

**BENIGNUS JÓZEF WANAT OCD**

## **SAINT JOSEPH PATRON OF THE CITY OF KRAKOW**

From the inception of their existence the Discalced Carmelites devoted themselves to honouring the Mother of God as their patroness and to honouring St. Joseph on her account. St. Teresa of Avila widely propagated the veneration of St. Joseph in the Church<sup>1</sup>, and left her lively devotion as an example to follow. Of the seventeen convents of Discalced Carmelite Nuns which she established, she dedicated eleven to St. Joseph<sup>2</sup>. The Reformed Carmelites followed the example of St. Teresa and during her lifetime, in 1581, proclaimed St. Joseph as their patron and as a founder of their reforms. The Provincial Chapter held in 1583 in Almodovar also chose St. Joseph together with the Blessed Mother as the patrons of their first province, giving instructions that their feast days be celebrated in a very solemn way<sup>3</sup>. The Polish province of Discalced Carmelites of the Holy Spirit dedicated several of their houses to St. Joseph, thereby promoting a very special veneration of him, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries all of them founded St. Joseph Fraternities with their own organizational and legal structures.

### **THE SANCTUARY OF ST. JOSEPH IN KRAKOW**

The largest and oldest Carmelite sanctuary of St. Joseph was found, in pre-partition Poland, in Krakow – Podzamcze in the no longer existing church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Joseph<sup>4</sup>. The monastery was erected in 1611–1637 within the defensive walls of the city, with Bishop Piotr Tylicki's approval and be-

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<sup>1</sup> P. Isidorus de san Jose OCD, *El Josefismo de la reforma teresiana*, "Estudios Josefinos", N° 34-35 (1963-1964), 456-457.

<sup>2</sup> Teresa od Jezusa, *Księga fundacji*, Dzieła, t. II, Kraków 1962, p. 339-348.

<sup>3</sup> *Documenta primigenia*, [in:] *Monumenta Historica Carmeli Teresiani*, vol. III, Romae 1977, p. 28. Conf. P. Matias del Nino Jesus OCD, *Primer documento oficial del Patronato de san José*, "Estudios Josefinos", N° 34-45 (1963-1964), 410.

<sup>4</sup> B. J. Wanat OCD, *Kult św. Józefa Oblubieńca NMP u Karmelitów Bosych w Krakowie*, Kraków 1981, p. 45.

nefactors' support. On 26 October 1636 the bishop of Krakow, Jacob Zadzik, consecrated the church and the main altar under the title of St. Michael the Archangel and Joseph betrothed to the Blessed Mother<sup>5</sup>.

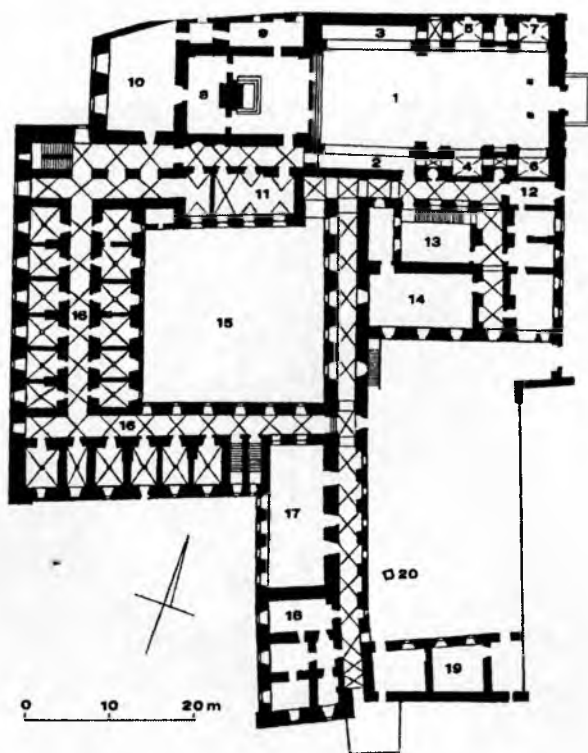
The early Baroque brick church was built on the plan of a Latin cross, with the façade turned east towards Grodzka Street. The main body had three aisles and a transept. The aisles were reduced to two pairs of side chapels connected with a narrow passageway. The façade of the church had no tower but had two-storeys and three-spans, and was modified according to the style of *Il Gesu*, in compliance with an accepted model and the regulations of Carmelite architecture<sup>6</sup>.



The cloister and the church of St Michael and St. Joseph of the Discalced Carmelites in Krakow. Steel engraving J.W. Linke, XIX century

<sup>5</sup> Archiwum Krakowskiej Prowincji Karmelitów Bosych w Czernej (= APKB), Dypl. 146 (The papyrus document with the signature of Archbishop Jacob Zadzik, found in portal of the main altar)

<sup>6</sup> B.J. Wanat OCD, *Zakon Karmelitów Bosych w Polsce. Klasztory karmelitów i karmelitanek bosych 1605–1975*, Kraków 1979, p. 93–96.



A plan of the cloister and the church of St Michael and St. Joseph according to measurement of 1797.

