



WOODEN ARTWORKS

TREASURES OF THE DIOCESE OF KALISZ



GUIDEBOOK TO THE CHURCHES AND UNUSUAL WOODEN SACRED MONUMENTS



**European
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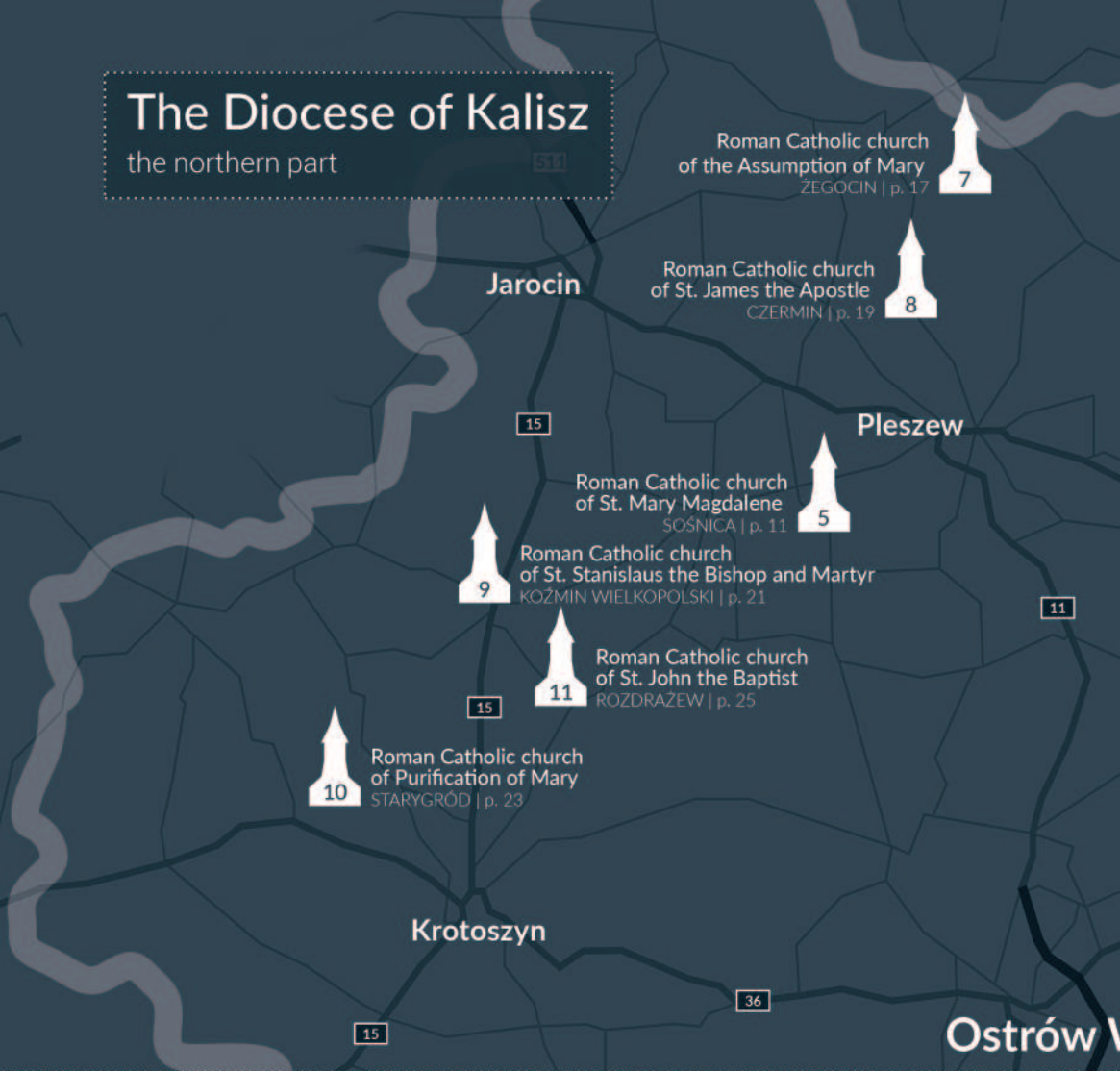
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The project is co-financed by European Union subsidy as a part of European Regional Development Fund

The Diocese of Kalisz

the northern part



About the project

The Diocese of Kalisz is a beneficiary of the project "On the trail of historical churches of the Diocese of Kalisz – revalorization and conservation of wooden monuments for the protection of historical heritage and the increase of the regional attractiveness", co-financed by European Regional Development Fund within the Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment.

The project had a profound and special meaning for the Diocese because wooden historical monuments possess extraordinary value, essential for the local identity and the region's cultural heritage. Almost 80 wooden churches are localized in the area which makes it unique on the national scale. Around 100 mobile and immobile historical objects in seventeen churches were renovated and preserved as parts of the project.



Roman Catholic church
of the Nativity of Mary
BLIZANÓW | p. 14



Roman Catholic
church of All Saints
LISKÓW | p. 3



Franciscan church
of St. Stanislaus the Bishop
KALISZ | p. 5

Kalisz



Roman
Catholic
church
of All Saints
DROSZEŹ | p. 9



Roman Catholic church
of the Nativity of Mary
OCIAŻ | p. 7

The Diocese of Kalisz
the southern part – pages 27-28

v Wlkp.



WOODEN ARTWORKS

TREASURES OF THE DIOCESE OF KALISZ

Saint Joseph is the patron saint of the Diocese of Kalisz, of families, fathers and also of craftsmen who work with wood, especially of carpenters.



