

# Evaluation of the Determinants of Religious Tourism Development in the Roztocze Region

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## Abstract

*Roztocze possesses considerable cultural assets, conducive to developing tourism. Among them all, the sacred ones are especially significant because they are traces and witnesses of the former multicultural and multireligious character of the region. They are also excellent premises for advancing religious tourism. But there are some barriers that confine opportunities to develop that kind of tourist movement in Roztocze. First of all, is the general weak state of the tourism infrastructure. Besides that, there is an evident lack of professional promotion and elaborated offering of products of religious tourism. It seems that this form of tourism is not emphasized strongly enough in regional and local development strategies.*

**Keywords:** Roztocze, religious tourism, cultural values, sacred places, sanctuary

## Introduction

Despite the progress of secularization in the contemporary world, in Poland since the beginning of the 1990s there has been intense growth in visits to places of religious worship. Such trips, described under the common heading of “religious tourism”, became especially popular owing to Pope John Paul II who always emphasized that travel plays a significant role in the process of spiritual rebirth and development of man. Currently, religious tourism is one of the more popular forms of spending free time in Poland. Pilgrims usually visit the sanctuaries of international and national renown, while fewer of them travel to regional and local centres of worship. This is typically due to lack of knowledge about the advantages of these places among wide circles of pilgrims and tourists.

An example of such an area is Roztocze whose sanctuaries do not have a supraregional character even though the region has sound prerequisites for the functioning of religious tourism. The area is rich in sacred places as well as a high percentage of rural inhabitants who, as generally known, are strongly attached to religious values and traditions, forming the perfect grounds for the development of pilgrim movement and religious tourism. Apart from religious objects, Roztocze has a lot of secular monuments of the past, which are also interesting for visitors. Another advantage of the region is the fact that many places of worship are located in attractive natural surroundings, which is undoubtedly conducive to a deep reception and experience of religion. Unfortunately, in some places of the Roztocze Region, despite their considerable cultural potential, development of religious worship centres is hampered by an insufficient tourist infrastructure. Without doubt, the condition of tourist facilities is not a strength of the examined region.

This paper presents and attempts to evaluate the crucial factors of religious tourism development in Roztocze. In particular, these are the chances—prerequisites for development of religious tourism in the region, as well as basic barriers to its growth. Apart from the general discussion on the regional level, the paper focuses on several places where the resources and religious tourism are currently the most concentrated. In terms of administrative division, almost the whole examined region is situated within Lubelskie Voivodship. It covers the area of 16 rural counties, 5 urban-rural counties and 1 urban county—Tomaszów Lubelski. Only in the south-eastern part

of Roztocze are there 2 counties which belong to Podkarpackie Voivodship: rural—Horyniec and urban-rural—Narol. The paper is mostly based on literature, travel magazines, field research and statistical data of the Central Statistical Office. Information from these sources is juxtaposed with data from documentation of the local government of Lubelskie Voivodship. As a result, it is possible to present the issues of religious tourism in Roztocze in a wider perspective of the general development of the region.

## 1 The essence of the religious tourism product and determinants of its development

A major influence on the development of religious tourism is exerted by cultural and sightseeing values, because they respond to the needs for the spiritual and sensual experience of man. An additional impulse to embark on a religiously-motivated journey may be environmental, landscape, leisure and other special qualities. However, these are not necessary conditions for development of religious tourism, they only raise the attractiveness of destinations. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that nowadays leisure and specialised assets are increasingly sought-after by tourists who travel for religious reasons. This is due to growing tourist awareness in the contemporary society, manifested by the need to fill spare time with various forms of recreation (Lijewski, Mikułowski, and Wyrzykowski 2008).

