

MICHAŁ WIDERA

Częstochowa

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7849-8887>

wideramichal@o2.pl

Pope Benedict XVI's Visit to the Jasna Góra Monastery in 2006

1. The role of the Jasna Góra Monastery in the history of the Polish nation – 2. Biographical profile of Benedict XVI – 3. The course of Benedict XVI's visit to the Jasna Góra Monastery

The 14th century was the time of Marian cult development in Częstochowa. This phenomenon took place after bringing the Icon of the Mother of God with the Christ Child from the Halicz land and entrusting it to the local Pauline Fathers' community. The pilgrimages to the Jasna Góra Monastery, which gained particular significance to the Polish nation during the period of the Swedish Deluge¹ in 1655, had been increasing gradually. As a result, Mother of God was given the title of Our Lady, Queen of Poland and the King of Poland John II Casimir Vasa² entrusted the whole Polish nation to Her care. The Jasna Góra Monastery played a vital religious and patriotic role during the period of partitions of Poland³ as well as after regaining independence in 1918. Development of scales and forms of pilgrimages to Częstochowa had also taken place. In this scope, there were three turning points, such as: the end of the Polish-Soviet War in the first half of the 20th century, the Jasna Góra Nation Vows made by Cardinal

¹ Swedish Deluge – Swedish invasion of the First Polish Republic in 1655–1660.

² John II Casimir Vasa (1609–1672) – King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania (1648–1668) descending from the Vasa Dynasty.

³ As a result of three partitions of Polish lands that took place in 1772, 1793 and 1795, First Polish Republic disappeared from the map of Europe and its territory was divided between Russia (Russian partition), Prussia (Prussian partition) and Austria (Austrian partition).

Stefan Wyszyński⁴ in the second half of the 20th century and the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła⁵ to the Holy See. Since then, all the subsequent visits of Pope John Paul II had gathered the largest numbers of pilgrims in Częstochowa. This tradition was continued by his successors – Pope Benedict XVI visited Częstochowa in 2006 and Pope Francis⁶ was there in 2016. Pope Benedict XVI's death in 2022 provided an opportunity to recall his only missionary visit as the Pope to Częstochowa, Poland⁷.

The aim of the undertaken research is to show the significance of Jasna Góra Monastery and the course of Benedict XVI's visit to this sanctuary on 26 May 2006. This issue has not been comprehensively researched yet. Unfortunately, the inquiry carried out in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Częstochowa and in the Archives of the Jasna Góra Monastery did not bring expected results. Maybe one day, it would be possible to reach the documentation concerning the preparations and the course of the aforementioned visit. Undoubtedly, archival materials of national institutions will occupy an important place in this research. However, it will take some time for the documents to be accessed. Therefore, archival materials found in the Archives of the Jasna Góra Monastery as well as publications, registering the course of Benedict XVI's visit to Poland, and press materials account for the source base. The methods concerning the analysis of sources and synthesis and later the subject matter has been a problematic arrangement. The research has allowed a detailed course of Benedict XVI's stay in the Jasna Góra Monastery, as well as preparations to this event and the significance of the visit for the Polish nation to be presented.

1. The role of the Jasna Góra Monastery in the history of the Polish nation

The year 1382 marked the arrival of the first members of the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit from Hungary to Częstochowa. In 1384, the Order was given

⁴ Blessed Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński (1901–1981) – Archbishop of Gniezno and Archbishop of Warsaw and Primate of Poland (1948–1981); Cardinal (since 1953).

⁵ Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, St. John Paul II (1920–2005) – Archbishop of Cracow (1964–1978); Cardinal since 1967, Pope (1978–2005).

⁶ Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Pope Francesco (born in 1936) – Archbishop, Metropolitan of Buenos Aires and Primate of Argentina (1998–2013), Cardinal (2001–2013), Pope since 2013.

⁷ Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 1984. *Jasna Góra. Ośrodek kultu maryjnego 1894–1914*. Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 133–264; Michał Widera. 2021. „Pilgrimages from the District of Wieluń to the Jasna Góra Monastery (1921–1939)”. *Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego* 41 (2): 193–206.

the icon of the Mother of God with the Christ Child by Władysław Opolczyk⁸, the Duke of Opole, which was brought from Halicz Land. Soon, this 16th – century masterpiece by an unknown author was given the name of the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa and later it was placed in a special chapel. In decades onward, the Marian cult developed in this city which simultaneously led to an increase in the pilgrimage movement.

The Jasna Góra Monastery gained significant importance for the Polish during the Polish-Swedish War. The siege of Jasna Góra and its heroic defence took place at the end of 1655. At that time, the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa was taken to Silesia. Although these events did not significantly influence the course of the Swedish Deluge, they were important in a religious and symbolic dimension. On 1 April 1656, King John II Casimir Vasa took a vow called the Lwów Oath in the Cathedral church of St. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lviv. Through this Oath, the King entrusted the Commonwealth to the Blessed Virgin Mary's protection, who was announced The Queen of the Polish Crown. On 8 September 1717, as a result of the decision by Pope Clement XI⁹, bishop Krzysztof Jan Szembek¹⁰ crowned the Jasna Góra Icon. It was the first coronation of the Icon of the Mother of God with the Christ Child in the Polish territory introduced with the papal decree and made outside Rome¹¹.

During the partitions of Poland, the Jasna Góra Monastery played an important role in sustaining hope among the Polish society for regaining independence. 123 thousand people gathered during the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Icon Coronation in 1817¹². In further decades, the number of pilgrims coming to Częstochowa was on increase. The Jasna Góra Monastery also became the place

⁸ Władysław Opolczyk (around 1326–1401) – Duke of Opole (1356–1401) descending from the Piast Dynasty, the Palatine in the Wieluń and Częstochowa territory in 1370–1396, etc.

⁹ Clement XI (1649–1721) – Italian priest, the Pope (1700–1721).

¹⁰ Bishop Krzysztof Jan Szembek (1680–1740) – Chełm Bishop (1713–1719) and Grand Secretary of the Crown since 1710, etc.

