refers to the contemporary administrative area. On the other hand, when the term 'Lublin region' is used, it can mean a historical land, which does not coincide with the borders of the present Lublin province.

The article was primarily prepared on the basis of the analysis of facts referring to the history of the region as well as the past and present forms of activity in the chosen religious centres. The essential sources was historical literature as well as miscellaneous information concerning temples surveyed, found in published materials, obtained directly on site or from the temples' websites.

Polish sanctuaries and their patriotic-integration role

'Ordinary' and 'extraordinary' building objects are distinguished in the Catholic Church among objects of religious worship. The former ones include parish and monastic churches, chapels, shrines, wayside crosses, etc. The latter ones include cathedrals, basilicas, and sanctuaries.⁶

Sanctuaries as places of extraordinary presence of the sacrum, concentration of religious elements, and often outstanding cultural values, are ascribed particularly high importance. According to the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church, sanctuaries are churches and other sacred places to which – 'with the approval of the local ordinary – numerous believers make pilgrimages due to their particular piety.'⁷ Although awarding the title of sanctuary currently depends on the decision of the local bishop, the majority of the religious centres obtained it based on the long-lasting and permanent traditions of functioning in people's awareness as sacred

⁶ R.O. Jusiak, *Socjologiczne analizy katolickich ośrodków kultu religijnego*, in: *Spoleczne świąty wartości*, eds. A. Kolasa-Nowak, W. Misztal, Lublin 2012, pp. 345–347.

⁷ *Kodeks prawa kanonicznego*, Poznań 1984, kan. 1230.

places, constant pilgrimages of believers, and consequently – even if silent – acceptance of the Church authorities and recognition of the places as sanctuaries.⁸

Sanctuaries are predestined for taking particular care of the spiritual condition of the believers and their religious education, but as was already mentioned, they are also often involved in non-religious forms of activity, among others in patriotic and integration ones.⁹ Those two functions have been and is initiated in the majority of Polish sanctuaries.

In the past, patriotic activity in sanctuaries was particularly undertaken in periods of wars, disasters, threats to independence, and various negative experiences and social unrest. It was particularly strong in the times of loss of independence. The primary task of Polish religious centres in difficult moments in history was to revive and maintain the national identity among Poles. Moreover, sanctuaries provided spiritual, prayerful, and often also material support to Polish citizens. Specific activities for the sake of the country were frequently initiated in churches, e.g. fund raising for those fighting in national uprisings or political oppositionists in the Communist period. Conducting holy masses, worships, and other prayers in the intention of the fatherland was a common form of activity in various periods in history. On national holidays, e.g. on 3 May (passing of the Constitution) or 11 November (Independence Day), sanctuaries initiated special academies and patriotic manifestations.¹⁰

Sanctuaries were also places of integration of Poles. From the 16th century, especially Marine centres were established in the eastern borderland of the Republic of Poland, on the one hand aimed at the strengthening of local Catholicism and Polish identity, and on the other hand, through common worship, aimed at the unification of Polish communities of different denominations.¹¹ In the 19th century, sanctuaries were places of meeting of Polish pilgrims from different annexed territories. After the 2nd World War, in the Communist period, sanctuaries became centres attracting and frequently providing shelter to political oppositionists and persons persecuted by the Communist authorities.¹²

Jasna Góra in Częstochowa is the model example of a Polish sanctuary, particularly involved in patriotic activity due to its important role in the history of Poland.¹³ It is related to exceptionally strong in Poland Marian devotion, resulting from the conviction of exceptional patronage of Mother of God over the Polish Kingdom. In the face of dangers, the intercession of the Holy Mary for Poland was

⁸ J. Adamczyk, *Wokół prawnej definicji sanktuarium*, „Prawo Kanoniczne”, 57 (2014) pp. 71–80; Ostrowski, *Prawno-duszpasterskie aspekty sanktuarium*, p. 62.

⁹ I. Soljan, *Sanktuaria i ich rola w organizacji przestrzeni miast na przykładzie największych europejskich ośrodków katolickich*, Kraków 2012, p. 126.

¹⁰ R. Bender, *Władze zaborcze wobec kultu maryjnego w Królestwie Polskim w XIX wieku*, in: *Niepokalana. Kult Matki Bożej na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, eds. B. Pylak, C. Krakowiak, Lublin 1988, pp. 132–135; Jusiak, *Sanktuarium religijne*, pp. 38–40; Marciniak, *Patriotyczno-polityczne aspekty*, pp. 160–162.

¹¹ Jackowski, *Rozwój pielgrzymek w Polsce*, p. 16.

¹² Jusiak, *Sanktuarium religijne*, pp. 39–40.

¹³ Soljan, *Sanktuaria i ich rola*, p. 149.

seen as a rescue for the country.¹⁴ The importance and position of Jasna Góra as the central sanctuary of Poland and one of the most important Marine sanctuaries in the world raises no questions. Simultaneously, each of the regions of the country features sanctuaries involved in the life of the Polish nation and related to the regional culture and history. In Warmia it is Gietrzwałd, where apparitions of Mary became an impulse for raising the national awareness of the local community and colonisation of the region. In Silesia, Piekary Śląskie is a centre important for the unity of the Polish nation and opposing separatist tendencies of the region. Other sanctuaries worth emphasising are those in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Kalwaria Paławska, Leżajsk, and in recent years also in Licheń. It should be emphasised, however, that many patriotic initiatives have been and are undertaken by small sanctuaries which, auxiliary to supraregional and regional centres, implemented their tasks at the local scale.

