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Selected examples from the literary legacy of Rev. Col. Józef Joniec (1900–1956) at the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa

Wybrane przykłady spuścizny pisarskiej ks. płk. Józefa Jońca (1900–1956) w Muzeum Parafialnym przy Sanktuarium Matki Boskiej Bolesnej w Limanowej

Abstract

"Let us not forget the mighty deeds of God" (Ps. 78:7)[1].

Every museum is a unique cultural centre. This is primarily due to the direct impact of the exhibits, which bear witness to history and culture. Museums are custodians of values that strengthen the local community's ties to the region. To generalize somewhat, we can say that a museum's primary mission is to collect, catalogue, preserve (conserve), and safeguard its collections. In addition to these fundamental tasks faced by every museum institution, attention should also be paid to additional responsibilities, such as making the collections accessible and disseminating knowledge about the museum and its collections through exhibitions, scholarly publications, and broadly understood academic and popular science discourse. It is important to highlight the educational value of museums, as the heritage preserved within them can serve as a tool for regional and historical education, as well as for fostering respect for cultural heritage.

Church museums also play a significant role among museums, as they are dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the patrimony of the Church. One of these is the Parish Museum operating at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, which serves as a branch of the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów – a natural arrangement, since, in terms of church administration, Limanowa belongs to the Diocese of Tarnów.

The purpose of this article, however, is not so much to describe the Museum itself, nor to provide a detailed analysis of the biography of the famous chaplain from Monte Cassino, Fr. Col. Józef Joniec, a native of Limanowa, but rather to present selected items from the collection associated with him – specifically, the written legacy that Fr. Joniec left behind, which is now housed in the parish

[1] Ps. 78,7. Specifically, the Millennium Bible translates it as: „that they should place their hope in God and not forget the works of God."

museum in Limanowa. In my opinion, this material can serve as an excellent source of inspiration for in-depth scholarly research, which may result not only in extremely interesting editions of primary sources, but also in a deeper understanding of the region, its society, culture, and history – and, from a Church perspective, its heritage of faith.

Keywords: Fr. Józef Joniec (1900–1956), Limanowa, Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, parish museum, literary legacy

Streszczenie

„Wielkich dziel Boga nie zapominajmy" (Ps. 78,7).

Każde muzeum jest wyjątkowym ośrodkiem kulturalnym. Wiąże się to przede wszystkim z bezpośrednią siłą eksponatów, świadków historii i kultury. Muzea są dysponentami wartości, które umacniają więzi lokalnego środowiska z regionem. Dokonując pewnego uogólnienia, możemy powiedzieć, że zadaniem muzeum jest przede wszystkim gromadzenie, opracowanie, ochrona (konserwacja) i zabezpieczenie zbiorów. Obok tych podstawowych zadań, przed którymi stoi każda placówka muzealna, należy także zwrócić uwagę na dodatkowe zadania, jak udostępnianie zbiorów i upowszechnianie wiedzy o muzeum i jego zbiorach poprzez wystawy, opracowania czy też szeroko rozumiana refleksję naukowa i popularyzatorską. Podkreślić tu należy pedagogiczne walory muzeów, bowiem zgromadzona w nich spuścizna może stać się narzędziem edukacji regionalnej i historycznej, a także wychowania do szacunku wobec dziedzictwa kulturowego.

Wśród muzeów znacząca role odgrywają też muzea kościelne troszczące się o zachowanie i utrwalenie *patrymonium Ecclesiae*. Jednym z nich jest Muzeum Parafialne działające przy Sanktuarium Matki Boskiej Bolesnej w Limanowej i stanowiące filię Muzeum Diecezjalnego w Tarnowie, co jest naturalne, wszak w zakresie administracji kościelnej Limanowa należy do diecezji tarnowskiej.

Zadaniem prezentowanego artykułu jest jednak nie tyle opis samego Muzeum ani też szczegółowa analiza biografii pochodzącego z Limanowej słynnego kapelana spod Monte Cassino, ks. płk. Józefa Jońca, ale przedstawienie wybranych zbiorów z nim związanych, a konkretnie spuścizny pisarskiej, którą ks. Joniec po sobie zostawił, a która została zdeponowana w limanowskim muzeum parafialnym. Materiał ten – w moim przekonaniu – może być znakomita inspiracją do prowadzenia pogłębionych badan naukowych, których owocem mogą być niezwykle ciekawe edycje źródłowe, ale też okoliczność bliższego poznania regionu, społeczeństwa, kultury i historii, zaś w perspektywie kościelnej – dziedzictwa wiary.