Church of All Saints

LISKÓW | Date of construction: 1901

Gothic resurrected

The church and its furnishings have a neogothic character. Neo-gothic style, similarly to other 'neo' styles (neo-baroque, neo-renaissance, neo-classicism) was alive during 19th and 20th centuries in the whole Europe. The inspiration for the style was gothic art, which in architecture characterised first and foremost by perpendicular, slender silhouette of buildings and the use of equilateral pointed arches. Their shape resembled hands put to prayer which should go up to God.

The objects below possess ornamental elements characteristic to the neo-gothic style mentioned above. That is why they constitute a magnificent, stylistically uniform "set".

Blue colour – reserved for Virgin Mary's robes and a symbol of heaven (dye in this colour was the most expensive one).

The image of the Holy Mother with Child covered by the image of All Saints (patron saints of the church).

St. Peter with Key – "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Mt 16, 18-19).

St. Paul with a sword with which he was beheaded.



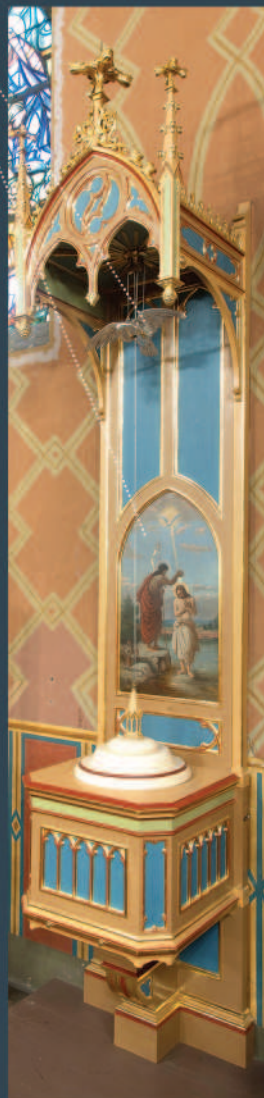
Artists-craftsmen who made the furnishings of the church tried to include not only style elements but also decorations rich in symbolism. Each of the artists was very talented and possessed the „divine spark”.

Silvered statue of a dove which symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

A scene of Christ's baptism in the Jordan river.

Gold colour – the symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven, eternal life and sainthood.

Figures of Christ and the four evangelists (St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John) in arcades with pointed arches.





Franciscan church of St. Stanislaus the Bishop

KALISZ | Date of construction: 1257

Fishing for men's souls

Preaching has always played a very important role for the Franciscans. In order for the preachers to be well seen and heard, a suitable position was necessary – a pulpit (Polish: *ambona*, from Greek *step, elevate*). During ages they have taken different shapes (compare examples from Koźmin Wielkopolski and Uszyce).

In Franciscan church, pulpit has taken a very sophisticated form of St. Peter's boat. Many preachers delivered passionate sermons above "the sea of heads" of the faithful.

The pulpit was constructed in 1862. Hung high above the floor, according to artists' plans, it was to focus attention. The voice of the speaker was heard in every corner of the church. The "basket" of the pulpit which bounced off sounds was responsible for that.

Papal coat of arms: a tiara with crossed keys below – the attribute of St. Peter, the first Pope (the following bishops of Rome are his successors).

Nets – a fisherman's attribute.

The figurehead, the ship's prow decoration, in the shape of an angel playing the trumpet.

Stairs which lead to the pulpit situated on "the prow".

Simon Peter, i.e. St. Peter the Apostle, was a special Fisherman. It was to him that Christ himself said: "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people" (Luke 5, 10-11).



Confessio, a confession of sins

Probably under the influence of moving sermons many of the faithful took the sacrament of penance. Since the Council of Trent (16th century) confessional has been the place where they could confess their sins. In every period, the confessional took less or more complex shapes (compare with the object in Żegocin).

Beautiful, almost 250 year-old confessionals in the late Baroque style are found at the Franciscans', which have been moved here from an old Jezuit church among others.



The symbolism of a heart in flames and IHS monogram (from Greek: Jesus Christ) on the confessional indicates its Jesuit origin. The Jesuits emphasized the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Many secrets and mysteries could be told by effaced kneelers, which were used by the people who would confess there and an openwork wall through which they confessed their sins...

This type of confessional is a result of the experience with wood which artist-monks gained. The confessional was supposed to look monumental and at the same time to ensure intimacy and concentration for the faithful during the act of confession.



Church of The Nativity of the Saint Virgin Mary

OCIAŻ | Date of construction: 1786

Our Lady of the Snows

On the main altar, Madonna with Child was portrayed in the style of Our Lady of the Snows. It is the most popular and eagerly copied image of St. Mary dating to the 12th century. It is kept in the basilica Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. The nickname "of the Snows" refers to a legend which says that during a hot August day in 352 one of the seven Roman hills, the Esquiline, was covered... in snow. In this miraculous way St. Mary picked a spot for building of Her new church. The founders were a couple who wanted a child. For their devotion they were blessed with offspring.



Small figures of the founders can be seen at St. Mary's sides. They wanted to immortalize themselves. The hierarchy of significance is used in the picture according to which the size of the figures reflects their importance.

Who was the married couple depicted in the painting? Members of the local nobility? Maybe they also awaited children? Perhaps the founding of the picture is the effect of their trust and hope for help in the solution of the problem?

The date of the painting: Anno Domini 1637.

The signature of the artist: 'AS'.