Currently, in Christian circles, particularly in the United States, a heated debate is conducted on whether the church is the right place to teach patriotism. The discussion was inspired by the dramatic events of the 1st and 2nd World War and the participation of Americans in the wars, but also the character of the country constituting a conglomerate of representatives of various nations. An extensive discussion on the subject is presented by G. L. Sittser in the book 'A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War' (1997), describing the ideological conflict resulting from the participation of Americans in the 2nd World War in the context of Christian values such as humanity, justice, or peace. The effect of the conflict was taking distance by Christian churches to active support of the participation of the USA in the war, or popularising political slogans, unlike during the 1st World War. The discussion on patriotism in the modern church is dominated by the opinion that religion and faith in God are of supranational character, and worshiping own country in church is a kind of idolatry.¹⁵

Notice, however, the specificity of the historical situation of Poland and its completely different character than that of the USA. For almost two centuries, Poland was in the captivity of the occupants. In the 20th century, it experienced two World Wars. After the wars, it was under the Communist regime of the Soviet Union for 50 years. Several generations of Poles have never experienced life in a free country. For this reason, fostering the national spirit and promoting patriotism by the Church was necessary for the maintenance of the national identity of Poles.

¹⁴ R. Bender, *Władze zaborcze wobec kultu maryjnego w Królestwie Polskim w XIX wieku*, in: *Niepokalana. Kult Matki Bożej na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, eds. B. Pylak, C. Krakowiak, Lublin 1988, pp. 121–123; B. Porter-Szücs, *Faith and Fatherland. Catholicism, modernity, and Poland*, Oxford 2011, pp. 360–390; Witkowska, *Ośrodki kultu maryjnego na ziemiach polskich*, p. 87.

¹⁵ B. Williams, *The Separation of Church and Patriotism*, <http://www.patheos.com> (accessed: 6.07.2021); R. Dreher, *Should Churches Be Patriotic*, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com> (accessed: 7.07.2021); K. DeYoung, *Thinking Theologically About Memorial Day*, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org> (accessed: 7.07.2021).

Historical background of the activity of religious centres in the Lublin province

According to J. Buzalka,¹⁶ in the countries of East Europe, evident correlations are observed between uncertain political situation and intensified activity of institutions or leaders of the Catholic Church. According to the author, in years of threat to the country, religious institutions defend the tradition and integration. This is confirmed by the example of Poland, including the Lublin province. Its history includes several periods when the patriotic activity of religious centres was intensified. These were particularly the periods of occupation in the 18th–20th centuries, then in the years of the 2nd World War, and finally during the Communist period until 1989.

As for the area of the Lublin province, currently located in East Poland, in the Middle Ages it constituted a border area, where Polish and Russian interests met, accompanied by the interests of the Western and Eastern Church. Owing to important commercial trails, the region attracted visitors from various parts of Europe and Asia. As a result, it became a place of co-existence of representatives of various denominations. Next to the dominant Catholic community, Orthodox, Armenian, Jewish, and from the end of the 16th century also Greek Catholic and Protestant communities were present. Relations between particular denominations were not always correct and conflict-free, because they were largely affected by the politics. In spite of the existing differences, however, even after the Eastern Schism of the 11th century, relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Church remained relatively proper in the Lublin province. This state was disturbed by the act of the Union of Brest, signed in 1596 at a synod in Brest by representatives of both of the denominations.¹⁷

The Union, constituting an attempt to unify Catholics and Orthodox Christians, was largely of political character. It aimed at the strengthening of the role of traditional Church in East Europe, and developing a barrier for reformation spreading from the West. In return for accepting the supervision of the Pope, the Church in Ruthenia expected a guarantee of the same privileges and immunities as held by the Catholic Church. Eventually, however, those two Churches have never experienced legal equality. Moreover, in the Eastern Church in the territory of the Republic of Poland, the population was divided into proponents of the Union – the Uniates, later also called Greek Catholics, and its opponents, remaining with the Orthodox Church. Finally, from the 17th century, in the eastern territory of the Republic of Poland, church structures and interests of three denominations co-existed: those of Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Uniates.¹⁸

¹⁶ J. Buzalka, *Nation and Religion. The Politics of Commemoration in South-East Poland*, Münster 2007, p. 7.

¹⁷ D. Olszewski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa w zarysie*, Katowice 1982, pp. 184–185.

¹⁸ J. Kłoczowski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa polskiego*, Warszawa 2007, p. 138; P.R. Magocsi, *Greek Catholics: Historical Background*, in: *Churches In-Between: Greek Catholic Churches in Postsocialist Europe*, Berlin 2008, pp. 39–40; S. Mahieu, V. Naumescu, *Introduction*, in: *Churches In-Between: Greek Catholic Churches in Postsocialist Europe*, Berlin 2008, p. 1.