Słowa kluczowe: ks. Józef Joniec (1900–1956), Limanowa, Muzeum Parafialne przy Sanktuarium Matki Boskiej Bolesnej w Limanowej, muzeum parafialne, spuścizna pisarska

Introduction

When we look at museums around the world, we quickly notice just how diverse their collections are and how varied the activities of these institutions can be. Many of these institutions house extremely specialized collections and sometimes engage in truly remarkable activities. This rich landscape of museums also includes church museums, which – in addition to the broadly understood activities of collecting and making collections accessible, as well as scholarly work – by their very nature also face pastoral challenges; or, viewed from another perspective, they can be put to excellent use in the Church's broadly understood pastoral mission.

By way of introduction, it should also be noted that church museums have their own specific characteristics, most often stemming from their nature and place of origin. Thus, we can distinguish between diocesan museums, as well as religious order museums, shrine museums, parish museums, and thematic museums. Of course, the way church museums operate does not preclude them from also collecting exhibits or collections of a typically civil (secular) nature.

Henryk Pyka notes that "of the forty Latin Rite dioceses of the Catholic Church in Poland, twenty-four have their own diocesan museums (as of 2005, PJ), To this number should also be added other church museums functioning as cathedral treasuries, monastic collections, parish museums, university museums, missionary and ethnographic museums, folk art museums, memorial halls, and museums associated with the religious veneration of specific saints."[2] Among these institutions is also the Sanctuary Museum at the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, which is a branch of the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów.

There is, therefore, an irresistible temptation to begin by asking about the purpose and significance of church museums, including the Limanowa Museum. Władysław Szczebak provides the answer, offering an extremely interesting conclusion: "The issue of the goals and roles of anything or anyone – whether an institution or an individual – is a question of identity. The Tarnów Diocesan Museum is a cultural institution, but also a church institution. Therefore, in defining its own identity – that is, in answering the question of what it is and what purpose it serves – it should take both of these aspects into account. It is customary in the museum field to use the term 'church museum' to refer to a museum administered by the Church – that is, by a diocese, parish, monastery, or other similar institution. The ecclesiastical character of such a cultural institution would thus stem from its title of ownership. Its mission would therefore naturally be the preservation of works of art, primarily due to their former sacred purpose. The museum itself could then serve as a sort of sentimental repository of memory. However, any other museum can fulfil this purpose. The Church has other objectives to fulfil. If, despite this, it has shown an interest in museum activities since time immemorial, one would have to conclude that these activities, too, should in some way fall within the scope of its proper duties."[3]

The establishment of the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów

The Diocese of Tarnów was established on 20 September 1783, by Emperor Joseph II. Pope Pius VI canonically confirmed the emperor's decision in a bull

[2] H. Pyka, *Dzieje muzeów diecezjalnych w Polsce od czasów powstania do chwili obecnej*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 2006, No. 85, p. 27.

[3] W. Szczebak, *Muzeum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie wobec celów i zadań muzealnictwa kościelnego*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 1997, No. 67, p. 99.

issued on 13 March 1786, titled *In suprema beati Petricathedra*, incorporating the diocese into the Archdiocese of Lviv. Subsequently, Pope Pius VII, by virtue of the bull *Indefessum personarum regia dignitate fulgentium* of 13 June 1805, decided to abolish the Diocese of Tarnów and transfer the cathedral chapter to Kielce, a decision largely dictated by the Third Partition of Poland. By the bull *Operosa atque indefessa* of 24 September 1805, the territories constituting the Diocese of Tarnów were incorporated into the dioceses of Kraków and Przemyśl. On 17 September 1807, the papal decrees came into effect. On 20 September 1821, by the bull *Studium paterni affectus*, Pope Pius VII established the Diocese of Tyniec, and by virtue of Pope Leo XII's bull *Sedium episcopalium translationes* of 23 April 1826, the seat of the diocese was transferred from Tyniec to Tarnów, giving it the name of the *Diocese of Tarnów*.[4]

Virtually from the very beginning of its existence, the Diocese of Tarnów collected documentation that later became the foundation of its historical archive. The dissolution of the Diocese of Tarnów in 1807 led to the transfer of a significant number of documents to Kraków, Przemyśl, and Kielce. After the diocese was re-established, the archival documents of the vicariate general in Stary Sącz and the Tarnów circuit – which had been brought from Przemyśl to Bochnia – as well as the chancery and the consistorial archives, were transferred to Tarnów.[5]

However, these events did not lead to the establishment of a separate archival institution in the diocese. Until the 1950s, all historical documents were stored in the premises of the Diocesan Curia in Tarnów and in the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów. This situation changed in 1959, when Bishop Karol Pękala established an independent diocesan archive.[6]

Much earlier, in 1888, the then-rector of the Tarnów Theological Seminary, Fr. Józef Bąba, founded Poland's oldest diocesan museum,[7] which was initially housed

[4] B. Kumor, *Diecezja tarnowska. Dzieje ustroju i organizacji 1786–1985*, Kraków 1985, pp. 41–54; B. Kumor, *Dzieje polityczno-geograficzne diecezji tarnowskiej*, Lublin 1958, pp. 43–82; M. Łabuz, *Duchowieństwo diecezji tarnowskiej w latach 1886–1918*, Tarnów 2007, pp. 51–54; K. Talarek, *Diecezja tarnowska w latach 1945–1970. Problemy personalno-organizacyjne*, Tarnów 2012, pp. 23–24.