¹¹ Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 1982. Polskie sanktuarium maryjne. In *Jasnogórska Bogurodzica 1382–1982*. Ed. Jan Majdecki, 9–12. Warszawa: Instytut Prasy i Wydawnictw Nowum; Jerzy Tomziński. 1982. Od Wazów do końca I Rzeczypospolitej. In *Jasnogórska Bogurodzica 1382–1982*. Ed. Jan Majdecki, 235–242. Warszawa: Instytut Prasy i Wydawnictw Nowum; Jan Golonka, Jerzy Żmudziński. 2002. *Kaplica Matki Bożej. Komnata Królowej Polski*. Jasna Góra – Częstochowa: Paulinianum, 141–148; Brunon Kubica. 2007. „Pierwsza koronacja Cudownego Obrazu Matki Bożej Częstochowskiej w 1717 r.”. *Studia Claromontana (next: StCl)* 25: 429–458; Jan Związek. 2011. „Klasztor jasnogórski i parafia częstochowska w relacji Jana Długosza”. *Zeszyty Długoszowskie* 10: 35–47.

¹² Wojciech Kęder. 1993. „Jasna Góra wobec przemian politycznych w Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1661–1813”. *StCl* 13: 194; Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 1998. Jasna Góra na drodze ku niepodległości w latach 1795–1989. In *Częstochowy drogi ku niepodległości*. Ed. Ryszard Szwed, Waldemar Palus, 79–81. Częstochowa: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Częstochowie.

concerning both religious and patriotic conspirational activity. Between 1885–1914, there arrived around 700–1000 pilgrimages annually with the participation of around 300–400 thousand people representing all social groups and including the creators of the national culture as well. The celebration of the second coronation of the Miraculous Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa with crowns given by Pope Pius X¹³ on 22 May 1910 was a consolidating peak for a wide range of Polish society. More than half a million pilgrims took part in it, and they cheered for the Pope and the homeland¹⁴.

After Poland had regained its independence in 1918, the Jasna Góra Monastery played a significant role in raising the moral of society by shaping its patriotic attitudes and a sense of citizenship. In 1920, the bishops gathered at the Polish Episcopal Conference met around 2.500 Upper Silesians and they supported their national aspirations for the unity of the country. During the Polish-Soviet War, the Jasna Góra Monastery became a place of prayer mobilisation against the threat of the loss of independence. Over the duration of the Second Polish Republic, the Monastery was visited by 12 million pilgrims, and in 1930's – in the era of economic crisis and in the boom of social associations – on average by a million pilgrims a year. During the Second World War, not only did the Pauline Brothers provide moral and prayer support for the struggling Polish society, but they also undertook conspirational activity and they facilitated secret teaching in the area of the Monastery¹⁵.

The intensified movement of pilgrims in order to show their gratitude for saving the nation arose after the end of the Nazi occupation. Soon afterwards, however, the

¹³ Pius X (1835–1914) – Italian priest, the Pope (1903–1914).

¹⁴ Archives at Jasna Góra (next: AJG). Ref. SGD 358. Files of Jasna Góra; AJG. Ref. SGD 359. Files of Jasna Góra; AJG. Ref. SGD 360. Files of Jasna Góra; AJG. Ref. SGD 893. Files of Jasna Góra; Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 1979. „Uwarunkowania polityczne Jasnej Góry w latach 1864–1914”. *Chrześcijanin w Świecie* (next: ChS) 11 (7): 31–47; Jabłoński. 1984. *Jasna Góra. Ośrodek kultu maryjnego 1894–1914*, 133–263; Jabłoński. 1998. *Jasna Góra na drodze ku niepodległości w latach 1795–1989*, 82–89; Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 2004. *Jasna Góra bliska i daleka. Ze studiów nad Sanktuarium Narodowym*. Jasna Góra – Częstochowa: Poligrafia Inspektoratu Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego, 120–159, 177–188.

¹⁵ AJG. Ref. SGD 2586a. Files of Jasna Góra; AJG. Ref. SGD 2709. Files of Jasna Góra; Jan Pietrzykowski. 1987. *Jasna Góra w okresie dwóch wojen światowych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ośrodka Dokumentacji i Studiów Społecznych, 113–120; Jan Mazur. 1987. „Społeczna rola Jasnej Góry w okresie międzywojennym”. *ChS* 19 (5): 63–72; Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 1997. *Znaczenie Jasnej Góry w życiu Kościoła i narodu polskiego*. In *Encyklopedia katolicka*. Vol. 7. Ed. Stanisław Wielgus, 1089. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL; Jabłoński. 1998. *Jasna Góra na drodze ku niepodległości w latach 1795–1989*, 43–148; Jabłoński. 2004. *Jasna Góra bliska i daleka. Ze studiów nad Sanktuarium Narodowym*, 189–213, 224–248; Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 2006. *Jasna Góra w II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939*. In *Częstochowa. Dzieje miasta i klasztoru jasnogórskiego*. Vol. 3. Ed. Ryszard Szwed, 181–200. Częstochowa: Urząd Miasta Częstochowy; Janusz Zbudniewek. 2006. *Jasna Góra w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej*. In *Częstochowa. Dzieje miasta i klasztoru jasnogórskiego*. Vol. 3. Ed. Ryszard Szwed, 468–485. Częstochowa: Urząd Miasta Częstochowy.

Communist authorities of the Polish People's Republic posed some problems for the participants of the Jasna Góra Monastery celebrations. Attempts were made to limit the participation of believers in religious manifestations. Nevertheless, a nationwide pilgrimage of 500 thousand pilgrims led by Cardinal August Hlond¹⁶ took place on 8 September 1946. Then, the act of dedication of Poland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary was made. In the following years, public administration effectively hindered the participation of people in walking pilgrimages, which were almost entirely stopped. On 26 August 1956, in the atmosphere of social discontent towards the activities of the authorities after the bloody massacre of workers in Poznań, the Jasna Góra Nation Vows, written by an interned Primate Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, were read out to the millions of faithful. In the following year, the peregrination of the Copy of The Our Lady of Częstochowa Icon blessed by Pope Pius XII¹⁷ was inaugurated. This event was supposed to constitute a form of a spiritual renewal of the nation and preparation for the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland. In 1966, the militia "arrested" the migrating icon because of the antisocial character of the peregrination. As a result of it, there were organised processions only with bare frames. However, such restrictions influenced on strengthening social bonds. Since the 1950s, on the Polish Episcopate initiative, nationwide state pilgrimages¹⁸ to the Jasna Góra Monastery had been organised during the biggest Marian celebrations. Pope Paul VI¹⁹ could not participate in the central millennial ceremony of the Baptism of Poland as the authorities refused to issue him a visa. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, as a papal legate, led the celebration instead. These celebrations became the impulse to fight for the religious freedom in the country. The year 1982, when the 600 years of the Jasna Góra jubilee was celebrated and after Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's election to the Holy See, was the turning point in the walking pilgrimage movement in Poland. Several million people took part in the further visits of John Paul II to the Jasna Góra Monastery. Pilgrimages of workers united by NSZZ "Solidarność" (Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity"), who initiated the peaceful revolution which eventually finished with the fall of communism, started since 1981²⁰.

