

The historical-geographical characterizations of the important centers of pilgrimage tourism in the north-eastern part of Slovakia

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Abstract

In every culture and civilization in the world we encounter the phenomenon of pilgrimage and pilgrim quite often. The peregrination (lat. Peregrinatio - wandering; peregrinus - stranger, outlandish) was already a reflection of human life in the Middle Ages. This dimension has been found by people in the following historical epochs, which many times were not inclined to spirituality, in the same way as at present. Christian pilgrimage sites such as Guadalupe, Lourdes and Fatima are known all over the world and are visited by millions of pilgrims every year. Marian pilgrimage places have a special position in this respect. Slovakia is one of the leading countries associated with religious tourism. The largest number of churches and chapels per m2 consecrated to the Virgin Mary in Europe are throughout Europe are located in our country. This proves deep tradition and centuries-old Marian veneration. After all, the fact that the patron of Slovakia has been officially since 1927 (unofficially centuries ago) the Seven-Sorrowed Virgin Mary is a sufficient proof. The region of northeastern Slovakia is one of the most prominent in the whole country in terms of religiosity. In the following paper we describe the most important centers of pilgrimage tourism in this region.

Keywords: peregrination, pilgrimage tourism, Levoča, Gaboltov, Lutina, Litmanová

Introduction

Peregrination, pilgrimages, pilgrims

Peregrination is a movement to sacred places for a religious purpose. It is mainly a religious phenomenon – timeless and confessional, tied mainly to the cult. Ever since the early Christian centuries, the aim of peregrination has been to see, pray, adore, fulfill promises, and to attain that the prayers would be answered. Pilgrimage, peregrination is a sign of universal value in which every person participates: a homo viator, a pilgrim, a person who is always on the road. During this journey, there are many dangers, many crosses, and trials until he reaches the destination of his journey and finds the most holy place where God is present- "heavenly Jerusalem" (Dancák, 2005; Tírpák, Dancák, Ostrowski, 2015).

The worldly road of life was often compared to the heavenly road. In Dante's Vita Nova (New Life), all pilgrims were considered travelers, but in the true sense of the word, the name could only refer to those who were destined for Santiago, as there were other pilgrimage cities as well. The pilgrims going to Jerusalem were called palmeros, the pilgrims going to the capital of Western Christianity, Rome were the romeros. In Rome, it has begun to record a great onslaught of people since 1300. Participation in pilgrimages is, in terms of the history of religions, part of all major religions. The pilgrimage is a reflection of the specific search for the deity that people set out on a journey to a place that deserves respect. Special customs and rituals, methods of sacrifice and prayer have developed in sacred places for this purpose. The journey of man to sacred places has deep roots since ancient times. The pilgrimages were made by Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Lamaists, Shinto and Confucianists. In the world's youngest monotheistic religious system - Islam the Mecca pilgrimage (Hajj) belongs to its five basic pillars (Dancák, 2005; Tírpák, Dancák, Ostrowski, 2015).

The pilgrimage movement was one of the strongest manifestations of the religiosity in the historical period. Religious enthusiasm has led thousands of people on very dangerous roads many times. Visitors to sacred places who touched the "higher world" were rewarded by forgiveness of sins, but the most valuable reward for them was the eternal bliss of heaven. The pilgrimage was considered to be a spiritual approach to the God Most High (Darkevič, 1984).

Religious and pilgrimage tourism

According to world statistics, in 2012 up to 84% of the world's population (almost 6 billion inhabitants) reported being religious. The most numerous were Christians (2.2 billion, 31.5%), Muslims (1.6 billion, 23.2%), Hindus (1 billion, 15%) and Buddhists (0.5 billion, 7, 17%). Around one in six people in the world declares no religion (16.3%).

Religious tourism generally refers to all tourist travels, the main motive of which is to visit sacral and religious objects and places. Unlike pilgrimage tourism, religious tourism is understood in the wider context.

Religious tourism, for example, may also be attended by members of religions who do not have a pilgrimage practice within their cult (eg many Protestant churches).

