

## The Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa



*Pope Saint John Paul II prays at Jasna Góra.*

Devotion to Mary, the Mother of God has a special place in the Catholic faith of Poland. Częstochowa is regarded as the national shrine and the spiritual heart of the nation. This most important Polish Marian shrine is the sanctuary for the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa, also called Jasna Góra (Bright Mountain). The icon was painted by St. Luke on a cedar table top from the house of the Holy Family. The icon came to Jasna Góra in 1382 and was placed under the protection of the Pauline Fathers. In 1430, a sacrilegious attack damaged the icon. The scars of the marks left by the sword slashes can still be seen on the right cheek of the Madonna.

Many miracles have been associated with Our Lady of Czestochowa. One of the greatest took place in 1655. A Swedish invasion, known as the Deluge, moved through Poland. Their first defeat was at Jasna Góra, when they were unable to take possession of the monastery and were forced to retreat. In 1656, King Jan Kazimierz (John Casimir) placed the whole of the country under the protection of Our Lady, declaring Her to be Queen of Poland. 300 years later, under the guidance of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who had been jailed by the communist government, the people of Poland renewed their vows to the Blessed Mother. On August 26, 1956, the acting president of the Polish Episcopate proclaimed the vows, together with one million pilgrims gathered at Jasna Góra.

In 1957, Cardinal Wyszyński led the Polish people in the Great Novena, nine years of fast and prayer, to prepare for the celebration of the Millennium of Polish Christianity in 1966. A copy of the Miraculous Icon visited all Polish parishes, amid large processions and gatherings for prayer. The communist authorities tried to stop the traveling icon by “arresting” the painting. In response, Cardinal Wyszyński sent the empty frame to continue the pilgrimage to the parishes. Prayers and processions continued as the faithful gathered around the frame to pray to Our Lady. Eventually, the government relented and returned the icon to the Church.

The strength of the Polish people lies in their faith, expressed in devotion to our Mother and Queen. Each night, at Jasna Góra and in countless homes around the world, the *Apel* is prayed:

Maryjo Krolowa Polski, jestem przy tobie, pamiętam, czuwam.  
Mary, Queen of Poland, I am near you, I remember you, I watch.

St. Stanislaus Parish and School are consecrated to Our Lady of Częstochowa. Whether you are Polish by ethnicity or not, the history of the Miraculous Icon, the courage of the Polish nation in proclaiming the Faith and their fidelity to the Blessed Mother are your spiritual heritage as members of the St. Stanislaus community. The days between the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15 and the Feast of Our Lady of Częstochowa on August 26 are known as the Częstochowa Days. Please join us, and pilgrims throughout the world, in praying the Novena to Our Lady of Częstochowa from August 17 – August 25. The text can be found on the reverse side of this page.

**Everyone is invited to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Czestochowa on Sunday, August 26, 2018 at St. Stanislaus Church:**

**10:00 a.m. Holy Mass**  
**3:00 p.m. Benediction and Adoration**  
**3:30 p.m. Marian Music– Polish and English**  
**4:00 p.m. Evening Prayer**

# Novena to Our Lady of Czestochowa

St. Stanislaus Parish and School

## Daily Invocations:

### Day 1

We thank you, Holy Mother, for your presence and intercession at the miraculous shrine at Jasna Gora and for the many graces you have obtained for us through this image.

### Day 2

We thank you, Holy Mother, for your reign over our nation. Strengthen our commitment to a culture of life.

### Day 3

We pray, Holy Mother, that you would strengthen us in faith and intercede in reconciling sinners to Christ and His Church.

### Day 4

We pray, Holy Mother, that you would guide with maternal care our leaders: Pope Francis, Bishop da Cunha, and Father Johnson.

### Day 5

We beg your pardon, Holy Mother, for our self-centeredness, and ask for the grace to serve your Son in the least of our brothers and sisters.

### Day 6

We thank you, Holy Mother, that you are the sign of our victory and our help against the Evil One.

### Day 7

We pray, Holy Mother, that you would be our help and comfort in the midst of loneliness and sorrow.

### Day 8

We ask, Holy Mother, that you would obtain from our Lord the grace of a deeper desire for personal holiness.

### Day 9

We pray, Holy Mother, that you would obtain for us the special personal grace for which we pray in this novena.

## **Novena Prayer** (to be recited each day following the appropriate invocation)

O Almighty and Merciful God! You have given the Church a wondrous help and defense in the Most Holy Virgin Mary and You have honored her sacred image as the Black Madonna with remarkable veneration of the faithful. Grant in Your mercy that, under her protection, we may struggle confidently throughout our lives and at the moment of death be victorious over our enemy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Black Madonna, our Mother and Queen, trusting in your maternal goodness and powerful intercession with your Son, we place before you our humble prayers and petitions. To you we commend our parish, Saint Stanislaus. We pray for our clergy, our parishioners, and our parish school. We beseech you, O Black Madonna, our Mother, strengthen us in faith and obtain for us the power to renew our lives in the spirit of God's commandments and the Gospel of Christ, that you may continue to reign in our lives and obtain for us from your Son the special graces that we implore for our parish and for ourselves (*pause to mention personal intentions*).

We turn to you for protection, Holy Mother of God, listen to our prayers, and help us in our needs. Save us from every danger, Glorious and Blessed Virgin.