¹⁶ Cardinal August Hlond (1881–1948) – Archbishop of Gniezno and Archbishop of Warsaw (1946–1948); Primate of Poland (1926–1948); Cardinal since 1927; Servant of God of Catholic Church.

¹⁷ Pius XII (1876–1958) – Italian priest, Pope (1939–1958), Servant of God of Catholic Church.

¹⁸ State pilgrimages – gathered people from specific age groups or social groups.

¹⁹ St. Paul VI (1897–1978) – Italian priest, Pope (1963–1978).

²⁰ Jabłoński. 1997. *Znaczenie Jasnej Góry w życiu Kościoła i narodu polskiego*, 1089; Jabłoński. 1998. *Jasna Góra na drodze ku niepodległości w latach 1795–1989*, 102–118; Jabłoński. 2004. *Jasna Góra bliska i daleka. Ze studiów nad Sanktuarium Narodowym*, 258–277, 287–292, 296–305.

2. Biographical profile of Benedict XVI

Joseph Aloysius Ratzinger was born on 16 April 1927 in Marktl am Inn (in the Free State of Bavaria in Germany) to a family of a military policeman, Joseph (1877–1959) and a cook, Maria (1884–1963). He was the third baby in a row, after Maria (1921–1991) and Georg (1924–2020) in a deeply religious family, who moved to Tittmoning in 1929 and Aschau am Inn in 1932. The latter one was the place where Joseph deepened his eucharistic piety and where he started his school education. Due to his father's negative attitude to Nazism, the family had to change their place of residence many times. In 1937, the family moved to Traustein, where Joseph attended high school. 1939 was the year when he entered the local minor seminary. He became a member of *Hitlerjugend* (the Hitler Youth) – the Youth National Socialist German Workers' Party in 1941. According to a regulation of 1939, all young Germans were supposed to serve in this organisation. In 1942, his study in the seminary was disrupted because a school building was used as a field hospital. Then, he continued his education in high school. Between 1943–1945, he carried out his military service in anti-aircraft artillery in Munich and in infantry barracks in Traustein. He deserted at the turn of April and May and after the US troops' arrival in Germany, he was recognised as a German soldier and after that he was imprisoned in a prisoner-of-war camp in Ainling and Ulm²¹.

In 1945, he re-entered the seminary in Freising together with his brother. At the same time, he undertook philosophical and theological studies in a local theological institute and at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. On 29 June 1951 in Traunstein, he was ordained to the priesthood and next he was referred to pastoral work in St. Blood of Jesus Christ parish in Munich-Bogenhausen (1951–1952). He stayed in Freising from 1952. Firstly, he was employed in the position of a docent in a Bishop Seminary (1952–1954) and in the University of Theology and Philosophy (1954–1957). Later, he became the Bishop of Freising's assistant (1957–1959). He obtained a doctorate in theology based on his dissertation: *The People and House of God in St. Augustine's doctrine of the Church* in 1953; he was conferred postdoctoral degree based on his thesis: *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure* in 1957. He started his work as a fundamental theology lecturer in

²¹ Joseph Ratzinger. 2005. *Moje życie. Autobiografia Benedykta XVI*. Ed. Witold Wiśniowski. Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła, 5–18; John Allen. 2005. *Papież Benedykt XVI. Biografia Josepha Ratzingera*. Transl. Robert Bartold. Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 16–56; Georg Ratzinger, Michael Hesemann. 2012. *Mój brat Papież*. Transl. Kamil Markiewicz. Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 33–52; Elio Guerriero. 2018. *Świadek prawdy. Biografia Benedykta XVI*. Transl. Joanna Tomaszek. Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 17–46; Georg Gänswein, Saverio Gaeta. 2023. *Nient'altro che la verità. La mia vita al fianco di Benedetto XVI*. Milano: Piemme, 89–92.

Munich. He became the dogmatic theology professor in Freising and later he taught at the University of Bonn (1959–1963). Between 1962–1965, he was appointed a chief theological advisor on the works of the Second Vatican Council. University work at the Monastir University (1963–1966), the University of Tübingen (1966–1968) and the University of Regensburg since 1969 marked the next stage of his scientific career. It was the latter University where he set up a *Communio* magazine together with other well-known theologians and later he became its Deputy Head (1976–1977) and Honorary Professor²².

On 25 March 1977, Joseph Ratzinger was appointed Archbishop of Munich and Freising by Pope Paul VI. He was ordained a Bishop on 28 May 1977 and on 27 June 1977 he was elevated to cardinal. He took part in two Conclaves. Between 1981–2005, Joseph Ratzinger was appointed by Pope John Paul II to become Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. Ratzinger resigned his office as Archbishop of Munich and Freising in 1982. He had numerous functions at the Roman Curia including President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, President of the International Theological Commission, an Advisor of the Council of the Second Section of the Secretariat of State; of the Congregations: for the Oriental Churches, for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, for the Evangelization of Peoples, for Catholic Education, as well as for the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pontifical Council for Culture and of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. He was appointed a Vice-Dean in 1998 and he became a Dean of the College of Cardinals in 2002. Three years later, in 2005, he presided at Holy Mass for the funeral of the deceased John Paul II. It was one of largest funerals in the history of the world. Ratzinger received a lot of the Doctor Honoris Causa degrees from American and European universities. He visited Poland several times during important religious events. In 1980, he was a member of the delegation of German bishops who met Primate of Poland Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in the Jasna Góra Monastery. He visited the Jasna Góra Monastery on 26 May 2002 where he celebrated the 25th anniversary of his Bishop's anointment²³.

