

Fr. Roman Soczewka OFMConv

NIEPOKALANÓW

Pilgrim-tourist guide

Fifth revised edition



WYDAWNICTWO OJCÓW FRANCISZKANÓW
NIEPOKALANÓW 2016

Edited by:
Fr. Jacek Staszewski

Graphic design:
Beata Lang
Marcin Płociński

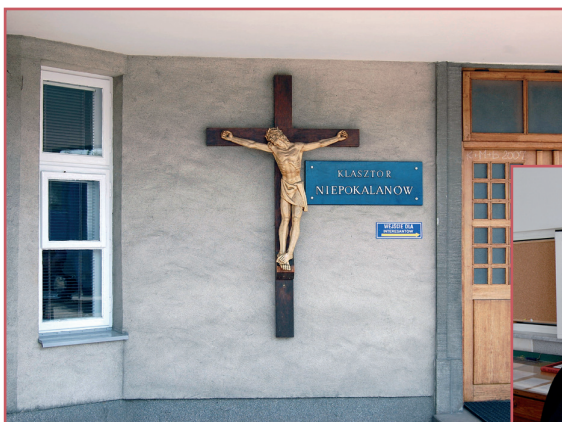
Photographs:
Niepokalanów Archives
Adam Bujak
Br. Christopher Dzido
Br. Leszek Gościewski
Fr. Mirosław Jaremczuk
Fr. Alexander Momot
Fr. Jacek Staszewski
Br. Mieczysław Wojtak

Translated by
Annamaria Mix

© Copyright by WOF, Niepokalanów 2016

ISBN 978-83-7766-113-0

Wydaństwo Ojców Franciszkanów
Niepokalanów 2015, 5th revised edition
Printed and issued by:
Niepokalanów, 96-515 Teresin
Tel. +48 46 864 22 08
e-mail: wof@niepokalanow.pl
www.wydaownictwo.niepokalanow.pl



Friary Gate



Friar on duty

1. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF NIEPOKALANÓW

Niepokalanów – like Jasna Góra in Częstochowa – is a one of its kind friary. It is located in Teresin, a municipality of the Mazovia region in the archdiocese of Warsaw. It lies near the intersection of the Warsaw – Łowicz – Poznań and Żyrardów – Puszcza Kampinoska roads, 42 km west from the center of the capital, highway nr 2 (E30). The suburban train Łowicz-Warsaw stops at the Teresin-Niepokalanów station.



Niepokalanów

At its start – in 1927 – the Franciscan settlement occupied a small parcel of land offered by Prince John Drucki-Lubecki from his Teresin estate. As if foreseeing the future growth of such a work, the Prince allowed the Franciscans to add on as much land as needed. Indeed the fast progress of the publishing house demanded more space, so that the present terrain is close to 28 hectares. Standing on these grounds are several average to larger size buildings, like the Church, the Franciscan living quarters, the management and publishing houses, the radio station, and the pilgrim retreat houses.

Paprotnia and Teresin (12 000 residents) thrive around the Franciscan friary. The train station and the post office are just next door. Interesting to note that the Teresin Post Office is on Paprotnia territory.



Little Raymond Kolbe



Prince John Drucki-Lubecki 1937

Many written works testify to the great cultural and social role Niepokalanów has played upon the neighborhood. The Franciscan center can be likened in this sense to the monasteries of the middle ages which had germinated small towns and cities around them.

The Holy Father John Paul II's Pilgrimage to Niepokalanów (June 18, 1983) did much to make this place famous around the world. Alongside Jasna Góra, Niepokalanów has become a well-known sanctuary. All this thanks to the ever increasing devotion to its Founder – St. Maximilian.



The Blessing of the first statue of the Immaculate, Aug.6,1927

2. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Niepokalanów boasts of being founded by St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe, martyr of the Nazi German concentration camp Auschwitz.