[5] M. Podgórski, *Archiwum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie*, "Tarnowskie Studia Teologiczne" 2008, vol. 27, p. 135.

[6] B. Kumor, *Archiwum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie*, ABMK 1961, vol. 2, No. 1–2, p. 59; M. Podgórski, *Archiwum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie*, s. 135; *Archiwum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie. Historia i zasób*, eds. S. Tokarski, J. Słowik, M. Podgórski, A. Sołtys, Tarnów 2015, pp. 9–10; R. Banach, *Archiwum Diecezjalne* [in:] *Encyklopedia Tarnowa*, ed. A. Niedojadło, Tarnów 2010, p. 29; P. Jaworski, P. Juśko, *Problematyka dziejów szkolnictwa i wychowania w zbiorach fotograficznych Archiwum Diecezjalnego w Tarnowie*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 2001, No. 117 – numer specjalny, p. 111.

[7] It is worth noting that views – or perhaps merely suppositions – appear in scholarly literature suggesting that the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów is widely considered the oldest Roman Catholic museum in the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was established on 25 November 1888, eighteen years after the Diocesan Museum in Włocławek; however, the Tarnów institution was more widely known due to its openness to visitors. Por. [edb] Ewelina Bednarz (wykonawczyni projektu)

in the seminary building, then in the city hall during the interwar period, and is now housed in historic townhouses next to Tarnów Cathedral. Currently, the museum complex consists of: 1) the former "Akademiola" – as Tarnów's first school was called, since it was a branch of the University of Kraków; 2) Mikołajowski House, built in 1524 by Tarnów burgher Jan Mikołajowski and inhabited by the rector of the aforementioned Akademiola; 3) Mansjonariuszy House and Scholasteria.[8]

A cursory glance at the history of the Diocese of Tarnów quickly reveals that, before the diocesan archive was established, a museum had already been founded which – to use contemporary terminology – combined the functions of both a museum and an archive.

The first parish museum in the Diocese of Tarnów was established in 1949 in Tropie on the Dunajec River, It was founded by Zofia Pawłowska, then a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, in the Department of Art Conservation, naturally with the cooperation of the parish priest at the time, Fr. Władysław Sołtys.[9] Subsequently, more museums were established, including the one in Limanowa.

Establishment of the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa

The chronicle of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa records this extremely important event as follows: "A Marian Hall, or Sanctuary Museum, was established in the Pilgrim House and consecrated by Bishop Piotr Bednarczyk on Sunday, 13 November 1988, at 4:00 p.m. A large portion of the collection is a gift

Tarnów, 1888, Muzeum Diecezjalne, https://muzeumpamieci.umk.pl/?p=6374 (20.06.2026). Piotr Sierzchała of the Diocesan Museum in Włocławek writes: "Priests Zenon and Stanisław Chodyński began assembling the museum collections at the Włocławek Theological Seminary around 1870. Their private artifacts – gathered primarily for academic purposes (such as lectures on Church history) – formed the nucleus of a collection initially known as the seminary museum." P. Sierzchała, *Muzeum Diecezjalne we Włocławku. Historia i teraźniejszość*, "Liturgia Sacra" 2010, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 183. It is also worth noting that the Diocesan Museum in Tarnów has been the subject of an exceptionally interesting monograph authored by Fr. Władysław Szczebak, who served as the institution's director. W. Szczebak, *Muzeum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie na tle dziejów muzealnictwa kościelnego w Polsce*, Tarnów 2003.

[8] T. Bukowski, *Muzeum Diecezjalne w Tarnowie. Dzieje – ludzie – dzieła*, "Muzealnictwo" 2008, No. 49, p. 102.