²² Allen. 2005. *Papież Benedykt XVI. Biografia Josepha Ratzingera*, 56–84, 122–172; Guerriero. 2018. *Świadek prawdy. Biografia Benedykta XVI*, 47–181.

²³ Allen. 2005. *Papież Benedykt XVI. Biografia Josepha Ratzingera*, 151–172; Guerriero. 2018. *Świadek prawdy. Biografia Benedykta XVI*, 209–386; Krzysztof Olaf Charamsa. 2005. „Współpracownik Prawdy”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 79 (4): 95–98; 2005. *Biographie seiner heiligkeit Benedikt XVI* (6.07.2023). https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/de/biography/documents/hf_ben-xvi_bio_20050419_short-biography.html; Życiorys (6.07.2023). https://www.marktl.de/po/papst_lebenslauf.php; Życiorys Josepha Ratzingera (6.07.2023). https://www.kul.pl/zyciorys-josepha-ratzingera,art_11978.html.

On 19 April 2005, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected Pope and he selected the name Benedict XVI. During his pontificate, he went on 24 foreign trips – he was three times in Germany and Spain. He also took 33 missionary visits around Italy. He resigned from his service as the Bishop of Rome on 28 February 2013 and he moved to Castel Gandolfo, where he ended his pontificate. He returned to the Vatican in May 2013 and he moved to the Mater Ecclesiae Monastery as the Pope Emeritus. He died on 31 December 2022. During his lifetime, he published numerous theological books and papal documents. Ratzinger is considered to have been one of the leading Christian theologians²⁴.

3. The course of Benedict XVI's visit to the Jasna Góra Monastery

Their only visit by Benedict XVI to Poland took place on 25–28 May 2006. The visit started in Warsaw, where the Pope met the President of Poland, the clergy, leaders of seven Churches and communities associated with the Polish Ecumenical Council. On the second day, the Pope was officially welcomed in Piłsudski²⁵ Square, where he led the Mass with the presence of about 300 thousand of the faithful. In the afternoon, he went to the Jasna Góra Monastery, where he met people of consecrated life, seminarians, and representatives of Catholic movements. In the evening, the Pope left for Cracow, where he gave a speech from the papal window to the people gathered by the Palace of Cracow Bishops. On the third day after the mass, he visited the Papal Basilica of the Blessed Virgin Mary and John Paul II's family home in Wadowice. Afterwards, Benedict XVI addressed the citizens of the town gathered in the square. Later, the Pope visited the Sanctuary of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Łagiewniki where he met the sick and the disabled. In the afternoon, the Pope went to the Wawel Royal Castle and in the evening, he met the youth at Błonia Park in Cracow. Approximately 600 thousand of the faithful came there. Then, the Pope said goodbye from the papal window to the people gathered there. The last day of the visit started with the Mass at Błonia Park. Eventually, Benedict XVI arrived at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Former German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp and in the evening he was seen off at Kraków Balice Airport where he departed for Rome²⁶.

²⁴ Guerriero. 2018. *Świadek prawdy. Biografia Benedykta XVI*, 387–568; Gänswein, Gaeta. 2023. *Nient'altro che la verità. La mia vita al fianco di Benedetto XVI*, 141–142, 191–209, 325–328.

²⁵ Józef Piłsudski (1867–1935) – the Chief of State (1919–1922), the First Marshal of Poland (in 1920), the Prime Minister of Poland (between 1926–1928 and in 1930).

²⁶ 2006. „Podróż apostolska Jego Świątobliwości Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI do Polski 25–28 maja 2006 r.”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 80 (5): 3–6; Marian Marek Drozdowski,

3.1. Direct preparations for the Pope's visit

The Pauline Fathers from the Jasna Góra Monastery were the first to have sent a telegram inviting Pope Benedict XVI to Poland. His visit coincided with the 350th anniversary of the Lwów Oath by King John Casimir and the 50th anniversary of the Jasna Góra Vows. Before that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as it had been written in the monastery chronicle, visited the Jasna Góra Monastery on 6 June 1979 during St. John Paul II's first visit to Poland. Later, he came to the Monastery on 11–12 September 1980 as one of the 16 members of the German Bishops' Conference delegation, who were invited by the Polish Bishops' Conference. On 26 May 2002, he celebrated the mass in the Jasna Góra Monastery on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the bishop's anointment. The Holy See officially confirmed Benedict XVI's visit to Poland on 8 April 2006. Concerning this matter, the spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls²⁷ issued a communication stating: "On 25–28 May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI will go on a missionary visit to Poland, where he will visit Warsaw, Częstochowa, Cracow, Wadowice, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska and Auschwitz". At that time it was planned that the Pope was supposed to lead the Liturgy of the Word connected with the Litany of Loreto chanting in the Jasna Góra Monastery²⁸.

It was the moment when the preparations for the 7th visit to the Jasna Góra Monastery of the Successor of Peter started. On 12 January 2006, the Archbishop Metropolitane of Częstochowa, Stanisław Nowak²⁹ created a diocesan committee that was responsible for developing the pilgrimage program, supervising its course and providing pastoral care to the faithful³⁰. On 27 February 2006, Benedict XVI made a decision to donate Pope Paul VI's rose to Our Lady of Częstochowa. It was his wish to bring it to Częstochowa on the occasion of the celebrations of the Baptism of Poland Millennium, however, it was impossible earlier as the communist authorities did not give consent to his visit. Benedict XVI's will was to fulfil this intention

Sebastian Fikus. 2010. *Pielgrzymka Benedykta XVI do Polski w 2006 r. śladami Jana Pawła II. Antologia tekstów prasowych*. Warszawa: Instytut Papieża Jana Pawła II, 9–10.

²⁷ Joaquin Navarro-Valls (1936–2017) – Spanish journalist and doctor, director of the Holy See Press Office (1984–2006).