More than 300 million tourists visit the most important religious places in the world every year. In the ranking of the 10 most visited religious cities in the world are 8 Christian cities, 6 of which are located in Europe (Rome, Lourdes, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela, Jasna Gora, Medjugorje). Countries with more than 70% of believers are considered to be highly religious countries. Catholics strongly prevail in Central and Southern Europe, reflecting the potential for the development of pilgrimage tourism in the future. In Europe, nearly 40 million Christians (mainly Catholics) spend their free time on pilgrimages. This means that one in seven Christians in Europe takes part in a pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage tourism is a part of religious tourism. It denotes tourist travels whose main motive is religious and religious - cognitive. Part of the religious cult is a pilgrimage, organized and governed by a strict ritual order. It includes prayers, masses, meditations and other forms of religious ceremonies. The pilgrim's tourism destinations are sacred places.

One of the most important pilgrimage routes in Europe is the Way of Saint James to the Spanish (Galician) Santiago de Compostela, the longest pilgrimage in Europe, based on the oldest terrestrial trade route connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Black Sea. The number of pilgrims is increasing every year, in 2015 more than 2.5 million pilgrims participated in this pilgrimage. In the Central and Southern part of Europe, the Central European Marian Route, which connects more than 150 Marian pilgrimage cities in the Central European Region, can be considered as an important pilgrimage route. The main diagonal north - south crosses the territory of Slovakia, and from Hungary crosses the state border in Šahy and north of Slovakia, behind Trstená it leaves our territory towards Poland. Wandering along this pilgrimage route provides a unique experience in exploring the natural and cultural values of Central Europe, while also providing spirituality and spiritual enrichment for the pilgrim.

On the basis of the above, it can be concluded that the predominantly Catholic regions of Southern, Central and following Orthodox Eastern Europe are in the present globalizing world, based primarily on material goods, areas where spiritual values are still permanent values. This situation is also reflected in the number of pilgrimages and pilgrims participating in them. The symbolism of this fact is the expression of the former Pope John Paul II. on "the light from the East", which should also "brighten" the rest of Europe and give it hope for the future (Fogaš, Michalko, Michalková, 2016; Matlovičová, Klamár, Mika, 2015).

Pilgrimage places in Slovakia

On the national scale, Šaštín, Levoča, Marianka, Staré Hory, Nitra, Lutina, are the most important places of pilgrimage in Slovakia. In terms of regional, diocesan and local pilgrimage places in Slovakia, we will mention the following towns and villages: Báč, Banská Bystrica, Banská Štiavnica, Bardejov, Čirč, Doľany, Domaníža, Dubnica nad Váhom, Dvory nad Žitavou, Gaboltov, Hronský Beňadik, Kláštor pod Znievom, Klokočov, Kluknava, Krásny Brod, Lednické Rovne, Litmanová, Malacky, Modranka, Obišovce, Prešov, Rafajovce, Rajecká Lesná, Sečovská Polianka, Skalka, Stropkov, Šašová, Tesárske Mlyňany, Topoľčany, Topoľčianky, Trnava, Trstená, Turzovka, Višňové, Vranov nad Topľou (Judák, 2011; Dancák, 2013).

Pilgrimage tourism centers in the northeastern part of Slovakia

Northeastern Slovakia was one of the strongest region in terms of religiosity in the past. In this highly heterogeneous region, where ethnic and confessional influences overlap, there are many pilgrimage sites with a rich tradition. The most well-known and most frequent ones are two Roman Catholic (Levoča, Gaboltov) and two Greek Catholic (Lutina, Litmanová) centers (Fig.1). Their detailed characteristics are given in the following section.