Among cultural values, the key role in religious tourism is played by places and objects associated with the sacred sphere, which are the centres of prayer for local inhabitants and which become the destinations for pilgrims and tourists. The following three groups of objects can be distinguished:

- temples of various denominations
- necropolises
- religious infrastructure, that is such objects as: monasteries, buildings adjacent to churches, calvaries, chapels, shrines and bell towers (Szczęsna and Gawrysiak 2009)

In the Roman Catholic Church, sanctuaries hold the most important position among temples. According to the canonical law, a sanctuary is a place which is considered holy in the general awareness of the faithful and which is visited by pilgrims motivated by piety, with the approval of a local ordinary (Jusiak 2006). In the development of religious tourism a significant role is also played by events connected with the sacred sphere. This group of values includes all types of religious celebrations—e.g., recollection of the patron saint of a parish, various anniversaries, as well as harvest festivals which are votive offerings in gratitude for crops gathered by farmers.

Frequently, the core of the religious tourism product encompasses the elements of the natural environment (e.g., “holy springs”). In the past, such natural sources were places of revelation of saints or other religious events inexplicable from the scientific point of view. People who drank sacred water were healed of their illnesses or were guarded against misfortunes in a supernatural way. Among the local population, such events reinforced the belief in the “holy springs” with their healing and miracle-working water (Pytka 2006). Folk tales popular in the community, corresponding with the miraculous properties of “sacred springs,” upheld the religious value of these objects which continue to arouse interest of pilgrims and tourists (Jusiak 2006).

Apart from tourist attractions, another important determinant of religious tourism development is the condition of tourist facilities. In relation to the basic functions of tourist facilities, four basic elements can be distinguished: accommodation, catering establishments, transport, and accompanying facilities (recreational objects, travel agencies, tourism management offices and tourist information centres, cultural and entertainment establishments, as well as local public utility and social infrastructure) (Kurek and Mika 2007).

## 2 Natural qualities of the Roztocze Region

Among the natural assets of Roztocze, the objects with the strongest influence on religiously motivated tourists are the “holy springs.” The most famous ones can be found in Krasnobród

(2 springs), Radecznicza and Górecko Kościelne, and all of them are the objects of Roman Catholic cult. In accordance with folk traditions, the “holy springs” in Roztocze are accompanied by small chapels located nearby, erected to commemorate the miraculous events (Pytka 2006).

The two best known “holy springs” of Roztocze are located in Krasnobród. The first one can be found in the eastern part of the town, called Podklasztor, in the Blessed Virgin Mary Avenue. This spring comes up from the slope of the Wieprz River valley. It was considered holy already in the 17th century due to extraordinary events—a revelation of the Mother of God (Tyrka et al. 1998). The place was frequently visited by inhabitants of Krasnobród and nearby villages and the water from the spring was believed to have healing properties. This belief has survived until today, which is manifested by numerous pilgrims visiting the “holy spring” and drawing water.

The other “holy spring” of Krasnobród has its source in the slope of Zagóra, in St. Roch valley situated 2.5 km from Krasnobród monastery (Tyrka et al. 1998). According to folk traditions, the belief in the miraculous power of this spring originated at the end of the 17th century, and the healing properties of the water were confirmed at the close of the 19th century (Górak 1990).

In Central Roztocze, popular “miraculous springs” visited by tourists are situated in Górecko Kościelne, near the local church, on the slope at the Szum River. According to folk beliefs, water drawn from these sources has had healing properties since the mid-17th century, that is since the revelation of St. Stanislaus—a bishop and a martyr—to two inhabitants of Górecko. In this way, the local cult of the Saint was born and the spring became the destination of numerous pilgrims who believed in the miraculous power of its water. The belief in its curative properties has survived until today and a small spring called “Boża Łezka” (“God’s Tear”) is especially popular.

Moreover, Radecznicza village in the region of Roztocze Szczebrzeszyńskie is also famous for its “miraculous water” with healing qualities. At the foot of the hill called Łysa Góra, on which the monastery of the Bernardine friars is located, there are numerous springs feeding the Por River. According to a story, the water gushing out from these springs was blessed in 1664 by St. Anthony of Padua during his revelations, and thus it obtained the curative properties. Since that time, inhabitants of Radecznicza who drank the miraculous water inexplicably recovered from diseases. The news about revelations and cases of healing soon attracted growing numbers of pilgrims (Jackowski 1999).