²⁸ Iwona Dojka, Marek Latasiewicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI w Polsce. Śladami Jana Pawła II „Trwajcie mocni w wierze”*. Kraków: Dom Wydawniczy „Rafael”, 48; Waclaw Depo. 2023. „Dziękujemy Bogu za Benedykta XVI”. *Niedziela* 66 (2): 12.

²⁹ Archbishop Stanisław Nowak (1935–2021) – Bishop of the Diocese of Częstochowa (1984–2011), Archbishop, Metropolitane of Częstochowa since 1992.

³⁰ The committee included: bishop Jan Wątroba (chairman), Father Piotr Polek (vice-chairman), Father Czesław Brud, Rev. Andrzej Kuliberda, Father Albert Oksiędzki, Rev. Ireneusz Skubiś and Father Stanisław Tomoń. 2006. „Dekret powołujący Archidiecezjalny Komitet ds. Pielgrzymki Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI na Jasną Górę”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 80 (1–2): 106.

and donate the rose to the Jasna Góra Monastery. In this regard, the figures of St. Casimir Jagiellon³¹ and St. Paul the Hermit³² were placed again after 200 years next to the Icon Our Lady of Częstochowa³³.

New sedilia and kneelers were ordered for the outdoor altar. They were made by *Prosspol* – Marek Kajkowski’s carpentry workshop from the nearby town of Krzepice based on Krystian Patrzyk’s project. The papal throne was light and it was embellished with the coat of arms, papal insignia, gildings and it was covered with white leather. The second throne, made for the Superior General of the Order, had the Pauline Fathers’ coat of arms. Moreover, there were four chairs made for cardinals, a pulpit and kneelers for the Pope and bishops as well as other chairs. A metal construction of the outdoor altar at the hill of the Jasna Góra Monastery was renovated too. New awning blinds protecting from rain and sunrays were fitted and there was a newly fitted carpet in place. In the background of the throne, there was placed a logo of the visit with a slogan “Trwajcie mocni w wierze” (“Stand firm in the faith”), which was extended with distinctive words associated with Częstochowa, “z Maryją” (“with Our Lady”). It was made with the screen-printing technique on the net made of plastic. A white carpet was placed between the throne and the altar. The floral decoration in the colours of the papal flag was also prepared. Special pedestals by the outdoor altar for the honoured guests were built at the Jasna Góra fortifications. A platform for journalists was put in the Potocki Bastion nearby Father Augustyn Kordecki’s³⁴ monument. The main entrance granite stairs leading from the courtyard in front of the basilica to the bastion with Father Kordecki’s monument were renovated. The logo of the visit was put at the Jasna Góra Monastery side gate and on the walls by the outdoor altar. 40 confessionals were put on the outskirts in front of the hill of the Jasna Góra Monastery. Both the Częstochowa citizens and the city authorities made every effort to prepare the decorations for the occasion³⁵.

³¹ St. Casimir Jagiellon (1458–1484) – prince, patron of Poland and Lithuania.

³² St. Paul the Hermit (around 228 – around 341) – first Christian Hermit, patron of the Pauline Fathers’ Order.

³³ In 1812, they were melted into coins which made it possible to purchase cannons supporting the Polish participation in Napoleon’s Invasion of Russia. Mirrors were placed in empty space. For the last 30 years there had been sculptures made of bronze. Preparing room for John Paul’s rose was an opportunity to place the missing figures there again. One of them – the figure of St. Casimir Jagiellon was founded by the city of Gdańsk, the other one, namely the figure of St. Paul the Hermit was founded by an artist-goldsmith Mariusz Drapikowski – the sculptor of both figures.

³⁴ Father Augustyn Kordecki OSPPE (1603–1673) – Prior of the Pauline Fathers’ Order in the Jasna Góra Monastery and commander of its defence during the Deluge.

³⁵ Dojka, Latasiewicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI w Polsce. Śladami Jana Pawła II „Trwajcie mocni w wierze”*, 62; Stanisław Tomoń. 2006. *Jasnogórskie przygotowania do spotkania (6.07.2023)*, <http://m.jasnagora.com/wydarzenie-1743>.

On the day of the Pope's arrival to Błonia Park the hours-long prayer of the faithful gathering there was taking place. It was started with *the Little Office of Our Lady (Godzinki o Niepokalanym Poczęciu NMP)*. Pilgrims were singing the religious song entitled: *Trwajmy mocni w wierze (Stand firm in the faith)* written by Bishop Józef Zawitkowski³⁶ and Rev. Wiesław Kądziela³⁷. Penitential service was conducted at 10 am. Long queues of penitents were standing at confessionals, waiting for the confession. At 12.30 pm, Józef Skrzek³⁸, a composer and a multi-instrumentalist performed: *Kantata Maryjna (Marian Cantata)*, which he created on his own. By 3 pm, Błonia Park and nearby parks as well as avenues leading to the Jasna Góra Monastery filled up with the faithful. Then, the Holy Mass celebrated by Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz³⁹ started. The officers of the Government Protection Bureau and the police as well as around 20 students from the University College of Social Sciences in Częstochowa were responsible for the order of the service in the area of the Shrine. More than 400 thousand people were waiting to see the Pope⁴⁰.

3.2. Benedict XVI's stay in the Jasna Góra Monastery

On 26 May 2006, the Archbishop Metropolitan of Częstochowa, Stanisław Nowak, the Pauline Fathers' delegation headed by their General, Father Izidor Matuszewski⁴¹ as well as representatives of local authorities, including the Silesian Province Governor, Tomasz Pietrzykowski and the President of Częstochowa, Tadeusz Wrona gathered in the car park by Pilgrim's House awaiting Pope Benedict XVI's arrival by helicopter from Warsaw to Częstochowa. Due to the strong wind,

³⁶ Bishop Józef Zawitkowski (1938–2020) – poet, composer, Auxiliary Bishop of Warsaw (1990–1992); later Auxiliary Bishop of Łowicz (1992–2013).

³⁷ Rev. Wiesław Kądziela (born in 1943) – Church Music lecturer at the Major Metropolitan Theological Seminary in Warsaw, author of many religious songs.

