

MARY'S TRSAT



Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Trsat

*Above the City, on the rock, an anchor and lantern:
The hand in the storm, You are our salvation.
Forever, You pray for us the grace of your Son,
Your Kvarner is shining in the bronze of bells:
Salve Regina!*

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MARY'S TRSAT



*Bas-relief of Our Lady of Trsat
in the Chapel of Candles*

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Trsat with the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat, the oldest Croatian Mary's shrine

MARY'S TRSAT

*Dear visitors
to Mary's Trsat!*

I am glad to see a great number of both personal and group pilgrimages to the Shrine of Trsat. I know that one does not have to persuade people very much to go on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Trsat. Our archbishopric of Rijeka organizes its own special pilgrim-

age to this Shrine. It is the greatest spiritual centre in our city and our Archbishopric. It is great not only in terms of the number of pilgrims, but also and especially by the spirituality one experiences here. This is the original spirituality of Mary, permeated with Franciscan simplicity, evangelic humanity and sensitivity. Man will aspire ever



occurred here has also become the history of the area, the Church and our Homeland. One should not forget anything which is of significance for Trsat.

However, today, it is very important to understand the tradition surrounding the connection between Trsat and Nazareth. This tradition concerns the connection of every visitor to Mary's Trsat, especially pilgrims, with the Holy Nazareth family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The Church takes this family as an ideal for all Christian families, due to their devotion to God and their mutual love. In this Church province of Rijeka or metropolitan see, we bishops are especially concerned with the spiritual guidance of the family. Such an initiative took place at Trsat in October 2001 during the metropolitan pilgrimage with an emphasis on the family. This means that the bishops of this metropolitan see have recognized the Shrine of Trsat as a family shrine and that they endeavour to value it as such.

We hope that this emphasis and value will grow, as the management of the Shrine promotes its events and programmes. I greet and support all the efforts to transfer and spread the Christian message by means of modern communication. The contemporary Church insists on it very much. Therefore, I am pleased that the Trsat Shrine will be rep-

more towards a literal interpretation of the Gospel according to St Francis, including an ever greater need for the tranquillity and revitalization provided by the Shrine of Trsat. The Shrine is viewed this way both by believers and those who still do not consider themselves of the faith. Therefore, they come here and return with pleasure, gladness and contentment.

The Trsat Shrine is seven centuries old and much has happened in Trsat's long history. What has

resented in this new account, first in Croatian and then in foreign languages. It is quite right that the facilities of the Shrine of Trsat should become more accessible to the many visitors, especially its history, cultural artefacts, and above all, its spirituality. In other words, I see this treatise in the service of the Shrine, its environment and its programmes. Therefore, I consider it very necessary. I recommend it to the visitors of Trsat and ask that they appreciate the Shrine with this monograph in their hands. Also, I believe that it will remain in their homes as a valuable memory, both to read

and to renew their impressions. From my heart, I wish that the visitors to the Shrine of Trsat may experience God's gift of new hope, meaning and faith, even if the visit be short.

While they view the church, the chapel of votive offering, the cloisters, and maybe even the interior of the monastery, let the pages of history turn before their eyes and promote those deeds which incite beauty and admiration. I also wish that all may experience the truth that Trsat is an oasis of peace and renewal.

Ivan Devčić,
the Archbishop of Rijeka

Impressive high-altar of the Trsat Shrine





Copy of the Trsat icon of Our Lady with the Child Jesus, 18th C, Monastery treasury

THE SHRINE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, OUR LADY OF TRSAT

Mary's Trsat is a special historic, religious, cultural and building complex consisting of the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat and the Franciscan Monastery, the residence of the guardians of the Shrine. The centre of this complex is without any doubt the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat, imbuing Mary's Trsat with a special force and attraction, both in the past and today. This is a family shrine and its origins are connected with the tradition that speaks of the small house in which Mary was born being transferred by angels to Trsat (1291-1294) before the arrival in Loreto, Italy. Therefore, Trsat is often referred to as the

Croatian Nazareth. It has been the most popular shrine for the seamen of Kvarner Bay since long ago. It is also the spiritual centre of the whole of Western Croatia. Its history predates the arrival of the Franciscans, but this period is filled with legend. The Franciscans, throughout their centuries of residence here, ran the shrine according to the strict rules of their order, which is closed to the public. The Trsat Franciscan monastery is the best-known monastery in Western Croatia. People are not drawn to it so much by the state of preservation of its buildings or by its original architectural characteristics, but by the realisation of



Our Lady of Loreto

its historical function. Although the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat, as an important building within the city of Rijeka, does not belong to the ranks of the most beautiful church buildings, of which some were conceived in competition to the Trsat building complex, it does outshine them all with its glory. Before de-

scribing the Trsat Shrine, it is important to consider the documentary evidence of its origins. There is scarcely a family on our islands where the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat is not mentioned. Where does the attraction of Trsat come from? The angel asks this when he hails Mary “full of mercy”. This means: full of God, close to God, filled with God’s power. In other words, we experience God’s proximity in Mary’s closeness, because she is close both to God and to ourselves. She helps us to be close to God through her, so that her shrines are places where God is close, places where God’s closeness is manifested... Therefore, in all of Mary’s shrines, and here on Trsat, we experience an awareness that God is with us, that he leads our history, our lives, our people; that he is the support of everything that happens and we feel secure in him.

Cardinal Josip Bozanić,
he Archbishop of Zagreb

Benediction of the Pastoral Centre



AN ATTEMPT AT THE HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINS OF THE TRSAT SHRINE

According to legend, on May 10, 1291, the small Nazareth house in which the Blessed Virgin Mary lived, appeared on the plateau where the Franciscan Monastery is situated today. This was also the house where the act of Annunciation and Incarnation of Christ took place. Angels transferred it from Nazareth to Trsat. It was kept here until December 10, 1294, when the angels transferred it again to Loreto, near Ancona, where it remains today. A rational interpretation of the legend offers us a complex story which has been verified scientifically in some of its aspects. The Nazareth small house became a shrine even in the time of the apostles. During the Arabian invasion, the Shrine was destroyed, but the crusaders rebuilt it in the 13th century. At the time of the Crusades, relics were removed from the Holy Land. The first crusaders to do this were the monks, especially the famous fighting order of the knights-templars, called “božjaci” in Croatian. In medieval interpretation, those monks involved in saving relics were identified with angels. Also, in 1291, Accra, the last crusaders’ stronghold, fell. On the dowry list of Margaret Angeli, the daughter of the despot of Epirus, Nycephore, the relic of the holy house is found, i.e. “the holy stones from the house of Our Lady”. This occurred in the

famous year of 1294 immediately before she was married to Philip II the Angevin (D’Anjou, lat. De Angelis, reminiscent of angels). At

Illustration from the famous Glavinić’s work Historia Tersattana from the 17th century





Angels bringing the Nazareth House on Trsat, an illustration from the Historia Tersattana

that time, the Angevins, the rulers of Naples, made abundant donations to Croatian regions in order to arrive at a position of dominance over the Hungaro-Croatian throne. Coastal areas were especially attractive to them, as a bridgehead to the interior, which was influenced more by their rivals, the Arpadovići. Croatian feudal nobles, while sup-

porting the Angevins, were interested in limiting the sudden rise of Venice, which also mirrored the interests of Rome. The Frankopans, the feudal masters of the region, were allies of the Angevins in their struggle for the Hungaro-Croatian throne. The role of the Frankopans was, without any doubt, crucial in the genesis and eventual reach of the cult of Our Lady of Trsat. They were probably involved in actions preceding the emergence of the cult on Trsat, which have not yet been sufficiently understood. The most secure communication between the Levant and Europe was the maritime route along the indented Eastern coast of the Adriatic, which was safe for navigation. Ancona, near Loreto, was the main papal port and also one of the most significant ports connecting the two shores of the Adriatic. There was a Croatian diaspora there, which was strengthened in the 15th century by refugees escaping from the Turks. Finally, archaeological excavation in the house of Our Lady at Loreto confirms the notion that it was transferred from Trsat with the crusaders.

