

CHAPTER 4

Polish diasporic Catholicism in Scotland

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INTRODUCTION

The global Polish diaspora has continued to keep their national identity alongside Roman Catholic faith since the 1830s (Alvis 2016: 150). In contemporary Scotland, where Poles constitute the largest foreign-born population (National Records of Scotland 2018: 4), many Polish Catholic immigrants attend religious services in their native language, venerate the Virgin Mary as Queen of Poland and enjoy singing the religious-cum-patriotic hymn ‘God, Save Poland’ on Polish national holidays. The origins of the Polish Catholic diaspora in Scotland can be traced back to the 1940s, when thousands of Polish soldiers and civilian refugees arrived in the country. Poles mainly settled around Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the number of Polish Catholics in post-war Scotland was estimated at 17,000 (Zubrzycki 1956: 70; SCA DE 68/8/4). The wartime refugees established a network of autonomous parishes, which was organized under the umbrella of the Polish Catholic Mission in Scotland (hereafter PCM). They created religious narratives of displacement and invented rituals that connected them spiritually with their lost homeland. Many of these institutions and practices have been adopted by Polish Catholic immigrants who came to Scotland after Poland’s accession to the European Union in 2004.

The existing literature on the topic tends to view Polish parishes as inhibitors of traditionally understood assimilation. This chapter suggests instead that

Polish Catholicism in Scotland can be seen as a genuine example of a ‘diasporic religion’. In this form of religiosity, migrants and their descendants create spiritual communities which transcend time and space in order to symbolically unite them with coreligionists in the homeland. This chapter will analyse how the practice of ‘diasporic religion’ empowers Polish migrants in Scotland to overcome the feeling of alienation from the host society through the use of church institutions, theological discourses, festive rituals and sacred objects which are inscribed with national meaning.

The Polish minority in Scotland is defined for statistical purposes by ethnic identification (‘White Polish’),¹ rather than birthplace (‘born in Poland’), in order to include multiple generations and both recent immigrants and descendants of wartime refugees (Bond 2017: 27). According to last census data, 76.7 per cent of Poles in Scotland were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, while Christians of other denominations and followers of non-Christian religions composed, respectively, 4.2 per cent and 0.6 per cent of the Polish community. At the same time, 11.3 per cent of Poles in Scotland declared no religion and 7.2 per cent did not state their religion (Scotland’s Census 2011, Table DC2201SC). In comparison, Roman Catholics in Poland made up 87.6 per cent of the population in 2011, while other Christians and adherents of non-Christian religions accounted for only 1.3 per cent and 0.05 per cent, respectively. In the last census, 2.4 per cent of Poles declared no religion and 8.7 per cent refused to state their religion or their responses were not recorded (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2015: 95). The data suggest that after settling in Scotland, some Polish Catholic immigrants become nonreligious or convert to other denominations, such as the Church of Scotland, which are virtually absent in Poland.

It is worth noting that Jews are missing from the list of religious identities above, as they represent a negligible religious presence in Scotland today. Historically Jews were the most visible ethno-religious minority among Polish migrants and in 1931 they made up the majority of Polish-born residents in Scotland (Ziarski-Kernberg 2000: 14–24). The Jewish community, which made up 10 per cent of pre-war Poland’s population, was annihilated by the Nazis in the Holocaust, but a few thousand Polish Jewish refugees found a safe haven in wartime Britain. However, the prevalent identification of Polishness with Catholicism, together with instances of anti-Semitism in the Polish Armed Forces in the West, contributed to the alienation of Jews from the Polish diaspora (Goldman 1984: 42–3; Engel 1993: 108–37). While the Yiddish-speaking refugees were rather quickly integrated into local Jewish communities of East European origins, the mostly middle-class, Polish-speaking Jews preserved a distinct Polish Jewish identity which separated them from both Catholic Poles and British Jews (Zubrzycki 1956: 214–15). According to the 2011 census, there were only thirty-nine adherents of Judaism in Scotland who identified as

‘White Polish’ (Scotland’s Census 2011, Table DC2201SC). The predominantly Catholic Poles are therefore one of the most religiously homogenous groups in contemporary Scotland, second only to Pakistani Muslims (Bond 2017: 34).

