**Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Kraków**

The **Church of St. Francis of Assisi** with Monastery of the [Franciscan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciscan) [Order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_order) ([Polish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_language%22%20%5Co%20%22Polish%20language): *Kościół św. Franciszka z Asyżu*) located in the [Old Town district](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krak%C3%B3w_Old_Town) of [Kraków](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krak%C3%B3w), Poland, is a [Roman Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church) religious complex on the west side of the All Saints Square at ul. Franciszkańska 2, across the street from [the Bishop's Palace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop%27s_Palace%2C_Krak%C3%B3w) – residence of [Pope John Paul II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II) during his stays in the city. The Church dates back to the 13th century. Saint [Maximilian Kolbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximilian_Kolbe) was a monk there in 1919, and led his first [service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_%28Catholic_Church%29) at this church on Poland's [return to sovereignty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Polish_Republic).



There is no consensus among historians about the church's founder. He was probably Duke [Henry II the Pious](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_II_the_Pious) (1196–1241), son of Prince [Henry the Bearded](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_the_Bearded) (1165–1238) who resided in Kraków and also previously invited the Franciscans to [Wrocław](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wroc%C5%82aw). His wife, Anna (daughter of the Bohemian King [Premysl Otakar I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premysl_Otakar_I)), and especially her sister Agnes (Agnieszka) contributed as well. However, widely regarded as the founder is also Duke [Bolesław V the Chaste](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boles%C5%82aw_V_the_Chaste) with his wife [St. Kinga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinga_of_Poland), especially in the construction and reconstruction of the church and monastery after the devastation of the [Mongol invasion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_invasion) in 1241.

The Church was one of the first tall brick-and-sandstone buildings in the city. The original [13th-century Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_Gothic_architecture) structure was consecrated before 1269, and expanded in 1260–70. Not much remains from that particular period other than the ribbed 13th-century vault. Presbytery was elongated beginning in 1401 with the three-sided [apsis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apse) (pictured). The cross-shaped central part with nave arcades was added around 1420–36 (the original chancel was straight). The annexes gave the temple a shape of a Greek cross for the first time. The expansion was re-consecrated by Cardinal [Zbigniew Oleśnicki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbigniew_Ole%C5%9Bnicki_%28cardinal%29) in 1436. In spite of various calamities (1462, 1476, 1655), the Church of St. Francis of Assisi and the adjacent Monastery experienced the most destructive fire only in 1850. The written records of its consecration along with priceless artifacts were lost.

For the Franciscan Order in Poland the [period of foreign partitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partitions_of_Poland) was deadly. By 1864, from over 90 Franciscan monasteries only 8 remained in the country including the one in Kraków. The situation slightly improved after the [Austro-Prussian War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austro-Prussian_War). In 1866, Austria granted a [degree of autonomy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austrian_Partition) to Kraków after its own massive defeat. In 1895, the eastern part of the church received murals with floral motifs by the founder of [Young Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_Poland), [Stanisław Wyspiański](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanis%C5%82aw_Wyspia%C5%84ski). Wyspiański was also the author of magnificent [stained glass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stained_glass) windows in the [apse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apse), manufactured at the [Innsbruck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innsbruck) foundry in 1899–1904. The re-consecration of the renovated church by Bishop of Kraków, Anatol Nowak, took place on 14 June 1908. It was promoted to the rank of [Basilica Minor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_Minor) on 23 February 1920.



The Franciscan Basilica is in possession of the certified copy of the [Shroud of Turin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shroud_of_Turin), located in the Chapel of [the Passion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passion_%28Christianity%29). It is placed at the [main altar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altar_%28Catholicism%29) of the chapel (pictured) for all guest and parishioners to examine. The replica was consecrated by [Pope John Paul II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II) at the Vatican on 19 March 2003; and the ceremonial unveiling by [Cardinal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardinal_%28Catholicism%29) [Franciszek Macharski](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciszek_Macharski) of Kraków took place on 14 April 2003.

The [Shroud of Turin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shroud_of_Turin) is a burial linen 4.36 by 1.10 metres (14.3 by 3.6 ft) large, with the reverse image of a man, believed to be the deceased Christ, who, according to tradition, was wrapped in it and placed in the tomb. In the middle is the apparent imprint of the face of Christ.