„The one who sings, prays twice” - St. Augustine

On a gallery (a balcony) decorated with flowery openwork walls there is a historic pipe organ dated to the end of the 18th century. It was integrated into the balustrade: the pipes “blend” into it to create a unified whole. Thanks to this the instrument of a 7-note scale (register), one hand manual (keyboard) and pedal keyboard, seems to enter the interior of the church. The music which fills the building magnificently completes the singing of the faithful. The multitude of voices, human and instrumental, allows to fully experience the Eucharist, for the greater glory of God.

The organs have played for the people of Ociąż for almost 250 years and they accompany them in various celebrations. They sound happy during Christmas, weddings and baptizms, and sad during the Holy Week and funerals.

• Sima (S-shaped convexo-concave profile) and floral motifs. Characteristic for the Rococo style: *rocaille decoration*)

• Biblical King David – the author of psalms - played the lyre.

• Floral openwork wall frieze.



“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.”



Church of All Saints

DROSZEW | Date of construction: 1787

The history of salvation

There is a very interesting group of statues in the church. It was created in 1865 and it used to decorate... the parish cemetery. A local folk sculptor wanted to move the viewers, encourage them to contemplate the scenes of passion drawn out from wood. Especially during the Great Lent the scenes had to stimulate the imagination of the faithful by recalling the history of Salvation: from the original sin to the death by crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.

Pelican striking its breast
(a symbol of passion and death
of Christ).

Christ crucified.

Skull ("Golgotha" in Hebrew
means "the place of the skull")
between a crossed spear (which
pierced Christ's side) and
a sponge put on a hyssop (with
which vinegar was given to
dying Christ to drink).



The secret of predella

The side altar had a secret that restorers revealed by accident while cleaning historic fragments of this object.

On a modest, wooden surface of predella (a plain desk decorated with a bas-relief or a painting) many layers of paint were discovered. When they were scraped off completely, an old painting revealed itself to the eyes of the surprised restorers.



Angels holding oval frames with scenes depicting pious acts of unknown saints (halos above the figures' heads indicate that these are saints). Who will identify them correctly? Time will tell.

So called *Arma Christi* – the instruments of the Passion which were to remind the faithful the stations of the Way of the Cross as well as the unbreakable connection of compassion and suffering.

- the cup of bitterness,
- scarlet robe (the symbol of the mocking of Christ),
- the hand of God,
- a rooster (before it crowed, St. Peter had denied Christ three times) on the column of the lashing,
- a ladder (symbol of the descent from the cross),
- a hammer (nailing to the cross) and pliers (taking out of nails),
- the pouch with 30 silver coins (the symbol of Judas' betrayal) and dices (soldiers cast dices for Christ's tunic).

Our Lady of Sorrows.

St. Veronica (Vera eikon – "true image") with a veil on which the face of tormented Christ was reflected.

St. John Apostle and the Evangelist, beloved disciple of Christ

St. Mary Magdalene with the attributes: jars with oils.

Adam and Eve next to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil where the serpent-Satan is lurking. The scene shows the moment of committing the original sin.



Church of St. Mary Magdalene

SOŠNICA | Date of construction: 1745

Christ has resurrected

A special artwork kept in the church is a full statue of Resurrected Christ. Dated to the half of the 18th century it has typical Baroque style elements (such as characteristic draping of the robes). Unknown artist, possibly inspired by religious texts connected with Easter, created the figure of the Saviour. To emphasize the effect of a "living" statue, the work was polychromed and then gilded (the crown and the hip band).

The gold crown – the symbol of royal power of Christ.

He is giving blessings with His right hand.

According to the Easter song from the Middle Ages, "Christ is resurrected" and "holds a banner in His hand" (as a sign of victory over death).

The purple coat on His shoulders is the symbol of blood, fire and saving torment which is reminded in the text "Lenten Lamentations": "Dressed in a scarlet garment (...) mocked", "dressed in purple robes, sceptered with a reed. Mercy He does plead".

Christ is standing on the globe as the Ruler of the Universe.



Untypical saints

Three oil paintings also deserve attention. They present untypical saints. The first of them is Benon, who probably was the patron saint of farmers and breeders from Sośnica:

"Because you are in the care of cattle extremely experienced (...)
Let the wing of your care
protect our cattle from disease;
you farm, and we like farm workers,
your servants".

Church Songbook, Poznań 1894

The patron saint is shown in bishop's clothing. He is giving blessing to the pair of farm animals with his right hand. An ox and a cow are attributes of Benon which he can be identified by. There is a country landscape in the background – the place of work of the patron saint of cattle breeders.



In the side altar of the Crucifixion, with the cross in the main quarter, a tondo with the image of St. Lutgardis is put. She was a Flemish nun of the Cistercians order who lived at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries. As a small girl she had the first of many visions of Christ. She joined the convent and quickly became the abbess while experiencing numerous supernatural epiphanies. She eagerly promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Women parishoners from Sośnica probably prayed to her during giving birth because St. Lutgardis help was invaluable then. Apart from this, the patron saint also takes care of the blind and the handicapped.

Crucified Christ gives His blessing to St. Lutgardis with His right hand 'detached' from the cross.



Opposite St. Lutgardis there is the second, left side altar. There is a painting of the Archangel Michael in the centre and above him a tondo with the image of St. Ivo. St. Ivo was a lawyer who lived at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries and who was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis. Even though he had a high social status as a diocese judge, he also took care of the poor, widows and orphans.



St. Ivo is holding his attributes: a book and a pen.

Above the patron saint's head there is a sign in Latin: "St. Ivo the lawyer of the poor".