Illustration of Our Lady of Trsat from the Historia Tersattana



THE FACADES OF THE CHURCH AND THE MONASTERY

Various stylistic and historical influences can be found on today's church. The façade is a specific mix of layers of styles which were applied here later than in Italy, and remnants of glorious embellishments and commercial reconstructions, which were characteristic of our regions. We can conclude that it belongs to Biedermeier art, because it reflects faithfully that period of the affirmation of national consciousness and civic taste. It was constructed during the last enlargement of the church in 1824. The bell-tower was built by the local builder Jakov Matković in the Baroque tra-

dition. The same style is seen in the accentuated, undulating gable. The master skilfully incorporated into the façade of the bell-tower an old window decorated with a finely carved late-Gothic motif of rope. The actual classicist style can only be discerned in the dissection of the façade with *pilastri* (semi-columns) with composite capitals. A shallow bas-relief of vegetables is inserted into the plaster. Extending symmetrically to the entrance to the monastery, the façade falsely suggests a three-aisled interior. Old portals of the 17th century were used for the side entrances to the northern nave and monastery and

Church of Our Lady of Trsat – harmony of various styles and historical periods





Biedermeier façade of the church of Our Lady of Trsat

coming from a different style, they offer a high Renaissance, if not mannered impression. The upper beam of the right side altar is decorated with rampant lions breaking bread, which is one of the coats-of-arms of the Frankopans, the feudal masters of Trsat, the founders and the greatest benefactors of the monastery. The motif of the six-



Franciscan's coat of arms

pointed star, which appears in several places in the decoration of the façade, is in fact the original coat-of-arms of the Frankopans. In such a way, the Biedermeier reconstruction of the Trsat Shrine is an early example of the expression of awakened national consciousness through architectural art. This also applies to the nearby castle.

Gable of the right side altar



THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH

Gothic columns from the first half of the 19th century were used as supports for today's choir gallery, below which one enters the church. One encounters then, surprisingly enough, two naves. The left one was made by connecting previous side chapels in the Baroque style. Although the Frankopans, the feudal masters of Trsat, had already built the first church on the site most probably at the end of the 13th century, the earliest parts of today's building derive from the 15th century. Then

Prince Martin Frankopan, with the permission of Pope Nicholas V, began to build a new church and monastery, and brought the Franciscans from Bosnia, from the Bosnian Vicary in 1453. Martin's church was a typical late-Gothic, single-aisled (hall) church with a rectangular shrine.

Its ancient remains and interior have been preserved in the lower parts of the walls of the shrine and in the church on that part of the southern wall, connected to the cloisters. The original southern

Luxurious interior of the Trsat basilica





Altar of St Francis of Assisi

wall extended from the shrine to the altar of St Nicholas, the nearest entrance to the church. On the other side, the remains of the previous northern wall are hidden in the massive columns which divide the main nave from the smaller nave. During the Baroque reconstruction in the 17th century, the Frankopans ordered the Franciscans to build carefully in order not to disturb the original shrine.

① **The altar of St Francis of Assisi** is the first in a series of altars in the northern (left) nave. Baron Franjo Čikulini of Podused and Stubica, the imperial coun-

sellor and the titular bishop of the city of Skoplje, erected the original altar at the beginning of the 18th century. He was buried beneath the altar, as per the inscription above the capital opposite the column. In 1725, the original altar was replaced by the current one. The side altar sculptures of St Pascal and St Bernardino of Siena date from that period. They are engraved in wood in imitation of expensive marble. The painting of the Stigmatization of St Francis was finished in 1891, whilst the original altar painting is kept in the monastery.

② **The chapel of St Anne.** Baron Stjepan della Rovere, the then feudal governor of Rijeka, had the original chapel built as a family vault in 1624. The inscription on the slab above the altar of St Anne and the previous altar of St Francis bear witness to this. Both the inscription on the slab below the altar and opposite inserted in the wall dividing the main and side naves, also confirm that the baron and members of his family were buried there. The chapel, twenty years after completion, was incorporated into the unique, left nave of the church. From the

original chapel altar, the painting of Our Lady and St Anne with members of the della Rovere family and their patron saints, St Stephen (the baron's), St Anne (the baroness's), and St Ferdinand and St Friedrich (the baron's sons), has been preserved. At the feet of the benefactor, there is the key to the city of Rijeka. The painter is Giovanni Pietro Telesphoro de Pomis, an Italian working in Graz, at the court of Archduke Ferdinand. This typical representative of Italian humanism dealt also with architecture and medal casting. In painting, he followed Venetian mannerist painters. A century after it was painted, the painting was incorporated into today's wood-engraved altar. On the side pedestals of the altar, beside twisted columns, St John of Capistrano and St Bernardino of Siena are depicted in full sculptural size.

③ **The Chapel of St Peter the Apostle.** Petar Kružić, one of the greatest Croatian military leaders, and one of the greatest benefactors of the monastery, ordered the building of the original chapel on the same site in 1531.



Altar of St Ann

It was also incorporated into the integral left side nave during the Baroque reconstruction in the first half of the 17th century. The wood-carved altar with the painting of Christ Delivering Keys to St Peter and the display of Souls in Purgatory is from 1723. Side sculptures with drapery folds, as if moving in the breeze, represent St Paul the Apostle and St Jerome. The altar was erected through the donation of Petar de Denaro, the imperial governor of the port of Bakar and counsellor to the court's chamber in Graz. To the left and right at the foot of the altar, there



Altar of St Peter the Apostle



Tombstone of the Krk Prince Nikola VI the Frankopan

are tomb slabs of Nikola VI Frankopan of Trsat, who died in 1523, and his wife Elizabeta Petuhi de Gerse, who died in 1513. The ornamentation of vegetation and dolphins in the trimming of Nikola's epitaph are of Renaissance characteristics. In the crypt below the altar, several bishops of Senj and Modruš (Smoljanović, Mariani, Agatić) were buried, which clearly underlines the importance of the Trsat Shrine in that diocese. The head of Petar Kružić was allegedly laid down in the crypt of the chapel of St Peter. This may be con-

firmed by the contract of his sister Jelena, who bought his head from the Turks, at Klis, for a hundred ducats.

④ **The Chapel of St Anthony of Padua.** It was added as the apse of the side nave in 1691 from a foundation provided by Franjo Frankulin, the vice-captain of the port of Bakar and the castle of Grobnik, who ensured, through this benefaction, a privileged burial for his family. The existing marble altar is from 1761. The altar painting is attributed to Christophor Tasccha, a painter born in Bergamo and

brought up in Venice. He was active in our regions on both sides of Venetian-Habsburg border at the beginning of the 18th century. He was especially popular among the Franciscans from Trsat to Karlobag. He excelled in large format painting for the monastery on Trsat and the cathedral in Krk. The inscription on the tomb slab witnesses the fact that the Franciscans of Trsat had been buried in the crypt for centuries. Here also lie the remains of the renovator of the Trsat Shrine, Fr. Franjo Glavinić, who extended the monastery,

and the painter of Trsat Fr. Serafin Schön. The bas-relief figures by the Rijeka sculptor Zvonimir Kamenar are reminiscent of them.