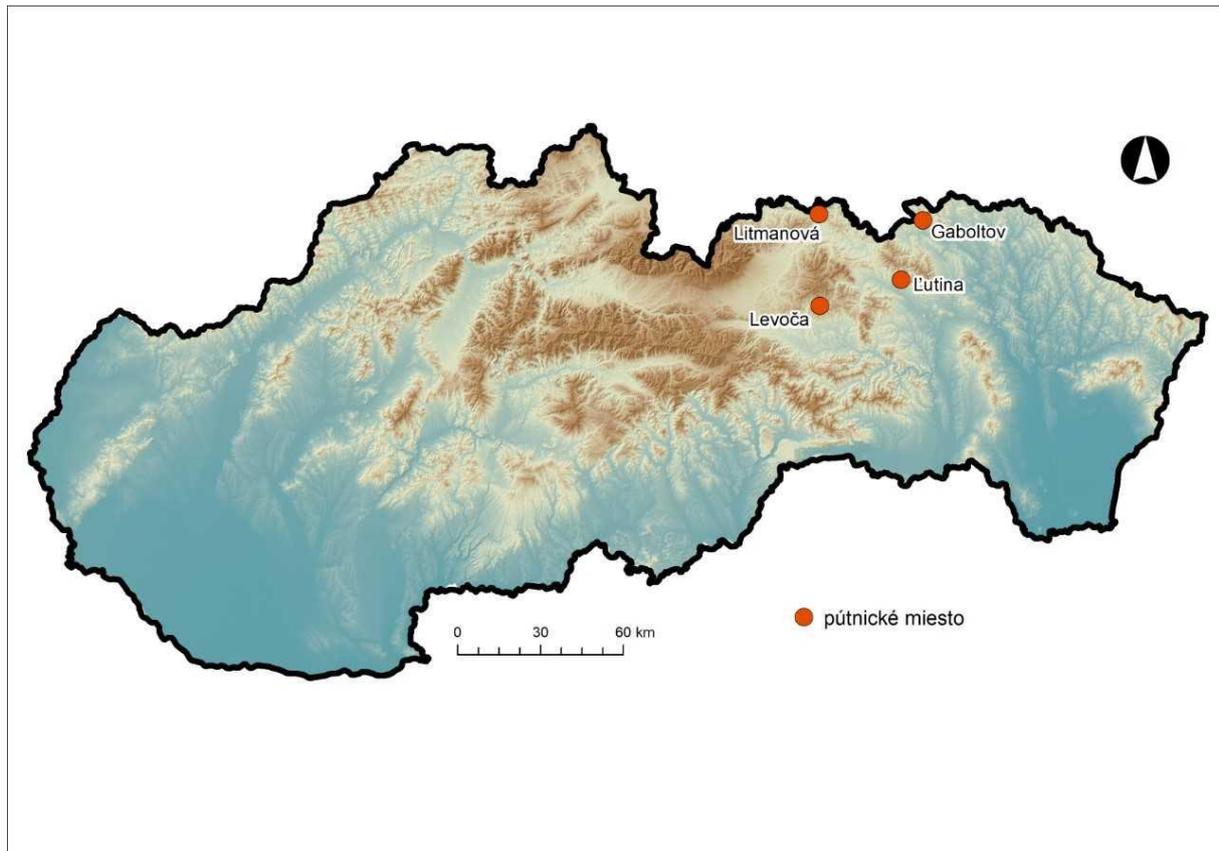


Fig.1 Important centers of pilgrimage tourism in north-eastern part of Slovakia

Levoča

The district town of Levoča (573 m above sea level) is situated on the left side of the Levočský Brook at the northern edge of the Hornád Basin below the southern foot of the Levoča Hills. Levoča is said to be the "most shining stone on the Spiš crown". It was first mentioned in a written document from 1249 under the name Leucha. The settlement prospered from its convenient location on the old Via Magna trade route (Big Road) and in a short time it grew into a city with several privileges. It became the center of German colonization in Spiš and in 1271 the capital of the Community of Spiš Saxons. In 1323 it became a free royal city. The greatest driving force in the history of the city has become the international trade (Krakow, Hanseatic cities, Venice, Russia). Levoča became one of the main centers of Humanism and Renaissance in Hungary. Education and other activities related to the overall intellectual development of the region were developed here. Since 1950, Levoča has been an urban conservation area with unique architectural and cultural-historical gems. The largest of them is the Roman Catholic parish Church of St. James with a late Gothic main altar with the patron of the same name. With its height of 18.6 m it is the highest altar of its kind in the world. It was created in the carving workshop of Master Paul from Levoča.