Church of The Nativity of the Saint Virgin Mary

BLIZANÓW | Date of construction: 1532

The copy of the image from Jasna Góra

In the main altar there is an image of the Holy Mother of Blizanów. It has accompanied the people from Blizanów for 400 hundred years now and it has enjoyed a special cult because the prayers said in front of the image are very often heard. The evidence for this are numerous votive offerings donated by the faithful (in 1655 the miraculous image received almost 100 of them!) as well as many pilgrimages which take place even today.

The image is a copy painted in life from the original painting from Częstochowa. It was created in the 17th century in one of the many workshops located by Jasna Góra, which created commissioned replicas.



The most precious of the votive offerings is a dress made of silver sheet and two crowns donated around 1760 by the castellan of Rogoźno's wife, Anna Molska. Her husband Maksymilian, the owner of the village, offered in turn two remarkable altars.

The faithful reacted very emotionally to every miracle. In effect there are many interesting votive offerings. Among them there is a silver plaque with three teeth. Perhaps a prayer relieved the pain?

A song wrote especially in honour of the Holy Mother of Blizanów is sung in the church during the celebratory unveiling of the image.

Altars like a *tableau*

Maksymilian Molski was a friend of the Franciscan and Jesuit orders from Kalisz and he decided to popularize the cult of their saints among the citizens of Blizanów. The altars founded by him were divided by narrow frames into quarters where images of selected saints were put: just like in a tableau or a photo album.

The Jesuit altar

St. Andrew Bobola – known as the Apostle of Polesie region and an avid 'hunter of souls', during the wars with the Cossacks died a martyr's death (he was tortured, mutilated, set on fire and finally stabbed to death by sword).

St. Francis Xavier – he went for missions to India, Singapore, and Vietnam among others, he also evangelized Japan. He advocates during plagues and violent storms.

St. Ignatius of Loyola – the founder of the Jesuit order. As a young man he led a life of a bellicose knight, a courtier and a trifler. He experienced conversion and started to obey the maxim *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* ("To the greater glory of God"). The author of "The Spiritual Exercises" – a collection of retreat exercises (contemplations, meditations), known as Ignatian exercises.

St. Stanislaus Kostka – when he didn't receive his parents' permission to enter the order, he escaped in disguise and he was admitted to novitiate of the Jesuits. He died of malaria.

St. Francis Borgia – a member of the Borgia family (he was a great-grandson of the Pope Alexander VI), when he was young he served at the court of Charles V Habsburg. At the age of 16 he got married, he had 8 children. When he was a widower he entered the Jesuit order.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga – one of the youngest canonized Jesuits, he died as a priest who served the sick during the plague.



Brother Josaphat Kuntsevych – a martyr murdered by a crowd of Eastern Orthodox denizens of Vilnius, because he acted for the unification of East Orthodox Church with Catholic.

Franciscan altar

St. Anthony of Padua – he possessed a gift of bilocation (he could be in two places at once), that is why he helps to find of lost things.

St. John of Dukla – he died in Lviv where almost 160 years later he performed a miracle: during the seige of the city by Tugay Bey and Chmielnicki, he appeared in the clouds. Frightened by the appearance, the enemies escaped.

St. Francis of Assisi – he came from a wealthy family, he led a carefree life but under the influence of a disease and a prophetic dream which followed, he decided to change it: he abandoned the wealth and honours and he started living a simple life of poverty.

St. Ladislaus of Gielniów – he died after the ecstasy which he experienced during giving homily on Good Friday in the church of St. Anna in Warsaw.

Blessed Szymon of Lipnica – a famous preacher, he died in Cracow during the cholera epidemy when he helped the sick.

St. Joseph of Cupertino - possessed the gift of levitation (especially during ecstasy) due to which he is the patron saint of aviators, pilots and astronauts.

St. Paschal – the legend has it that during his own funeral mass he opened his eyes twice: at the upraising of the Host and the goblet. It was a reward for his deep reverence for the Holy Communion.





Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

ŻEGOCIN | Date of construction: 1714

Miraculous painting

Dated to around 1600 the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Żegocin was created in the style of Our Lady of the Snows. Originally it was dedicated to the parish of the village Łęg. It ended up in Żegocin in unusual circumstances. The legend has it that during one summer, just after the harvest, water level in the Prosna river rose so much that the river flooded. The flood destroyed a small church in Łęg. Its remains drifted towards Żegocin and with them – the painting of Madonna. When the picture got stranded, local people brought it carefully ashore and it was the last time when the bells of the village of Łęg rang...



The picture quickly became famous for giving grace. For years requests and pleas of many pilgrims were heard so in 1965 cardinal Stefan Wyszyński personally crowned the Madonna. There is a telling sign on the picture: *Sancta Dei Genitrix ora pro nobis* ("Pray for us, o holy Mother of God").

A famous actress, Helena Modrzejewska, who was a guest at Józef Chłapowski's household, prayed in front of the picture. This prominent actress, known for her Shakespearean roles, donated a precious necklace to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Żegocin as a votive offering.

O the most holy Virgin of Żegocin's painting
Save us, save us from danger
We put all our hopes in You
Aid us Mother when we are to die.

A song sung during the unveiling and covering of the picture.

The noble set

A confessional, a founder's bench and benches were done in a local workshop by craftsmen from Greater Poland region in around 1776. During their experiments with wood material, those anonymous artists sculptured oak church 'furniture' into sophisticated shapes. They were decorated with fine ornaments, which required not only precision but also artistic sense.