Remaining under the rule of Russia from the beginning of the 19th century, the Lublin region experienced the consistent policy of the Empire aimed at the elimination of all connections in the territories of the former Republic of Poland, and unification of the annexed land with the Russian territory. The measures involved among others land grabbing, liquidation of rights of the aristocracy aware of their Polish nationality, and its displacement, Russification of the population through restricting the use of the Polish language, and introducing restrictions towards Polish schools. The measures were combined with the restriction of the functioning and influence of the Catholic Church and various religious institutions, dissolution of monasteries, and takeover of Church property.¹⁹

The goal of the Czarism was also to weaken and destroy the Uniate Church. It was formally done for the first time by Nicolas I of Russia in 1839 by liquidating the Uniate Church in the Russian Empire, and then by Alexander II in 1875 by liquidating it in the Polish Kingdom.²⁰ Uniates were forced to adopt the Orthodox denomination. The most commonly applied methods included: persuasion and propagation of returning to the Orthodox Church by special messengers, bribery with promotions and financial rewards, administrative and legal pressure, and acts of direct violence, detention, and deportation. Uniate priests were frequently replaced in parishes with Orthodox priests, and then displaced to Siberia. In fear of the repressions, a major part of the Uniate community adopted the Orthodox denomination, but Uniates often openly defended their temples and priests.²¹

Religious life in Poland began to recover only after regaining independence in 1918. According to the Polish constitution from March 1921, the primary denomination in the newly established 2nd Republic of Poland was Catholicism, but other denominations were also guaranteed various freedoms, i.e. they could conduct religious life and social activity, organise their internal affairs, own property, etc. In Podlasie, a revival of the Greek Catholic Church occurred, in this region called 'Neo-Uniate' Church. Its believers particularly originated from the former Uniate community forced by the Russian Empire to convert to Orthodox faith in the 19th century. Besides, as a result of pressure of the national authorities, Polish Orthodox Church gained independence from the Moscow Patriarchate and obtain autocephaly. It was granted by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory VII in 1924, and in September 1925 it was announced in the Arch cathedral of Warsaw.²²

The 2nd World War was another moment in the history of Poland when the country fell under occupation, this time German and Soviet, and Polish society was subject to the repressive policy of the aggressors. The activity of all denominations, not only Christian, was strongly restricted in the period, and their structures were purposefully destroyed.²³

In addition to the fight of a regular army, a conspiratory resistance movement and guerrilla warfare developed in the Lublin region against the terror and violence of

¹⁹ Kłoczowski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa polskiego*, pp. 235–236, 242.

²⁰ Ibidem, pp. 231–235.

²¹ B. Kumor, *Historia Kościoła*, vol. 8, Lublin 2004, pp. 237–240.

²² Ibidem, pp. 388–390, 421–423.

²³ Kłoczowski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa polskiego*, pp. 326–331.

the occupants. They were supported by the rural population dominant in the region. Referring to the patriotic religiousness from the period of Partitions of Poland, the Catholic Church got involved in the support for fighting Poles. It supported them both through legally existing ecclesial institutions, and through underground activity. Polish chaplains accompanied Polish units fighting on Polish and foreign fronts. Secret pastoral care was organised in prisons and labour camps. Priests and religious conducted social activity, participating in secret education, taking care of the ill, children, and elderly people in hospitals, orphanages, and nursing homes. Charity actions were organised in parishes aimed at helping prisoners of labour camps and concentration camps. The help did not only cover Poles, but also people of other nationalities and religions, including Jews. Through all these types of activity, the Catholic Church strengthened its authority and prestige, and strengthened the bond with the Polish society. This determined its strong position in the post-war period.²⁴

The Communist years were a very difficult period in the Polish history. The Church showed continuous solidarity with the Polish society, and was involved in the political and social life of the country. In spite of the harassment and repressions against priests, restrictions on forms of practicing of religious worship, pastoral care, and social activity, the importance of the Church increased.²⁵ The primary means of influence on Poles became traditional pastoral care practiced at the level of parishes, with time enriched by more specialised activities targeted at various professional circles. This included holy masses, also of political character, missions and retreats, pilgrimages, celebrations of national anniversaries, and teaching social values. In the period of martial law in Poland, from December 1981, committees for assistance to interned persons and persons hiding from the authorities were established in parishes.²⁶

The anti-religious policy of the Communist authorities also covered other Churches in Poland, not only the Roman Catholic Church. In the years 1946–1947, the dissolution of the Greek Catholic Church was accompanied by persecution of its clergy. A conclusive event in the years directly after the war was ‘Operation Vistula’ in 1947 which determined the religious image of the south-eastern parts of Poland. As a result of forced displacement conducted by the Polish army, almost all the remaining Ukrainian and Lemko population in the area was in the Recovered Territories, i.e. in the present West Poland. The majority of them were believers of the Greek Catholic Church. A certain part of them were also members of the Orthodox Church.²⁷ Only several parishes could be established in the Lublin region from the decimated non-Uniate population after the 2nd World War. Only one of the parishes survived until today, in Kostomłoty. The remaining Unites living among the local population converted to Catholicism or Orthodox faith.

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 332–338.

²⁵ Buzalka, *Nation and Religion*, p. 42; Kłoczowski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa polskiego*, pp. 354–355; Porter-Szücs, *Faith and Fatherland*, p. 258.

²⁶ Kłoczowski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa polskiego*, pp. 358–375.

²⁷ Buzalka, *Nation and Religion*, p. 41.

The free functioning of religious communities and revival of their structures and religious life occurred in Poland again after 1989 together with the political transformations. Modern Poland has a stabilised socio-political situation and develops as an independent and democratic country. Due to this, the modern activity of religious centres does not have to be directed at awakening patriotism and national spirit among Poles, as it was the case in the past. Currently, in sanctuaries and other Church centres, prayers in the intention of Poland, its safety, successful development, and internal peace are still practiced. Patriotic actions and celebrations prepared by the clergy also adopted a different character. Their goal is particularly to remind and commemorate important events from the history of Poland so that the national history and traditions are not forgotten or lost, but can be continued among the young generation of Poles.

