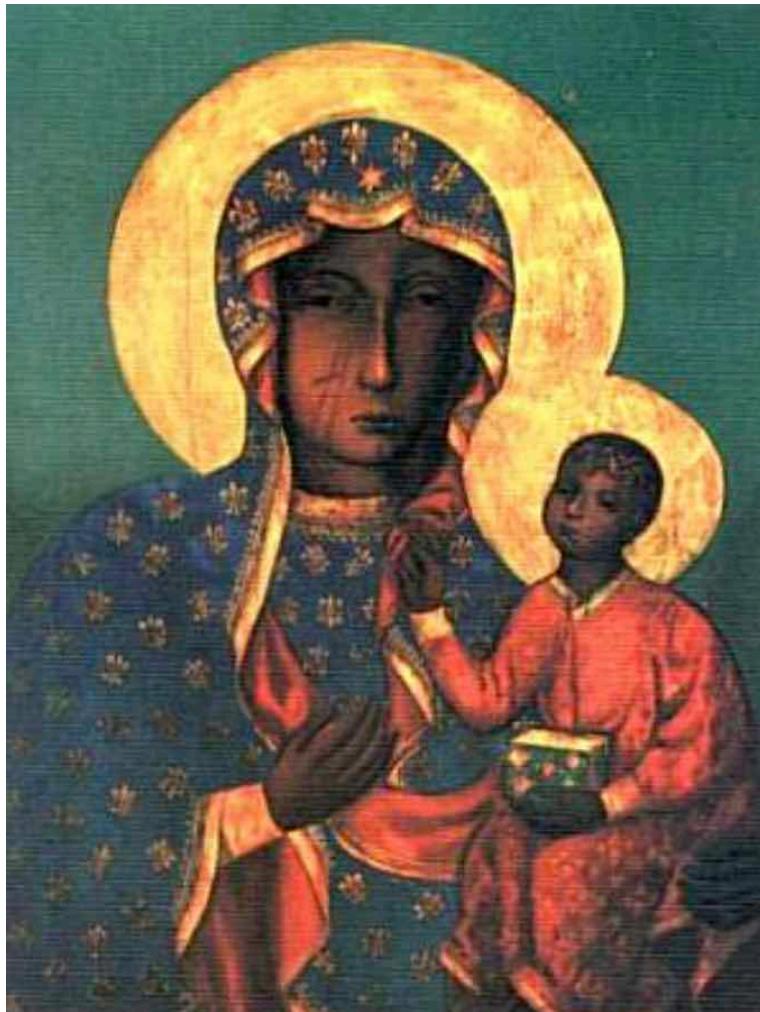


OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA

Feast: August 26



Our Lady of Czestochowa or Black Madonna of Poland is a very famous image of the Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus. Mary in this painting is recognized as the Patroness and Protector of Poland. Mary's face is very dark, that is why she is called the Black Madonna.

This darkening of the image comes from the time of hiding this painting and incensing it with candle smoke.

The painting refers to the traditional form of the icon. Mary points to Jesus as the source of salvation. The Jesus Child stretches out his right hand in blessing and holds the book of the Gospel in his left hand., Jesus looks like a little man, reminding us that Jesus, while still a child, is fully mature in his divine nature.

The painting of Madonna has a long history. Legend says that it was painted by St. Luke on a piece of cedar top built by St. Joseph. Some even claim that it is part of the table used at the Last Supper. Saint Helena found this image when she went to Jerusalem in search of the true cross. She gave the painting to her son Constantine. When the city of Constantinople was invaded by the Saracens, people prayed to Mary and the city was saved. This initiated the great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary associated with this image.

The history of the painting was more accurately documented in 1382, when the owner of the painting was the prince Wladyslaw. When the Tatars invaded the prince's palace and an arrow hit the painting, digging into Mary's throat, prince Wladyslaw decided to take the icon to Opal. This was the city where he was born, so he thought there is going to be the good place where the painting would be safe. On the way there, he stopped and spent the night in Czestochowa. The next day, when they set off on their further journey, the horses pulling the cart with the image of the Mother of God refused to move. Prince Wladyslaw took this as a sign that the painting was to remain in Czestochowa. The icon came under the care of the Order of Hermits of St. Paul in their monastery called the Mountain of Light, or Jasna Góra in Polish. The icon of the Black Madonna of Our Lady of Czestochowa has remained there to this day.

The icon was again in danger and was damaged in 1430, when the Hussites invaded the monastery. The painting was struck twice with a sword, and before it could be hit for the third time, the looter fell to the ground and died. Despite trying to repair the image, the sword cuts and the arrow wound are still visible in the image.

When in 1655 r. the Swedes invaded Poland, people prayed to Mary asking for intercession and rescue from the invaders. And a miracle happened, which was a contribution to the crowning of Our Lady of Czestochowa as the Queen of Polish, and the icon became a symbol of national unity.

There is even a modern legend from the time when Russia invaded Poland in 1920. The Russian army was ready to attack when the image of Mary appeared in the clouds. At this vision, the troops withdrew, and Poland was again saved. The Church venerates Mary, Mother of God, in various ways. Mary can intercede for us, as evidenced by the numerous healings and miracles that over the years have been attributed to prayers to Our Lady of Czestochowa.

Traditionally, also this year Holly Mass and procession were held in the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa and Queen of Poland in Sydney.







Photos: Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa and Queen of Poland in Marayong



Author and translation: Danuta Piotrowska

Sources: <https://dzieje.pl/dziedzictwo-kulturowe/w-kosciele-uroczystosc-najswietszej-maryi-panny-czestochowskiej>
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