

Introduction

Since 1995, the Department of Geography at the Jagiellonian University has been publishing an academic periodical entitled *Peregrinus Cracoviensis*. It has already become a tradition that every year one of the issues is a monographic issue. Until now four such issues have been published and they are devoted to Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Jasna Góra, Leżajsk and to the pilgrimages of Pope John Paul II. This year we would like to devote volume No. 11 to the Sanctuary of God's Mercy in the district of Łagiewniki in Cracow. The basic objective of the publication is to present to the university circles, as well as to the average Polish and foreign pilgrims, the religious phenomenon of the developing worship of the Passion of Christ and of Saint Faustina Kowalska, as well as the role the Sanctuary in the district of Łagiewniki in Cracow plays in it. In our opinion, the range of the development of that worship and its extent considerably transcend the experience connected with the worship of saints. We may venture here a comparison with Saint Jacob the Great who was a patron of pilgrimages and churches in the Middle Ages. In the same way the worship of God's Mercy and of Saint Faustina Kowalska is and will continue to be the denominator of the present and the future. At the same time, it is a unique phenomenon of piety and religious culture, as well as an enticing subject for academic research. It should be emphasised that our publication is the first attempt at a synthesis of the role of the Łagiewniki Sanctuary in the religious life of Poland and of the whole world.

I would like to thank most heartily the Cracow Metropolitan, His Eminence, Cardinal Franciszek Macharski for his blessing and for the words he addressed to us. Equally heartily I would like to thank the *Rector Magnificus* of the Jagiellonian University, Professor Franciszek Ziejka for the splendid essay concerning the new Polish saint. Its title has become the title of the whole volume. My thanks also go to all the Authors for their efforts connected with writing the articles. Special words of gratitude are addressed to the guardians of the Sanctuary of God's Mercy in the district of Łagiewniki in Cracow, the nuns of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, and in particular to Sister M. Elżbieta Siepak for her help and involvement in gathering the materials necessary for the proper preparation of this volume

of *Peregrinus Cracoviensis*. I would like to thank my closest associates, doctor Izabela Sołjan and doctor Elżbieta Bilska-Wodecka, as well as Marian Drązek Msc, Halina Matlak Msc and Franciszek Mróz Msc, for the great effort put in the editorial and technical work connected with our publication. I would also like to express my gratitude to docent doctor habilitated Ludwik Kaszowski OSPPE for the inspiration he gave us. This publication is its fruit.

I also express my special thanks to the authorities of the Jagiellonian University, especially to the Deputy Rector, Professor Maria Nowakowska, and to Ms Teresa Starmach, the Deputy President of the City of Cracow, for the financial assistance that made it possible to publish this issue of *Peregrinus Cracoviensis* dedicated to the worship of God's Mercy and of Saint Faustina Kowalska in Cracow-Łagiewniki.

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