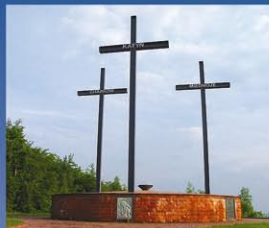


The Magic of Święty Krzyż



Święty Krzyż

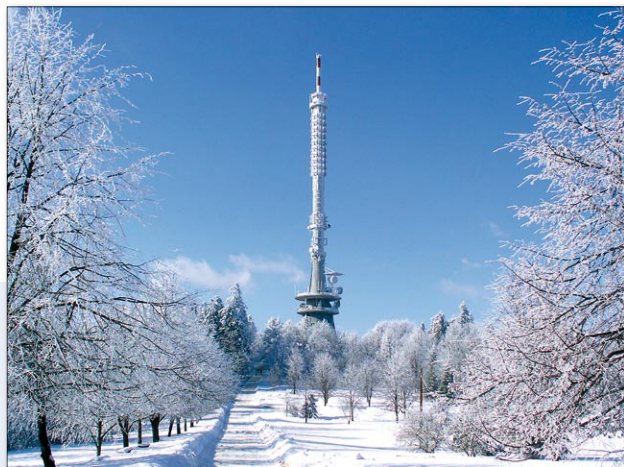
"Łysa Mountain in the Sandomierskie region, near Opatów, high, nearly always cold, often foggy or covered with snow or standing in the rain, the beginning of many springs..." this was the description of Łysiec, also called Łysa Mountain, by Jan Długosz in "The History of Poland".

At present it is known more as Święty Krzyż (Holy Cross). From its beginning it has been a place of worship, pagan at first and christian later. Historians are not sure about the date when the Benedictine abbey was built. According to Długosz it was in 1006 at the times of Bolesław Chrobry, while others say it was in the early 12th century and that it was founded by Bolesław Krzywousty. The first records on the cult of the remains of the Holy Cross, which gave the place its name, come from the 13th century. Soon it became one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in Poland. In the times of the development of the abbey the oldest writings - Świętokrzyskie Preaching and Łysogórskie Songs, were created here. Throughout the century the monastery was being expanded: in the 15th century ambulatory was founded by Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, and in 1614-20 the Oleśniczy chapel was built. The place did not avoid fires and destruction. The monastery and the church were often plundered by invaders. The present church on top of Święty Krzyż was erected in the end of the 18th century in place of the former one destroyed by huge fire. Świętokrzyscy abbots engaged themselves in nursing herbs and healing, they owned glass-works where they made medicine bottles, and they also run a school in Nowa Słupia. In the monastery there was a huge library which gathered 6305 books till 1819, when the monastery was taken over by the government.

In the vacant building the ukase government started a prison, the strictest in Poland. During the IIWW the Germans created here a prisoner-of-war camp for Russian soldiers. Nowadays the owners of the monastery are the Oblat Missionaries of the Holy Virgin Mary.

The oldest part of the church complex





is the 15th century Gothic ambulatory. In the wall adjoining the church there are remnants of the first Roman church. On the walls of the ambulatory there are remains of Baroque pictures. The ceiling is cruciform with fillets in architecture. From the ambulatory there are two entrances to the Classicistic church of the Holy Cross. Its altars are decorated with paintings by Franciszek Smuglewicz, the creator of the Wilno painting school. Another entrance from the ambulatory leads through a vestry to the Oleśniczy chapel, also known as the Holy Cross chapel. There are kept the remains of the Holy Cross wood. In the vault under the shrine there are coffins of the family of the founder of the chapel and of Jeremi Wiśniowiecki. Three rooms adjoining the ambulatory house the Oblats Missionary Museum. Two of them are devoted to the history of Święty Krzyż. Several other rooms of the monastery are occupied by an exhibition of the Świętokrzyski National Park where the sanctuary is located. Nearly at the top of Łysa Góra there is a vantage point over the biggest in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains rocky rubble. From there not only the famous gołoborza can be seen but also a wide panorama to the north.

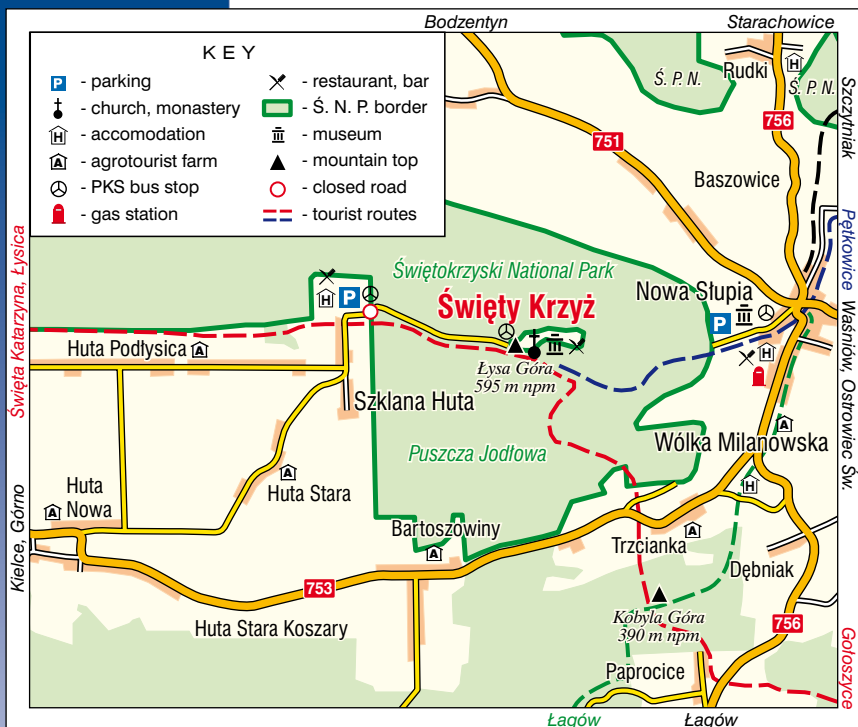
There are two ways to Święty Krzyż:

- from Nowa Słupia along the so called Royal Way which is also a blue tourist route;
- from Huta Szklana along asphalt road, on chaises, on the so called "Świętokrzyska Train" or by PKS buses.

It is allowed to drive your own car on top of Święty Krzyż only on Sundays and on holidays between 7 am – 1 pm to take part in masses.

**Oblat Missionaries
of the Holy Virgin Mary Museum**
Święty Krzyż 1, 26-004 Bieliny,
Nowa Słupia Commune,
Phone (+48 41) 317 70 21
www.swietykrzyz.pl

**Świętokrzyski National Park
Exhibitions**
Święty Krzyż 1, 26-004 Bieliny,
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