• decoration know as *rocaille*

• so called volute scrollwork

The antique pieces of furniture were probably founded by the owners of Żegocin – for themselves and the rural community. Surely they must have obtained the sacrament of penance which was given in this black confessional. When the souls were purified from sins, the founders, finding themselves under God's grace, could cross the 'border' below the rood beam and sit in a reserved bench.



• On the benches there are two couples in folk costumes, a man and a woman in nobelman's clothing and the emblems of John the Baptist (decapitated head of the saint in a bowl) and St. John of Nepomuk (the halo of stars, a padlock and a tongue).



Church of St. James the Apostle in Czermin

CZERMIN | Date of construction: 1725

The Madonnas of Czermin

Two exceptional paintings of St. Mary deserve a special attention in this church. The first of them is put in the Rococo-style main altar which dates to the second half of the 18th century. In the very centre of this extremely decorative, architectural case, there is a miraculous image of the Mother of God of Czermin. The painting finished in 1662 comes from the former, now gone, church. Therefore, it is older than the altar where it was later put.

The Madonna is presented in the style of Our Lady of the Snows (compare with the example of the Mother of God from Ociąg). The thing that distinguishes the artwork from Czermin is the change of sides. St. Mary who is holding the Child on Her right arm instead of the left, is in fact a mirror image of the original. This was a quite popular procedure in modern times, especially when it came to copying of famous paintings.



The painting is an object of special worship. Madonna listens to pleas which two tables with votive offerings on the sides of the altar bear witness to.

The second Mother of God with Child which one has to notice is the oldest work of art in the church of Czermin. It dates to the Gothic period 1470, when the artists created their works anonymously. The artist who sculptured in soft, lime tree wood was definitely inspired by the Book of Revelation. The work, inspired by the divine spark, shows detailed and delicate robes, hands and faces.

Like the naked child which She is holding on Her hands, St. Mary is wearing a gold crown on Her head – as it suits the true Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Beautiful Madonna embodies the woman of the Apocalypse. Her lavishly draped golden clothes make her look as if she is "clothed in the Sun".

"The silver moon beneath her feet" /Revelation, 12, 1-2/ which was imagined in a very original way, also focuses attention. It is not a typical "crescent" but a human face with its profile turned to the ground.





Monastery church of St. Stanislaus the Bishop and the Martyr

KOŹMIN WIELKOPOLSKI | Date of construction: 1670

From the eyes to the soul

The Baroque art was born during times of religious unrest and reformation. It had one principal aim: to draw attention of the faithful and assure them in the Catholic faith. Because many people were illiterate, visual arts took the role of texts. In this way painting and sculpture became very visual "letters" of *Biblie Pauperum* (the Latin name for the Bible of the poor, the lowly ones, i.e. those who couldn't read), affecting the viewers in a suggestive way. It is precisely why the flamboyant and curvy Baroque figures and characters look immobilized, dramatic, expressive in gestures. As if they were actors who play their roles in the "mission theatre" of the Catholic church, to the greater glory of God.

One of the tools of Counter-Reformation were music and words. That's why pipe organs and pulpits were very important in Baroque churches.

Music of the heaven

The first pipe organs which were mounted in the church in Koźmin played for almost 150 years. When they broke in 1779 a new instrument was ordered. It took 3 years to finish it. Till this day the pipe organs' sound entrances, "caress ears by their sonorous voice".



Probably together with "the music of the heavens", real sounds of pipe organs sounded even more magnificent. The faithful were charmed not only by the things they saw but also by the things they heard. Baroque compositions for pipe-organs written by such masters as Liszt and Brahms were a perfect soundtrack for the liturgy.

A voice from the clouds

The artist who created the pulpit surely possessed the 'divine spark'; his work is a bold vision and masterful performance.

On the canopy, among the cherubs (the most important angels in the hierarchy who were companions of God), there is God the Father with the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove. This bird had symbolized soul detached from body since the ancient times and in Christianity – a soul going to Christ.

Medallions with Christ's bust and the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The pulpit floats in the clouds and is held by a pair of angels.

"Sing aloud to God our strength; (...) Raise a song; sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp. Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day" (Ps 81). Music is like angles' speech to men. On the prospect there are angels who are playing the horns, trumpets, flutes, drums and violines.





Church of Purification of Mary

STARYGRÓD | Date of construction: 1668

Women under the Cross

On the border of the chancel and the nave there is a rood beam. It has a symbolic character and refers to a biblical text: it is a symbol of the covenant between God and people. Since the Middle Ages, on this kind of a "shelf" a sculpture of Crucifixion Group, i.e. the rood, and accompanying figures of Our Lady of Sorrows and usually St. John the Apostle, were placed.

We can see a unique situation in the church in Starygród: two women are accompanying Christ who hangs on the cross. Instead of St. John the Apostle, the figure of Mary Magdalene was shown. She is presented in a kneeling position. Her hair is loose and she is wiping tears with one hand.

- The crucifix with Christ comes from the 18th century, however the figures of Our Lady of Sorrows and Mary Magdalene are younger, dated to the second half of the 19th century.



The drama of the scene was shown in a simple, folk way: death in front of the closest ones. A sculptor showed tears on the faces of Mary and Mary Magdalene.

Baptist angel

The baptismal font was made in the Baroque period by local artists. A full-bodied figure of an angel who is kneeling on a trunk is a result of experiments conducted by the artists with wood material. The angel is holding the font with a figure of the lamb on the top. Spread wings and slightly elevated right hand make an impression of movement. The messenger of heaven has just left the Kingdom of God to take part in the sacrament of baptism.