Scotland became a Protestant majority country after 1560 and the Church of Scotland is still the largest religious group. In 2011, 32.4 per cent of Scottish people professed this Calvinist Presbyterian denomination, compared to 15.9 per cent of Roman Catholics. Islam was the largest non-Christian religion but Muslims made up only 1.5 per cent of the population (Scotland’s Census 2011, Table KS209SCb). Following the Reformation, the Catholic Church in Scotland had been suppressed for 300 years, and the number of local Catholics only began to rise in the second half of the nineteenth century, largely because of the arrival of thousands of immigrants from Ireland, Italy and Lithuania. Some Scottish Catholics, especially in the area around Glasgow, have preserved a militant Irish identity until today. This has manifested itself in support for Irish nationalism, including raising funds and smuggling guns for the Irish Republican Army during ‘the Troubles’ in Northern Ireland. However, most of the newcomers adopted a low public profile, as they suffered from sectarian discrimination and xenophobic hostility which culminated in the anti-Catholic riots in the Edinburgh suburb of Morningside in 1935 and the anti-Italian pogroms of June 1940. The Scottish Catholic hierarchy has for its part managed to downplay the national consciousness of Irish, Italian and Lithuanian faithful, fearing that separate parish organizations and other public displays of non-British nationality would internally weaken the church and provoke a hostile reaction of the Protestant majority (Bradley 1996; Devine 2008; Douglas 2002; Hickman 2002; McCready 2000; O’Donnell 1998; Ross 1978; Sponza 2000; Walls and Williams 2003; Ugolini 2011).

In contrast to other migrant groups in Scotland, Polish Catholics who arrived in the country during or immediately after the Second World War were not only able to preserve a distinct national identity but were also allowed to develop an autonomous network of Polish parishes that still exists today. On the other hand, the Polish wartime diaspora in Scotland was predominantly male, with a 6:1 men-to-women ratio, and thus a high rate of intermarriage with non-Polish and non-Catholic spouses meant that only a few refugees outside the large centres of Polish settlement, such as Glasgow and Edinburgh, were able to pass down a Polish Catholic identity to their Scottish-born children (Ziarski-Kernberg 2000). With regard to the more recent immigrants from Poland who arrived in the country after 2004, it is too early to predict to what extent their Scottish-born children will preserve a Polish Catholic identity. Although Poles in contemporary Scotland share church buildings with other Catholics, religious services in Polish are obviously not accessible to those who do not speak the language. The Polish community therefore remains largely isolated from the local church which over the last few decades has been increasingly diversified

by the arrival of Catholic immigrants from non-European countries, such as the Philippines, India and Nigeria.

Polish Catholicism in Scotland is characterized by the preservation of outward manifestations of religious faith, such as traditional songs, seasonal devotions, festive customs, rites of passage and sacred artefacts, which are distinct from the popular piety of other Catholic communities in the country. The axiomatic identification of Catholicism with Polish patriotism, which is strengthened by a strong Marian devotion centred on the veneration of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Poland, is also maintained in the diaspora. There are two aspects which nonetheless differentiate Polish Catholics in Scotland from their coreligionists in Poland. First, many Catholics cease to practice their faith after arriving in the new country, because of a lack of social pressure to observe religious duties and an increased exposure to other belief systems and secular worldviews. While the percentage of Catholics who attend Sunday Mass in Poland has oscillated between 43.2 per cent in 2004 and 36.9 per cent in 2019 (ISKK 2020: 30), it is estimated that only 10 per cent of Polish immigrants in Britain regularly go to church (Grzywaczewski et al. 2013: 177–8; Romejko 2015: 292). Secondly, those migrants who belong to Polish parishes in Scotland continue to engage in religious practices not only to fulfil their spiritual needs but also to rekindle emotional bonds with the homeland and reconstruct a sense of belonging in the host society. The phenomenon of Polish diasporic Catholicism in Scotland will be explored in more detail later.²

DIASPORIC RELIGION

The understanding of the religious life of Polish migrants in Britain has been shaped by an approach that was pioneered by Thomas and Znaniecki (1958: 2: 1511–49). They have argued that the need for separate Polish churches in the United States was not caused by the unavailability of religious services, which could have been performed by local Irish-American clergy, but arose from the fact that Polish parishes primarily served as community centres and hubs of social activity. This framework has been adopted by Zubrzycki's sociological study of Polish immigrants in Britain (1956: 122–33) and Sword's historical account of the formation of the Polish-British community (1989: 428–36). Whereas Stachura (1997) and Ziarski-Kernberg (2000) have specifically discussed the role of autonomous parishes and lay associations in the life of the Polish community in Scotland, their accounts focus mostly on the organization and internal dynamics of church institutions rather than on the significance of religious practices and outward manifestations of spiritual life, such as songs, festivals, rituals and sacred objects.

It has traditionally been claimed that autonomous religious institutions have inhibited the 'assimilation' of Poles in Britain by helping them to preserve their

national identity. Such a one-sided perspective is also visible in a more recent study which argues that allegiance to native language and traditions prevents Polish immigrants in Aberdeen from integrating with the local Scottish church (Trzebiatowska 2010). A more comprehensive approach has been adopted by Gula (1993) who has emphasized the importance of communal prayer and the observance of traditional Polish Christmas and Easter customs for maintaining symbolic and material connections with the homeland.