³⁸ Józef Skrzek (born in 1948) – Polish multiinstrumentalist, vocalist and composer.

³⁹ Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz (1923–2020) – Archbishop, Metropolitan of Wrocław (1976–2004), Cardinal (since 1985).

⁴⁰ 2006. „Komunikat Archidiecezjalnego Komitetu ds. pielgrzymki Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI do Częstochowy”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 80 (5): 113–114; Dojka, Łata-siewicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI w Polsce. Śladami Jana Pawła II „Trwajcie mocni w wierze”*, 48; Katarzyna Woynarowska, Robert Łukaszuk. 2006. „Benedykt XVI w domu Matki na Jasnej Górze”. *Niedziela* 49 (23): 14; Łukasz Sośniak. 2006. „Papieska wizyta w Częstochowie. Benedykt XVI na Jasnej Górze”. *Gazeta Częstochowska* 16 (22): 3; Ewa Staniewska, Izabela Tyras, Łukasz Drywa. 2006. *Benedykt XVI na Jasnej Górze (6.07.2023)*. <https://m.niedziela.pl/arttykul/79466/nd/Benedykt-XVI-na-Jasnej-Gorze>.

⁴¹ Father Izidor Matuszewski OSPPE (born in 1942) – Prior of the Pauline Fathers' Order in the Jasna Góra Monastery (1996 – 2002) and General of the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit (2002–2014).

the flight was delayed by 20 minutes. The helicopter landed at 5.17 pm. Then, the faithful raised the flags, unfolded banners and they shouted: “Kochamy Ciebie! Viva Papa!” (“We love You! Viva Papa!”). The Archbishop of Częstochowa and the General of the Pauline Fathers’ Order uttered the words welcoming the Pope. Afterwards, the Pope was transported by car to the Monastery courtyard, where he was welcomed by sub-priors and a custodian of the Shrine⁴².

His stay at the Chapel of the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa started with its unveiling by the sounds of the so-called Old Royal Fanfare, which has been played for 400 years. Among others in the presbytery, were the Secretary of the State of His Holiness, Cardinal Angelo Sodano⁴³, the Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski⁴⁴ as well as other Polish cardinals. 600 monks and nuns (including nuns and monks from enclosed religious orders), seminarians as well as representatives of associations, movements, brotherhoods, and secular institutions gathered in the Chapel. After a few minutes of long prayer on behalf of all the pilgrims, Benedict XVI was greeted by the General of the Pauline Fathers’ Order, Father Izydor Matuszewski, who assured the Pope of a prayer for Him, which had been lasting in the Jasna Góra Monastery for many years. By pointing out that the Pope’s visit was taking place on Mother’s Day, he paid the tribute to all the earthly mothers. After that, he kissed the Papal Ring. In turn, Benedict XVI donated the golden rose to Our Lady of Częstochowa, the one which was supposed to be brought to Poland in person by Pope Paul VI 40 years ago. There was a dedication added which could read: “Benedict XVI donates the golden rose to Our Lady of Częstochowa, recalling John Paul II, his much-loved predecessor, the Great Son of the Polish nation (26 May 2006)”. Afterwards, the Pope administered a blessing and *Regina Caeli* was sung. On the way to the papal apartment, which was located on the second floor of the Order, Benedict XVI met mayors of towns and cities belonging to the Shrines of Europe Association⁴⁵ (*Stowarzyszenie Miast Sanktuariów Europy*)⁴⁶.

⁴² Stanisław Nowak. 2016. „Łaska nawiedzin Kościoła częstochowskiego przez Piotra naszych czasów. Pielgrzymki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II i Benedykta XVI na Jasną Górę i do Częstochowy”. *Veritati et Caritati* (6): 345.

⁴³ Cardinal Angelo Sodano (1927–2022) – Secretary of the State of His Holiness (1991–2006), Dean of the College of Cardinals (2005–2019).

⁴⁴ Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski (1939–2020) – Cardinal (since 2001), Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education (1999–2015).

⁴⁵ Among them there were found: President of Częstochowa, Tadeusz Wrona, Mayor of Altötting, Herbert Hofauer, Mayor of Lourdes, Jean Pierre Artiganave, Mayor of Mariazell, Helmut Perti as well as Vice-mayors of Ourem – Fatima, Louis Albuquerque and Vítor Frazao.

⁴⁶ 2006. „Powitanie Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI przez o. Izydora Matuszewskiego, generała zakonu paulinów. Jasna Góra – Kaplica Cudownego Obrazu Matki Bożej 26 maja 2006 r.”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 80 (5): 30–31; Dojka, Latasiewicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI w Polsce. Śla-*

Several dozen domestic bishops as well as foreign ones, the President-in-exile, Ryszard Kaczorowski⁴⁷ and representatives of the local authorities gathered beside the outdoor altar, at the hill of the Jasna Góra Monastery. Benedict XVI was led with the procession to the Jasna Góra fortifications at 6.15 pm. The orchestra intoned the melody of the song: *Chrystus Królem (Christ the King)* and later four Jasna Góra choirs sang a piece: *Tu es Petrus*, composed by the Jasna Góra Monastery organist, Jarosław Jasiura⁴⁸. The faithful at the hill of the Jasna Góra Monastery shouted slogans, such as: “Szczęść Boże, Ojczy Świty!” “Grüß Gott Heiliger Vater!” (“God speed you, Holy Father!”), “Witamy Cię Ojczy Świty!” (“We welcome you, Holy Father!”) i “Kochamy Cię Ojczy Świty!” (“We love you, Holy Father!”). The service started with the Sign of the Cross uttered in Polish. It aroused the faithful’s enthusiasm who shouted: “Niech żyje Papież! Benedetto!” (“Long live the Pope! Benedetto!”). The Pope smiled, asked for silence, and sat at the throne. Then, Archbishop Stanisław Nowak, who greeted the Pope, took the floor. He mentioned that the Poles had always felt free in the Jasna Góra Monastery and that they had entrusted their life to God there. He asked to recite a litany, entrust the pilgrims to the care of Our Lady and he requested a blessing. Finally, words: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini!* echoed⁴⁹.