[9] W. Szczebak, *Muzea parafialne i klasztorne na przykładzie diecezji tarnowskiej*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" 2006, No. 85, p. 77. Chronological list of parish and monastic museums in the Diocese of Tarnów: 1) 1949 Tropie; 2) 1950 Grybów; 3) 1955 Dobra; 4) 1955 Szczyrzyc; 5) 1965 Mogilno; 6) 1966 Iwkowa; 7) 1970 Szalowa; 8) 1971 Złota; 9) 1975 Tuchów (Muzeum Misyjne); 10) 1986 Bobowa; 11) 1987 Wał – Ruda; 12) 1987 Szczawa; 13) 1988 Limanowa; 14) 1990 Dom św. Kingi; 15) 1991 Odporyszów; 16) 1991 Krynica-Zdrój; 17) 1993 Tuchów (Muzeum kultu MB. Tuchowskiej); 18) 1994 Paszyn; 19) 1995 Rzepiennik Strzyżewski; 20) 1996 Nowy Sącz (SS. Niepokalanki); 21) 1997 Okulice; 22) 1999 Stary Sącz (Centrum Pielgrzymowania); 23) 1999 Chełm; 24) 2000 Łękawica. W. Szczebak, *Muzea parafialne i klasztorne*…, p. 88.

from Bishop Piotr Bednarczyk."[10] Of course, the first exhibits had been collected much earlier. Józef Szymon Wroński, a distinguished expert on the history of the Limanowa region, mentions in his research that "Father Kazimierz Łazarski not only dreamed of a museum but also gave it serious consideration, since the competition guidelines for the church included a requirement that the church have a treasury on the upper floor. The treasury of the newly built church housed precious vestments, liturgical vessels, as well as various curiosities."[11] Tomasz Biedroń and Anna Siwik state that the museum "is the realization of the vision of Monsignor Ludwik Kowalski (…) who collected historic artifacts.[12] Other donors to the museum included Wincenty and Walenty Gawron, Father Jan Rachwał, and Father Jan Ślęk,[13] as well as many lay donors."

Among the museum's extensive holdings, the valuable collection of paintings of both domestic and foreign origin deserves special attention. Among them is a work by the Spanish painter Juseppe Ribere (1591–1652) depicting St. Francis and an angel playing the violin. Józef Szymon Wroński remarks on this masterpiece: "If it was indeed painted by this Spanish artist himself, and not by a member of his workshop, it constitutes an important work of European painting in the Polish collections."[14]

The entire collection has been included in the museum's inventory; nevertheless, it is worth mentioning works by other artists, such as Aleksander Mroczkowski (1850–1927), Franciszek Mrażek (1891–1970), and the talented local painter Wincenty Gawron (1908–1991).

Until renovation work began, the Sanctuary Museum was housed in the Pilgrim House; once the extensive renovation work – inspired by the current parish priest, Monsignor Wiesław Piotrowski – is complete, the valuable exhibits will likely return to their former, now-restored location. It must be acknowledged here, with undisguised emotion, that the large-scale renovation work undertaken by Monsignor Piotrowski, combined with the revitalization of the sanctuary square, will create a beautiful setting not only for the Limanowa Basilica but also for the museum. It is also a wonderful example of how the preservation of historical monuments can be integrated into pastoral ministry.

When writing about the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady in Limanowa, it should also be emphasized that several years before the museum's opening – specifically on 19 October 1980 – the Parish Library was opened, and the Deanery Library, containing rare books from the collection of Father Jan Duszyński,[15] was organized and opened to the public.

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[10] Archive of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, Chronicle of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, p. 296.

[11] J.S. Wroński, *Muzeum Sanktuaryjne w Limanowej*, "Mater Dolorosa" 1999, No. 4(59), p. 14.

[12] T. Biedroń, A. Siwik, *Życie kulturalne miasta w latach 1945–1989. Muzeum Parafialne* [in:] *Limanowa. Dzieje miasta*, Vol. 2, ed. T. Biedroń, Kraków 2002, p. 375.

[13] K. Wojtas, *Nieznane skarby Muzeum Parafialnego, czyli V Spacer Historyczny po Limanowej*, "Echo Limanowskie" 2018, No. 286–287, pp. 29–31.

[14] J.S. Wroński, *Muzeum Sanktuaryjne w Limanowej*, p. 16.

[15] J. Poręba, *Troska o kulturę i obyczaje regionu* [in:] *Limanowa. Dzieje miasta*, Vol. 2, ed. T. Biedroń, Kraków 2002, p. 467.

Rev. Col. Józef Joniec (1900–1956) – a biographical essay



Imperium Austriae.
Regnum Galiciae.
Districtus Limanovae.

№ 254.

Diaecesis Tarnov
Decanatus Limanova.
Parochia

Testimonium ortus et baptismi.