The dominant feature of Levoča is a steep hill called Marian Hill (Mariánska hora) with a neo-Gothic church. It is one of the oldest and most important pilgrimage sites in Slovakia (Fig.2). Archaeologists have found a hillfort on a hill just behind the Marian Hill, which today is called Burg - Castle. The roots of the Marian cult go back to 13th century. The first mention of this pilgrimage site and the gathering of Marian devotees come from those days. In 1247 the first chapel (church) was built on the Olivetská hora. Most likely, it was built as an expression of gratitude to the Mother of God for saving many lives from the invasion of the Tatars who ravaged our territory and specifically Levoča in 1241-1242. In 1311 the Franciscans - Minorites arrived to Levoča and introduced the feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. In 1322 the priest Henrich of Levoča repaired the first church (chapel) on Marian Hill. The priest Servác partially rebuilt and enlarged the church in 1470, and shortly afterwards the church was decorated with today's Gothic Graceful Statue of the Virgin Mary. At that time there was a guard house near the church. The pilgrimages to Marian Hill did not cease even during the Reformation.

Moreover, the local Protestants retained the Feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. The pilgrimage revived after the re-Catholicization, when its first act was a great procession and a pilgrimage to the Hill on July 2, 1671. In 1673, Marian Hill received an indulgence document from the Pope. In 1698 priest Štefan Gyôrfy built the second church on Marian Hill. In 1819, Ján Ehrnsperger, priest of Levoča, built the third church on Marian Hill, which in 1820 was consecrated by the Bishop of Spiš, former Levoča priest Michal Brigido. In 1847 the Roman Catholic priest Jozef Dulovič built a wooden chapel for the believers of the Eastern Church -

Greek Catholics. In 1906 Celestín Kompanyik began to build today's pilgrimage church from believer's alms. The church was after his death completed and arranged by new priest Jozef Krššák. On July 2, 1922, the new spacious church was ceremonially sanctified by the new bishop Ján Vojtaššák. In 1947, the priest of Levoča, the canonist Jozef Vojtas, who worked in Levoča after World War II, tried to prepare grand plans for the Marian Hill (to build an exercise and religious house, a pilgrimage house with material and technical equipment), but the political situation in the 1950s thwarted his plans. His grandiose plans were only realized after the fall of communism in 1989 by Parish Mons. doc. Fr. ICLic. František Dluhoš, PhD. Marian Hill initially concentrated pilgrims from eastern and central Slovakia. The believers of the Latin and Greek churches met here. Gradually, pilgrims began to come from other regions of Slovakia as well as from abroad, especially from Poland. Marian Hill has become the largest pilgrimage site in Slovakia by the number of pilgrims and has ranked among the world's pilgrimage sites. Holy Father John Paul II. elevated Pilgrimage Church on January 26, 1984 to a minor basilica. The greatest pilgrimage took place here in the presence of the Holy Father John Paul II. on July 3, 1995. It was estimated that over 650,000 people participated in the pilgrimage. The visit of the Holy Father in Levoča prompted deeper examination, especially of the recent history of this pilgrimage site, to highlight its merit and greatness in the religious consciousness of the Slovaks and in the Marian devotion that helped support believers of Slovakia even in the hardest times

(<http://rkc.levoca.sk/put.html>,http://rkc.levoca.sk/k_marianskahora.html,<http://www.levoca.sk/put-na-mariansku-horu.phtml?id5=12463>).