Apart from “holy springs,” the environment of Roztocze is rich in other natural assets which do not have religious value but nevertheless fulfil the sightseeing needs of pilgrims and tourists.

## 2.1 Sightseeing and cultural assets

Religious objects are predominant in the cultural landscape of Roztocze. Nowadays, the region is inhabited mainly by Polish people of the Roman Catholic faith, so the majority of temples are Catholic churches. Apart from them, Greek Catholic churches are noticeable, especially in the borderland of Roztocze. There are only a few monuments of Jewish culture surviving after World War II, dispersed all over the region. Among them there are synagogue buildings, none of which fulfils a religious function nowadays. They usually house museums, libraries or culture centres (Skowronek 2004). In the Latin rite, sanctuaries have the most important position among places of worship and they are the main destinations of religious journeys. At present, in Roztocze there is one suprarregional sanctuary in Krasnobród and three sanctuaries of the regional range: in Tomaszów Lubelski, Radecznicza and Górecko Kościelne (Jackowski 1999).

## 2.2 Sanctuaries of Roztocze

The Sanctuary of the Visitation of Blessed Virgin Mary in Krasnobród, Central Roztocze, is the main Catholic Marian centre in the Diocese of Zamość-Lubaczów. The cult of the Virgin Mary has been continued in Krasnobród since the 17th century. Owing to numerous pilgrimages to this sacred place, it got the nickname of “the Częstochowa of the Roztocze Region” (Bernat and Flaga 2012). The history of this sanctuary began in 1640. According to the legend, that year, at a spring in Krasnobród, Jakub Ruszczyk had a revelation of St. Mary who liberated him from demonic possession (Bernat and Flaga 2012). Folk stories recount that a small picture of the Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus was put on a pine tree in the place of the revelation. Soon it turned out that the

image had special properties: it gave rise to many cases of miraculous healing (Tyrka et al. 1998). In 1674 the Theological Commission of Zamojski Academy examined and made a list of all the miracles, and the Bishop of Chełm pronounced the image of Our Lady of Krasnobród miraculous. From then on, the image became the object of an intense religious cult which is continued nowadays (Jackowski 1999).

The main religious object of the Marian sanctuary in Krasnobród is the group of monastic buildings of Dominican friars, comprising the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the monastery erected in the first half of the 18th century (Rolska-Boruch 2002). Some other objects connected with the sanctuary in Krasnobród are also places of prayer. Near the monastery there is the Calvary of Krasnobród, created at the beginning of the 1980s, which is the only object of this kind in the Roztocze Region (Parnicka 2006). Frequent destinations of tourist trips are also historic chapels situated near the springs whose water has healing properties.

Another important place of religious worship in Central Roztocze is the Catholic Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Scapular in Tomaszów Lubelski. The sanctuary is located in the larch wood Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The church in Tomaszów was founded by the Ordynat (Entailer) Michał Zdzisław Zamojski in the 1st half of the 18th century and is regarded as a gem of Baroque wooden architecture in Poland (Kaczorowski et al. 1998). In the centre of the main altar there is the miraculous image of Our Lady of the Scapular painted in the mid-17th century. Since the beginning of its existence, there have been numerous cases of miraculous healing, occurring through intercession of Our Lady of the Scapular (Jackowski 1999).

In Radechnica, West Roztocze, there is the Sanctuary of St. Anthony of Padua. The history of this sanctuary began in the 2nd half of the 17th century when, according to the legend, St. Anthony appeared to an inhabitant of Radechnica on a nearby hill. Then the Saint appeared also at a spring at the foot of the hill and blessed the water. After some time, a stone church was erected in the place of the revelations. The Bernardine friars, who took care of the church, placed inside the picture of St. Anthony with Baby Jesus. Soon the image was considered miraculous and thus it was greatly worshipped by the faithful (Jusiak 2006). Another religious object of the sanctuary in Radechnica, apart from the monastery of the Bernardine friars, is the very popular wooden chapel of St. Anthony, located at the “miraculous springs.”

