

Basilica

of Presentation of The Blessed

Virgin Mary in Wadowice

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The history of the church and the parish of Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Wadowice

First mention of the church in Wadowice dates back to 1325. Until 1836, it was dedicated to All Saints. After a fire in the 18th Century, the church was further extended, and consequently, its contemporary, three-nave body came into being. In the early 19th century, side chapels and a sacristy were added. Towards the end of the 19th century, Tomasz Pryliński, a renowned architect from Kraków, carried out a general alteration and restoration of the front facade of the church in the Neo-Baroque style. The facade was beautified with rich ornamentation and stone sculptures, which present the Blessed Virgin Mary surrounded by two patrons of the universal church, St. Peter and St. Paul. The alcoves below became a place for statues of the patrons of Poland, St. Stanislaus and St. Adalbert. The portico of the main entrance with a balcony and a modification of the tower helmet, which gives it a unique, characteristic shape have also been created within the period mentioned above. On the exterior wall of the church from the south, a sundial was created with a motto "Time flies, eternity is waiting". In the entrance hall on the left side, there is a plaque which commemorates the event of the church being given the rank of a Minor Basilica by the Pope John Paul II in 1992. The vaults of the church naves are decorated with polychrome which draws on the teaching of the Pope John Paul II. It includes illustrations of encyclicals, pastoral letters and apostolic exhortations. In the chancel there are eight portraits of the Polish saints who were canonized by John Paul II. Around the walls, 19th century Stations of the Cross are located and numerous plaques commemorate deceased parish priests from Wadowice.

The Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (of the Holy Cross)

1 The main element of the chapel is the altar with a miracle-working image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, crowned by John Paul II at the Wadowice market square on 16th June 1999. The chapel is separated from the church with a black grille, which contains papal coats of arms and an inscription "Totus Tuus" as well as numerous votive offerings made by the faithful as a token of gratitude for received graces. At the bottom part of the painting there is an inscription in Latin "S. Maria de Perpetuo Succursu" – Our Lady of Perpetual Help. For more than one hundred years, the image has been highly worshipped in Wadowice and the vicinity. Karol Wojtyła used to pray in front of it each day before he went to school.

The Holy Family Chapel with a baptismal font

6 The main wall is occupied by the altar of the Holy Family. The statues on the altar include Mary with Joseph and the infant Jesus, whereas below – St. Anna and St. John Cantius instead of St. Joachim.

A polychrome behind the altar presents Nazareth. In the central point of the chapel there is a baptismal font **5**. The Holy Family chapel holds a stone Baroque baptismal font with a golden cover, topped with a cross. It was right there that on 20 June 1920 Karol Wojtyła – later pope John Paul II – became baptized by rev. Franciszek Żak, the military chaplain and the assistant curate at the parish in Wadowice.

The main altar – the chancel

7 The central point of the church is occupied by a Gothic chancel, which contains a gold-plated Baroque main altar with images of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Transfiguration of Jesus. At the sides of the altar statues of saints Peter and Paul have been placed. The most recent element of the decor are frescos presenting eight Polish saints whose stories are related to southern Poland, which allude to the Beatitudes. Among the saints are: St. Fr. Raphael Kalinowski, St. Stanislaus, St. Jadwiga, St. Kinga, St. Sr Faustina Kowalska, St. Fr Maksymilian Kolbe, St. Fr Albert Chmielowski, St. Stanislaus Kostka.

The Chapel of Crucifixion

8 The altar presents the Christ on the cross against a background of the fresco with Calvary and Jerusalem. On the right side of the altar there is an image of St. Father Pio – an Italian mystic, who received the gift of stigmata. The tabernacle holds relics of the saints: Father Pio, Szymon of Lipnica and Maksymilian Kolbe.

The Chapel of St. John Paul II

12 In the central point, there is an altar with an image of the patron of the chapel. Four corners of the altar contain four images of churches: the Basilica in Wadowice, the Sanctuary in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, the Wawel Cathedral and the Jasna Góra monastery, places to which St. John Paul II was particularly attached. The altar's predella holds a copy of a fresco from the Sistine Chapel "The Delivery of the Keys to St. Peter by Christ". On the altar stone there is a reliquary, with relics of the blood of St. John Paul II. At the side there stands a statue of Our Lady of Fátima, brought by local pilgrims from Fátima. The chapel holds a statue of St. John Paul II, made out of a linden tree trunk by highlanders from Czarny Dunajec as well as the crozier of the pope Benedict XVI – a memento of the pope's pilgrimage to Wadowice.