Fig. 2 Basilica of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Marian Hill in Levoča (www.severovychod.sk)

Gabolto

Village Gabolto (428 m) is located in the valley of the Kamenec Brook on the southwestern slope of the Busov Mountain range, 15 km northwest of Bardejov. About 3 km from the village runs the Slovak - Polish state border. Gabolto was inhabited from the 11th - 12th century. The first written mention dates back to 1247 and it is recorded in the letter of King Bela IV of Hungary, addressed to members of the Cistercian Order in Bardejov. It speaks of the influence of the Knights' Order of the Crusaders called the "guardians of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem", who signed themselves as "cruciferi de Gabolto". Their monastery was a religious and cultural center of the area. The impact of the Crusaders could be one of the reasons for the early reverence for St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert), because he is one of the main patrons of Poland. He proclaimed the gospel in Poland and his relics are also stored there. Another very old tradition says that St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert) on his missionary journey from Hungary to Poland, went through an ancient salt road that led from Šariš to Galicia through Gabolto and Kurov Saddle. With his retinue, he relaxed here and drank water from a spring, located near the Church of St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert). Today, the spring is hidden in the chapel dedicated to St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert). St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert) came from the powerful and famous Czech Slavík family, who controlled

the northeastern part of the present Czech Republic including Kladsko Region. He was born around 956. He was very pious. At home he gained the basics necessary for his next studies and later he moved abroad. When he returned to the Czech Republic in 981 as a subdeacon, he joined the orders of the cathedral priesthood in Prague. In 982 he became the Bishop of Prague. He removed all the remnants of the former paganism in the country. Because of his efforts, he met in Czechia with great resistance, he went to Rome in 989, where he spent three years in a Benedictine monastery. At the request of Pope John XV. and Prince Boleslav II. he returned to Prague. He founded the first Benedictine monastery in Břevnov near Prague in 993. For new disputes in 995, Vojtech again renounced his bishop's office and went to Hungary, where he successfully proclaimed the gospel and baptized Prince Gejza and his son St. Stephen, the first Hungarian king. Then he went to Rome, where he wanted to re-enter the monastery. When he heard that his Slavník family had been murdered in the Czech Republic, he went to Poland to meet with Boleslav the Brave and from there he went to the pagan Prussians. Near today's Kaliningrad he suffered the martyrdom on April 23, 997, when a pagan priest stabbed him with a lance and the other attackers shot him with arrows. Boleslav the Brave redeemed his body with gold and buried him in the Polish village Hniezdne. Some of the relics are stored in Trnava, in the chapel of the St Vojtech (St. Adalbert). At present it is not possible to determine exactly in which year the first church in Gaboltov was built. It was built in Gothic style and was rebuilt in 1370. The beginnings of today's parish church date back to the first half of the 14th century. In 1715 it was adapted in the Baroque style, later in the same style was modified the church tower (characteristic onion-shaped roof). The Gothic portal - the artistically designed entrance - remained intact. The original Gothic portal on the south side has been preserved in the church nave. The last overhauls of the monumental church, the altars and the coffered ceiling were carried out in 1972 - 1974. Today's main altar was installed at the time of renovation in 1715 (Fig. 3). In the middle of the altar is a statue of the patron of the church - the Bishop St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert), who holds a double-barred cross in his left hand - a symbol of the missionary archbishopric and he blesses the faithful with his right hand. All the statues of the altar form with statue of St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert) one complete thought. The left side altar is Baroque and is dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Scapular. It dates back to the second half of the 18th century. The right side altar is also built in the Baroque style and is dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Czestochowa. Religious life in Gaboltov is also evidenced by several chapels, which are an expression of the faith of local people. In the 18th century, religious life in the Catholic spirit stabilized in Gaboltov. In the second half of the 18th century pilgrimages were an integral part of the spiritual life of the believers of Gaboltov. Pilgrims from the surrounding parishes came here and believers from Gaboltov wandered back to the surrounding parishes. From the report of the priest of Gaboltov Matej Haruch (around 1750) we learn about the Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary of Scapular. The statutes of the Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary of Scapular states that its superior is the priest of Gaboltov. New members are allowed to join the Brotherhood of Virgin Mary of Scapular annually on the occasion of the pilgrimage to the Virgin Mary of Carmel. The pilgrimages take place on the following Saturday and Sunday after the feast of Virgin Mary of Carmel or after 16th July. Pilgrims from all over Slovakia come to Gaboltov on this occasion, many of whom travel on foot. Gaboltov pilgrimage is the largest pilgrimage in the Archdiocese of Košice. Thanks to the decision of Archbishop of Košice Mons. Alojz Tkáč, Gaboltov was designated as a pilgrimage place for Roma believers. The pilgrimage of men is also important, the only one of its kind in Slovakia (<https://sites.google.com/site/farnostgaboltov/ministries>).



