

Selected aspects of marketing pilgrimage sites

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Abstract: Tourism centered on pilgrimages to religious sites in Slovakia, the target groups being individuals, family, youth seniors, etc., promotes the spiritual, cultural and educational growth of those who partake of it. But, more importantly, this trade in tourism promotes the regional economy in terms of tourism thereby promoting the growth of the whole country.

The objective of this paper is to examine pilgrimage sites, highlight their importance with regards to ecumenical, cultural and economic aspects.

Keywords: Wandering , tourism , pilgrimages , region

Introduction

Slovakia has pilgrimage sites equivalent to Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal and Guadalupe in Mexico. Devotion to the Blessed Mother Mary is an ancient tradition, which has survived even the Turkish invasions and communism. Tourism (Fr. Tour = path, ride or hike) - is one form of physical education activities, or active relaxation associated with movement and residence within the countryside at leisure. Content tourism forms a component of physical, cultural, cognitive, professional and technical knowledge and skills. By way of movement, tourists are divided into hiking and walking, (in difficult mountain areas such as the Alps) skiing, cycling, water sports and car trips. Recently added forms of tourism are agrotourism, ecotourism, social tourism a trend, not least of these, religious tourism [Dancák , 2005, p. 7] Walking has become a great challenge for society and the church. There is a danger that this may lead to decreased religious tourism, which may lead to a dis-service to souls. "Walking, or "NETURISTIKA", holiday, or "NEDOVOLENKA", provides a benefit above all else, and in particular our soul. " According to Dancák2005 (p. 11) attitudes towards tourism can be summarized in three points:

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1. Tourism contributes to the improvement of mental and moral profile of a person.
2. Tourism as a social activity arouses a sense of human solidarity , undermines the prejudices that govern the relationships between people and promotes mutual respect among peoples.
3. Tourism creates objective conditions for spiritual upliftment .

Characteristics of the researched object

Gúčík (2006 , p.109) advises, cultural tourism is associated with the traditions of many of world's religions. Its most common manifestation is a pilgrimage. The characteristic of the pilgrimage- the pilgrim, religious acts and a place of pilgrimage. The place of pilgrimage (iconic) can be a city, town, village or natural feature (holy river, holy mountain, etc.). The main difference between religious tourism and cultural tourism lies in that religious tourism refuses to assign its participants the title "tourist". Touring tourism is a type of tourism structured in terms of its dynamics.

Life is in many ways like wandering. At this time, many authors published in the field of religious tourism are devoted to legal issues such as wandering. Radlinskeho (2010) advises that wandering may be the same spiritual journey as a pilgrimage, if it is a spiritual journey as its purpose. It if is intended to visit a particular shrine or place, we call it a pilgrimage. Dlužořová (2011) advises wandering has an external character, visible in time and space, which takes its place in history, but with a more substantial internal character, which involves a pilgrimage of faith. Dancák (2010) writes wandering is a sort of exercise in ascetism, where a pilgrim on this journey voluntarily leaves the established order, motivated alone by the pilgrimage itself.

Pilgrimage sites are alive and well. Their impact goes beyond regional and national borders. Dancák (2005, p. 16), writes, "Between tourists and pilgrims there is a considerable difference. The tourist comes to historical sites to experience the

cultural heritage, recognized throughout the world and undiminished by time. The pilgrim differs from tourists because on their journey are not only places of beauty and heritage, but he is also trying to preserve and indeed retrieve the time of the saint or saints who somehow touched the place. The pilgrim follows in sacred footsteps. Indefatigable examples of these are the other witnesses of faith who for him provide encouragement and reinforcement for his own life. Pilgrims, as their name suggests, are the main actors in pilgrimages. Everything in this journey, depends precisely on these people, all along from their hometowns to the shrine where rest the remains of saints and their return to the place from which they came."

One of the great figures of modern history at the turn of the 20th and 21 century was John Paul II - Apostle of the Gentiles. He is known for coining the phrase pilgrim nations.