⑤ **The marble altar of St Michael** is situated in the main nave, to the left of the triumphal arch of the Shrine. This excellent stonework was completed at the beginning of the 18th century through funds provided in the



Chapel of St Anthony of Padua

will of the bishop of Senj, Sebastian Glavinić. The artistic excellence is reflected in the skilful



Fr. Franjo Glavinić and fr. Serafin Schön, renovators of the Trsat Shrine

composition of various kinds of plain and multi-coloured marble. A miniature display of St Michael killing the Devil in the central medallion on the antependium is especially beautiful. In 1631, the Swiss Serafin Schön painted a depiction of the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and small Tobias together with members of angelic hierarchies with the Most Holy Trinity above.

This painter and Franciscan came to Trsat around 1630 by invitation, almost immediately after the great fire which devastated the monastery. Staying here for several decades, he left a great number of works to the monastery. His paintings are easily recognizable by graceful, elongated and mannered figures of fair complexion in habits of light fabric. The painter especially carefully portrayed the figure of St Michael, the protector of Fr. Mihovil Kumar, the then provincial of the Franciscan province of Bosna-Hrvatska and the originator of the grandiose renovation of the monastery.

⑥ **The late-Gothic triumphal arch** is the most significant remnant of architectural moulded art from the time of the building of the Franciscan church and monastery in the second half of the 15th century. The large painting of the Annunciation in the lunette above the triumphal arch was painted by Christophor Tascha using a heavy Venetian palette in 1714. He skil-

fully incorporated the transfer of the small holy house in the scene of the Annunciation. Baron Franjo Ignacije Androcha is depicted as the donor in a special painting below the Annunciation. The wrought-iron grille enclosing the shrine was given by Bishop Martin Brajković of Senj in 1707. The grille is lavishly decorated with foliage ornamentation and with angelic figures on the base in the form of a snail shell. It is considered one of the best works of art of that kind in the Croatian Baroque period.

⑦ The church was noted for centuries as one of the most privileged burial places in the region. The crypt beneath the floor of the shrine was, of course, reserved for the Frankopans. This is also the place of the original, pre-Franciscan church. Furthermore, the relic of the small house of Our Lady was kept here for three years in the 13th century. The tomb slab is rather worn and is covered with a rug to protect the relief and inscription. The founders of the monastery, Martin Frankopan with his wife Doroteja and their nephew Bartol have lain here since the second half of the 15th century. An inscription refers to Bartol's burial, whilst the couple is depicted in a bas-relief. Below the couple, there is a shield with a six-pointed star, an older coat-of-arms of the Frankopan. Nikola IX Frankopan, who was a Croa-



Triumphal Arch of the Shrine with the altar of St Michael to the left and St. Catherine on the right side



Crucifix on the wrought grille enclosing the Shrine

tian ban for a time and who died in Vienna in 1647, was also buried here in the family sarcophagus. The Frankopan dynasty, one of the two greatest dynasties in Croatian history, was honoured in Croatian folklore a long time after the end of their reign. A local legend, linked to the shrine, speaks about the miraculous golden horse of St Martin, a part

of which the Franciscans used when needed, but it would grow back. In the middle of the 20th century, the shrine was paved with greenish marble and decorated with a cycle of paintings:

The Transfer of the Holy House, The Coronation of the Figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 8, 1715, The Vow of Petar Kružić, Prince Nikola Frankopan Sending the Emisaries to Nazareth, the Star of the Sea.

They were all painted by the Zagreb painter Vladimir Kirin.

The Split painter Josip Botteri Dini decorated the shrine with stained-glass windows in 1993 and 1994. The Gothic door on the right

wall of the shrine leads to the sacristy.

⑧ The monumental marble main altar was donated to the shrine by the brother of the then prior, the Zagreb judge Ivan Uzolin. It is attributed to the workshop of the master Giovanni Pacassi from Gorica. In the centre of the altar, there is a copy of the famous triptych of Our Lady of Trsat,



Wrought grille of 1707, a unique work of Croatian Baroque art

whose original is kept today in the monastery treasury. The painting is wreathed with votive offerings. In the side niches, there are full sculptures of St Francis and St John. The attic of the altar is richly decorated with architec-

tural and figurative artefacts. The use of multi-coloured marble and marble incrustations heightens the opulence of the altar. Small marble figures are also incorporated, depicting the Stigmatization of St Francis on the doorframe and Our





↑ *Miraculous painting of Our Lady of the Graces, the present of Pope Urban V to the Trsat Shrine*

↻ *High altar of the basilica with the painting of Our Lady of the Graces*

⇒ *St Francis's Stigmatization on the doorframe of the Shrine*





Transfer of the Holy House, a painting in the Shrine

Lady with Christ on the antependium. Two vaulted passages with painted wooden doorframes allow a procession to move around the altar. The area behind the altar was used for depositing votive offerings.

⑨ Today's marble incrustated altar of St Catherine, to the right of the triumphal arch, was erected in the 17th century. It was the third, following a Gothic and an early-Baroque altar. It was donated by Ana Sorsiana, born Petreković, as

written on the inscription. The Gothic altar differs in detail only from the opposite altar of St Michael. The central painting shows St Catherine with the martyrs. It was also painted by Fr. Serafin Schön. The female martyr from Alexandria is also displayed in front of the altar by the technique of incrustation.

⑩ The engraved wood and polychromatic altar of St John Nepomuk on the south



Altar of St Catherine, painting of St Catherine with Martyrs

Stained-glass window in the Shrine



wall of the main nave. The saint is displayed inside the baldachin supported by small angels. It is surrounded with the sculptures of the Franciscan saints: St Francis Solano and St Peter of Alcantara at sides and St Pascal on the altar painting. This altar was consecrated in 1727. As is the case with other altars engraved in wood in this church, it was made in a Franciscan workshop of Slovenian (Kranj) origins with South Tyrolean influences. The Franciscans of Trsat were connected with Carniola (Kranjska) in the 18th century. This workshop has left a significant number of works on Trsat, as its masters were active here in the 1720's. In accordance



Altar of St John Nepomuk



Pulpit of 1726 and the Calvary, a detail

with the then fashion, these altars were engraved in wood and painted in such a way as to imitate much more expensive marble incusted altars.

⑪ **The pulpit** was made in the same workshop in 1726. The basket is pentagonal and the edges of the full sides are accentuated by balustrades. Mary's monogram can be found in the central trim of the parapet. The composition is crowned by a baldachin with a full sculpture of an angel blow-

ing a trumpet. The doorframe leading to the monastery corridor is decorated in bas-reliefs, whilst the central motif is Christ's monogram.

⑫ **The Altar of St Nicholas.** This patron-saint of seamen was celebrated in this church from the beginning of the 16th century. The altar was renovated in the first half of the 17th century, whilst the painting of St Nicholas with his followers is the work of Fr. Serafin Schön. The painter's signature is



Interior of the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Trsat





Altar of St Nicholas, the saint-protector of seamen

to be found on the book in the saint's hands. St. Bonaventura is in the bas-relief above the altar atop a cloud. On the left pedestal, there is a full sculpture of a saint bishop, whilst St Anthony of Padua is displayed on the right.

