



Pre-Vatican II churches of the Radomszczanski Pastoral District in the Archdiocese of Czestochowa (1945-1966)

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ABSTRACT:

Churches built in Poland after World War II can be divided into those that arose before and those after the Second Vatican Council. Due to the ground-breaking importance of the Council for sacral architecture, the so-called „pre-Vatican II” churches differ significantly from those built during later years. Churches built in the Radomszczanski Pastoral District of the Czestochowa Archdiocese in 1945-1966 have been presented in the paper. There are only eight churches of this type, because of the numerous difficulties affecting sacral architecture in the People’s Republic of Poland. The objects were described and analyzed in terms of their style and functionality.

KEYWORDS:

Pre-Vatican II churches; sacral buildings; churches of the Archdiocese of Czestochowa

1. Introduction

Churches built after the Second World War, apart from other classifications, can be divided into those built before and those after the Second Vatican Council (1966). This is believed to be the most pronounced architectural division. Therefore, some researchers suggest that the architectural styles before and after the Council should be classified as different periods [1]. Vatican II initiated fundamental changes in the Catholic church. The reform of the holy liturgy was one of the results of the Council, which became the foundation for the new approach to sacral art. The profound renewal of sacral art arose from the need to adjust to the needs of modern people. The significance of its symbolism was emphasized. Thus the reduction of artistic means and illustration was noticeable. The Council emphasized that the Church did not recognize any style as its own and allowed all forms of art from different regions and different nations to be equal. It was also recommended that art which offends religious feelings, has no connection with faith, customs, and Christian piety, or has low or even average artistic level should not be allowed in places of worship. The temples are to be adapted to the liturgy and facilitate active participation in the celebrations. Clerics responsible for sacral art should seek the advice of experts in this field and also look after sacral artists [2].

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the primacy of architecture over other areas of sacral art. In addition to other functional changes, one of the most important was the change in the location of the main altar. The altar, found previously adjacent to the wall, was now moved closer to the center of the temple in order to focus the attention of the parishioners. Masses began to be celebrated with the priest facing the faithful. A lot of freedom was allowed in the location of the tabernacle, and the pulpit reading rooms were ordered to be placed in visible places.

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Throughout the centuries, the tradition of religious architecture has barely changed, and even after World War II, churches were inspired by pre-war and historic buildings. Therefore the shift in the architectural approach after The Second Vatican Council in 1966 was very significant.

2. Sacral buildings in the Diocese and Archdiocese of Czestochowa

The Czestochowa Diocese was founded in 1925 and had 226 churches in its area. By 1939, 35 churches were built in the diocese, of which five were adaptations of buildings with formerly different purposes. The years 1939-1945 was a period of devastation when many churches were destroyed. However, despite the occupation, four religious buildings were erected at that time: three by adaptation and one new [3].

Post-war years were a time when religious architecture in Poland, including the Diocese of Czestochowa, did not develop. During the first 12 post-war years, only three new temples were erected in the diocese. In the whole country, only 59 new churches were built between 1945-1950, and 57 buildings between 1951-1955 [4]. After 1956, there was some improvement in relations between the government and the church, unfortunately, it did not last long. In 1957, the Office for Religious Affairs stated that „the lack of planning in the construction of religious buildings and other church buildings has caused a number of difficulties resulting from the shortage of building materials in the whole country” and introduced many restrictions regarding the issue of permits for the construction of churches. The significant formalization and extension of the procedure for seeking permission to build a church were applied [5]. A number of deliberately planned obstacles hindering the investment process of sacral buildings were noticeable. Finally, in the 80 s, loosening of the harsh rules became visible and, from 1989, religious architecture multiplied rapidly. The years from the end of World War II to the end of the Second Vatican Council coincided with the period of greatest stagnation in religious construction in Poland [6].

The Archdiocese of Czestochowa (established in 1992 in part of the area of the Diocese of Czestochowa) includes four pastoral districts: Czestochowski, Radomszczanski, Wielunski, and Zwierzanski. On its territory, there are only 14 sacral buildings built in the years 1945-1966, of which 6 buildings were erected in the Czestochowski Pastoral District and 8 in the Radomszczanski District. No religious building was built at that time in the other two districts [7, 8]. Basic data on pre-Vatican II churches in the Radomszczanski Pastoral District is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Pre-Vatican II churches of the Radomszczanski Pastoral District