Fig. 3 Interior of the Church of St. Vojtech (St. Adalbert) in Gaboltov (www.severovychod.sk)

Lutina

The village of Lutina (424 m above sea level) is situated in the valley of the Lutinka Brook on the southwestern slope of the Čergov Mountain range, 9.5 km from the district town of Sabinov. Lutina was founded in the 14th century. The village was first time mentioned in 1312, as an unpopulated territory belonging to the Tarczay family. The oldest report mentioning Lutina is from 1330. Lutina was located in the territory of Šariš County, the center of which was the Old Castle (Veľký Šariš). It was established near the village of Pečovská Nová Ves, as part of the New Castle estate (Hanigovce), which was owned by the Perényi family. In the Middle Ages, an important trade route led through Lutina to Krakow. Since 1851 the village of Lutina has been known for most people in Slovakia. It was the apparitions that made Lutina the largest Marian pilgrimage site of the Greek Catholics in Slovakia. The inhabitants of the village made their living by farming, cattle ranching, fruit growing and woodcutting.

The history of the pilgrimage site in Lutina began on August 19, 1851, when St. Mikuláš (St. Nicholas) appeared to poor widow Zuzana Feketeová on the Lutina Hill. Until 1855, Lutina was a branch office of a large parish of Hanig. The events of the Lutina apparitions in 1851 caused that the seat of the parish moved to Lutina, which became the most important pilgrimage site of the Greek Catholics in Slovakia. The original temple made of wood stood on the present square in front of the basilica. It was built by an unknown master of Kežmarok in the Gothic style. Its tower was 22.8 meters high. This building was unique throughout the Šariš County. In addition to the ground plan, which is in the Budapest State Archives, the drawing of the temple has been preserved. At the end of the 19th century, the wooden temple's premises no longer met the needs of the believers, so the diocesan and parish leaders decided to build a new stone temple. The building was completed in 1908 and consecrated to the Blessed Virgin. In 1853, Greek Catholic believers decided to build a chapel on top of the hill, which was completed on August 7, 1854. The ceremony was on August 27, 1854 and on May 11, 1855 Pope Pius IX. issued the apostolic breve of the plenary indulgences. A large number of pilgrims required the construction of additional chapels. From 1878, they started to build the Chapel of St. Anne, Chapel of St. Cross and St. Nicholas at the spring. The last one was completed in 1930. During the interwar period it was a pilgrimage of a religious-social event lasting two weeks. The liturgical program took place in the parish church and also in the chapels on the hill. Believers from Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary came to the pilgrimage. In August 1942, the first Sisters of the Immaculate Virgin Mary came to Lutina. The monastery was consecrated on August 28, 1948. An important event of the pilgrimage site in Lutina was a pilgrimage organized on August 28, 1945, at which Blessed Pavel Peter Gojdič, the Bishop of Prešov, O.S.B.M. ceremoniously completed the eparchial Marian Year lasting from October 14, 1944 and he consecrated the Diocese of Prešov to the Mother of