The Calvary on the wall of the church, painted in fresco technique in the 1960's, is the work of Ivan Režek from Varaždin. The public pews in the main nave are from 1886, and the confessional is from 1981. One can just see the monastery through the small door on the

Interior of the church of Our Lady of Trsat





Big Cloisters of the Franciscan monastery on Trsat

Impressive cross-shaped vaults of Big Cloisters





A fresco in the Big Cloisters

southern church wall, situated between the pulpit and the altar of St Nicholas.

13 Main Cloisters. One can enter the Main Cloisters through a special entrance at the side of the church façade or through the side door leading from the church itself. It was completed as part of the overall Baroque reconstruction at the end of the first half of the 17th century. It is interesting to note that it was never part of the enclosure, but was conceived and used as an open part of the monastery, a place where pilgrims could rest and receive refreshments. Massive plastered columns and crossed vaults give a lasting impression of the continental Baroque art. The cylindrical crown of the cistern (“šterna”), like oth-

er stone architectural mouldings from that period on Trsat, has all the characteristics of the mannerist art-form.

The cloisters, after their renovation following the fire of 1629, were adorned by Serafin Schön with a series of frescoes displaying scenes from the life of Our Lady. The original, rather damaged frescoes, disappeared in two excessive restorations in the 19th and 20th century. However, the painter’s motifs and the inter-relationship of the figures have been preserved. The cycle begins with the Annunciation, beside the main entrance into the vestibule of the sacristy. Walking along the cloisters, one arrives at the passage leading to a small courtyard in which a chapel in the form of a portico with

candle windows has been recently arranged. From this courtyard, one can enter the chapel of votive offerings, an unavoidable destination within the monastery complex.

⑭ The Chapel of Votive Offerings. The chapel is the only new part of the monastery complex, and it was built at the beginning of the 20th century. The testimonies of various miraculous deliverances and healings resulting from the prayers of Our Lady of Trsat are present. These include several wooden engraved sculptures, silver and other votive of-



Vestibule of the Big Cloisters

Chapel of Candles



ferings, naïve paintings describing actual events, votive displays of storm-tossed ships, discarded crutches and other aids. Scenes of children miraculously saved from mortal danger are especially impressive. The gifts reflect faithfully the international importance of Mary's Shrine on Trsat. The exhibits have been continuously changed and added to. The excellent Gothic sculpture of Our Lady of Slunj from the 15th century dominates the chapel. Fearing Turkish invasion, the Franciscans hid the sculpture first in Senj and then, in Trsat. It has been kept in the Shrine of the Trsat church for centuries. By the second half of the 20th century, the majority of votive offerings were displayed on the wall of the church.



Chapel of Votive Gifts

⑮ **The Chapel of St Francis of Assisi.** The chapel was designed and constructed in 1647, as part of the grandiose building programme at the end of the first half of the 17th century. It was funded by Matija Rakamarić.

It is situated in the corner of the Main Cloisters, next to the passage leading to the courtyard in front of the Chapel of Votive Offerings. The present Baroque retable (an elaborate framework rising behind the altar and enclosing a panel decorated with paintings, sculpture, or mosaics), made in 1724, is the work of the Franciscan wood-engraving workshop active in Trsat at that time. The central bas-relief depicting

the Stigmatization of St Francis is bordered by a rich framework engraved in wood. The cycle of the Calvary was painted by Nenad Petronio from Bakar. The souvenir shop and information desk in the gatehouse are in a wing of the Main Cloisters. Rosaries and candles can be bought here. The entrance to the inside of the enclosure is in the corner. Proceeding further along the south-western wing, leads to the vestibule and the monastery's exit.

⑯ **The Vestibule of the Main Cloisters (exit door).** It is adorned with a sculpture of Our Lady and the only preserved original Schön fresco from the first half of the 17th century. The scene in the lunette



Chapel of St Francis of Assisi from 1647

Vestibule of the Big Cloisters with the preserved fresco of S. Schön

below the vault, above the entrance to the cloisters, depicts Our Lady as the Celestial Queen with the Child Jesus in her arms. St Francis and St Michael are displayed beside Our Lady. The fresco was discovered by accident beneath plaster during the renovation of the monastery in the 1960's. From the vestibule, there is access to the garden in front of the church façade. The surroundings of the monastery, the Calvary, Mary's garden, the Pastoral Centre "Aula Ivana Pavla II", Trsat's





Painting of Our Lady of Trsat saved from the fire in Klanjec

Richly decorated sacristy cupboard



steps, Trsat's Gradina (hill-fort) and other attractions, are later described in the text.

⑪ **The Sacristy.** It is situated next to the Shrine. Its vestibule is on the site of the old sacristy in which one can find two strong lockers for liturgical vestments and vessels. The inscriptions date them 1661 and 1678. The



Small cupboard for the list of saint masses from the 18th C



Detail of a stone wash-basin in the sacristy

Christ's monogram carved in Gothic script, a three-lobed carving adorned with teeth. The shallow date carving (1668) was added later. It most probably refers to the time of its insertion into the old sacristy. It was moved into the new sacristy in the middle of the 20th century.

Sacristy cupboard for keeping monstrances

later one has more ornate metal reinforcements, whilst the earlier, wood-engraved locker, is more richly decorated in Baroque form and ornamental *lesenas* (vertical bands on the front). The sacristy cupboard for keeping monstrances and the small cupboard containing the list of sacred masses from the 18th century, excel in lavish intarsia. The stone wash-basin in the sacristy is a late-Gothic work of art full of stylistic detail: heads of small columns, profiled beams,





Baroque bell-tower of Our Lady of Trsat

THE FRANCISCAN MONASTERY IN THE SERVICE OF THE SHRINE OF TRSAT

The Small Cloisters are situated within the monastery's enclosure, i.e. the area where the monks live, dedicated to their own way of life and teaching the noviciate to young friars who spend the first year of their vocation at Trsat. This part of the monastery can be entered only when the daily work of the Franciscans is not disturbed. The Small Cloisters have a little cistern. The arch spans and crossed vaults are much narrower, so that the overall dimensions of the corridors create a more intimate ambience than the Main Cloisters, which actu-

ally were not part of the original monastery enclosure. Unrendered columns of dressed stone endow the Small Cloisters with a certain Mediterranean feel.

The summer dining room is another art gallery of the monastery. This large room functions today as it always has done, although its walls and ceiling are covered with valuable paintings. The Franciscans first ordered a large canvas with a painting of the Mystical Supper of the Holy Family, commissioned from Fr. Serafin Schön in 1640, immedi-



Small cloisters of the Franciscan monastery



Painted ceiling of the Summer Dining-room



Summer Dining-room, a treasury of valuable paintings





Pulpit for readers and a marble wash-basin

ately after this part of the monastery had been completed. He executed this unusual iconographic painting (friars' dining rooms are otherwise conventionally decorated with a painting of the Last Supper) to the requirement of the then guardian, Franjo Glavinić. Other adornments in the dining room were commissioned according to a carefully determined iconographic programme in a very short period of time at the beginning of the 18th century. On the wall opposite the large tableau representing the Mystical Supper, a large stone wash-basin was constructed with a pulpit for readers in several kinds of marble with marble insertions. The marble axis completes a lavish acanthus decoration on the sides and skilful wooden supporters for towels. The overall construction, similar to a rich Baroque altar, occupies

St Bonaventura, oil on canvas, the work of Christophor Tascha



Frankopan coat of arms, the work of Christophor Tascha

the greater part of the wall. The symbol of the Franciscan order is found on the prominent parapet of the pulpit by an incrustation in warm colours. Our Lady with the Child Jesus is painted on the wooden doorframes of the pulpit. The work is attributed to Christophor Tascha. The other parts of the walls above the side door are covered with canvases displaying the Habsburg's coat-of-arms with a shield, on which are the initials of Emperor Leopold I; and the Frankopans' coat-of-arms with an inscription devoted to the founder of the monastery, Martin. Tascha is also the painter of all the other canvases on the walls of the dining room. On the longitudinal wall towards the interior of the monastery, he painted large tableaux with appropriate themes: The Miraculous Multiplication of Bread and The Rain of Manna.