As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter goes beyond the lingering paradigm of linear assimilation by suggesting that Polish Catholicism in Scotland can be seen as a form of 'diasporic religion'. Tweed (1997) has introduced this concept in his study of the Cuban American shrine of Our Lady of Charity in Miami. Diasporic religions are translocal, as they enable devotees to symbolically move between the homeland and the new land, and trans-temporal, as they constantly transport practitioners between constructed past and imagined future. For many immigrants and their descendants, these horizontal dimensions of religious practices are as important as the vertical ones that connect them with the deity. Diasporic religions allow displaced devotees to unite with their compatriots in the homeland by creating imagined moral communities that bridge the natal land with the new country. These trans-locative and trans-temporal flows are predominantly expressed through religious narratives, theology, institutions, rituals and artefacts.

Tweed's theoretical model, inspired by fieldwork among Cuban Catholics in late-twentieth-century Miami, is applicable to diasporic groups in different times and places. The concept of diasporic religion has been employed in a study of Silesian Catholic expellees in post-war Germany (Alvis 2010: 852–6). Tweed himself has pointed to

striking parallels between Cubans and Poles during some points of their respective national histories. Both have suffered through wars and struggled for independence. Both turned to Marian devotion to express their nationalist sentiments and revolutionary impulses. All this remains evident, for instance, in the artifacts and rituals at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, where many Polish Americans have pilgrimaged since it was dedicated in 1966. (Tweed 1997: 141)

Unlike other countries with a sizeable Polish diaspora, such as England, France, Germany or the United States, where large groups of labour migrants from Poland had been arriving alongside smaller cohorts of political exiles since the nineteenth century, the Polish Catholic community in Scotland emerged out of displaced soldiers and civilian refugees who settled in this country after the Second World War. The form of religiosity developed by these victims of forced migration can therefore be seen as a genuine example of Tweed's diasporic

religion, and the enduring appeal of Polish Catholicism in contemporary Scotland can only be understood if one takes into account its historical origins.

NETWORK OF AUTONOMOUS PARISHES

After their arrival in the country of asylum, refugees often set up translocative religious institutions to re-establish severed relations with the lost homeland (Tweed 1997: 96). The vast majority of Catholic Poles who found a safe haven in Scotland during the Second World War were either soldiers or military dependents. Spiritual welfare of these exiles was initially in the care of around fifty Polish military chaplains. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction over them was exercised by Józef Gawlina, the field bishop of the Polish Armed Forces, who was authorized by the pope to organize and administer the religious life of Polish refugees (Gula 1993: 153; Zubrzycki 1956: 123–4).

Demobilization of Polish troops who remained in Scotland after the war required a reorganization of the chaplaincy network. Ludwik Bombas, the most senior Polish priest in the country, was appointed the rector of the PCM in 1948. Fr Bombas was nominated by Cardinal August Hlond, the primate of Poland, but his candidacy was put forward by Andrew MacDonald, the archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh (SCA DE 68/8/10; Zubrzycki 1956: 123–4; Gula 1993: 151–66). The PCM was modelled after a permanent Polish chaplaincy that was set up in England and Wales in 1894. Similar institutions had previously been established in other countries with a large Polish Catholic diaspora, such as France and Belgium (Wójcik 2012: 175). The rector of the PCM was entrusted with organizing and coordinating the religious life of the Polish diaspora.

The PCM was initially staffed by nine demobilized chaplains who set up a network of so-called personal parishes in places with a sizeable Polish community. Four priests were active in the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, another four in the Archdiocese of Glasgow and one in the Diocese of Dunkeld (SCA DE 68/8/4; Gula 1993: 166n34). The offices of the PCM were located in the building of the Polish Ex-servicemen's Association in Edinburgh (SCA DE 68/12/20). The relationship between Polish priests and their flock did not derive from ecclesiastic jurisdiction over a given territory but was based on personal ties and shared national identity. This type of parochial organization for Catholic refugees and migrants was envisaged by the pope in the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia* (Pius XII 1952).

The number of Polish parishes in Scotland decreased in the subsequent decades, but arrival of new priests from Poland became possible after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The Episcopal Conference of Poland entrusted the PCM to Pallotine Fathers from the Poznań Province of the Society of the Catholic

Apostolate, and Fr Marian Łękawa SAC was accordingly appointed the rector of the PCM in 1991. His offices were located in the General Sikorski Memorial House in Glasgow, also known as *Dom Polski* (Polish House), a building owned by the Polish Social and Educational Society. Fr Łękawa was succeeded in 2018 by another Pallotine, Fr Leszek Więcaszek SAC, parish priest of St Joseph's Church in Dundee and chaplain to the Polish community in the Diocese of Dunkeld (PCM 2020a; Więcaszek 2020; Grzywaczewski et al. 2013: 180; Romejko 2015: 266).