Raymond, son of weavers Julius Kolbe and Maria Dąbrowski, was born on January 8, 1894 in Zduńska Wola. He received a Catholic and patriotic upbringing. As a sixteen year old, he entered the Franciscan novitiate in Lwów and was given the name Maximilian to which latter was added: Maria. He received two doctorates while studying in Rome: one in philosophy from the "Gregorianum" papal uni-

HISTORICAL DATES

July 12, 1927 – Negotiations with Prince John Drucki-Lubecki for obtaining land to build a friary-publishing house in Teresin.

Aug. 8, 1927 – The placing of the statue of the Immaculate on the grounds of the future friary.

Oct. 1, 1927 – Prince John Drucki-Lubecki offered five hectares of land from his estate.

Oct. 5, 1927 – The construction of the friary.

Oct. 31, 1927 – The canonical establishment of Niepokalanów.

Nov. 21, 1927 – Transferring the publishing house of the "Knight of the Immaculata" from Grodno to Niepokalanów.

versity and one in theology from the St. Bonaventure Papal Department of the “Seraficum” International Franciscan College.

On October 16th 1917, Kolbe began what is now an international association called Knights of the Immaculate. It consists of total consecration and entrustment to the Mother of God which Kolbe believed to be essential for personal sanctification and winning souls to God. He was ordained a priest on April 28, 1918.



The Miraculous Medal



The First “Knight of the Immaculate” magazine

When Fr. Maximilian returned to Poland a year later, he began to put into effect his life plan. In Cracow 1922, he published the monthly magazine “Knight of the Immaculate”. Of an apologetical-marian character, this small magazine made quick progress despite financial difficulties. Though he suffered from tuberculosis, Fr. Maximilian did not halt his activity and soon found other eager co-workers to help.

Towards the end of 1927, he built the friary-publishing house called Niepokalanów in Teresin. In just 12 years till the war broke out in 1939, Niepokalanów had expanded at such a lively rate that three monthly magazines were printed (“Knight of the Immaculate”, “Young Knight” and

Founders of the MI:
Fr. Joseph Pal (middle) and
Fr. Maximilian Kolbe (right)





Books and magazines published at Niepokalanów

“Little Knight of the Immaculate”) together up to 1 200 000 issues. Also in 1935, a daily newspaper called “Little Daily” was printed with the Sunday issue alone of 250 000.

Also the Niepokalanów Minor Seminary flourished with young vocations preparing for future work.



The printing machine in Niepokalanów 1946

Similarly, the Japanese Niepokalanów in Nagasaki grew. Fr. Maximilian founded it in 1930. His aim was to conquer the entire world for Christ through the Immaculate. Here he started to publish the “Knight of the Immaculate” in Japanese called “Mugenai no Seibo no Kishi”. Throughout the span of years, this center in Nagasaki gave birth to what is now a Franciscan Province of 85 Japanese friars and 15 houses. Fr. Maximilian lived there for six years until his return to Poland in 1936.

Meanwhile the Polish Niepokalanów became ever more busy and gained more members. A building for the radio station was built and plans for an airplane strip were laid out for quicker distribution of the published materials. Social and cultural organizations functioned in the Friary, like the Volunteer Fire Department and Church Choir.

Fr. Maximilian in this period, as director of the largest friary printing house in Poland, increased effort to spread devotion to the Immaculate and develop the apostolate activities through the press and other mass media. He attracted an increasing interest among Catholics as well as much negative opinion from rival atheistic press media.

Work was stopped by World War II. After their arrest and several month stay in three German internment camps, Fr. Maximilian returned to Niepokalanów and renewed the religious community under different conditions by helping those in need, taking care of the disabled



Statue of St. Maximilian Kolbe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>1. The topography of Niepokalanów</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>2. A brief biography of St. Maximilian Kolbe.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3. The history of Niepokalanów.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>4. The sanctuary of Niepokalanów.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>5. The interior of the basilica.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>6. The old town Niepokalanów.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>7. An inside report from the cloister.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>8. The sanctuary of Niepokalanów is on the way to Santiago de Compostella.....</i>	<i>74</i>
<i>9. Pilgrim information.....</i>	<i>90</i>