The ecumenical movement, aimed at the restoration of the original unity between various Christian denominations, has currently become a very important aspect of the activity of the Church. Integration activities are particularly important in traditionally multi-denominational areas such as the Lublin region. The multi-denominational character is an unquestionably high local cultural value, although it involves inter-denominational antagonisms which existed in the past and also appear today among the local community. They are balanced by numerous initiatives aimed at mutual familiarising and understanding inspired by the local Churches and centres of religious life.

Manifestations of patriotism in the Marine sanctuaries of the Lublin province

Worshipping the Mother of God and going on pilgrimage to Her holy images has a very significant place in Polish religiousness. The Lublin region has always been distinguished by the intense cult of Our Lady, even though, in comparison to the central (e.g. Masovian province) and southern (mainly Lesser Poland province) parts of the country, the region has relatively few centres of pilgrimages to St. Mary. It results, among other things, from the fact that Catholic centres frequently had to 'compete' for worshippers with numerous centres of the eastern rite: Uniate and Orthodox.²⁸

In the Lublin region, the network of Marian sanctuaries was developing most intensely between 16th and 18th centuries. During that period the cult of Our Lady was flourishing throughout the Polish Commonwealth, especially in the borderland, for two reasons. On the one hand, Marian centres were established in order to strengthen Catholicism and Polish identity in the areas influenced by the Orthodox Church. On the other hand, their aim was to unify the Polish people of various Christian denominations through the common worship of the Mother of God. Due to these reasons, during the period of the Partitions of Poland, the tsarist authorities tried to prevent the development of the Marian cult, e.g. through banning pilgrimages and imposing restrictions on sanctuaries. The activity of the

²⁸ A. Witkowska, *Maryjne loca sacra na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej w początkach XIX wieku*, in: *Przestrzeń i sacrum*, eds. A. Jackowski, A. Witkowska, Z.S. Jabłoński, I. Sołjan, E. Bilska, Kraków 1996, pp. 105–121.

Marian centres was further limited by tsarist authorities who tried to repress the Polish monastic life. The most devastating blow was the final dissolution of monastic orders. In the areas under the Russian rule, a frequent method for weakening the worship of St. Mary was also moving the images of the Mother of God from their traditional places to other towns or even other regions of the country.²⁹

The sanctuary of Our Lady of Kodeń in Kodeń in Podlasie is an exceptional place of Marine worship in the Lublin province. It is an inseparable part of both the past and current history of the region. The inhabitants of Podlasie sought for the advocacy of Our Lady of Kodeń not only in personal, but also national matters. The history of the painting of the Holy Mary worshipped there is extraordinary, and the role it has played for the local community through centuries is best expressed in the titles awarded to it: 'Queen of Podlasie,' 'Our Lady of Unity,' 'Guardian of the Borders,' 'Kodeń Patron Saint of Martyrs of Faith.'³⁰

During the Partitions of Poland, the miraculous painting in Kodeń was subject to Russian repressions just like the inhabitants of Podlasie. In 1875, the Russian authorities ordered moving the painting together with other relics to Jasna Góra. Church of St. Ann where it was placed until that time was transformed into an Orthodox church, and the parish in Kodeń was dissolved (Golec 2009, 30–31). The former religious situation in Kodeń was only restored in the inter-war period. In 1917, the temple in Kodeń was returned to the Catholic Church, and in 1927, the painting of Holy Mary was transported back from Częstochowa.

After the 2nd World War, Kodeń rapidly developed as a centre of spiritual life. From the late 1960's, numerous celebrations were held there, taking the form of public demonstrations of the faith of secular and clerical pilgrims from Poland and abroad. The peregrination of the painting of Our Lady of Kodeń in the parishes of the Podlasie diocese at the turn of 1980 and 1981 became a particular form of manifestation of anti-Communist attitudes.³¹

The sanctuary of Mother of God in Leśna Podlaska was a place of integration and common nationalistic activities of Catholics and Uniates. The image of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit has been worshipped there since the 17th century. The graces and miracles related to its presence made Leśna Podlaska a centre of worship both for the local Catholic community and Uniates from Podlasie.³²

The sanctuary in Leśna Podlaska, located in a region with strong influences of the Orthodox Church, was intended by the Russian occupant to become 'the centre of Orthodox Christianity and Russification.' Therefore, already from the first moments of the Russian rule in the territory of Poland, it was subject to restrictions imposed by Russian authorities. During the January Uprising, the sanctuary constituted an important link of the regional national liberation movement. In the monastery of the Pauline fathers, guardians of the sanctuary, meetings of priests supporting the Uprising were held, including Uniate priests. According to Russian

²⁹ Jackowski, *Rozwój pielgrzymek w Polsce*, pp. 13–44.

³⁰ M. Golec, *Matka Boża Kodeńska Królowa Podlasia*, Siedlce 2001, pp. 20–21.

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 36, 41.

³² Sanktuarium Matki Bożej Leśniańskiej, www.lesnapodlaska.paulini.pl/sanktuarium/historia-obrazu.html (accessed: 25.08.2021).

reports, 'in 1863, Leśna was a centre of rebellion against Russian law, a school of Polish patriotism, and place of agitation and revolt against the governmental authority.' As a consequence, 'the open and visible participation of Paulines in Leśna in the criminal propaganda of 1863–65 caused the dissolution of the monastery by the authorities.'³³

The Catholic Church in Leśna was restituted in 1915, and in 1927, the original painting of Holy Mary, hidden in the Benedictine abbey in Łódź, returned to the temple. After the 2nd World War, in the period of fight of Communists against Catholicism, the Church authorities took great effort to revive the Marine worship in Leśna. In the early 1960's, Primate Stefan Wyszyński conducted the coronation of the painting, and in 1981, the Holy See awarded the painting of Mother of God with the title of Mother of Unity and Faith, referring to the role it played throughout centuries of the history of Podlasie.³⁴