Winter Dining-room dominated by the Baroque wooden carved Crucifix

It is interesting to compare the two painters who contributed to the Baroque appearance of the monastery: the theatrical Tascha and the lyrical Schön. Between

Fr. Franjo Glavinić, a historian, writer and theologian



the windows of the opposite wall Tascha set oils on canvas with the display of St Ludovic (Ljudevit), St Bonaventura and St Francis. The central painting on the ceiling is also Tascha's oil on canvas, as well as two side paintings. The main one represents the Immaculate Virgin Mary to whom St Francis of Assisi and St Anthony of Padua are bowing. The smaller one represents the patriarchs: Jacob's Dream in Bethel and Moses in front of the Burning Bush. The paintings are within a medallion and framed with a *tabulat* (painted wooden part of the ceiling). The *tabulat* was painted in 1703 by Josip Benedikt Stemberger. Other parts of the monastery have also preserved, in great measure, the Baroque ambience.

The winter dining room is a smaller and more simply arranged room. It is dominated by a Baroque wood-carving of the

crucifixion from the first half of the 18th century. The tables and benches with high backs are in contrast with the whiteness of the walls and ceiling. The Baroque wash-basin of black marble is a more elegant piece of furniture. A rather large oil on canvas represents St Paul. It is a work of art by the student of the Viennese Academy A. Roblek from the 19th century. He was also a monk as were many others who decorated the monastery. There is also a portrait of the cardinal and bishop of Padua, G. Barbadigo, which was brought to Trsat by his nephew, the bishop of Verona, Ivan Franjo Barbadigo on the occasion of his pilgrimage to Our Lady of Trsat in 1709. The unusual Schön painting



Black Our Lady

of Our Lady shows the appearance of the main altar of the church in the first half of the 17th century, which predates the construction of the high marble altar. In the

Hall above the Big Cloisters – an art gallery



winter dining room, one can also see Schön's portrait of Fr. Franjo Glavinić, a historian, author and theologian, the monastery's guardian and the director of the renovation of the monastery at the end of the first half of the 17th century. A mitre and crook are painted beside the guardian as signs of the bishop's office, which he refused. Another gallery of artefacts can be seen above the cloisters, in the outer corridor in the old part of the monastery, from which one enters the Franciscans' rooms. Many of the exhibited works were originally meant for this space. The Baroque oils on canvas from the 1730's showing Franciscan saints are especially interesting.

They were painted by Valentin Metzinger, a Lotharingian who lived in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Many works of this painter's prolific output have been preserved in Slovenia and Croatia. A drawing by the famous 20th century Croatian naïve painter Ivan Lacković Croata excels among the more recent donations. He painted the Shrine of Trsat and pilgrims in his specific Podravian way. Several excellent models of ships are exhibited. *Viribus Unitis* is one such vessel, the flag-ship of the Austro-Hungarian navy during the First World War.

Passing by the engraved-wooden sculpture of the Immaculate Conception in the corridor, one enters the treasury of opulent votive offerings.

In climatically controlled conditions, the treasury holds the icon which was donated to the Croats, according to tradition, by Pope Urban V in 1367. He met them on the pilgrimage to Loreto, where they were inconsolable due to the loss of the small house of Our Lady. This icon was proclaimed miraculous because it had been allegedly painted by St Luke himself. Modern analysis attributes this triptych to the north Adriatic or Venetian artistic circle of the first half of the 14th century. Gothic stylistic elements are clearly expressed, whilst the Greek letters are the result of the convention of the day in painting miraculous icons. The iconographic analysis of the figures on the sides of the triptych points to the Frankopans, who most probably purchased the icon. The golden crowns used in the 1715 coronation of Our Lady and the Child Jesus, an initiative of the Bishop of Verona, Barbadigo, are exhibited separately. The crowns were financed from the foundation of Alessandro Sforza, the canon of the Vatican basilica of St Peter. This was the first coronation of Our Lady outside Italy. In the first room of the treasury, there is a copy of the Trsat icon Our Lady with the Child Jesus from the 18th century.

Donations by the Habsburg rulers can be found here: the chandelier of Leopold I, the two-headed golden eagles studded



Copy of the Trsat Our Lady with the Child Jesus and golden crowns



House chapel

with diamonds from Charles V, and the mass vestments of green velvet donated by Mary Therese (the Franciscans believe that the Empress embroidered it herself). One of the most beautiful artefacts is the high Renaissance silver sculpture of Our Lady with the Child Jesus of 1597. It was a votive offering for the healing of Sigismund Erdödy, the son of Ban Toma Erdödy and his wife Ana Marija Ungnad. The biblical sign of Mary below the feet of Our Lady also symbolised victory over the Turks. Ban Toma was celebrated all over Europe because he defeated the Turks in the decisive battle near Sisak in 1593. The coat-of-arms and the gilt inscription of thankful parents

are carved on the high stand of the sculpture. The sculpture is attributed to the goldsmiths of Augsburg.

An unusual reliquary with inscriptions in *bosančica* (Croatian/Bosnian Cyrillic script) is the gift of the Serbian female despot Barbara, born Frankopan, the niece of the founder of the monastery. Other silverware originates mostly from Venetian and South German workshops. Renaissance, Baroque and classicist reliquaries

can be found here, together with chalices and plates, *pacificals* (liturgical objects offered by the priest to the faithful for the kiss of peace), processional and other liturgical objects. The treasury holds part of the overall wealth, mostly connected with well-known donors. The only preserved specimen of the prayer book 'The Paradise of the Soul' is significant. The prayer book, printed in Padua in 1560, was created in the area of Pokuplje, the then Frankopan land. This is one of the oldest known books printed in Croatian in the region of mainland Croatia. It was edited by the priest Nikola Dešić and belonged to Katarina Frankopan, the wife of Nikola Zrinski of Siget. The monastery on Trsat also

holds the manuscript of the *Historia Tersattana*, the famous work about the history of the monastery written by Fr. Franjo Glavinić; and the charters of Pope Nicholas V from 1435 and Martin Frankopan from 1468.

A painting on wood in a richly decorated engraved frame of acanthus leaves was placed in the interior chapel of the novitiate building as a background to the altar. This work of quality is attributed to Serafin Schön, and represents Our Lady Breast-feeding Jesus with John the Baptist and St Elisabeth in attendance.

The monastery owns a rich library and archival material for use by the Franciscan school of philosophy and theology. Many

of the books and manuscripts disappeared in the fire of 1629. A contemporary of the time, guardian Franjo Glavinić, mentions important and rare books from different regions of Europe which were lost in the fire. Many precious Franciscan objects were sent to the monastery from Bosnia and parts of Croatia occupied by the Turks. After this catastrophe, the monastery has not experienced further damage. Music archival materials are also in the monastery. The monastery library has 17 incunabula, books printed by 1501. One of them is written in Croatian and published in Venice in 1495 - it is the famous evangelist book by Fr. Bernardin of Split.