Monument to John Paul II in front of the Basilica

13 The monument presents the Pope as a successor of St. Peter, standing on a rock. He holds a crozier in his left hand, from under of which there spurts a spring. With his right hand the Pope blesses the pilgrims. The monument by Maksymilian Biskupski – graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw – is made of bronze. It was unveiled and consecrated by rev. cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz on 30 June 2006.

Plan of the Basilica



of Presentation of The Blessed

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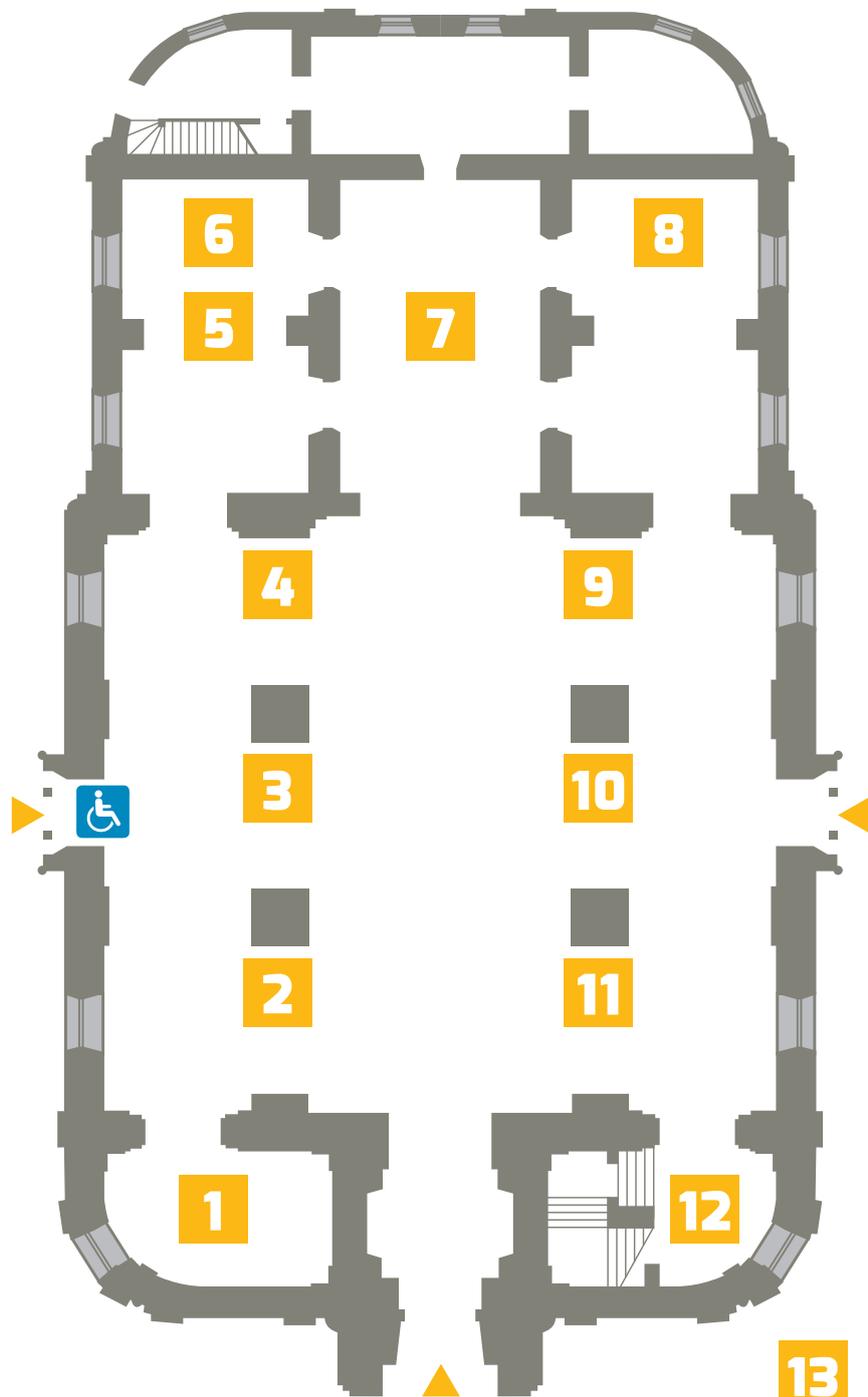
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John Paul II Square

- 1 Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- 2 Altar of Crucifixion
- 3 Altar of St. Anthony
- 4 Altar 'Jesus I Trust in You'

- 5 Baptismal font
- 6 Chapel of the Holy Family
- 7 Main altar
- 8 Chapel of Crucifixion
- 9 Altar of St. Joseph

- 10 Altar of the Heart of Jesus
- 11 Altar of Ecce Homo
- 12 Chapel of St. John Paul II
- 13 Monument of John Paul II

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