Marian pilgrimage cities of Slovakia

Since 2002, selected representatives of Marian pilgrimage sites regularly initiate joint meetings on the issue of solving the spiritual, cultural and economic problems faced by pilgrimage sites. Marian Pilgrimage expansion occurred mainly between the 17th to 19th centuries. Currently, Slovakia has over 55 places of pilgrimage, of which 8 are of the Greek or Byzantine rite. Most often pilgrimages to Christian festivals occur on the 15th of August, the 8th of September, and the 16th of July. Slovakia has a great tradition of pilgrimage on the occasion of the feast of the Virgin Mary, patron saint of Slovakia – the 15th of September. This is a public holiday in the SR. In addition to the renowned pilgrimage sites such as Marianka in Bratislava, Šaštín – GUARDS, Rajecká FOREST, OLD MOUNTAINS and MARIAN HILL in Levoči, Catholic faithful come to express respect for the Mother of God and gain strength and hope at many less well-known locations. Visits to the pilgrimage site in the AGRICULTURAL Forest is referred to as a pilgrimage to the Basilica of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary and also the Slovak pilgrimage to Bethlehem. This Slovak Bethlehem became the place or house for pilgrims from around the world every day.

Table.1 Nation-wide, regional, diocesan and local places of pilgrimage

Place	Pilgrimage places
Bratislava	Bratislava – town, Marianka (1377), Dunajská Lužná, Malacky
Trnava	Sereď - Stredný Čepeň, Trnava – town, Báč, Dechtice, Dolné Orešany, Hlohovec – town, Modranka, Trstín-Hájiček
Trenčín	Skalka pri Trenčíne, Červený Kameň, Domaniža, Dubnica nad Váhom – town, Chrenovce-Brusno, Lednické Rovne, Nadlice, Stará Turá, Trenčianka Závada, Veľké Uherce
Nitra	Šaštín, Topoľčianky, Dvory nad Žitavou, Hrušov, Lehota pri Nitre, Levice, Nitrianska Blatnica, Nitrianske Pravno, Nová Ves nad Žitavou, Pozba, Tesárske Mlyňany, Topoľčianky, Zlaté Moravce
Žilina	Turzovka, Rajecká Lesná, Višňové, Dubnica nad Váhom, Trstená, Bobrov, Kláštor pod Znievom, Oščadnica, Višňové, Zákamenné
Banská Bystrica	Staré hory, Modrý kameň, Banská Bystrica – town, Banská Štiavnica – town, Detva – town, Divín, Hliník nad Hronom, Hontianske Nemce, Hronský Beňadik, Nová baňa, Predajná, Senohrad
Prešov	Prešov – town, Levoča, Gaboltov, Stropkov, Veľký Šariš, Ľutina, Litmanová, Šašová, Rafajovce, Bardejov, Buková Hôrka, Čirč, Doľany, Humenné, Krásny Brod, Radvaň,
Košice	Obišovce, Klokočov, Bôrka, Kluknava, Košice – town, Malá Vieska, Uhorná

Source: Own processing

The Slovak Republic is supporting these shrines. The target demographic for these sanctuaries (for example in eastern Slovakia at the city of Ľutina, the Basilica MINOR) are of course religious pilgrims and visitors. Among them are families with children, young people, adults, the elderly, sick and disabled. Continued implementation of this support will contribute to the technical assessment and improvement of complex material and spiritual development of the site, which in turn will increase the number of visitors to the basilica, as well as the municipality and the entire region. It will also spread the good name of the Prešov region, aiding in the development of general and religious tourism. At the same time it will continue to enhance the quality of the services provided, which will enhance

the comfort of visitors and the appearance of the basilica as well as the surrounding area.

Table.2 Estimation of pilgrims

Place	Počet pútnikov na jednej púti ^{†††}
Šaštín	60 000
Staré Hory (Basilica minor)	12 000 (r.1990 – 20 000)
Gabolto	25 000 + (1 000 do 5000 in the individual Masses)
Obišovce	30 000 pilgrims

Source: Own processing

Levoča, a city in eastern Slovakia, is among Europe's most famous pilgrimage site. Marian Hill has seen the largest number of pilgrims of any of the pilgrimage sites in Slovakia, and is ranked among the world's great pilgrimage sites (since 1984 less Basilica).