Officium parochiale ecclesiae ... omnibus et singulis quorum interest aut interesse poterit praesentibus testatur, in libro metrices baptisatorum pro pago ... destinato, tomo V. pag. 24. Nro ser. 8. ... reperiri:

„Anno Domini Milessimo ... mensis Martii.
„hoc est ... et die ... ab R. P.
„natus sub Nro domus 38. ... baptisatus est:

Pater Mater

In quorum fidem has testimoniales literas sigillo ecclesiae munitas manu propria subscribo

Datum Limanowa 27. VI. 911

Baptismal Certificate of Father Józef Joniec. Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa. Inventory No. 632/VI

The Rev. Józef Joniec was born on 11 March 1900, in Limanowa, the son of Wojciech and Agata (née Ryś). As Jerzy Bogacz writes, "They lived in a house that no longer exists, in what was then known as '*by the station*.' Today it's almost in the center of town, but back then it was Sowliny, because the Mordarka stream marked the town's boundary on that side."[16] He graduated from elementary school

[16] J. Bogacz, *Nasz patron* [in:] *Wędrówka przez lata. Jubileuszowe kalendarium 1965–2005. Publikacja okolicznościowa z okazji 40 lecia szkoły*, ed. J. Bogacz, Limanowa 2005, p. 7.

in Limanowa and then went on to study at the Jan Długosz Middle School in Nowy Sącz, and from 1919 at the Henryk Sienkiewicz No. 4 Middle School in Kraków. After the Polish-Russian War, he returned and on 1 June 1921, received his high school diploma. He subsequently entered the Seminary in Kraków, thereby beginning his theological studies at the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University.



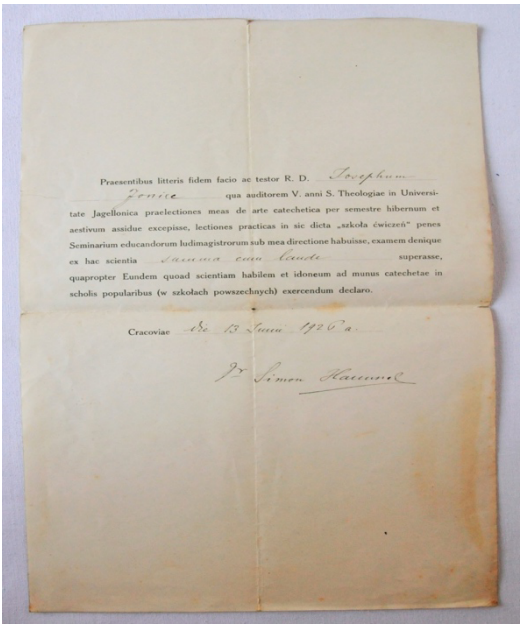
Fr. Józef Joniec student ID card from his time as a student at the Faculty of Theology of Jagiellonian University.[17] Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa. Inventory No. 672/VI

He was ordained a priest on 19 September 1925, by Adam Sapieha, the Bishop of Kraków. He then served as a vicar in Czarny Dunajec for five years, after which he was transferred in 1930 to Balin near Chorzów, where he served as a catechist and later as parish priest. The period of the September Campaign was a time when he actively supported the underground resistance; after the campaign's collapse, he joined the activities of the Service for Poland's Victory and the Union of Armed Struggle. Facing arrest on 23 January, he fled to Hungary across the green border with a group of refugees, where he provided religious services in camps for Polish refugees. Seeking to join the Polish army, he undertook a long journey through Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Palestine, where he enlisted in the Carpathian Rifle Brigade to fight alongside them on the battlefront in Africa. During his stay in Tobruk, he served as a hospital chaplain (it was during this period that he wrote his *Tobruk Sermons*).[18]

[17] A student record book from the time Fr. Józef Joniec studied at the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University – the equivalent of a modern student grade book. It contains a photograph of Fr. Józef Joniec from that period. The first page is written in Latin. The document lists the mandatory subjects of his studies, along with confirmations of his attendance and a few recorded grades.

[18] J. Bogacz, *Nasz patron*, p. 9.

Gradually, in Palestine, his brigade joined forces with soldiers who had arrived from Russia, and thus Father Józef Joniec became the chaplain of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division – the very division that fought at Monte Cassino in April 1944.[19] He then accompanied his soldiers during the battles at San Benedetto, San Elpido, Loretto, Ancona, and Bologna. He remained in Italy after the war ended to establish Polish war cemeteries. In September 1946, he traveled to Great Britain with the Carpathian Rifle Division. It was then that he decided to return to his homeland.



Praesentibus litteris fidem facio ac testor R. D. Josephum Joniec qua auditorem V. anni S. Theologiae in Universitate Jagellonica praelectiones meas de arte catechetica per semestre hibernum et aestivum assidue excepisse, lectiones practicas in sic dicta „szkoła ćwiczeń" penes Seminarium educandorum ludimagistrorum sub mea directione habuisse, examem denique ex hac scientia summa cum laude superasse, quapropter Eundem quoad scientiam habilem et idoneum ad munus catechetae in scholis popularibus (w szkołach powszechnych) exercendum declaro.

Cracoviae die 13 Junii 1926 a.