No.	Name of the church	Place	Year of design	Designer	Years of church construction
1	Christ the King	Strzelce Małe	1946	Jan Olejarski	1946-48
2	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Garnek	1947	Wiktor Majwald	1947-51
3	St. Antoni of Padua	Kiełczygłów	1948	Stanisław Pospieszalski	1948-57
4	All Saints	Jedlno	before 1949	no data	1949-50
5	Divine providence	Strzelce Wielkie	before 1956	Wiktor Majwald	1956-59
6	Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Universe	Ciężkowice	1958	Feliks Paszkowski	1958-60
7	Sacred Jesus' Hearts	Łysiny	1958	Feliks Paszkowski	1958-59
8	St. Urszula DM	Soborzyce	1963	Leszek Łukoś; Ludwik Mackiewicz	1963-66

3. Churches of the Radomszczański Pastoral District

In 23 years: 1946-1968, only 8 religious buildings were built in the Radomsko region, which was the largest number of investments among all four regions of the archdiocese. A query carried out by the author in the archdiocesan archives of the metropolitan curia in Czestochowa proves that during this period, permission was sought for the construction of churches, including in the pastoral region in question. The rich correspondence from the authorities of the Diocese of Czestochowa to the provincial authorities and with the office of denominations shows a definite blocking of the issue of building permits for churches. In the Radomsko district of the Czestochowa Archdiocese, during the next 36 years: 1970-2005, 53 new churches were built, which proves the scale of the parish's needs.

The oldest church in the Radomsko Pastoral District, Christ the King in Strzelce Male was built in 1946-1948 (Fig. 1). It is a single-story building, partly with a basement, made of limestone and ceramic brick - practically the only materials available after the war. Compositionally, it is a homogeneous convention with a traditional shape and hall body. The projection polygon is symmetrical, based on a rectangle, the longitudinal polygonal orientation of the interior and axial internal orientation were used. Thus, the interior layout is traditional, conforming to historical patterns. Stylistically, the church conforms, with some elements, to Neo-Roman features, but at the same time, it has the distinct look of modernism. The block is simplified, with no external decorations, a simple gable roof over the nave, and the roof above the presbytery and overlaps. Originally, the church did not have a tower. The tower visible in Figure 1 was built for the church in 2004.

The Church of The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in Garnek was built in the years 1947-1951 (Fig. 2), while the interior was finished only in the 1960s. It is a one-story building, made of ceramic, full brick. Compositionally, it is a homogeneous convention with a traditional shape and wall-pillar body. The polygon of the plan is asymmetrical, based on a cross. Traditional longitudinal polygonal interior orientation and axial internal orientation were used. The church externally conforms to Renaissance buildings: a traditional rosette above the entrance, arched upper parts of the windows. Renaissance volute runoffs were replaced by simplified stepped firewalls. The church tower, located on the right from the entrance, has a modernist character. The whole structure gives the impression of trying to combine traditional fourteenth and fifteenth-century patterns with a modern approach.

The Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Kielczyklow was built in the years 1948-1957 (Fig. 3). It is a one-story building, made of ceramic, full brick. The composition is not a uniform convention with a traditional shape and a basilica basis. The multi-side projection is symmetrical, in the shape of a cross. As with the features described above, the church uses longitudinal polygonal interior orientation and axial internal orientation. The stylistic convention is similar to Romanesque temples. The raw brick walls with small window openings and simple geometric shapes bring to mind medieval churches. The interior of the temple is completely different from the external style and conforms to the Byzantine style.

The Church of All Saints in Jedlno was erected in just two years, starting from 1949 (Fig. 4). It is a one-story building, made of ceramic, full brick. Compositionally, it is a homogeneous convention with a traditional shape and indoor body. The projection polygon is symmetrical, on a rectangular plan with a semicircular presbytery. As in most post-war churches, a longitudinal polygonal interior orientation and axial internal orientation are observed in Jedlno. The church belongs to the mainstream of historicizing architecture. The front and rear facades feature a volute runoff, characteristic of Renaissance buildings. The roof is gabled with a tower in the middle of the ridge span, with a hexagonal lantern and an onion-shaped dome crowned with a cross.

The church of the Divine Providence was built in the years 1956-1956 (Fig. 5), on the wave of political thaw. It is a three-nave building with Neo-Roman features but also conforms to the modern style. Compositionally, it is a homogeneous convention, with a traditional configuration with a pseudobasilic body. The projection polygon is symmetrical, on the cross plan. The church has a free-standing tower, located on the side of the main entrance. The polygonal orientation of

the temple is axial, and the internal orientation is longitudinal. There is a wall structure here, made of full brick.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of the Universe in Ciezkowice was created in the years 1958-1960 (Fig. 6). It is a one-nave church, combining modernist features, visible especially in the front facade with the Neo-Roman style. The composition of the building is in a homogeneous convention with the traditional shape and the indoor body. The projection polygon is symmetrical based on two T-shaped rectangles connected, the polygonal orientation of the building is axial, and the internal orientation is longitudinal. The building has a wall construction dress, made of ceramic, full brick.