Table.3 Traffic in Marianske Hory in Levoča during the year ^{§§§} (Prešov region)

Month	Number of pilgrims	Sum
		1 320 000
January	Fatima's saturday ^{****} - 2 500,	2 500
February	Fatima's saturday - 2 000,	2 000

^{†††} Estimate based on numbers of Holy Host

^{§§§} From January to December 2006

^{****} Estimate

March	Fatima's saturday - 2 000,	2 000
April	Fatima's saturday - 3 000,	3 000
May	Fatima's saturday - 4 000,	4 000
June	Fatima's saturday - 5 000, Pilgrimage of children from parishes of Eastern Slovakia - 10 000,	15 000
July	Fatima's saturday - 6 000, Main Levoča's pilgrimage - 800 000, individual pilgrimages from parishes - 200 000, pilgrimage of Eastern Slovakia seniors - 10 000,	1 016 000
August	Fatima's saturday - 6 000, The national pilgrimage of youth - 15 000, individual pilgrimages from parishes - 10 000, pilgrimage of Christian Democrats - 6 000,	37 000
September	Fatima's saturday -5 000, Salesian dot after the holidays - 1 500, pilgrimage dedicated to Marian feasts - 20 000, traditional pilgrimage of the faithful from the Polish Zakopane - 3 000,	29 500
october	Fatima's saturday – 5 000, Solemnity of Our Lady of the Rosary - 5 000, Rosary month - 10 000,	20 000
November	Fatima's saturday- 4 000,	4 000
December	Fatima's saturday- 4 000,	4 000
	Other (eg retreats for pupils, students, teachers, etc.).	180 000

Source: Own processing

Levoča city has been a focus for pilgrims from Eastern and Central Slovakia, for both the Latin and Greek rites of Catholicism. Pilgrims come here from Kosice, behind Magura, the Holíč Pohronie, but also Poles from the other side of the Tatras make the pilgrimage here. Simple Slovaks come here to express their joys and sorrows to Mary as Jesus' mother, as she often listens to their pilgrim songs (Dlugoš, 2000).

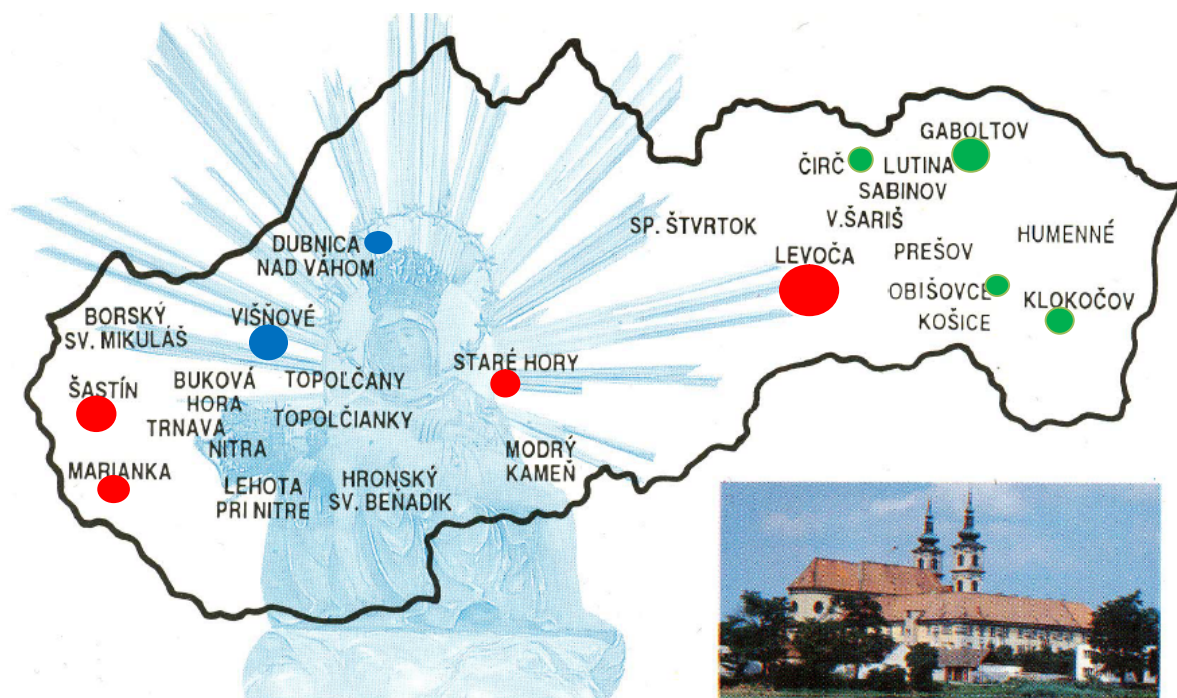


Figure 1 Marian pilgrimage sites in Slovakia

Source: Own processing

Pilgrimage sites in Slovakia can be differentiated between the National pilgrimage sites (CP) and regional, diocesan and local pilgrimage sites (RP). Among the securities are classified: CP1. Šaštín (Gracious statue of the Virgin Mary); CP2. Levoča (Gracious Levočska statue of the Virgin Mary); CP3. Mariánka (Gracious statue of the Virgin Mary); CP4. Staré Hory (Gracious statue of the Virgin Mary); CP5. Nitra (the picture of Our Lady of Sorrows); and CP6. Ľutina (Greek or Byzantine Catholic pilgrimage site, Basilica of minor)