Górecko Kościelne in the Józefów County is another important place of religious worship in Roztocze. In the history of the village, a significant role is played by the figure and the revelations of St. Stanislaus—a bishop and a martyr. According to folk sources, the revelations took place around the mid-17th century. Since then the Saint has been zealously worshipped in the village. In consequence of the developing cult, a vast group of religious buildings was established, picturesquely located in the valley of the Szum River. The most important building is the larch wood church from the 18th century with the picture of St. Stanislaus and his relics, presented in 1968 by Cardinal Karol Wojtyła to the parish in Górecko (Bernat and Flaga 2012). Other significant objects are: two wooden chapels erected in the place of St. Stanislaus’ revelations, Stations of the Cross, the cemetery with characteristic wooden tombs in the form of shrines and other two wooden chapels located in the avenue of old, historic oaks.

### 2.3 Other religious monuments of Roztocze

The Catholic temples which attract special interest of tourists include also: the Church of St. John of Nepomuk in Zwierzyniec and two churches in Szczebrzeszyn: the Church of St. Nicholas the Bishop and the Church of St. Catherine.

The Baroque Church of St. John of Nepomuk in Zwierzyniec, Central Roztocze, is commonly called “The Small Church on Water” and is situated on the biggest island of the town’s pond. Inside the church there is the picture of the patron saint and the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa, considered miraculous, presented in 1907 by the Ordynat’s wife Róża Zamoyska (Pawłowski 2000).

Both churches in Szczebrzeszyn, as examples of the so-called Lublin Renaissance, have considerable cultural value (Rolska-Boruch 2002). The interior of the temples, originating mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries, is richly decorated (Pawłowski 2000).

Apart from Roman Catholic temples, in Roztocze there are also Greek Catholic churches, concentrated mainly in the borderland of the region. They can be found, (e.g., in Hrebenne, Werchrata, Wola Wielka, Łosiniec, Siedliska and Bełzec). Some of them have been turned into Roman Catholic churches (Hrebenne, Werchrata, Łosiniec), while others, unfortunately, are becoming dilapidated (Wola Wielka, Siedliska, Bełzec) (Pawłowski 2000). On the other hand, in Szczebrzeszyn and Tomaszów Lubelski there are Orthodox churches which have been renovated lately and are gradually regaining their sacred function (Skowronek 2004).

The cultural landscape of Roztocze includes also monuments of Jewish culture: synagogues and cemeteries, surviving the war damage and dispersed among various places. Former synagogue buildings have survived e.g. in Szczebrzeszyn and Józefów Biłgorajski. Nowadays, these objects do not fulfil their religious function. The former synagogue in Szczebrzeszyn currently houses a culture centre, while the synagogue of Józefów has been turned into a library and a place of accommodation. Jewish cemeteries can be found in four small towns of Roztocze: Frampol, Zwierzyniec, Szczebrzeszyn and Józefów (Skowronek 2004).

## 2.4 Religious events

From the perspective of religious tourism development, apart from the advantages of a place, valuable events are also significant. The most important religious events connected with the Roztocze Region include: main church fairs taking place in particular sanctuaries and famous Catholic temples, the diocesan harvest festival in Krasnobród and the Festival of Marian Songs in Górecko Kościelne (Bernat and Flaga 2012).

The biggest event of the sanctuary in Krasnobród is the church fair celebrated on the July 1 and 2 during the holiday of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, commonly called the holiday of the Blessed Virgin of the Berries. The celebrations comprise a number of church services: an evening Rosary Procession with stations in the Blessed Virgin Mary Avenue, the Marian watch-night service held at the “holy spring” near the “Chapel of Revelations,” the night vigil before the miraculous image of Our Lady of Krasnobród, and the High Mass on the July 2, celebrated in the Krasnobród sanctuary. Moreover, in Krasnobród there are also church fairs during other important Marian holidays: the Nativity and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holiday of Our Lady of the Rosary.