Calvary procession



Treasury



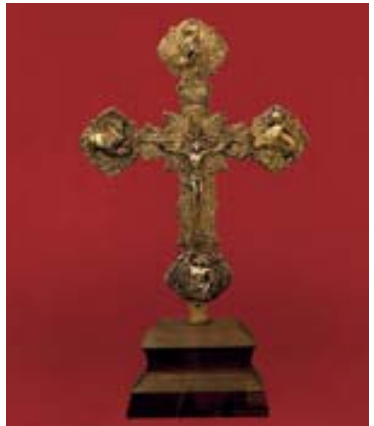
↪ *Ciborium, gilt silver, a Venetian work from the 18th C*

↑ *Reliquary of Barbara Frankopan, a local master, 15th/16th centuries*

↩ *Monstrance, gilt silver, 18th C*

↗ *Cross with the lamb, silver*

↓ *Cross - pacifical (a liturgical cross offered by the priest to the faithful for the kiss of peace), cast silver*





- ↑ *Chalice, gilt silver; technique of embossing, 17th C*
- ↗ *Chalice of Bishop Aleksandar Ignacije Mikulić, 17th C*
- ⇒ *Silver statue of Our Lady with Jesus, a votive gift of Prince Toma Erdödy (1597)*
- ↓ *Votive crown of "Uskoci" of Senj from 1615*
- ↖ *Pendant of Emperor Charles V, an anonymous jeweller, 1536*





↪ *Monstrance*

↑ *Reliquary of Count Porcio, Venice, 1636*



↩ *Unique book of prayer Paradise of the Soul from 1560; it belonged to Katarina Frankopan*

↓ *Book of Gospels of fr. Bernardin of Split from 1495 written in Croatian and printed in Latin letters*





Precious votive gifts



Chasuble, the gift of Empress Mary-Therese, green velvet embroidered with silver

Miraculous icon of Our Lady of Trsat kept in the monastery treasury



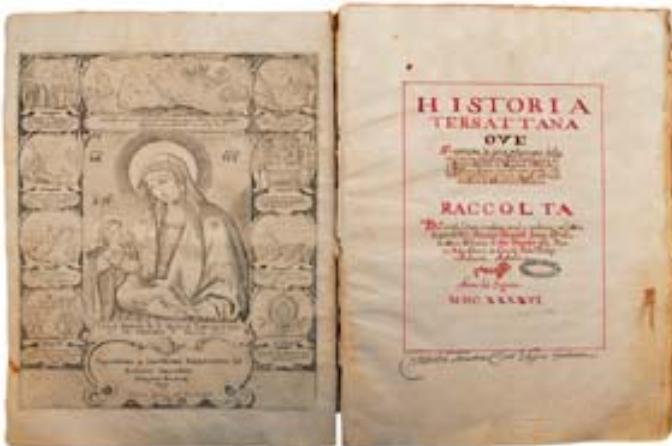
Library



↪ Papal letter of proclaiming the church of Our Lady "a smaller basilica"

↪ Papal letter of the foundation of the brotherhood of Our Lady of Trsat

↪ *Historia Tersettana*, the famous work about the history of the monastery





Mary's pleasure garden

OPEN ASPECTS OF THE TRSAT SHRINE

Mary's Garden and the Calvary

One can pleasantly visit the monastery walking through Mary's garden which has been recently re-arranged. The old part of the garden in front of the church façade was laid out in the 19th century. Walking through it towards the south-west, one shortly arrives at the last two chapels of the Trsat Steps. Other chapels are situated below the road leading to Trsat. The Trsat Steps, as an urban and architectural

complex of particular interest, will be dealt with in another chapter of this book. The newly arranged part of the garden is bordered by the monastery complex to the east, in an area previously planted with vineyards. This great exploit was done at the time of the guardian fr. Serafin Sabol in the last decade of the 20th century.

Eucharistic celebrations take place here on Holy Days. Due to its position and setting, this area is said to have the most beautiful summer stage in the city of

Rijeka. Further on towards the east, a larger resting-place has been installed with benches and tables for visitors. The Calvary is arranged on Mount Fortica above Mary's Garden. The Franciscans have planted trees on this previously bare elevation over the last hundred-odd years. To the north-east behind the monastery, Dolac with its vegetable plots edged by stone walls has been preserved. This Dolac (karst valley) with its



Shrine of Our Lady on Trsat, the church and Franciscan monastery

vegetable patches is mentioned in the legend about the arrival of the small house on Trsat. Another interesting episode from the life of the monastery is connected with it. The famous Art Nouveau architect, the Slovene Jože Plečnik, planned to enlarge the church immediately before the First World War. He conceived the idea of a new domed shrine above this karst valley, modelled on the basilica of St Peter in Rome. However, the project was stopped by the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who, as a connoisseur of ancient buildings

Station of the Calvary



Calvary, time of prayer and meditation





Calvary

and sites, estimated that the new shrine would destroy the origins and significance of the real Trsat Shrine.

Petar Kružić's Steps

This religious and architectural venue has been repaired and built on for centuries. The steps start at the centre of Sušak, a part of the city of Rijeka situated along the left bank of the River Rječina. According to tradition, the Croatian military leader, Petar Kružić, began the building of the steps in 1531 along the track of an existing votive path towards the monastery. He built a votive chapel situated on the plateau near the Franciscan church.

It is dedicated to St Nicholas, the patron-saint of mariners, as Kružić often went by ship to his

many fights with the Turks. The chapel is arrived at from the garden in front of the church by a path paved with schist. The year 1531 is engraved on the façade of the chapel, atop the angular late-Gothic vault in Glagolitic script. A little further on, there is a passable portico in the form of a triumphal arch. The inscription inside the portico refers to the great contribution given towards the completion of the Trsat Steps in the first half of the 18th century by the Duke of Styria, Carinthia and Carniola, and the commander of Brinje, Franz Gabriel Aichelberg. The pilgrim's path is bisected by the road below the chapel, but apart from that single interruption, one can continue to descend the steps without hindrance as far as the start. However, there



Chapel of the Consolatrix of the Sad at the beginning of the Trsat Staircase

is a tradition that the steps be counted while ascending them, towards the monastery. There are more than five hundred, whilst folklore has it that “the number is not known”. The beginning of

the steps in Sušak is marked by the Baroque chapel in the form of the triumphal arch.

The bas-relief of the Female Consoler of the Sad, Our Lady with the Child Jesus in her arms, invites the pilgrims’ difficult ascent. It is situated in the niche of an attic, framed with Baroque volutes (architectural ornaments in the form of a spiral or scroll, characteristic of an Ionic capital). Two more chapels are built on

Chapel of St Nicholas, the votive chapel of Petar Kružić on the Trsat Staircase



Aichelberg’s portico on the Trsat Staircase



the steep ascent as votive repositories of dignitaries. A unique experience is to climb the Trsat Steps in the procession on the Feast of the Assumption. Even today, some pilgrims practise the ancient votive tradition of climbing the steps on their knees.



Medieval Trsat building

TRSAT, THE PLACE AND THE HILL-FORT (GRADINA)

The Centre of Trsat

The Croatian Reading Room was built opposite the entrance to the church of Our Lady of Trsat at the end of the 19th century, and was historically designed by the local builder, Mate Glavan.

The reading rooms at that time functioned as cultural centres of the Croatian revival movement and as a base for various societies.

The Frankopan Square at the rear of the church is the urban centre of Trsat. One passes along the Street of Petar Zrinski leading towards the castle (*kaštel*), the Trsat Gradina, to the north-west.