A Brief Look at pilgrimages in neighboring Poland

Pilgrimages in Poland have become "social and community cultural events". Approximately 500,000 people participate every year, walking in pilgrimages to sanctuaries throughout the country (Data published by the Institute of Geography of Religion at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow). Half of the pilgrims heading to the Jasna Gora (Czestochowa) - the most famous national Marian shrine, which is visited by 4 million people annually. In Poland there are 500 sanctuaries for pilgrimage, of which 430 are associated with reverence to the Virgin Mary. The fact that the Poles are a nation of pilgrims also shows in other ways - they make up 5% of all Christian pilgrims in the world and 20% of those in Europe (Jacečková, 2010).



Figure.2 Map of pilgrimage sites in Slovakia, Poland and the world, having revelation ^{**}**

Source: www.zivcakova.sk

Consolution

Christian pilgrimages in Slovakia in general, and Eastern Slovakia in particular, are comparable with the largest ^{****} pilgrimages in the world ^{§§§§}. For example, Turzovka is often compared to France's Lourdes as a pilgrimage site. Glory pilgrimage site is the oldest pilgrimage site in Slovakia and compares with the Austrian and Polish Mariazell pilgrimage site Czestochowa.

Markus Schlagnitweit (2004) analyzed the positive and negative aspects of the ever-growing interest in pilgrimages of the faithful. When a pilgrim goes on a pilgrimage, leaving their usual environment and bustle of everyday life, either by walking or cycling, this journey leads to the pilgrim slowing down. The emergency situation which causes the pilgrim to go on his journey, and in turn leads him to discover himself, allows him in turn to become a pilgrimage route to for us to our own interiors. For "adventurers" a pilgrimage can be a comfortable alternative to endeavors that often mark the limit of our performance and allows them to meet people from all sorts of cultures and backgrounds ^{*****}.

Regardless of the motives for the pilgrimage, the pilgrim always meets with experiences that are good and valuable, i.e. the experience of traveling, calling into question the usual style of his life, the chance to experience quiet and a challenge to stay true to the intended objective - a deepening of faith. At the same time, we must take into account the negative concomitants of mass pilgrimage. The desire of pilgrims to keep on the right track for deep spiritual enrichment may be corrupted by a growing infrastructure built around shrines to "civilize" the experience and provide pilgrims every comfort. Consequently, the main sanctuaries of the world

^{****} <http://www.zivcakova.sk/05Fotogaleria/Prilezitostnefotografie.html#>

^{****} Among the ten most visited pilgrimage places (in. 1997) is a seven Marian shrines in order of Guadalupe (Mexico), Aparecida (Brazil), Czestochowa (Poland), Lourdes (France), Lujan (Argentina), Fatima (Portugal), Loreto (Italy). – comp.: Vnuk, F., (2003).

^{§§§§} Czestochowa (1382) - Jasna Gora, Poland; Fatima – Cova da Iria, Portugal; Garabandal - San Sebastian de Garabandal, Spain; Guadalupe – Tepeyac, Mexico; Hostýn - Basilica Nenebevzetí Panny Márie, Czech republic; Krakov - Monastery Lagiewniky, Poland; La Saletta - Saint Mountain La Salette, France; Lurdy – Massabielle cave – France; Medžugorie – Podbrdo, Bosnia a Herzegovina, Rue du Bac, Paris – Monastery of the Daughters of christian love - France; Ephesus – Turkey, and so on.

^{*****} Santiago de Compostela- Portugalsko

lose their silence and solitude. This destroys the original nature and importance of pilgrimages. Visiting pilgrimage sites in Slovakia should give rise to a deeper examination of the recent history of each particular pilgrimage site, so as to highlight their merit and the size of the religious consciousness of the Slovaks and Marian veneration which helped believers hold to their faith in Slovakia and in the toughest times of the totalitarian regime.⁺⁺⁺⁺

The target groups should complete at least one pilgrimage a year. This would increase the contribution of pilgrimage, especially if it is a multi-day pilgrimage to Slovakia, which would aid, inter alia, the promotion of tourism, accommodation, and so on.

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