Dr Simon Hasenöhrl

Certificate of graduation from the Faculty of Theology at Jagiellonian University awarded to Fr. Józef Joniec. Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa. Inventory No. 641/VI

On 21 April 1948, an order from the last commander of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division (3.DSK) – Gen. Bronisław Duch – was read aloud: "As a result of his appointment by church authorities to pastoral work in the country, Parish Priest Józef Joniec is leaving the ranks of the Carpathian Division (…). While serving abroad, he served as head of Catholic pastoral care, first in the Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade and then in the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division. He participated in the campaigns in Tobruk and Libya, as well as the entire Italian campaign. His

[19] It should be noted that Fr. Col. Józef Joniec appears in the record of Gen. Władysław Anders's activities. For further details, see: Dziennik czynności gen. Władysława Andersa 1941–1945 [Diary of Gen. Władysław Anders's Activities 1941–1945], prepared for publication, with an introduction and editorial work by Bogusław Polak, Koszalin University of Technology, Koszalin 1998.

wartime service is inextricably linked to all the hardships, experiences, and traditions of the Carpathian units. In his pastoral work within the Carpathian ranks, he was characterized by deep faith, dedication, and fervent patriotism. These great qualities quickly won him a place in the hearts of the soldiers and earned him the respect of his commanders and superiors. Therefore, this fine figure – a soldier-priest and a trusted friend and confidant to his comrades-in-arms – will always remain in our memory. As I bid farewell to Father Joniec, I commend him on behalf of the Service and express my heartfelt thanks for all of his selfless work."[20]

On June 13, 1948, Father Józef Joniec, a soldier in exile, set foot on Polish soil.[21]

He was assigned to pastoral work in Wola Justowska, and then to Oświęcim, where he became the parish priest.[22] During this period, specifically in 1953, he completed his special work: *The History of the Limanowa Parish.*

The chronicle of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, under the entry for 1955, notes: "A local native, Fr. Józef Joniec, arrived from Oświęcim after having been removed from the rectory by the authorities; he stayed with his family for several months. After some time, he was allowed to return to his post."[23]

Father Colonel Józef Joniec died on 21 December 1956, after a long illness.

A selection of the literary legacy of Father Józef Joniec, housed in the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa[24]

The inventory of the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa has been divided into separate sections so that they correspond to the respective rooms where the exhibits are housed. At the time of writing this article, it is difficult to assess to what extent the large-scale renovation work currently underway will preserve the previous layout of the rooms, display cases, and placement of exhibits. Nevertheless, a review of the aforementioned *Inventory* reveals several extremely interesting avenues for research.

[20] J. Wielek, *Kapelan spod Tobruku i Monte Cassino*, "Echo Limanowskie" 1996, No. 36, p. 9.

[21] J. Bogacz, *Nasz patron*, pp. 8–11.

[22] To date, no comprehensive monograph dedicated to Fr. Józef Joniec has been published. Krzysztof Migacz explored the subject in greater detail in a master's thesis defended in 2000 at the Theological Institute in Tarnów pt. *Życie i działalność ks. Józefa Jońca (1900–1956)*. Promoter: ks. dr Stanisław Salaterski (currently auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Tarnów).

[23] Archive of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, Chronicle of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, p. 130.

[24] The entirety of section 4 of this article was prepared based on the inventory of the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa. See: Archive of the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, Inventory of the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa. Unpaginated.

The purpose of this article is to draw attention to a specific segment of the museum's collection, namely the rich literary legacy of Father Colonel Józef Joniec. The author's intention is not only to present this rich legacy but also to tentatively propose undertaking broader research related to the person of Father Joniec, and perhaps even to encourage the preparation of a source edition of his texts.

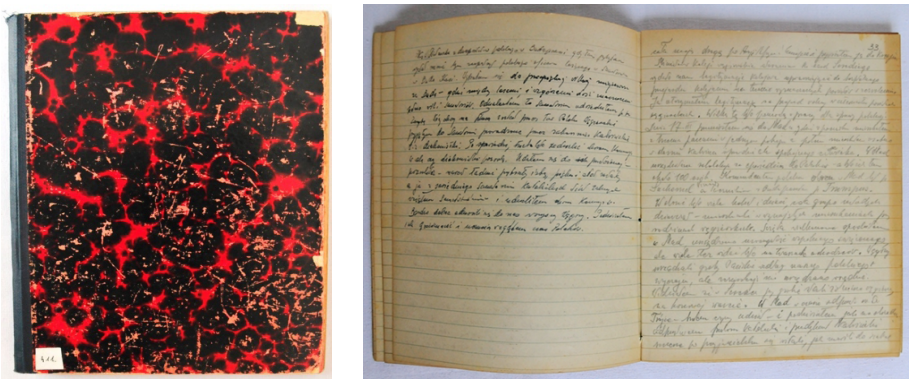
The first item from Father Józef Joniec literary legacy is a manuscript dating from around 1950, titled *An Outline of the History of the Limanowa Regio*n.