Having greeted the Pope, the deacon exposed The Holy Sacrament in the 18th-century old monstrance made by Brother Makary Szyftowski⁵⁰. The Pope, kneeling with his face directed towards the crowd of the faithful gathered behind the Icon, and was accompanied by the Master of Pontifical Celebrations, Archbishop Piero Marini⁵¹. The act of burning incense of *Sanctissimum* took place and

dami Jana Pawła II, „Trwajcie mocni w wierze”, 62; Katarzyna Kolenda-Zaleska, Wojciech Bonowicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI – pielgrzymka do Polski 2006*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 48; Woynarowska, Łukaszuk. 2006. „Benedykt XVI w domu Matki na Jasnej Górze” 14; Jasna Góra – moc wiary. In Drozdowski, Fikus. 2010. *Pielgrzymka Benedykta XVI do Polski w 2006 r. śladami Jana Pawła II. Antologia tekstów prasowych*, 75; Jan Sztukowski. 2021. „Papieskie róże”. *Niedziela* 64 (21): 40–41; Stanisław Tomoń. 2006. *Spotkanie z Benedyktem XVI (6.07.2023)*. <http://www.jasnagora.com/wydarzenie-1757>.

⁴⁷ Ryszard Kaczorowski (1919–2010) – President of Poland-in-exile (1989–1990).

⁴⁸ Jarosław Jasiura (born 1972) – organist, choirmaster and composer in the Jasna Góra Shrine (2005–2021).

⁴⁹ 2006. „Powitanie Ojca Świtego Benedykta XVI przez abpa Stanisława Nowaka, metropolite częstochowskiego. Częstochowa – Szczyt Jasnogórski 26 maja 2006 r.”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 80 (5): 31–32; Kolenda-Zaleska, Bonowicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI – pielgrzymka do Polski 2006*, 48; Nowak. 2016. „Łaska nawiedzin Kościoła częstochowskiego przez Piotra naszych czasów. Pielgrzymki Ojca Świtego Jana Pawła II i Benedykta XVI na Jasną Górę i do Częstochowy” 345; Staniewska, Tyras, Drywa. 2006. *Benedykt XVI na Jasnej Górze (6.07.2023)*. <https://m.niedziela.pl/arttykul/79466/nd/Benedykt-XVI-na-Jasnej-Gorze>.

⁵⁰ Brother Makary Szyftowski (around 1667–1740) – Pauline artist and jeweller.

⁵¹ Archbishop Piero Marini (born in 1942) – Archbishop, Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations (1987–2007), President of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses (2007–2021).

Father Izydor Matuszewski read the adoration prayer on Mary's remaining with disciples in the Cenacle. Then, the song: *Bądźże pozdrowiona Hostio Żywa* (*Hail, Living Host*) was sung, the quotation from the Acts of Apostles was read out and *Ave verum* was sung. Afterwards, Benedict XVI delivered the 20-minute-long homily in the Italian language intertwined with the elements from the Polish language. Remaining parts of the Polish translation were read out by the Secretary General of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Bishop Piotr Libera⁵².

The Pope directed his address mainly to consecrated people, clerics preparing for the priestly service and representatives of the church movements. He compared his meeting in the Jasna Góra Monastery to Mary's remaining with apostles in the Cenacle. He said the following words on Our Lady: "Mary, Our Lady is among us. Today, she is leading our meditation. She is teaching the prayer to us. She is showing us how to open our minds and hearts for the Holy Spirit coming to us, whom we will pass to the whole world". Moreover, the Pope drew attention to the need for quiet moments and reflection so as to learn from Mary how to live in faith and how to stay close to God in normal, everyday moments of our lives. Then, Benedict XVI explained the significance of faith in people's lives and he recalled John Paul II's teaching, who said that faith means giving ourselves to God. The Pope also encouraged people to deepen their faith and efforts so that the faith could be present most of all in people's thinking and acts. Mary in the Cenacle was teaching scared disciples how to persevere in the faith. That is why Benedict XVI encouraged religious people to stick to their consecrated life first and foremost regardless of undertaken activity. He appealed to candidates for the priestly service to fix their eyes on Jesus under the direction of Mary and learn the right attitudes from Him, so that in their priesthood, they could show Jesus to everyone, who will visit them. He remarked that the world and the Church need priests. The Pope reminded the representatives of different new movements in the Church that the longevity of their communities is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. He expressed hope that there would be more of them in the future and they would reach the areas where priests or religious people cannot get to. He encouraged to get to know schools of spirituality recognised by the Church and to reach for Saints' legacy, which should not be locked in monasteries or libraries. He reminded that evangelical wisdom taken from great saints' works and examined in our own life should be carried in a mature way to the world of culture, work, media, politics as well as family and social life. A test of faith should indicate its comparison to

⁵² Bishop Piotr Libera (born in 1951) – Auxiliary Bishop of Katowice (1997–2007), Secretary General of Polish Episcopal Conference (1998–2007), Bishop of Diocese of Płock (2007–2022). Tomoń. 2006. Spotkanie z Benedyktem XVI (6.07.2023). <http://www.jasnaгора.com/wydarzenie-1757>.

Mary's faith. At the end, Benedict XVI referred to words beginning his first encyclical: *Deus caritas est* and he repeated that God is Love. The Pope encouraged the gathered to bear witness to this truth through learning in the School of Mary. Only with Her is it possible to experience that God is Love and learn how to show the loving God in a various way to the world⁵³.

After the homilia, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the prayer *Pod Twoją obronę (Sub Tuum Praesidium)* were sung. At the end of the prayer, the Pope administered a blessing with the Holy Sacrament. Then, there were also blessed the devotional objects brought there, such as foundation stones for the construction of churches in Polish parishes, commemorative plaques, the bell for the Pallottines' church in *Dolina Miłosierdzia* in Częstochowa and the Katyń Cross for the Golgotha of the East. Afterwards, Benedict XVI kissed the altar and went to the papal apartment greeting the faithful⁵⁴.