What impression did the unusual font make on the faithful? How many baptisms did the angel witness? For almost 300 years of the figure's existence twelve generations of people of Stary-gród were baptized on the angel's hands.

The figure of the lamb on the top of the font refers to the words of John the Baptist who said upon the approach of Jesus to the Jordan river: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (J 1, 29)

It is said that an artist sees the final work in a lump of unhewn wood. The angel was thus created first in the imagination of an artist, and later in a tiresome and long process a chisel sculptured fragments: meticulously arranged hair, feathers and robes.



Church of St. John the Baptist

ROZDRAŻEW | Date of construction: 1640

Mannerist altar

The church and the altar were built on the initiative of Hieronim Rozdrażewski – the bishop of Włocławek and the Royal Chancellor who lived in the 16th century. He was a member of a noble family and undoubtedly wanted to emphasize its greatness with this endowment. The altar's oldest fragments attest to the bishop's ambition and the splendor of the work. These are elaborately decorated side elements and columns which are almost 400 years old. The onetime woodcarvers experimented with wood while seeking new shapes. The effect of surprise, the play of illusions and fanciful originality of ideas were important. Such a trend in art is called Mannerism. It stemmed from the Renaissance and constituted its changed, reshaped (mannered, i.e. contrived) artistic form.

At the end of the 19th century the church was enlarged and rebuilt in a new style. Probably the upper and bottom parts of the altar and the paintings come from this period.

It took a lot of patience and talent to carve a side decoration of the altar in wood. Openwork composition required from the author a lot of fantasy. The effect was swirly auricular ornament, grapes and angel heads on the top.

St. John is baptizing Christ in the Jordan river (Latin inscription on the ribbon: "Look, the Lamb of God").

On the sides of the altar there are patron saints of Poland: St. Adalbert is holding his attributes: a cross (he christened pagans) and an oar (he sailed to the land of the Prussians by boat), St. Stanislaus the Bishop is presented with a small figure of Piotrowin by his feet.

The columns are decorated with candelabra, leaves arranged symmetrically, grapes, and ornamented fittings.



The Diocese of Kalisz

the southern part

Ostrzeszów



Roman Catholic church
of Holy Trinity
DZIESŁAWICE | p. 33

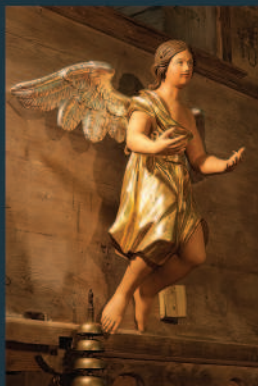
S8

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Roman Catholic church
of The Holy Virgin Mary
the Queen of Poland
JAKUBOWICE | p. 37





Roman Catholic church
of Holy Trinity
WĘGLEWICE | p. 31

Roman Catholic church
of St. Andrew the Apostle
ZŁOCZEW | p. 29



Wieruszów

S8



Roman Catholic church
of Sacred Heart of Jesus
PROŚLICE | p. 39

Roman Catholic church
of The Assumption
of the Blessed Virgin Mary
USZYCE | p. 35



Church of St. Andrew the Apostle

ZŁOCZEW | Date of construction: 1614

Last will from the cross

Inside the church, on the chancel wall a historical group of statues was put. Dated to 18th century it shows a moving scene of the lament over the crucified Christ. Usually these depictions were put on the so called rood beam between a nave and a chancel. In contrast, in Złoczew the group has crossed this line and moved towards the sacrum space usually restricted to a main altar and the place for clergy.

The hip band and the crown of thorns are gilded; above the head of crucified Christ there is a sign: 'INRI': Jezus of Nazareth, Jewish King.

St. John the Apostle and Evangelist (the only one from the group of disciples who remained by the cross).

Rococo-style consoles, i.e. decorative cantilevers, which were used to put sculptures at the wall background.

The figures shown here, St. Mary and St. John are symbolic heirs of Christ. Before He died, He expressed His will: "When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." (J, 19,26-28).



Fire-guard(ian)

In the main quarter of the side altar there is a figure of St. Florian, a Roman soldier in silvered armour, who is holding attributes – a banner and a water container. Since the 16th century when the church with St. Florian's relics in Cracow was saved from fire, he has become the patron saint during natural catastrophies, especially fires. He also aids people whose occupation is connected with fire: firemen, ironmasters, chimney sweepers.

He has under his care especially wooden tabernacles, therefore, in many "flammable" churches one can encounter the saint's image (see the polychromy of the vault in Węglewice).



• The Eye of Providence (the symbol of Holy Trinity) accompanied by angels.

• St. Isidore the Laborer, in the foreground a figure of an angel who is ploughing by the means of oxen.

• St. Florian, the patron saint of firemen, is holding a banner in his left hand, and a pail (wooden bucket) in his right, from which water is pouring on the church's model.

The legend has it that St. Florian once saved a burning village by pouring it with just... one bucket of water.

Church of Holy Trinity

WĘGLEWICE | Date of construction: 1670

Illusion painted with a brush

After crossing the church's threshold a rich polychromy of the interior is revealed in front of the faithful's eyes. An anonymous artist cleverly mixed together figural and ornametal motifs as well as elements imitating architectural fragments: plinths, cornices and columns. This way he alluded to the decor of Baroque churches where certain pictorial tricks were used very often. By using them, qualified and talented artists were able to paint realistic windows, niches and even three-dimentional sculptures.