The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Lysiny was erected in the years 1958-1962 (Fig. 7). It is a building with a symmetrical projection in the shape of the letter „T”. It is constructed and stylistically very similar to the church in Ciezkowice described above, while the features of the historical style are more visible. Just like in the aforementioned building, it is a homogeneous convention with a traditional shape and an indoor body. The polygonal orientation of the building is longitudinal, and the internal orientation is axial with a single space interior configuration.

The Church of St. Ursula DM in Soborzycze was built in the years 1963-1966 (Fig. 8). It is the first typically modernist church in the whole of the Radomsko district since the end of the war. It was innovative at the time, especially considering its location in a small town. Despite the modern character of the building, it has a traditional axial polygonal orientation and internal longitudinal orientation. It is a uniform convention with a roof-wall structure and a tent body. The interior configuration is a single space.



Fig. 1. Church of Christ the King in Strzelce Male



Fig. 2. Church of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Garnek



Fig. 3. Church of St. Antoni of Padua in Kielczyklow



Fig. 4. Church of All Saints in Jedlno



Fig. 5. Church of Divine providence



Fig. 6. Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Universe in Cieczkowie



Fig. 7. Church of Sacred Jesus' Hearts in Lysiny



Fig. 8. Church of St. Urszula DM in Soborzyce

All the described churches originally had the altar situated in the back of the presbytery. According to tradition, priests celebrated the mass facing the altar and standing with their back to the parishioners. After the new rules came into effect, all churches underwent remodeling, with altars moved to the front of the presbytery so that the priest would be facing the faithful. The facilities' interiors have been adapted to the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, including the location of the pulpit in the presbytery.

4. Conclusions

The four oldest churches in this pastoral region obtained building permissions before 1949 before the new restrictive rules were introduced by the government. Another three after 1956, during a political thaw. The last of the pre-Vatican II churches began to be built in 1963. The number of church buildings erected in the following years can be considered representative of the situation in the whole country.

All churches of the Radomszczanski Pastoral District built between the years 1945-1966, according to the historical canon, had traditional axial polygonal orientation and longitudinal internal orientation. The vast majority of buildings conformed to historical styles, although in some of them, clear modernist features can be seen, which shows the architects' creative approach to the design process and attempts to adapt historical solutions to contemporary aesthetic canons. Only the church in Jedlno is an example of a typical neo-Renaissance building. In turn, the church in Soborzyce is an entirely modern building, innovative for the time it was built.

The described churches have a traditional construction and are made out of stone or solid brick. Certainly, this is due to the availability of these materials in difficult post-war times as well as the size of the buildings. They are relatively small, adapted to the needs of local rural and small-town communities. Unlike many following projects, too large in relation to the current needs of users, those described were not 'exaggerated', in fear of not obtaining further building permits.

These churches have undergone interior modernization since construction, adapting them to modern liturgical requirements. Despite the time, they fulfill religious functions well, without the need for expansion or reconstruction. Only the church in Strzelce Male recently received a new church tower, which the original design did not include. This extension did not significantly affect the functionality of the church. However, it did increase the visual qualities of the building.

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Przedsoborowe kościoły radomszczańskiego okręgu duszpasterskiego archidiecezji częstochowskiej (1945-1966)

STRESZCZENIE:

Kościoły wzniesione w Polsce po II wojnie światowej podzielić można na te, które powstały przed Soborem Watykańskim II i po nim. Ze względu na przełomowe znaczenie Soboru dla architektury sakralnej obiekty tzw. przedsoborowe różnią się znacząco od tych wznoszonych w latach późniejszych. W pracy przedstawione zostały kościoły zbudowane na terenie okręgu radomszczańskiego archidiecezji częstochowskiej w latach 1945-1966. Istnieje zaledwie 8 takich kościołów ze względu na liczne trudności, jakie dotyczyły budownictwo sakralne w Polsce Ludowej. Dokonano opisu i analizy tych obiektów pod kątem ich stylistyki i funkcjonalności.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:

kościół przedsoborowy; obiekty sakralne; kościoły archidiecezji częstochowskiej