According to long tradition, the diocesan harvest festival is organized every year in the Krasnobród sanctuary. It takes place on the first Sunday after the September 8. Delegations arriving from the whole Diocese of Zamość-Lubaczów participate in the ceremonious procession and the holy Mass. After the religious part of the harvest festival, in the square near the temple there are concerts of folk groups and agricultural exhibitions. Harvest wreaths, presented by delegations, are collected in the church granary (Bernat and Flaga 2012).

The most important religious event of the sanctuary in Tomaszów is the church fair taking place on the July 16, on the day commemorating Our Lady of the Scapular. Moreover, the festivities take place also on such Marian holidays as the Annunciation and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holiday of the Mother of God — Queen of Poland.

The main celebrations in the Radecznicza Sanctuary are associated with commemoration of St. Anthony. They begin on the June 12 with the vespers said in the chapel at the “holy springs.” After the service, on the way from the springs to the main church, there is a ceremonious procession with the figure of St. Anthony carried in the front. The High Mass is celebrated on the June 13. Its regular element, apart from procession around the church, is the blessing of lilies which are the symbol of the patron saint of the sanctuary in Radecznicza. Apart from the main church fair, in the Sanctuary of St. Anthony there are also other church fairs celebrated: to honour Our Lady of Angels, St. Francis and the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary.

An important religious event taking place in Roztocze is the Festival of Marian Songs for Folk Vocal Groups from the Diocese of Zamość-Lubaczów. The event has been organised in Górecko Kościelne regularly since 2000. Apart from performances of folk groups competing for a “Grand Prix” and a golden rosary, the Festival includes also a ceremonious holy Mass. Each edition of the Festival ends with a concert of well-known artists of the Polish music scene. So far, the following

artists have performed at the festival in Górecko: Golec uOrkiestra, Czerwone Gitary, Krzysztof Krawczyk, Janusz Laskowski, Eleni and others. Moreover, since 2007, one of the regular comperes of the event is Marcin Krawczyk, a Polish film actor born in Tomaszów Lubelski.

### 3 Tourist facilities in Roztocze

#### 3.1 Accommodation facilities

In Roztocze, the basic accommodation network comprises objects of group accommodation, private rooms and agrotourism farms. In 2012 in the Roztocze Region there were 61 objects of group accommodation (including 25 open all year) with a total of 2 846 beds. Only 8 of them were objects of the hotel type, including 1 hotel with 98 beds, and 5 boarding houses with a total of 229 beds.<sup>1</sup>

The region of Roztocze is characterised by uneven distribution of accommodation places. Central Roztocze has the most developed accommodation facilities. In this mesoregion there are in total 51 objects of group accommodation with 2 216 beds. The majority of these objects are located in five towns and villages: Krasnobród, Józefów, Zwierzyniec, Tomaszów Lubelski and Susiec. On the other hand, West Roztocze has the worst developed accommodation facilities: only 2 objects of group accommodation (in Szczebrzeszyn and Zakrzew) with 115 beds available all year. East Roztocze has a well developed accommodation base: 8 objects of group accommodation with a total of 515 beds (including 437 available all year).

Development of religious tourism in Roztocze is especially influenced by the condition of the accommodation facilities in Krasnobród, Tomaszów Lubelski, Radecznica, Górecko Kościelne, Szczebrzeszyn and Zwierzyniec—the places with the most important centres of religious cult. In this respect, the best conditions are in Krasnobród. In 2010 the town had 14 objects of group accommodation with 944 beds in total. The structure of group accommodation facilities in the town comprised: 6 holiday centres, 3 training and leisure centres, 3 groups of holiday cottages, 1 youth hostel and 1 boarding house. Among these objects, 6 were open all year and had a total of 424 beds (Sochacka 2011). In 2012 the accommodation facilities in Krasnobród comprised 17 objects of group accommodation with 876 beds in total, of which 374 were available all year.

According to data of the local authorities in Zamość, the accommodation base in Krasnobród, including private rooms and agrotourism farms, has more than 1380 beds, over 54% of which are available all year. Moreover, there are plans to build a pilgrim's house in the near future. It will be a place of accommodation designed especially for the faithful arriving in the sanctuary, the first of such kind in Roztocze (Polski and Polska 2008).