St. Anna is teaching Mary

- an ox (a symbol of St. Luke) •
- a man (a symbol of St. Matthew) •
- a lion (a symbol of St. Mark) •
- an eagle (a symbol of St. John) •

St. Francis

St. Teresa



It's true that in Wętlewice one can detect certain naivety of style, however, it is worth to remember that the interior of a church is not easily painted. An artist who used scaffolding climbed as high as the vault which he had to prime first (cover with mixture of adhesive and chalk). Next he put diverse ornamental motifs, architectural elements and even patron saints by the use of a blueprint. Then he completed the pictures by hand with a very detailed contour. In many places the decoration is meticulously developed. For painting, distempers were used whose binding element was probably... egg yolk. Due to this, it was possible to obtain luscious colours.



Hearts in flames: St. Mary's (pierced with the sword of sorrow) and Jesus' (pierced with the lance)

St. Florian

Christ Pantocrator (the ruler and the judge of the Universe) is sitting on a throne among cherubs, holding a cross in His right hand, and in His left – the Bible with A and Ω symbols: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end". (Revelation 22, 13-14)

St. Anthony

Virgin Mary in the company of angels

St. Stanislaus Kostka

Church of Holy Trinity

DZIESŁAWICE | Date of construction: 1670

The erection board

The board was created probably for an important event for the local community: a ceremonial establishment of a parish or an erection of a new church. It is special for a few reasons: rarely ever churches made of wood have an erection board which would survive till this day, it is made of wood and probably dates to 1492 (!). Although the date is hard to read, the board is unmistakably an unusual relict of the past. It is thought that the board was originally put in a church that previously existed in this spot.

Now the board hangs above the entrance to the vestry.

A sign carved in the board: *In nomine Patri Et Filii Et Spiritus Sancti Anno Domini...* (In the name of the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit...), now blurred in many places and hardly legible.



The erection board from the older church has been composed into the architecture of the new one. It was a symbolic act which emphasized the permanence of the church's existence.

Tender Madonna

The painting which presents Madonna with the Child was painted by Ferdinand Winter, a 19th century German artist. After studying in Germany and Belgium he moved to Wroclaw where he took on religious painting. His works were inspired by the Nazarene painters. It was a group of artists who reacted against the academic way of painting and who worked in the style of Italian Renaissance (quattrocento). They mainly painted religious scenes. The members of the Nazarene group led an ascetic life. They stood out thanks to their clothes and hairstyle because they wore loose-fitting cloaks and had long hair.

Madonna who is holding the Child is an example of an image full of gentleness, tenderness and simplicity. In her beautiful face one can notice a resemblance to female figures painted by such Renaissance artists like the famous Sandro Botticelli.



Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

USZYCE | Date of construction: 1517

Holy benefactresses

A meticulously decorated 18th century side altar dedicated to Holy Trinity is very interesting. The altarpiece (also known as a retable, i.e. painted or carved "screen" of the altar) was beautifully decorated with openworks by skilled woodcarvers.

While looking at the piece, the effect of work of the craftsmen from the turn of Mannerism and Baroque, it is worth to appreciate their creative enthusiasm.

St. Rosalia – the hermit from the 12th century who lived in a cave in Sicily is an effective guardian against the plague. In the picture she is presented with a skull because during a plague outbreak in Palermo, the saint appeared in the dream of a young village girl and ordered to move her remains from the cave to the city. When this was done, the plague miraculously ceased.

The Christ Resurrected

The scene of baptism of Christ.

St. Apollonia with a palm tree twig, in the open right hand she is showing her own teeth. She is the patron saint of dentists and she also gives courage to patients before the visit to the dentist.

Painting of the Holy Trinity is put on the main altarpiece: the Son of God (on the left) and God the Father (on the right), and the Holy Spirit above Them in the shape of a dove.

According to the tradition, in the eve of St. Apollonia's day (9th February) praises were sung to her and the saint was even asked to 'save from toothache'. This prayer from the 18th century includes a request for relief of toothache:

'When toothache occurs so much that the head hurts
it is not easy for the barber to pull out,
o the martyr whose teeth were knocked out
relief the pain, beget my teeth are not gnashed in hell'.



Those who have ears, listen

The colours are the thing which attracts attention in this late Renaissance pulpit. Images of the four Evangelists are painted on it. Each of the saints has been depicted with his attribute (an object or a figure). Below the images of the saints, their names are put as well.



- The attributes of the Evangelists refer to the opening scenes of the Gospels they wrote:
- St. Mark – a lion (the work of St. John the Baptist, the voice of one calling in the wilderness)
- St. Matthew – a man (the pedigree of Jesus Christ)
- St. Luke – an ox (a sacrifice that Zechariah made to God when he learnt that his prayers were heard and his wife Elisabeth would give a birth to his son, John the Baptist)
- St. John – an eagle ('In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. It is the most sublime, 'lofty' Gospel which describes miracles of the Son of God).

Prošlice and Jakubowice are in the historical region of Silesia where for many years mostly evangelical community lived. Evangelicism has had an impact on the arrangement of the churches' interiors. They have characteristic elements such as altars with pulpits and galleries. The founders of the churches were the von Frankenberg family.

After the World War II these lands were incorporated to Poland and the churches passed to Catholics.



Church of The Holy Virgin Mary the Queen of Poland

JAKUBOWICE | Date of construction: 1585

Altar with pulpit

For Evangelicals the most important thing in a temple was the proclamation of the word of God. Therefore, in the centre spot they put a pulpit on which the faithful focused their attention. They also attached importance to the sacrificial table (the altar) where holy communion was given. By putting together the two elements an original object was created – an altar with a pulpit (especially popular in the 18th century).