In 1668–1669 with the assistance of the Prior, Ireneusz of the Ascension of the Lord (Wojciech Nuceryna), a separate altar of St. Joseph was built in the left shoulder of the transept. According to the description of Canon Fr. Jacek Łopaciński, the altar was wooden and gold-plated, with a composition of architectural columns, regular beamed with crowned coping, and decorated with gilded statues of saints. The altar was separated from the aisle and semicircular balustrade by Debniki marble<sup>7</sup>. The construction of the altar was begun at the same time as the establishment of the Fraternity of St. Joseph. The Prior placed a new image of St. Joseph on the altar. It was rectangular in size 281,5 x 170 cm, and painted on canvas in oils and glazes. The image was painted by Brother Luke of St. Charles

<sup>7</sup> Archiwum Metropolitalne w Krakowie, Sygn. 28, *akta wizytacji kościołów krakowskich z roku 1748*, p. 615–621.

(Charles Sibrecque 1612–1682), Discalced Carmelite (Flemish) in the Santa Maria della Scala monastery, Rome<sup>8</sup>.



Brother Luke Charles Sibrecque OCD, with the venerated image of St. Joseph, Patron of Krakow

The image represents St. Joseph as a young man (aged approximately 30), in a standing position, turned three-quarters right, with Jesus on his left. The figure of

<sup>8</sup> Before joining the Discalced Carmelites Order the artist was under the strong influence of the Netherlands School, especially the works of P. P. Rubens. As a monk in Rome, he was under influence of the artists of Bolognese School of Carraccich. He studied works of Francesco Albano (1578–1660), Guido Reniego (1575–1642), Domenico Zampicri (1581–1641) and other. Cf. B. J. Wanat OCD, *Kult św. Józefa...*, op. cit., p. 77–91.

the saint shows a well-built man. His face is full of kindness, attentiveness and thoughtfulness. His eyes are glowing with happiness. With both arms he holds the Baby on his left side. His left arm encircles the Child under its right arm, while the Saint's right arm is raised behind the child's back indicating: "Here is the Saviour of the world!" The Baby – amused and bewitched with innocence, and clothed in strands of rich fabric with tassels – holds in His little right hand a small branch with paradise apples – the symbol of the salvation. In His left hand he holds a rose – the symbol of the Saviour. On the right side, a kneeling angel adores him. At the top of the image rises the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove radiating rays on Jesus and St. Joseph. On the right side of the picture, an angel is emerging from the clouds holding a lily (the symbol of chastity) and from the left the cherub is crowning St. Joseph with a garland of roses. The figure of St. Joseph is set against a backdrop of fields, trees and rolling hills on a distant horizon.

On Monday 18 1669, a Fraternity of St. Joseph was founded at the monastery of St. Michael and St. Joseph. The new image of St. Joseph was carried in a solemn procession from the St. Mary's (Mariacki) church to the church of the Discalced Carmelites<sup>9</sup>. From that day on a new era of veneration of St. Joseph as the Patriarch commenced at the Discalced Carmelites' church. The Fraternity of St. Joseph encouraged the blossoming of this worship and in a short time it rose to the rank of archfraternity. At the end of the seventeenth century, the archfraternity had approximately 8000 members, and at the end eighteenth century the records showed 23,068 members<sup>10</sup>. The dynamic life of the archfraternity is testified to by nineteen prayer books with different services to St. Joseph published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the Discalced Carmelites in Krakow<sup>11</sup>. The image of St. Joseph achieved fame as a result of numerous graces. In 1687, during the plague in Krakow, the faithful gave themselves up to the protection of St. Joseph and brought silver-votive offerings of thanksgiving for their rescue from death. A contemporary witness, Fr. Piotr Hyacynt Pruszc, describing the church of Discalced Carmelites wrote: "There is also in this church a very splendid and miraculous image of St Joseph to whom everybody goes with different supplications and they receive help"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> *Skarbu nowoodkrytego dostatki ...*, Kraków 1669, A5.

<sup>10</sup> Archiwum Klasztoru SS. Bernardynek w Krakowie przy ul. Poselskiej, Rkps 165, *Album Confraternitatis sancti Joseph.*; B. J. Wanat OCD, *Łaskami słynący obraz św. Józefa w klasztorze karmelitów bosych w Krakowie na Podzamczu w XVII wieku*, „Atencum Kapłańskie”, nr 465–466 (1986), 269.

<sup>11</sup> B. J. Wanat OCD, *Kult św. Józefa...*, op. cit., p. 124–128.

<sup>12</sup> P. H. Pruszc, *Kleynoty stołecznego miasta Krakowa*, Kraków 1754, p. 17.