Meeting Pauline brothers and fathers coming from different Orders in the Knights' Hall was the last part of the Pope's visit at the Jasna Góra Monastery. Then, the commemorative photographs were taken, and the Successor of Peter was given a copy of the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa and an amber, gilded chalice with a paten by the Gdańsk "Solidarność" movement created by Mariusz Drapikowski⁵⁵. Afterwards, the Pope went to the helipad and while he was boarding the helicopter, the faithful were still praying, thanking the God for meeting the Pope. Benedict XVI took off from Częstochowa to Cracow at 7.48 pm. His stay in the Jasna Góra Monastery extended by 45 minutes. The celebration was assisted by around 200 journalists. It was broadcast by *Telewizja Polska* (Polish Television). Benedict XVI was accompanied by the Director of the Holy See Press Office, dr Joaquín Navarro-Valls, a delegate from the Vatican in charge of international pontifical tours, Alberto Gasbarri⁵⁶ and a papal photographer, Arturo Mari⁵⁷.

⁵³ 2006. „Przemówienie Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI w czasie spotkania z osobami konsekrowanymi i przedstawicielami ruchów kościelnych. Częstochowa – Jasna Góra, 26 maja 2006 r.”. *Wiadomości Archidiecezji Częstochowskiej* 80 (5): 32–36; Przemówienie Benedykta XVI w czasie nabożeństwa majowego i spotkania z osobami konsekrowanymi i przedstawicielami ruchów kościelnych na Jasnej Górze. In Kolenda-Zaleska, Bonowicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI – pielgrzymka do Polski 2006*, 57–62; 2010. Przemówienie Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI. In Drozdowski, Fikus. 2010. *Pielgrzymka Benedykta XVI do Polski w 2006 r. śladami Jana Pawła II. Antologia tekstów prasowych*, 358–361.

⁵⁴ Kolenda-Zaleska, Bonowicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI – pielgrzymka do Polski 2006*, 50; Woynarowska, Łukaszuk. 2006. „Benedykt XVI w domu Matki na Jasnej Górze” 14; Tomoń. 2006. Spotkanie z Benedyktem XVI (6.07.2023). <http://www.jasnagora.com/wydarzenie-1757>.

⁵⁵ Mariusz Drapikowski (born in 1960) – Gdańsk artist specialising in goldsmithery, amber maker, creator of sacred art.

⁵⁶ Alberto Gasbarri – main organiser of papal visits.

⁵⁷ Arturo Mari (born in 1940) – Vatican photographer (1956–2007). Dojka, Latasiewicz. 2006. *Benedykt XVI w Polsce. Śladami Jana Pawła II „Trwajcie mocni w wierze”*, 64; Stanisław Tomoń.

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The enormous role of the Jasna Góra Monastery in the history of the Polish nation prompted John Paul II to visit this Shrine as many as six times. His Successor, Benedict XVI, who paid only one missionary visit to Poland, also came to the Jasna Góra Monastery. It was a chance to donate the rose to Our Lady, which was supposed to be brought by Pope Paul VI to celebrate the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland in 1966. The Pope's pilgrimage to the Jasna Góra Monastery additionally emphasized the importance of this sanctuary for the Polish nation and became an occasion to meet representatives of monastic associations, including enclosed religious orders, seminarians and representatives of Catholic associations who Benedict XVI addressed mainly in his homily delivered during the May Mass. His visit was welcomed with great enthusiasm by the pilgrims and in accordance with a few days long missionary tour it led to stay firm in faith with the faithful from all over Poland. A later expression of a connection of Benedict XVI with the Jasna Góra Monastery was a blessing given to the crowns for the Miraculous Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Rome in 2010, which were founded on the 100th anniversary of the recoronation of the Jasna Góra Icon⁵⁸.

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⁵⁸ Katarzyna Jabłońska. 2006. W sali na górze. In Drozdowski, Fikus. 2010. *Pielgrzymka Benedykta XVI do Polski w 2006 r. śladami Jana Pawła II. Antologia tekstów prasowych*, 337; Szczepan Zachariasz Jabłoński. 2013. „Więzi Benedykta XVI z Jasną Górą”. *Niedziela* 56 (8): 16.

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Abstract. The Jasna Góra Monastery has played an important role, both a religious and patriotic one, in the Polish past. The significance of “the Spiritual Capital of Poland” was emphasised by the activity of subsequent Popes as well as by visits of the last Popes to Częstochowa. Paul VI’s unfulfilled desire to be present there during the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland was fulfilled by John Paul II, who visited the Jasna Góra Monastery six times, and later by his Successor, Benedict XVI. The Pope’s stay in Częstochowa became a chance to strengthen consecrated people, seminarians, and representatives of Catholic associations in faith. This proclamation was addressed to the

above-mentioned groups of believers from all over the country. The presence of the Pope and the homily delivered by him was welcomed with enthusiasm by numerous pilgrims, to whom Marian piety was an important element of religious life.

Keywords: Marian piety, pilgrimages, the Jasna Góra Monastery, Benedict XVI.

Streszczenie. Pielgrzymka papieża Benedykta XVI na Jasną Górę w 2006 r. Klasztor na Jasnej Górze w przeszłości narodu polskiego odegrał bardzo ważną rolę nie tylko religijną, ale również patriotyczną. Znaczenie „duchowej stolicy Polski” zostało podkreślone w działalności kolejnych biskupów Rzymu, w tym także poprzez pielgrzymki ostatnich papieży do Częstochowy. Niespełnione pragnienie Pawła VI dotyczące obecności w tym miejscu podczas obchodów Tysiąclecia chrztu Polski zostało dopełnione sześciokrotnym pobytem na Jasnej Górze św. Jana Pawła II, a w 2006 r. także jego następcy – Benedykta XVI. Pobyt w Częstochowie stał się okazją do umocnienia w wierze osób życia konsekrowanego, seminarzystów i przedstawicieli stowarzyszeń katolickich. Przesłanie to zostało skierowane do wskazanych grup wiernych z całego kraju. Obecność papieża na Jasnej Górze i wygłoszona przez niego homilia spotkały się z entuzjazmem licznie zgromadzonych pielgrzymów, dla których pobożność maryjna była ważnym elementem życia religijnego.

Słowa kluczowe: pobożność maryjna, pielgrzymki, Jasna Góra, Benedykt XVI.