Apart from Krasnobród, Zwierzyniec also has a well-developed accommodation base. In 2012 there were altogether 11 objects of group accommodation in the town, including 5 functioning throughout the year. The number of available beds was 419, of which 185 were available all year. The accommodation network in Zwierzyniec, including agrotourism farms and private rooms, has 749 beds in total, of which 33% are available all year. In contrast, Tomaszów Lubelski has a poorly developed accommodation base. It consists of privately hired rooms and 3 objects of group accommodation: 2 hotels with 40 beds and 1 youth hostel with 30 beds available in season.

Similarly, the accommodation base in Górecko Kościelne is limited to only one object—the retreat house open from May to October, offering 35 beds. Apart from the retreat house, tourist can stay in 4 objects of group accommodation, situated in the Józefów County. These places offer 164 beds altogether, including 99 available all year. Additional accommodation is offered in private rooms and agrotourism farms.

Among the centres of religious worship in Roztocze, Radecznica has the worst developed accommodation base. In the village and in the county there are not any objects of group accommodation. The nearest such object is located in Szczebrzeszyn: a youth hostel with 100 beds available all year. In the Radecznica County there are just a few agrotourism farms (Strategia rozwoju Gminy Radecznica... 2008).

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1. All statistical information presented in section 3.1 according to data published by GUS in year 2012 at <http://stat.gov.pl/bdl/>.

Important elements of the accommodation system in Roztocze are private rooms and agrotourism farms which additionally supplement the accommodation facilities in each mesoregion of Roztocze (Koncepcja programowo-przestrzenna... 2008). In 2010 there were 3 agrotourism associations in the macroregion (in Zwierzyniec, Krasnobród and Susiec) that had in total 92 members offering accommodation services (Sochacka 2011).

### 3.2 Catering facilities

The catering establishments in Roztocze comprise widely available facilities, serving the needs of the general public, and so-called closed catering establishments, that is the objects associated with accommodation infrastructure, such as hotel restaurants, hotel bars and canteens in leisure centres. The basic catering facilities are supplemented by smaller establishment: pizzerias, cafes and pubs. Objects of this type can be found most frequently in the small towns of Roztocze: Szczepieszyn, Zwierzyniec, Krasnobród, Tomaszów Lubelski, Frampol, Józefów and Narol. Additionally, in the areas with high concentration of the tourism movement, there are fish and chip shops, ice-cream parlours and snack bars open in the summer season. Moreover, important elements of the catering network in Roztocze are inns and taverns located near main communication routes (Koncepcja programowo-przestrzenna... 2008; Flaga 2011).

### 3.3 Transport facilities

In the Roztocze Region the system of communication routes consists of a network of roads and fragments of two railway lines, which, however, are rarely used for passenger transport (Zmiana planu przestrzennego... 2009). The main problem of road transport is lack of throughways. Moreover, the technical condition of most roads is unsatisfactory. The majority of roads in Roztocze have a local and regional character (Myna 2011). Despite these weaknesses, the network of roads in Roztocze makes tourist centres, including places of religious workshop, fairly accessible (Majewska, Telniuk, and Broma 2008).

The basic communication network of Roztocze encompasses 2 national roads and 8 regional roads, connected with the system of local and county roads. From the perspective of the religious tourism development in Roztocze, the focus is on the condition of the communication network in the counties where the major sanctuaries are located.

The Sanctuary of St. Anthony is accessible through public roads of the Radecznica County. One national road and fragment of a regional road run through the Radecznica County, accompanied by local and county roads. This network of roads offers a fairly good connection between the Radecznica County, the city of Lublin and the town of Zamość, provided by private and public buses (Strategia rozwoju Gminy Radecznica... 2008).

The basic communication network in the Krasnobród County comprises: the regional road Zamość-Jacnia-Wola Obszańska and secondary—local and county—roads. Unfortunately, the technical condition of roads in the Krasnobród County is described as average or below average (Polski and Polska 2008). Krasnobród has a wide network of bus connections. The town can be reached (e.g., from Tomaszów Lubelski, Józefów, Biłgoraj and Zamość) (Brzezinska-Wójcik and Skowronek 2009).