The manuscript, measuring 21x17 cm, is an account of the history of the Limanowa region from prehistoric times to World War I. The author draws on numerous sources, describing the earliest settlements, churches, and parishes, as well as events related to the town and its surroundings. The author presents his own hypothesis regarding the origin of the town's name. He lists notable figures, as well as a roster of the local population. He devotes considerable space to the Battle of Limanowa during World War I. There are gaps in the text, and many pages are blank. The manuscript was written in pen and ink in a hardcover notebook with lined pages. Attached to the notebook are numerous notes, sketches, and documents on loose sheets of paper. In good condition.



***An Outline of the History of the Limanowa Region* – a manuscript by Father Józef Joniec from 1950 (cover and title page). Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, inventory number: 676/VI**

The three volumes of *Memoirs* written by Father Józef Joniec constitute an interesting collection. The first volume of Fr. Józef Joniec *Memoirs*, covering the years 1940–1948, is a manuscript that begins with an account of the priest's escape from the country in 1940. It describes his stay in Hungary, his attempts to make his way from there to the Polish Army in France, and finally his departure for the Middle East. The text is written in pencil and ink. Some pages are blank. The notebook contains two postcards, one from Hungary and the other depicting a seashore. The manuscript, measuring 21 x 16.8 cm, was written in the 1940s.



***Memoirs* of Father Józef Joniec from 1940–1948. Vol. I – *manuscript.* The cover and the inscribed page inside the manuscript. Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, inventory no. 683/VI**

The second volume is a manuscript measuring 21.5 x 15.2 cm, titled *Memoirs of Father Józef Joniec from 1940–1948*. Vol. II – *Manuscript*. Date of creation: the 1940s and 1950s. The manuscript contains vivid descriptions of the author's stay in Palestine and the Middle East, alongside Polish troops, during World War II. The volume includes descriptions of places visited, events, people, digressions, and interesting facts. On the reverse side of the notebook are notes from 1952, from the time when Father Józef Joniec served as Dean of Oświęcim. The entries were written in pen; there are many blank, unwritten pages. The notebook is bound in a hardcover. In good condition.



***Memoirs* of Father Józef Joniec from 1940–1948. Vol. II – *manuscript.* Cover and handwritten title page. Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, inventory no. 680/VI**

The third volume of Father Józef Joniec *Memoirs* begins with an account of his time with the Polish troops in Egypt during World War II. The notes end with the events in Tobruk. The volume contains descriptions of the places he visited, events, people, digressions, and interesting facts. Only 23 pages have been written on, while most of the notebook's pages are blank. The entries were written in pen and ink. Loose notes are inserted into the notebook. In good condition.



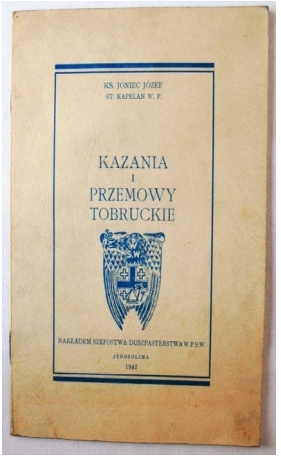
***Memoirs* of Father Józef Joniec from 1940–1948. Vol. III – *manuscript*. Cover and handwritten title page: Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, inventory no. 681/VI**

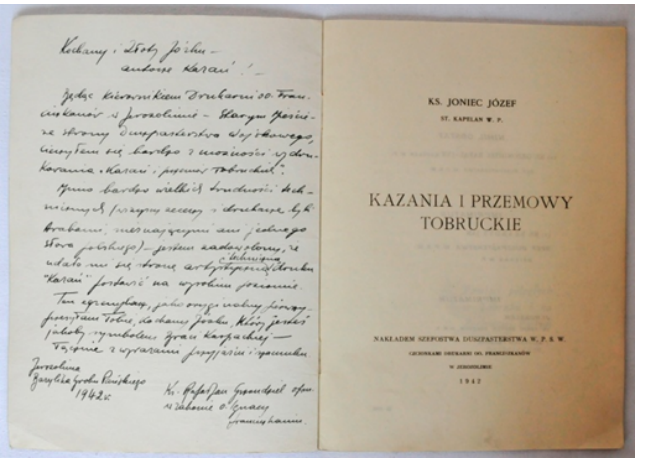


***The diary* of Father Józef Joniec from 1940–1941 – *manuscript*. The cover and the inscribed inside page of the manuscript. Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, inventory no. 682/VI**

Another extremely valuable exhibit is Father Józef Joniec *Diary* from 1940–1941, which also contains notes from a later period. It begins with a description of

the circumstances that forced the priest to leave the country and enlist in the Polish army in the Middle East. In addition to his memoirs, the notebook contains various notes, letters, poems, and lists of people. The text was written in pen and ink, with some passages underlined in pencil. The notebook is worn, and two newspaper clippings are inserted inside. The dimensions of the *diary* are 22.6 x 16 cm. The manuscript was written in the 1940s.