The miraculous icon of Our Lady of Chełm, called Mother of God of the Uniates of Chełm, played a role for the Chełm region similar to that of the paintings of Our Lady of Kodeń and Leśna Podlaska for Podlasie. The worship of the painting probably dates back to the 13th century, when the icon was brought to the Chełm region. From the beginning, the painting participated in many important historical events. Until the Union of Brest, it remained in an Orthodox church, and after signing the act, it was given to the Uniates of Chełm. Over the subsequent centuries, depending on the political and religious situation in the eastern parts of the Republic of Poland, the guardians of the painting changed. Nonetheless, the icon remained the destination of continuous pilgrimages, particularly those by Uniate and Roman Catholic communities.³⁵

From the 17th century, the icon from Chełm 'actively participated' in the history of Poland. It accompanied the expeditions and battles of King Jan Kazimierz, and stayed in battle camps of Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki and Jan III Sobieski. From the 18th century, when it was placed in the temple on Chełm Hill, holy masses have been conducted in its presence in the intention of maintaining the independence of the Polish state and the durability of the union. The bishops from Chełm, seeing that the union can only survive in the independent Republic of Poland, supported groups striving for rescuing the country with their prayer and financial help. They advised the population and clergy to prey among others in appreciation of the passing of the Constitution of 3 May. In 1794, a patriotic manifestation was held in the sanctuary in Chełm, attended by the leader of the independence uprising – Tadeusz Kościuszko, who arrived in order to express gratitude for the victory in the battle with Russia near Raclawice. After the loss of independence and abolishment of the union in 1875, the sanctuary in Chełm was again transferred to the Orthodox

³³ E. Rakoczy, *Sanktuarium maryjne w Leśnej Podlaskiej w XIX wieku*, in: *Niepokalana. Kult Matki Bożej na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, eds. B. Pylak, C. Krakowiak, Lublin 1988, pp. 237, 242.

³⁴ Sanktuarium Matki Bożej Leśniańskiej, www.lesnapodlaska.paulini.pl/sanktuarium/historia-obrazu.html (accessed: 25.08.2021).

³⁵ J. Zięba, *Dzieje jednego obrazu. Opowieść o cudownej ikonie Matki Boskiej Chełmskiej*, Lublin 2008, pp. 45–88.

Church, and Mother of God from the painting became the patron saint of Uniates from Chełm and Podlasie persecuted for their faith.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the fate of the Chełm icon was very difficult. First of all, the original painting was lost during World War I and was replaced with a copy. In the interwar period and during World War II, the Mother of God in the miraculous icon, regarded as the Guardian and the Advocate of the Chełm Region, witnessed painful conflicts and fights of the religious character in the region. During the period of the Nazi occupation, the worship of St. Mary in the Chełm temple was banned for Poles, and Ukrainians were granted the right to the church. The religious life of the Polish population was restored in the sanctuary after the end of the war in 1944, when the Chełm Hill became again a place of prayer and pilgrimages for inhabitants of the region. In the communism period the sanctuary was once again a centre supporting the struggle for independence. From the moment the 'Solidarity' movement was created, the Chełm Hill and the church became a place of patriotic demonstrations and 'the tradition was to start patriotic holidays and local celebrations with a service held in the temple on the Chełm Hill.'³⁶

The worship of Mother of God in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Kazimierz in Kazimierz Dolny on the Vistula River has always been of nationalistic character. The guardians of the place, Franciscan-reformer fathers, did not only support, but also participated in national uprisings in the period of Partitions of Poland. This resulted in their repressions, and the dissolution of the monastery in Kazimierz. In times of various political and social unrest, masses in the intention of Poland were conducted before the image of the Holy Mary. In the 1980's, in the Communist period, the fathers also developed the Crusade of Individual Prayer for the Fatherland. Throughout centuries, due to their involvement, after each of the national tragedies, the Marine worship in Kazimierz was revived, and the inflow of believers praying for the good fortune of Poland increased.³⁷

Symbolic Significance of the Sanctuary in Pratulin

Pratulin is a small farming village which went down in history as a place of heroic defence of the Uniate temple against Cossacks during the Partitions period. From the beginnings of the village, representatives of various faiths lived there. The majority were Latin Catholics, but there were also Uniates, Jews and Muslims. Since the 17th century, the Roman Catholic and Uniate parishes functioned side by side in Pratulin. They helped each other, e.g. when a priest of one or the other denomination was absent.

During the times of the Partitions of Poland, both communities were subjected to persecution from tsarist authorities, but repressions towards Uniate worshippers were much stronger and aimed at the total dissolution of this Church. The events which took place in Pratulin in January 1874 reflected the general situation of

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 89–135.

³⁷ C. Ryszka, *Sanktuarium Zwiastowania NMP w Kazimierzu nad Wisłą*, Kraków–Rzym 1986, pp. 57–58; A. Sroka, *Sanktuarium maryjne franciszkanów w Kazimierzu Dolnym*, Kazimierz 1991, p. 7.