Along the path, there are single-storey houses built in the 19th century. The settlement was mentioned in the Statute of Vinodol of 1288, as part of a system of nine Vinodol communities within a de-



Trsat – a place of hill-forts, parish church of St George and the Shrine Of Our Lady of Trsat

veloped autonomy. A larger municipal residence belonged to the noble house of Nugents, the last masters of the castle. The Baroque parish flat is on the opposite side with visible traces of earlier building phases.

The Trsat Gradina, the Castle above the Canyon of the Rječina

The Frankopans, Croatian aristocrats originating from the island of Krk, were the predominant masters of the medieval castle. The fortifications of the castle were strengthened at the end of the 16th century because of Turkish and Venetian threats.

The monastery's valuable items were kept in a special secure treasury, through fear of Turkish invasion. The castle was abandoned in the middle of the 18th century following a great earthquake.

The Austrian military leader and Count Laval Nugent, originating from Ireland, chose the castle for his last resting-place, in the first half of the 19th century. He also renovated it in the romantic classicist and Biedermeier styles.

His family played a significant role in the formation of the Croatian people's revival. The ancient church of St George is situated below the castle. It was reconstructed several times as the parish church of Trsat.

The view from the castle extends to the Rijeka hillside districts of Kalvarija and Kozala, the

town centre of Sušak to the left of the Rječina, a part of the centre of Rijeka itself, the city port, and also the whole of Kvarner Bay, Liburnian Istria to the west, the island of Cres to the south and Krk to the south-east. To the north, one can see the remains of old mills in the canyon of the River Rječina.

The Approach to the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Trsat

If one is in Rijeka, one can see Trsat from Jelačić Square, from Fiumara, Wenzel and from Fishermen Streets - in fact, from the whole length of the Dead Channel (Mrtvi kanal). The best way to visit the Shrine would be via the Trsat Steps. The steps start from the Sušak part of the city centre.

If you don't feel up to a strenuous ascent, you can go to Trsat from Rijeka by city bus, on lines 1 and 1a (Cindrićeva - Kumičićeva - Mihanovićeva ul. - Šet. J. Rakovca) and walk back down to Rijeka.

You can also get to Trsat by car using the ring-road at the eastern entrance of the city of Rijeka (Rijeka - east - Kačjak - ul. T. Strižića - Mihanovićeva ul. - Šet. J. Rakovca), and avoid city centre traffic.

On the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, Trsat is closed to traffic.



Trsat Shrine – “the Croatian Nazareth”, a place of gathering of numerous Pilgrims, admirers of Our Lady of Trsat



PILGRIM LIFE IN MARY'S TRSAT

Pilgrims had visited the Shrine of Trsat even before it was taken over by the Franciscans in the 15th century. Pope Martin V gave his approval to the Modruš associate bishop Blaž to look after the Shrine in 1420. A year later, the Pope granted special indulgences to Trsat's pilgrims. The same pope allowed Martin Frankopan to entrust the care of the Trsat Shrine to the Franciscans, as well as the church of the Blessed Mother of God because "the faithful on the other side /of the Adriatic/ nurture a special feeling of piety due to the various miracles done by Almighty God in past times through the pleading of the dearest Virgin Mary". The number of Trsat pilgrims increased in the 14th century after the image of Our Lady of Trsat had been placed in the Shrine in 1367. *"This was because of the special attraction by which this place influences people both near and far, who affirm this by taking part in both public processions and small groups."* When Petar Kružić had the Trsat Steps built in 1531, an access to Mary's Trsat was opened for those

who arrived from the sea (the main port of Rijeka was then situated on the estuary of the River Rječina, below Trsat).

"For 700 years, Your pious people from Trsat, the city of Rijeka and its surroundings, Istria, the Kvarner islands and the Coast, the Gorans and Podgorans, the inhabitants of Lika and Krbava, our entire beautiful homeland of Croatia and neighbouring Slovenia, go on pilgrimage to Trsat. You shared with these people Every happiness and misfortune, Every defeat and victory. Through long centuries, You have always Consoled the sad, and been a Refuge for sinners."

Anton Tamarut (1932-2000),
the Archbishop of Rijeka and Senj

Christ's faithful in the Trsat Shrine





Celebration of the Holy Mass in the open air in Mary's pleasure garden

In 1647, Franjo Glavinić pointed out that the Trsat Steps influenced the adoration of Our lady of Trsat in a new way: “In order not to smother the memory of piety, I say that one can see people from various social strata climbing these steps, from the foot of the mount to the peak.

They often kneel on their bare knees while going on this pilgrimage.” Glavinić, who stayed at Trsat for decades, witnesses that “all Christian folk converge there, not only those from nearby regions but also from the distant Alps and other more remote lands, competing among themselves in their gratitude for grac-

es received.” The pilgrims “pray piously and make vows seeking favour from that Virgin who was both servant and mother to the only eternal Descendant, the Supreme Ruler.” (*Historia Tersattana*, 1989, p. 77, 99, 130). Mary’s Trsat experienced its greatest period after the image of Our Lady of Trsat was crowned in 1715. Then, Pope Clement XII granted Trsat pilgrims the privilege of visiting the seven altars of the Roman basilica of St Peter, with the same indulgences. Later historical events influenced the fortunes of pilgrimages to Trsat.

This was particularly evident when the River Rječina became

the international frontier separating Trsat from Rijeka, Istria, some of the islands and a part of Slovenia.

Also, for twenty or so years after the Second World War, the regime frowned on religion and discouraged pilgrimage.

Popes Pius IX and Pius XI extended pilgrims' privileges. Pope Pius XI honoured the Trsat church with the title of 'minor basilica' in 1930. Among official annual pilgrimages, of particular note are the pilgrimage of Franciscan youth in April, the Holy Day in May of Our Lady of Trsat (May 10th is the day of the celebration of the arrival of the small Nazareth house on Trsat), Mother's Day, the Seamen's Pilgrimage, the Karlovac Pilgrimage, the Grobiniština Pilgrimage in June, the Pilgrimage of Novi Zagreb in July; then on August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption, the pilgrimage of the faithful from the region behind the Bay of Bakar, the pilgrimage of Bistrica, the pilgrimage of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary on September 8, the pilgrimage of the Istrians, the Zagreb pilgrimage, the pilgrimage of the Krk diocese in October, and the pilgrimage of the

Rijeka archbishopric at the end of October.

The main Festival of the Assumption is especially impressive. Trsat is then closed to traffic, and the faithful arrive in their multitude from all directions.

The Festival is accompanied by a traditional fair and by numerous accompanying performances. Throughout the Summer on Saturday, pilgrims arrive from the central part of upper Croatia and demonstrate their devotion in the procession around the altar of Our Lady of Trsat. Many of them stay in the church and the chapel of votive offering, praying and meditating all day long.

Procession on the holiday of Our Lady





Holy Father prays in front of the miraculous painting of Our Lady of the Graces

JOHN PAUL II AT TRSAT

Despite the passage of time, we recall that Pope John Paul II's third visit to Croatia took place between 5th and 9th of June, 2003. Rijeka hosted the visit, and from Rijeka he went to Dubrovnik, Osijek and Zadar. At the end of his stay in Rijeka, he gave himself completely to the host city and on the night of 7th June, the faithful crowd, through prayer and song, for Whit Sunday to dawn. The Pope celebrated mass on the Rijeka Delta in the morning. He bravely took note of

the social and other conditions in which a family in Croatia lives and championed the motto with which he was welcomed "the family was the future of the Church and the People"! He underlined his good wishes and love towards our people by exclaiming: "Be the people of hope!" He arrived at Trsat on Whit Sunday afternoon and confirmed his belief that the Trsat Shrine was a memorial site for the Holy Family and a Shrine protective of Croatian Christian families. Aware of his illness and

his advanced years, he asked at Trsat: “Pray for me while I am alive and also when I am dead!”. On his return to Rome, he simply marked his visit to Trsat as confirmation of his being one in the long series of Trsat pilgrims and called himself “the Trsat pilgrim”.