*I. E. Belling. Cath. Sc. A.V.*

I. E. Belling, Copperplate of the venerated image of St. Joseph,  
Patron of Krakow from XVIII century.

#### THE PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH OVER THE CITY

The eighteenth century began tragically for Poland. The country became a battleground for Swedish, Muscovite and Saxon armies. Prolonged wars brought her to complete economic ruin. The destruction caused hunger, plague and death. Krakow also suffered. In this difficult period, the Municipal Council, inspired by the Carmelite monks, turned to St. Joseph to rescue the city from plague. In 1714,

in plenary session, councillors of the city and representatives of the guilds numbering 40 persons, in a ballot unanimously chose St. Joseph as a patron of the city of Krakow<sup>13</sup>. Pope Clement XI, on 23 March 1715, by a decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, confirmed their choice<sup>14</sup>. The solemn announcement of the placing of Krakow under the patronage of St. Joseph took place on 11 May 1715, during a solemn celebration of the liturgical feast of St. Joseph the Carer by the Discalced Carmelites. The famous image of St. Joseph was carried in procession around the Market Square, presided over by Archbishop Kazimierz Łubieński. The inhabitants of Krakow participated in the solemnity along with the cathedral-chapter, clergy, orders, the Municipality, Krakow-Academy, and the guilds and Fraternity with their own flags. When the market square of Krakow was filled with the sound of bells and the rumble of cannons from the towers and royal fortifications of castle and city, Bishop Łubieński announced that by the choice of the Municipal Council, St. Joseph was the main Patron of the city of Krakow. He then placed all its inhabitants under the Saint's care. St. Joseph did not disappoint the people's trust in him. All found in him a speedy help and care. On that very day, he healed Jan Antoni Słowakowicz, the medical doctor and the councillor of the city<sup>15</sup>.

The famous picture spread all over Poland through small copperplate pictures, made by the engraver Joseph Belling and through oil canvas copies. Some important, venerated, copies of St. Joseph's image may be found at the Carmelite churches in Warsaw – Krakowskie Przedmieście, in Zagórz near Sanok and in Wiśniowiec, Volhyn. Mirror images of the St. Joseph image in Krakow are found in the collegiate church in Pilica, and in Poznań on the main altar of the Discalced Carmelites church created recently by the Krakow artist George Kumala at the request of Prior Mariusz Józef Jaszczyszyn.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORSHIP OF ST. JOSEPH, PATRON OF KRAKOW

The Discalced Carmelites, with the support of the Municipal Council of Krakow, enthusiastically organized and developed all the liturgical solemnities of St. Joseph to high standards. From 1620–1730 the Discalced Carmelites always used the services of the cathedral band, and then the Jesuit band<sup>16</sup>.

Every Wednesday at 7:00 am, they celebrated votive Holy Mass of St. Joseph before his image. Before Mass the Fraternity members sang the "Officium or the

<sup>13</sup> Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie, Rkps 1232, *Senatus consulta et conclusiones Magistratus cracoviensis*, p. 201.

<sup>14</sup> ASV, Archiwum S. Congr. Rituum, *Decreta Sacrae Rituum Congr. anni 1713–1714 usque ad annum 1715, fol 269 v. i 212 r.*; B. J. Wanat OCD, *Kult św. Józefa...*, op. cit., p. 133–152.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153–156.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115–116.

Hours of St. Joseph". The Mass was celebrated with vocal-instrumental musical accompaniment and with various cantatas in honour of St. Joseph the Patriarch. The Fraternity members committed themselves to request two Masses every quarter in honour of St. Joseph and every Wednesday to sing with the musicians the Litany of St. Joseph. Every Wednesday of Lent, they conducted the Passion service with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, a Passion of Christ (Bitter Sorrows) sung by the bands, and the passion sermon. The Fraternity members wore penitential dresses<sup>17</sup>.

In 1797, the Austrian government closed down the Discalced Carmelites monastery in Krakow. The building was turned into a political prison (presently the Archaeological Museum) and the church was rebuilt in the nineteenth century as a courthouse (presently the Archive of PAN). Dispersed, the Discalced Carmelites monks transferred the most celebrated image of St. Joseph to the convent of the Discalced Carmelites nuns at number 44 Kopernika Street. The image remained there for 135 years, where it was venerated by the nuns. In 1932, the Discalced Carmelites brought the image back to their own new monastery at number 18 Rakowicka Street and placed it in the monastic oratory. In 1979, after the identification of the image and perusal of its splendid history, the administration of the monastery came to the decision to resume its veneration of St. Joseph as the Patron of the City of Krakow. This decision was confirmed by the monastic chapter with all votes in favour on 4 December of the same year. After rebuilding the side-altar of the church (according to the project of architect Józef Dutkiewicz) and after conservation of the image (by Cecylia Wójtowicz), on the solemnity of St. Joseph Worker, 1 May 1980, the enthronement of this most celebrated image took place and the Polish Province of Discalced Carmelites was returned to the care of St. Joseph.

The official resumption of the veneration of St. Joseph as the patron of the city of Krakow and the rededication of all citizens to his care took place on 19 March 1981 with Cardinal Francis Macharski, the Archbishop of Krakow, presiding and in the presence of the diocesan, and religious clergy and townspeople.

Returning then to former traditions, they decided to celebrate daily Holy Mass on the altar of St. Joseph at 7:00 am, and every Wednesday to celebrate the votive Mass of St. Joseph with a homily and devotion. The representatives of the Municipal Council of the City of Krakow partake yearly in the solemnity of St. Joseph.

*Translated by: Edward Wanat SDS*

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p.. 117.