Uniates in the Podlasie region. The reasons for the tragic events in Pratulin were the changes which tsar's clerks planned to introduce in the local church and parish. First of all, it was the replacement of the parish priest with the new one who, as a supporter of the Orthodox faith, appointed by state authorities, was not accepted and gladly welcome by the local inhabitants. Moreover, the interior design of the church was to resemble Orthodox temples, while liturgical ceremonies were planned to be conducted according to the Orthodox rites.³⁸

The refusal of the Uniates from Pratulin to accept the new parish priest and to give Russians the keys to the church resulted in armed intervention of a military unit of Cossacks. The negotiations between the Russian commander of tsar's soldiers and parishioners of Pratulin, who gathered in large numbers at their church preventing access to it, were ineffective. When Cossacks tried to capture the church by force, with rifles and bayonets, the local people grabbed stones and wooden sticks. In response, the tsar's soldiers prepared for the all-out attack, and on hearing the order they opened fire on the church defenders. The Russian bullets killed 9 men on the spot, while 4 fatally wounded died later that day. As a result of the fight, 13 people were killed and about 180 injured. After the attack was stopped and the door to the church was battered down with axes, the soldiers let the new parish priest inside. The murdered Uniates were buried by the Russians away from the church, in one grave in the old cemetery. To obliterate traces of the burial, the soldiers trod down and levelled the ground on the grave, but the place was remembered and honoured by people.³⁹

The thirteen murdered men – Wincenty Lewoniuk and 12 companions became the symbol of all heroic Uniates who, when their faith was threatened, defended the Church in Podlasie. In 1990 the remains of 13 Martyrs from Pratulin were exhumed, laid in one coffin and placed in the parish church in the village. In October 1996 they were beatified by the Pope John Paul II, and the Pratulin temple was officially proclaimed the Sanctuary of Podlachian Martyrs, even though it was honoured by Uniate worshippers already since the memorable 1874.

Beatification of the Uniates from Pratulin aroused among Catholics an interest in their story, the Union of Brest, as well as in history and religious relations in the Podlasie region. Since mid-1990s, the sanctuary has had more and more visitors: both pilgrims and tourists. Pratulin became famous as a place of religious worship, where it is possible to reflect and pray at the relics of the Martyrs from the 19th century. Moreover, owing to the specially prepared stations presenting the history of the Union of Brest, visitors can participate in an extraordinary history lesson of Poland and the Podlasie region.

Especially in the borderland, religious differences were frequently used by the authorities for political purposes, so the forced conversion to the Orthodox faith carried out by tsarist powers in the Partitions period was regarded by local inhabitants as Russification actions. In this context, the heroic resistance of the

³⁸ K. Matwiejuk, *Pratulin. Narodziny dla nieba Sług Bożych Wincentego Lewoniuka i XII Towarzyszy*, Warszawa–Siedlce 1995, pp. 73, 130–134.

³⁹ H. Jakubowicz, *Pratulin miejscem świadectwa i męczeństwa Unitów*, in: *Turystyka a religia*, eds. J. Bergier, J. Żbikowski, Białą Podlaska 2003, pp. 233–238; Matwiejuk, *Pratulin*, pp. 134–140.

Uniates in the Pratulin church is, on the one hand, a proof of defending unity and autonomy of the Church and, on the other hand, a symbol of opposition of the local community to enslavement and repressions of the Russian occupant, having a clear national and patriotic character.

Patriotic Activity of the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers in Radecznicza

Radecznicza is known in the Lublin voivodeship primarily as a place of St. Anthony of Padua's revelations. The sanctuary of the Saint, located in the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers' Church from the 17th c., is famous for the traditions of worship and piety inspired by the life of St. Anthony and lasting several centuries. At the same time, it has always been the centre of the national and social life of the local area. This role has been upheld by successive Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers taking care of the sanctuary and deeply involved in the religious and social life of the village and the region.

The cult of St. Anthony in Radecznicza originated in the 17th century and is connected with the revelation experienced by one of the village inhabitants and blessing of water in a local spring. With the growing number of miraculous events (mainly cases of healing) occurring through the intercession of St. Anthony, the place became increasingly famous and visited by more and more pilgrims. The developing place of worship was cared for by the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers who gradually enlarged and enriched the temple in Radecznicza. The main object worshipped by the faithful was the picture of St. Anthony with Baby Jesus and a lily, placed in the main altar of the church. As a result of the increasing amount of miracles and a great number of pilgrims, the Church authorities conducted proper canonical studies and in 1679 officially confirmed authenticity of St. Anthony's revelation and favours bestowed by the Saint. The sanctuary in Radecznicza was the most famous in the 19th century, when annual church fairs were visited by tens of thousands of pilgrims. Due to its renown and fame, Radecznicza was then called 'Częstochowa of the Lublin region.' The group of church buildings in Radecznicza includes also the monastery of the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers which was established together with the church so that the monks could take care of and serve the temple and pilgrims.⁴⁰

During the period of the Partitions, Radecznicza was first occupied by Austria and then by Russia. In 1869 the tsarist government closed down the church and dissolved the monastery of the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers. The miraculous painting of St. Anthony was moved to Łabunie, and all activities of the sanctuary were suspended. In order to replace the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers, the Uniate priests were soon brought to Radecznicza, followed by the Orthodox monks. The Catholic church was turned into an Orthodox temple. At the end of the 19th century, the monks were replaced by nuns who created in Radecznicza a strong centre of Orthodox faith.⁴¹

⁴⁰ R.O. Jusiak, *Sanktuarium Św. Antoniego Padewskiego w Radeczniczy*, in: *Radecznicza. Ośrodek życia religijnego i społeczno-kulturowego*, ed. R.O. Jusiak, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2006, pp. 89–96.

⁴¹ G. Gąbka, B. Kwapisz, *Gmina Radecznicza*, in: *Radecznicza. Ośrodek życia religijnego i społeczno-kulturowego*, ed. R.O. Jusiak, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2006, pp. 61–86; Jusiak, *Sanktuarium Św. Antoniego Padewskiego*, pp. 90–95.