Pope John Paul II visited the Shrine of Our Lady on Trsat on June 8, 2003 and prayed before the image of Our Lady of Trsat, led the Franciscans in common prayer, and presented the Shrine of Trsat with a rosary in memory of his pilgrimage. In his short speech, he emphasized that he considered

the Trsat Shrine to be a permanent inspiration for family pastoral life, because it was the Croatian Nazareth, the shrine of the Holy Family. It was the reason he went on pilgrimage to Trsat and will connect him forever with the Trsat Shrine.

Pope John Paul II was invited by the bishops of the Trst metropolitan area to come to Trsat in 1991, on the occasion of the celebration of the 700th Anniversary of the Shrine of Trsat. The invitation was supported by the then president of the Bishops’ Conference, Cardinal Franjo Kuharić. However, the political

Holy Father in the church of Our Lady of Trsat



situation in Yugoslavia was such that he was not able to respond to the invitation. He did not visit Trsat during his visits to Croatia in 1994 and 1998, but was there in 2003, when Rijeka was his host, and he also visited Dubrovnik, Osijek, Đakovo, and Zadar.

The Pope's visits to Loreto reminded him of Trsat and the Shrine of Our Lady, because he knew very well the history of the Loreto Shrine, which is inexplicable without the legend of Trsat. Loreto and Trsat are connected with the same tradition about the move of the small house of the

Blessed Virgin Mary from Nazareth through Trsat to Loreto. Visiting Loreto, the Pope could not forget Trsat and in fact, this increased his wish to go on pilgrimage to Mary's Shrine at Trsat - the Croatian Nazareth.

Therefore it was understandable that he began his sermon on the Rijeka Delta by referring to Trsat:

"We find ourselves at the foot of the Mount on which the Trsat Shrine lies..." He tried to pronounce the difficult Croatian word "trsatsko", and received much applause from the gathered multitude. These opening papal words

not only marked the location of the Rijeka Delta, but they were also an introduction to his message about the family, emphasizing that the Trsat Shrine was a permanent memory of the life of the Holy Family in Nazareth. The Holy Family is the eternal ideal for Christian families, following the model of family life established by the Holy family of Nazareth. The Trsat Shrine is a constant reminder to pilgrims of this truth

Pope John Paul II visited the Trsat Shrine in 2003





Monument to Holy Father in front of the Trsat Shrine

and it was understandable that the Pope wished to come to Trsat, which he affirmed in his first audience upon his return following his third visit to Croatia. He stressed that he had visited Trsat as a pilgrim, because he honoured the Shrine which preserves the memory that, according to tradition, “the holy Nazareth house stopped at Trsat before arriving at Loreto”.

The Pope arrived at Trsat on Whit Sunday in the afternoon. The crowd welcomed him on the square in front of the church and in the area used for celebrating mass in Mary’s garden. In order for the Pope to see Mary’s garden, a place of great liturgical celebration and pilgrim gathering, and in order for the crowd to see him better, the Pope’s car drove along the semi-circular path in front of the Shrine. The

then provincial Franciscan prior, Fr. Lucije Jagec and the guardian and the custodian of the Shrine, Fr. Matija Koren, formally welcomed him at the entrance to the Shrine. Fr. Lucije is the custodian of the Shrine today.

While the Pope visited the church, the guardian briefly recounted the history of the Trsat Shrine. Before the altar, he greeted the Pope and presented him with the Paradise of the Soul (from 1560), the prayer book of Katarina Frankopan, and also a facsimile edition of the history of the Trsat Shrine *Historia Tersettana*, published in 1647, written by Fr. Franjo Glavinić. These are two oldest documents about the Trsat Shrine; the latter represents the history of the Shrine and the former is a special testimony that the Trsat Shrine is the promoter of Mary’s thoughts, deep piety

and spirituality. The Pope, due to his many obligations, probably did not read these books, but he received with evident interest the Litany of Our Lady of Trsat from the prayer book *Paradise of the Soul*, which was translated for the occasion into his mother tongue. He probably used it in his prayers and thus revived memories of his pilgrimage to Trsat. When the Pope came before the altar of Our Lady of Trsat, he asked that the kneeling desk be moved to the very altar of Our Lady and then knelt on it in front of the figure of Our Lady of Trsat. He became absorbed in silent prayer and observed with dedication the painting of Our Lady of Trsat, which impressed him greatly. Then he led common prayer, and expounded on his interpretation of the ancient image of Our Lady of Trsat.

When the Pope noticed the apostolic figures and the figure of a deacon, probably St Stephen the First Martyr, he came upon the idea that the figure of Our Lady of Trsat might be seen as the figure of the Mother Church. These papal words should be understood as Mary's dignity within the Mother Church. The Pope donated the rosary to the Shrine saying: "Pray for me while I am alive and also when I am dead!" He was thus both leader and congregation of

the common prayer, but also faithfully asked to be prayed for, both in life as in death.

On his pilgrimage, Pope John Paul II celebrated the 550th Anniversary of Franciscan service to the Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat; which the guardian remarked on in his speech. The Pope evidently wished to honour the Franciscans for their long service, and did this in a simple, fatherly way. He allowed all the Franciscans present, some fifty of them, to approach him and be received as if they were church or political dignitaries. It was a strong sign that he recognized and approved of the five and a half centuries of service by countless Franciscans. He also encouraged young Franciscans, who were the majority in this formal welcome, to continue the tradition of their predecessors.

After the visit of the Holy Father, the Trsat Shrine was also included in the many visits to Mary's shrines made by this Pope. Now it has a new task: to seize the moment and realize the initiatives put forward by Pope John Paul II during his stay on Trsat. The Trsat Shrine will be all the more attractive to pilgrims because many of them will wish to follow in the steps of the Pope. Trsat will continue to remember the Pope as the man of prayer but will also remember his words after his re-

turn from Croatia, that he places Croatian Christian families, both in Croatia and overseas, “under the special protection of the Holy Nazareth Family.”

The Trsat Shrine as the Croatian Nazareth, should in a deliberate and determined way, promote pastoral family life. This should be done in both word and deed, throughout Trsat. The Trsat Franciscans cannot do this on their own; they need the help of the lay faithful who cherish the Trsat Shrine. If the Franciscans join forces with the lay faithful, the Pope’s pilgrimage to Trsat will be the beginning of a new period in the history of the Trsat Shrine. By no measure, did the

Pope just come and then leave Trsat. The monument in front of the Trsat Shrine added his name to every group of Trsat pilgrims, whilst the recently complete Hall of Pope John Paul II becomes a pastoral centre where his message will live permanently, especially that which he announced during his three stays in Croatia. Moreover, according to his teaching, this pastoral centre of the Trsat Shrine will be a place from which the social teaching of the deceased Pope will echo all over the world and create a new character of Christians in our regions, sensitive to social problems and ready to resolve them in a high Christian responsible way.

Hall of Pope John Paul II – Pastoral Centre



TOURIST INFORMATION

Shrine of Our Lady of Trsat, Franciscan monastery,
Frankopanski trg 12.tel. 051 / 45 29 00



*Pope John Paul II,
the work of the sculptor Ante Jurkić*

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