***Sermons and Speeches from Tobruk* by Fr. Józef Joniec. Cover and title page. Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, inventory no. 686/VI**

When presenting the legacy of Father Józef Joniec, housed at the Parish Museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa, one cannot overlook a special publication—namely, the collection titled *Sermons and Speeches from Tobruk* by Father Józef Joniec. The publication was issued in Jerusalem in 1942. It consists of transcripts of sermons and speeches delivered by Father Joniec to soldiers during the battles in Tobruk. They address matters of faith and war, contain patriotic themes, and raise questions about the meaning of fighting and sacrifice for one's homeland. On the inside back cover is a handwritten letter from Fr. Rafał Jan Grondziel to the author of the sermons. This copy is a first edition. It has 32 pages and measures 21.6 x 15.6 cm.

Published in Jerusalem in 1942, this volume contains records of sermons and speeches delivered by Fr. Joniec to soldiers during the fighting at Tobruk. They address matters of faith and war, incorporating patriotic themes and questions regarding the meaning of the struggle and sacrifice for the homeland. A handwritten letter from Fr. Rafał Jan Grondziel to the author appears on the inside of the back cover. This is a first edition. It comprises 32 pages and has a soft cover that shows slight soiling.

Conclusion, cognitive value and educational text

Dorota Folga-Januszewska notes that "the museumification of the world is one of the most dynamic phenomena accompanying civilizational transformations. Museums are the only type of institution that encompasses everything created by humans and everything that arises in their surroundings."[25] Indeed, museums seem to represent the institutional dimension of preserving human heritage – everything created by humans, their surroundings, and the environment in which they lived and worked.

The material presented in the article offers significant educational and cognitive value, portraying the museum not merely as a space for collecting and preserving heritage, but as a venue for disseminating knowledge and fostering cultural awareness. Engaging with the artifacts, documents, and memorabilia housed there enables individuals to discover their own roots, the history of the locale, and the legacy of past generations, thereby helping to shape regional identity. At the same time, local history – revealed through the stories of specific individuals – can serve as a pathway to understanding national history. The example of Józef Joniec – whose legacy has been deposited at the Parish Museum in Limanowa – allows us to link a local perspective with the history of Poland and the experiences of a generation that took part in events of national significance. Exploring the history of one's own region – its inhabitants, traditions, and religious heritage—fosters a sense of rootedness and a responsibility to preserve the memory of the past. Furthermore, highlighting the connections between the local community's history and the history of Poland enables us to view regional identity not as the antithesis of national identity, but as one of its essential foundations. The educational value of the text also stems from the opportunity to use the preserved materials as authentic historical sources. Analyzing them can foster research interests, develop skills in working with source material, and encourage a critical, independent approach to understanding the past.

I am deeply convinced that the goal I set for myself in writing this article will one day be achieved, that is, a researcher will emerge who, to put it colloquially, will knock on the door of the parish museum at the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa and undertake not only a detailed archival search but also the editing of the works penned by Fr. Józef Joniec. I believe that this is not only an interesting research proposal but also – and perhaps above all – a contribution to a deeper understanding not only of this priest's life story but also of his extraordinary, charismatic personality. A reflection of this personality can also be found in the museum's rich collection of objects and items that belonged to Father Józef Joniec.

In writing this article, I have deliberately omitted a specific work by Fr. Józef Joniec – namely, *The History of the Limanowa Parish*, written in 1953. I am deeply convinced that this work deserves a comprehensive source edition. I see here a research opportunity for an academic project that might combine the monograph

[25] D. Folga-Januszewska, *1000 muzeów w Polsce*, Warszawa 2011, p. 8.

on the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows in Limanowa with the monograph *The Son of Limanowa* by Fr. Józef Joniec and his account of the history of the parish community from which he emerged.

In this way, we find yet another essential role of every museum: to preserve and perpetuate memory, and to rediscover and interpret its own identity.

I believe that the words of St. John Paul II – as he is now known – can serve not only as a conclusion to the topic presented here, but also as an inspiration to return to our roots: "Amid the various experiences of my ministry, I am constantly aware of how much I owe to the heritage of faith, culture, and history that I brought with me from my homeland. I am indebted to it because this heritage constantly allows me to open myself to the manifold richness of peoples and nations within the community of the universal Church. My own native heritage does not limit me in itself, but helps me to discover and understand others."[26]

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[26] Jan Paweł II, *Moje rodzime dziedzictwo pozwala mi odkrywać i rozumieć innych. Audiencja dla polskich pielgrzymów w dziesiątą rocznicę pontyfikatu*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (Polish edition) 1988, No. 2(10–11), p. 15.

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