The reactivation and restoration of St. Anthony's sanctuary took place in the interwar years when Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers returned to the monastery and Catholic pilgrims started to arrive regularly. The activity of the centre was restricted again during World War II and in the communism period. The authorities hampered the cult through oppressing the Fathers and threatening the pilgrims. Some buildings of the monastery were taken away from the monks and turned into a psychiatric hospital, existing until now. After 1989, the situation in the Radechnica sanctuary became normalized, the cult could develop freely and the temple gradually returned to its previous greatness.

Apart from its basic religious function, the sanctuary in Radechnica has always fulfilled additional roles, especially in important and difficult moments of history, e.g. during the Partitions, wars and other threats to independence of Poland. In such times, the sanctuary became a centre of national life of the Polish people and provided various kinds of support to the local population. The patriotic activity of the monks from Radechnica had many dimensions. First of all, they inspired and spiritually supported local inhabitants in their struggle for national liberation, through celebrating holy masses, holding religious services, organizing various celebrations and demonstrations, during which they preached patriotic sermons.⁴²

The Fathers provided direct help to soldiers fighting in nearby battles, supported the resistance movement and took active part themselves in conspiracy, during the November and January Uprisings and both World Wars. Their commitment frequently resulted in repression and persecution by state authorities. For instance, in 1861 two Fathers from Radechnica were arrested for organizing national celebrations and delivering an anti-Moscow sermon. In 1864 another monk was arrested and sentenced to penal servitude for swearing in the insurrectionists of the January Uprising, whose base was the Radechnica monastery.⁴³

In the interwar years, the patriotic activity of the Franciscan-Bernardine Fathers was connected with culture and education. During that time, a seraphic college was established at the monastery, educating young people at the level of a secondary school. Together with their students, the Fathers organized cultural events, and at national holidays – celebrations of a patriotic character.

During World War II, in 1940, the monastery was the seat of a small committee of the resistance movement: the Service for Poland's Victory, and provided shorter or longer refuge to monks, soldiers and civilians resettled or fleeing from the West of the country. Cooperating with groups from the Union of Armed Struggle, the Fathers had frequent contact with underground conspirators, which resulted in searches and arrests by Gestapo. Another form of conspiracy in the Radechnica monastery was continued education in the seraphic college at

⁴² B. Budnik, *Obiekty sakralne i formy kultu w sanktuarium radeckim*, in: *Radechnica. Ośrodek życia religijnego i społeczno-kulturowego*, ed. R.O. Jusiak, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2006, pp. 97–117; R.O. Jusiak, *Spoleczno-patriotyczna działalność klasztoru w Radechnicy*, in: *Radechnica. Ośrodek życia religijnego i społeczno-kulturowego*, ed. R.O. Jusiak, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2006, pp. 147–171.

⁴³ S. Rapa, *Ośrodek kultu religijnego w Radechnicy*, in: *Radechnica. Ośrodek życia religijnego i społeczno-kulturowego*, ed. R.O. Jusiak, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2006, pp. 127–144.

clandestine classes, organized already in 1940 for the local youth. Owing to this form of teaching, about a dozen people graduated from secondary school, and a few of them passed examinations at various educational levels.⁴⁴

During the communism period, the authorities regularly tried to discredit the sanctuary and remove its Franciscan-Bernardine guardians. One of the methods for undermining the role of the monastery as the centre of local community life was opening a psychiatric hospital in the monastery's buildings in 1950. At that time, the seraphic college, restored after the war, was closed down, as well. Despite all these forms of harassment, the religious centre in Radecznica remained the mainstay of Catholic and national values, while monks stayed committed to the nation's problems and upheld the Polish identity among local inhabitants. As the political situation in Poland became normalized after 1989, the former religious life was gradually revived and the sanctuary in Radecznica returned to its previous social functions.

Contemporary Integration Initiatives in Sanctuaries

The patriotic and integrative activities of the region's worship centres did not end when Poles regained their political independence and religious freedoms in the 1990s. The traditions of active participation in the political and social life of the sanctuaries of the Lublin province survived until today. Their activity is still closely related to the socio-political situation, and responds to the current needs of the local communities. However, the current task of the Church is not enticing Poles to fight for independence and faith – as it was in the past, but to concern for the contemporary state of the country and society. Prayers for the intentions of the Homeland continue to be held in shrines and other church centres. However, patriotic actions and celebrations prepared by the clergy have taken on a different character. Nowadays, their main task is to recall and commemorate important events in the history of Poland, so that national history and traditions are not forgotten or lost, but can be continued among the young generation of Poles.

At the same time, due to their location in a region that is a meeting place for various religions, the shrines of eastern Poland today have other important tasks. In the past, these centres were primarily tasked with strengthening the religious and national identity of the local population in a situation where it was subjected to the influence of the Orthodox Church and strong Russification. Nowadays, the same interpenetration of different confessions is the basis for activities not so much putting up boundaries between different confessions, but promoting interfaith dialogue, eliminating interfaith resentments and aiming at integrating local communities. Therefore, the idea of ecumenism is being disseminated in the shrines of the Lublin province, the realisation of which is further fostered by the educational and cultural functions of sanctuaries. By providing an opportunity to learn about the history, principles of faith, sacred art, traditions and rituals of individual churches, religious centres create chances to understand differences

⁴⁴ J. Borowski, *Dzieje pracy oświatowej OO. Bernardynów w Radecznicy (1922–1950)*, in: *Radeznica. Ośrodek życia religijnego i społeczno-kulturowego*, ed. R.O. Jusiak, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2006, pp. 173–190; Jusiak, *Społeczno-patriotyczna działalność*, pp. 149–163.

between confessions and to accept them, which further leads to friendly coexistence between people of different faiths.