After the seizure of the building by Catholics, the pulpit in the middle of the altar and the stairs leading to it became unnecessary. On the main altarpiece a painting of The Mother of God of Częstochowa was put. Today not many churches possess altars with pulpits.

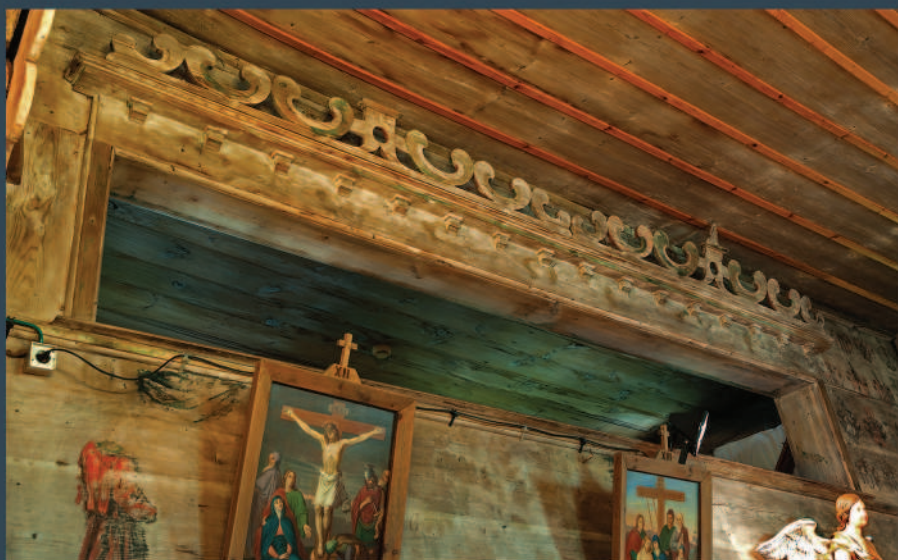


The pulpit of an Evangelican preacher was originally in the place of the painting.

The effect of work with wood done by the sculptors is an altar with decorations typical for the final stage of the Baroque style, so called Rococo. Artists then liked more sophisticated and decorative forms, such as spiral columns.

A balcony for the chosen ones

A unique place in some churches is a specially accented founder's lounge which is a "balcony" for the founder, open towards the chancel. Each benefactor who offered help, especially financially, was ensured his own space where private benches were. Such a lounge, like in theatres or opera houses, provided comfortable conditions during a liturgy or a mass. Apart from this, it was also a nobilitation by literally "elevating" those who helped the parish, by separating them from the rest of the faithful who were sitting in normal benches in the nave.



Who sit in the lounge? One could presume that it was built for the church's founders, the von Frankenberg family. Later it was probably taken by other distinguished parishoners.



Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus

PROŚLICE | Date of construction: 1580

Untypical gallery

The interior of this unique church amazes first and foremost by a masterly manner in which wooden details were done. Inside the church there is a storeyed passage (a gallery) with benches for the faithful (just like in Jakubowice), which was typical for Protestant churches. Evangelicals gathered with families to listen to sermons and seats had to be provided. The most important parishoners, the founders, sat in a special place: benefactor's private lounge. Compare with Uszyce and Jakubowice), situated above the vestry.

- Surley not once did a solemn protestant song, which told about the trust and faith in God and which was written in 1529 by Martin Luther, sound from the galleries:

„A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.”



The benefactor's lounge adjoins the main nave. From the outside, it outstands from the building as a characteristic annex with a separate entrance for the founders and owners of the village.



The Altar with Pulpit

The pulpit was once a part of the altar. It was fixed in the place where now the statue of Christ stands.

On the left side of the altar one can still see old stairs which were used by an Evangelican preacher 300 years ago...

Church of The Nativity of the Saint Virgin Mary in Blizanów

Blizanów 4, 62-814 Blizanów

Church of St. James the Apostle in Czermin

Czermin 16, 63-304 Czermin

Church of All Saints in Droszew

Droszew 8, 63-460 Nowe Skalmierzyce

Church of The Holy Virgin Mary the Queen of Poland in Jakubowice

46-262 Jakubowice

Franciscan monastery church of St. Stanislaus the Bishop in Kalisz

7 Sukiennicza Str., 622-800 Kalisz

**Church of St. Stanislaus the Bishop and the Martyr
in Koźmin Wielkopolski**

60 Klasztorna Str., 63-720 Koźmin Wielkopolski

Church of All Saints in Lisków

25 Ks. Bliźńskiego Str., 62-850 Lisków

Church of Holy Trinity in Dzieśławice

Dzieśławice 20, 56-513 Międzybórz

Church of The Nativity of the Saint Virgin Mary in Ociąż

17 Kościelna Str., Ociąż, 63-460 Nowe Skalmierzyce

Church of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Proślice

46-262 Proślice 26

Church of St. John the Baptist in Rozdrażew

1 Pleszewska Str., 63-708 Rozdrażew

Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Sośnica

Sośnica 89, 63-330 Dobrzyca

Church of Purification of Mary in Starygród

Starygród 16, 63-705 Kuklinów

Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Uszyce

Uszyce 71, 46-310 Gorzów Śląski

Church of Holy Trinity in Węglewice

17 Kopernika Str., Węglewice, 98-405 Galewice

Church of St. Andrew the Apostle in Złoczew

16 Kościelna Str., 98-270 Złoczew

Church of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Żegocin

Żegocin k/Pleszewa 39, 63-304 Czermin

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