God. At the time of the ban of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia (1950 - 1968), the Greek Catholic Marian pilgrimages in Lutina ceased to take place. After the resumption of the activities of the Greek Catholic Church, the village under Čergov Mountains became a meeting place for believers. A great encouragement in the faith was the Marian Year of 1988, in which Pope John Paul II. (today canonized saint) raised the church of Lutina to the level of Basilica minor (Fig.4). The first archbishop and metropolitan of Prešov, Ján Babjak S.J., decided in 2007 to enlarge the basilica to be not only as a dignified but also as a pleasant center of pilgrimages. The basilica was extended during the reconstruction with two side naves with separate entrances, which gave the facade the typical features of the basilica. The original windows with stained glass designed by academic painter Mikuláš Klimčák are now decorating the added side naves. The space they used to be is open and connects the extension with the core - the nave - of the original basilica. Both added naves have their own choirs. The right - east nave also serves as a parish temple. It included a reconstructed Baroque iconostasis from the Church of St. Paraskevy (Nová Polianka) from 1766. On August 16, 2009, the enlarged basilica was solemnly consecrated at the main Marian pilgrimage by the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Prešov Ján Babjak S.J., attended by the Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Church - Archbishop Cyril Vasiľ S.J., Archbishop Edward Nowak and six other bishops. On June 9, 2010, the Basilica of the Dormition of the Mother of God was affiliated with a special Spiritual Relationship to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome with the privilege of empowered indulgences. On November 3, 2010, the reconstruction of the former parish orchard over the basilica had started. The orchard had been abandoned for many years, later it was replaced by two new chapels, along with twelve confessionals. One chapel is dedicated to the Blessed Greek Catholic Martyr - Bishop Pavol Peter Gojdič O.S.B.M., Vasiľ Hopko and the religious priest Metod Dominik Trčka CSsR and the second chapel is dedicated to the Archbishop and Wonder-worker St. Nicholas.

On August 20, 2011, the Basilica was enriched with a reliquary with the relic (blood) of St. John Paul II, which was donated to Archeparchy of Prešov by the Archbishop and the Metropolitan of Cracow to Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz. In 2011, small open air museum of wooden temples with small-scale models of folk sacral architecture from Eastern Slovakia, was created in the area of the Basilica Minor. In 2012 the Archbishop of Prešov and the Metropolitan Ján Babjak S.J. in the Chapel of St. Nicholas, in the area of the Basilica Minor, saved and blessed the relics of St. Archbishop Nicholas, the Wonder-worker from Myra in Lycia. In the glass case is stored ampoule with myrrh - fragrant manna, which flows from the sarcophagus of St. Nicholas in Bari, Italy, as well as secondary relics of St. Nicholas's clothing. It also holds certificates confirming the authenticity of these relics. In July 2013, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the local temple as a minor basilica, the basilica received a new design in the form of large mosaics of Divine Mercy, St. John Paul II, the Blessed Bishops and the Martyrs Pavol Peter Gojdič, Vasiľ Hopko, Teodor Romža, religious priest and martyr Metod Dominik Trčka, Wedding at Cana of Galilee, Merciful Samaritan and St. Sister Faustína. Their author is Kamil Dráb CSsR. Since 2013, the basilica also includes relics of all the above-mentioned saints and blessed which are installed directly in mosaics.

(http://bazilikalutina.sk/?page_id=21, <http://slovo.grkatpo.sk/nova-stranka/marianskeputnicke-centrum-baziliky-minor-v-lutine/>).



Fig. 4 Basilica of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Lutina (www.severovychod.sk)