The best-known ecumenical initiative in eastern Poland were The Ecumenical Meetings in Kodeń, which were organised for more than 30 years by the Oblate missionary fathers. The idea of the Kodeń Meetings was born in 1983 as a prayer of thanksgiving for the youth meeting in Taizé. The guiding thought from the beginning was to pray for Christian unity and peace in the world. Historically inhabited by Orthodox Christians, Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics and Protestants, the area around Koden became, for three days, a place for joint prayers, meetings, reflections and discussions on ecumenical dialogue.

In the beginning, the participants were youth, usually students, from all over Poland. However, over time there has been a noticeable decline in the number of participants, and finally these were mostly people who were directly involved in ecumenical activity. The Meetings took place every year, during three days at the end of May till 2015,⁴⁵ and followed the regular schedule. They started on Friday with a service conducted by an Evangelical pastor in the Orthodox church at the Sapieha Castle in Kodeń. On the following day, after the holy mass, there were conferences and lectures of representatives of various Churches, and the next event of the day was the Orthodox service conducted in the Jabłeczna monastery or in St. Michael's Orthodox church in Kodeń. The central event of the third day of the Meetings was Byzantine-Slavic liturgy celebrated in the Neo-Uniate church in Kostomłoty by its parish priest.

Dialogue between denominations was pursued in Kodeń also during the Festival of Life, organized there since 2002. These were holiday meetings of youth from Poland and abroad, lasting a few days, dedicated to ecumenism and support for young people who suffered from various forms of poverty, were lost and looking for God.⁴⁶

The Neo-Uniate parish in Kostomłoty is also committed to the ecumenical activity. First of all, it takes care of establishing and maintaining relationships with other Greek Catholic communities in Poland and abroad, especially these which are nearby – in Ukraine and Belarus. However, the Uniates from Kostomłoty keep also close contact with the local Roman Catholic church. This is noticeable in joint prayers and liturgies at holidays and celebrations, as well as in regular, everyday help. An example can be the special Liturgy of John Chrysostom, celebrated once a year in the cathedral in Siedlce with participation of the local bishop, transmitted on the radio.

Moreover, the parish in Kostomłoty organizes retreats, prayer days and camps for young people from various communities and associations. In 2008 the first Pilgrimage of Unity was organized, with the route from Kostomłoty to Pratulín, whose participants were Catholics of the eastern and western rites from Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. Its idea is reminiscent of earlier times, when Unites and Roman Catholics walked to the relics of Josaphat Kuncewicz in Biała Podlaska,

⁴⁵ W. Romanowicz, *Młodzież pogranicza środkowo-wschodniej Polski wobec ruchu ekumenicznego*, „Colloquium Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych i Społecznych. Kwartalnik”, 3 (2017) p. 114.

⁴⁶ Golec, *Matka Boża Kodeńska*, pp. 86–91.

praying together on the way. The Pilgrimage of Unity is a rarity as it is a kind of mosaic manifested in the diversity of rituals, language and even costumes. The initiative, which has attracted widespread interest from the beginning, is continued and has become a part of the parish tradition.

Conclusions

The presented description of the patriotic activity of the sanctuaries of the Lublin province, although brief, clearly shows their strong involvement in the political and social life of Poland. The patriotic attitude of the spiritual guardians of the sanctuaries, manifested in various forms of religious and social activity, corresponded with national events and needs. At various stages of the history of the country, religious centres actively participated in national initiatives, and were committed to the matters of the entire nation, simultaneously supporting local communities.

The Church centres constituted places of national and religious integration of Poles, a haven of the national identity, a substitute for the Polish state, and provided the feeling of belonging to one community with common history and culture, particularly in the periods of non-independence. One could risk saying that it is largely due to the activity of religious centres, supporting patriotic attitudes and independence movements, that Poles did not lose the national spirit, and fought for regaining independence.

The worship of Mother of God, characteristic to Polish religiousness, has always been reflected in the activities of sanctuaries in the Lublin province. This was also determined by the fact that Marian centres are dominant in the sacred landscape of that region. Moreover, Marian devotion was an element that strongly integrated all Poles in difficult situations and has always been very strongly linked to the patriotic attitudes and independence aspirations of the Polish people. Analogically as for the entire Poland, Holy Mary fulfilled the function of a guardian of the region, as expressed in the titles awarded by the local community, e.g. 'Guardian of the Borders.' Local places of worship could have constituted a specific supplement for national sanctuaries for the local population, e.g. Jasna Góra or Kalwaria Zebrzydowska. Due to the distance or financial or political barriers, pilgrimages to those most important centres were not possible for everyone. Such a supplementary role of local religious centres is suggested by the common name of the sanctuary in Radechnica 'Jasna Góra of Lublin.'

Today, the activities of the shrines of the eastern Lublin province continue to refer to the multicultural and multi-faith nature of this part of Poland. However, at present, the initiation and promotion of interfaith dialogue and, consequently, the integration of local communities have become their most important and momentous function. It should be added that an important role for the implementation of the above ideas is played by the educational and cultural function of sanctuaries. By providing an opportunity to learn about the history, principles of faith, sacred art, traditions and rituals of individual churches, religious centres create opportunities to understand the differences between confessions and to accept them, which in the long run may also result in friendly coexistence between people of different faiths.

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