The Józefów County, where Górecko Kościelne is situated, has a relatively well-developed communication network. Two regional roads: Zamość-Jacnia-Wola Obszańska and Majdan Stary-Tomaszów Lubelski run through the Józefów County (Strategia rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego Miasta i Gminy Józefów... 2007). The sanctuary of Our Lady of the Scapular in Tomaszów Lubelski can be reached by the national road no. 17 joining Tomaszów with Zamość and Hrebenne and by two regional roads.

The communication network of the Zwierzyniec County encompasses fragment of the regional road Zarzecze-Biłgoraj-Zwierzyniec-Szczepieszyn, as well as local and county roads (Majka-Smuszkiewicz, Grykałowska, and Białek 2005). The communication network of the Szczepieszyn County is based on public roads of the total length of 168 km. The national road no. 74, a regional road and over 130 km of local and county roads go through the Szczepieszyn County (Lokalny program rewitalizacji miasta Szczepieszyn 2005).

## Conclusions

Without doubt, the region of Roztocze has a considerable potential of assets necessary for the development of religious tourism. The cultural richness of the region contributes a lot to these advantages. Religious tourism, as one of the forms of tourism in the rural areas, can be combined with other ways of spending free time in the country—e.g., with appreciation of folk arts and culture, participation in traditional folk rites, tasting regional dishes, or just relaxing in the bosom of nature. However, despite the exceptional richness of religious attractions, a disadvantage of the region is lack of ready-made, comprehensive products of religious tourism, which would distinguish the region and could be offered by travel agencies. Furthermore, in some towns and villages of Roztocze, places of religious worship cannot be used fully due to an insufficient tourist infrastructure. A major disadvantage is the poorly developed and unevenly spread out accommodation and catering base, concentrated mainly in towns. The best conditions for religious tourism, owing to the well-developed accommodation and catering facilities, are in Krasnobród, Zwierzyniec and Tomaszów Lubelski. This encourages the faithful to longer visits in these towns. In contrast, one-day trips are preferred in Radechnica and Górecko Kościelne, due to poor tourist facilities.

On the other hand, the wide-ranging network of roads, providing transport throughout the macroregion, has a positive impact on the amount of tourist flow in all places of religious worship in Roztocze. Tourist trips of the religious character are further promoted by the well-developed accompanying facilities (e.g., in Krasnobród, Zwierzyniec and Tomaszów Lubelski).

Widespread knowledge of the religious assets of the region is in the interest of inhabitants and local authorities. It can certainly be claimed that religious tourism has been rather marginalized so far, and in practice it has been limited to more or less intensive pilgrim movement to the main sanctuaries of the region. Only a broadly understood “religious tourism” offers a possibility to generate and obtain economic benefits. This can be attained through spreading information about its advantages, as well as stronger emphasis and promotion of religious tourism in advertising materials of the region, including beyond its borders.

As it is emphasized in one of the strategic documents of the Lublin region, religious tourism and pilgrimages need specific actions aimed at enhancing their image and increasing competitiveness. The key initiatives in this area should include: development of tourist infrastructure at sanctuaries, and in particular building and renovation of car parks, toilet facilities, shelters, benches and places of rest, an affordable accommodation and catering base, adapted also for the needs of sick and disabled people. Another important issue is improvement of accommodation facilities in the vicinity of sanctuaries, e.g. increasing the number of agrotourism farms offering high standards and a variety of services. Furthermore, it is emphasized that there is a need to organize or extend a range of cultural and religious events in places of religious worship: concerts, festivals, open-air shows, exhibitions of religious art, etc. The starting point for boosting religious tourism should be first of all: protection, restoration and enhancing the image of the sanctuaries in the region, and then intensive promotion of sanctuaries as destination of trips, not only of the religious but also of sightseeing character (Koncepcja programowo-przestrzenna... 2008).

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