Litmanová

Litmanová (679 m) is a village located in the valley of the Litmanovský Brook at the eastern end of Pieniny Mountains near the Slovak - Polish border. The district town of Stará Ľubovňa is 11 km away. The first written mention of the village dates back to 1412. In 1778 the Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel (National Cultural Monument) was built in the village. The inhabitants of the village are mostly Greek Catholics. Divine holy liturgy, sacraments and devotions are celebrated in the Slovak and Church Slavonic language, which is associated with the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition brought to the territory of present-day Slovakia by the co-patrons of Europe - Cyril and Methodius. In modern history, Litmanová became known mainly in connection with the Virgin Mary apparitions on Zvir Hill, situated about 5 kilometers from the beginning of the village, near the Polish border (Fig.5). The authenticity of these apparitions is still under investigation by the Church. Our Lady appeared to two girls, then eleven-year-old Iveta Korčáková and twelve-year-old Katarína Češelková in a room of a wooden log house (called majdan), which still stands on a meadow surrounded by forest. Virgin Mary used to sit on a wooden bench. She introduced herself as Immaculate Purity. She wanted both girls and people to come to this place to pray regularly. The apparitions lasted from August 5, 1990 to August 6, 1995, on Sundays after the first Friday in the month. At the last apparition, the Mother of God promised to remain present. Not only during the apparitions, but also after their end, believers still come to this place regularly in large numbers. They meet most on Sunday after the first Friday in the month. In addition to the first Sundays, pilgrims from Slovakia and abroad come to this pilgrimage place every day, where they find lost peace of soul, draw God's help into their lives, thank for the manifestations of God's love, God's help and their lives under God's protection. Given the number and spiritual needs of pilgrims, it was necessary to organize a prayer and liturgical program. Pilgrims have the opportunity to take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation every day and be religiously involved in the celebration of the Holy Liturgy and other devotions.

This place offers graces that enrich the spiritual life of believers and help in the way of salvation. Since pilgrims continue to come to the Zvir Hill even after apparitions, seeking spiritual deepening in all of life, this place was appointed as the place of prayer by Ján Babjak, S.J. the Archbishop and Metropolitan of Prešov, on August 6, 2004, and the chapel was dedicated to the Immaculate Purity of Virgin Mary. On September 7, 2008, the whole area with its spring on the Zvir Hill in Litmanová was raised to the level of the Greek Catholic Marian pilgrimage site of the Prešov Archeparchy. On August 8, 2010, on the occasion of an archeparchial forgiveness ceremony, a decree on the establishment of a bond (of affiliation) to this Marian pilgrimage site on the Zvir Hill with the Pontifical Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, the world's first and main Marian temple, was inaugurated. The Apostolic Penitentiary of Rome granted this pilgrimage site the privilege of indulgence like the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. In 2008 a liturgical space was built. The altar, which is the work of academic sculptor Miroslav Kollár, is made of travertine stone. The iconostasis consists of only one row of four icons. The

entire liturgical space with the iconostasis was solemnly consecrated during the annual pilgrimage on August 9, 2009. Near the car park there is the House of St. Joseph - wooden cottage, in which the spiritual administrator of the Zvir Hill lives. Opposite the House there is an information center, which serves to provide basic information about this Marian pilgrimage site and also offers religious items for sale. The repair work of the spring was completed in 2009, and at the same time, the Chapel of the Apparition was renewed and enlarged, bringing a number of pilgrims on a daily basis to persevere in prayer and ask for God's mercy. Opposite the spring (the Spring of St. John the Baptist) there is a place for the votive tablets, by which the pilgrims express their thanks to the Holy Mother for various spiritual and physical healings. In 2010 the Candle Chapel was built. In 2011 it was built and put into use Confessional house of Blessed Metod Dominik Trčka CSsR. On October 6, 2013, after the reconstruction of part of the original liturgical space, the Eucharistic Chapel adjacent to the Chapel of the Apparitions was inaugurated. The main pilgrimage to the Zvir Hill is always held on the first Sunday of August after the first Friday in month (<http://www.horazvir.sk/historia.php>, <http://casopisslovo.sk/wpcontent/uploads/archiv/0821.pdf>).



Fig. 5 Pilgrimage area at Zvir (www.severovychod.sk)

Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to point out the phenomenon of pilgrimages, peregrination and pilgrimage tourism in the world and in Slovakia. The region of the northeastern part of our country is one of the most important in this respect. Several unique pilgrimage centers have been established here in the past, which have become the destination of thousands of pilgrims every year. The most well-known and most frequent ones are two Roman Catholic (Levoča, Gaboltov) and two Greek Catholic (Ľutina, Litmanová) localities. A substantial part of this paper is devoted to their detailed characterization.

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