The network of Polish chaplaincies in Scotland expanded after 2004 to meet the spiritual needs of thousands of Polish immigrants who arrived in the country after Poland's accession to the European Union. As of 2020, at least a dozen Polish priests (both regular and secular) are active in twenty-four churches in fifteen towns. While some of the clergy are working within the framework of the PCM, others have been invited by Scottish bishops and are ministering not only to the Poles but also to the native faithful (PCM 2020b; Romejko 2015: 290–1). Regular Sunday Mass in Polish is celebrated in sixteen churches in eleven towns, including twice a day in St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh, St Mary's Cathedral in Aberdeen, St Anne's Church in Glasgow and St John the Baptist's Church in Perth. In large cities, local Poles are able to attend Mass in their native language also on weekdays, whereas in the smaller towns of Aviemore, Dingwall, Invergordon and Thain, the Sunday Mass in Polish is held once a month. The more remote places in the Scottish Highlands, such as Thurso and Fort William, are visited by Polish priests only during Christmas and Easter holiday seasons.

In addition to celebrating the Eucharist, Polish priests administer other sacraments and provide pastoral care to their compatriots. They hear confessions in the native language of the immigrants, confer baptisms and bless marriages. The priests preside over traditional prayers, such as *nabożeństwo majowe* (May devotion) to the Mother of God or *gorzkie żale* (bitter sorrows) devotion on Lenten Sundays. Polish parishes offer marriage preparation courses and invite priests from Poland to hold Lenten and Advent retreats. Apart from regular Sunday observance, some Polish Catholics are also involved in their own lay communities, such as the Charismatic Renewal group in Glasgow, the Neocatechumenal Way and Bible Study groups in Edinburgh and the Living Rosary groups in various parishes (PCM 2020c).

Although formally under the jurisdiction of Scottish bishops, Polish personal parishes are largely autonomous. Polish Catholics follow their own spirituality and observe feasts and solemnities in accordance with the Polish rather than Scottish liturgical calendar. However, unlike the PCM in England and Wales, which owns thirty churches and twelve chapels around the country, Polish congregations in Scotland are accommodated in local Scottish churches (Grzywaczewski et al. 2013: 177; Romejko 2015: 290–1). The exception was

Edinburgh, where Archbishop MacDonald offered a small church, St Ann's Oratory, for the exclusive use of the growing Polish Catholic community in the 1940s (EUA GD46/9; Bober-Michałowska 2013: 80). In the early twenty-first century, however, the dilapidated building was sold off by the diocese and the Polish congregation moved to St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. Because of the lack of their own churches, Polish priests depend in many practical aspects of their ministry on the goodwill of Scottish parishes that rent their buildings to the Poles. An alternative arrangement to Polish personal parishes has recently been introduced in the Diocese of Aberdeen, where Polish-language chaplaincies have been integrated with local Scottish parishes in Aberdeen and Inverness.

RELIGIOUS-CUM-PATRIOTIC SONGS

A persistent penchant for interweaving religious songs with patriotic lyrics is another characteristic feature of Polish diasporic Catholicism in Scotland. Tweed (1997: 95) argues that members of diasporas often remember and compose stories that narrate collective history, express suffering and disorientation of displacement and form bridges between the homeland and the land of exile. Polish Catholic refugees in Scotland have likewise used traditional church hymns and newly composed songs to symbolically move across time and space, between the pre-war Poland of their memories and the liberated Poland of their dreams.

Modlitwa Obozowa (Camp Prayer) was written in September 1939 by a Polish officer, Adam Kowalski, in an internment camp in Romania, and quickly became popular among displaced soldiers and civilian refugees from Poland (Tomaszewski 1976: 60–1; Bober-Michałowska 2013: 86–7). Polish troops would often sing the 'Camp Prayer' at the end of their daily training in the Scottish countryside:

Oh, Lord in heaven,
Stretch your hand of justice!
We call upon you from foreign lands
and ask for a Polish roof and a Polish weapon.

(Chorus)
Oh God, crush this sword,
which cut our Homeland
Let us return to a free Poland!
To raise a fortress of a new force in
our home, our home.

Oh Lord, hear our lamentations,
 Oh, hear our wanderer's song!
 The blood of martyrs calls upon you
 From the banks of Warta, Vistula, San and Bug

(Chorus)
 Oh God, crush this sword . . .³

The translation of the lyrics unfortunately does not do justice to the poetic quality of the Polish original, but specifically diasporic tropes are easily discernible in the English text of this song-prayer. The author emphasizes the dislocation and estrangement of exile through the use of phrases, such as 'foreign lands' and 'wanderer's song'. At the same time, however, his narrative invokes the familiar landscape of the lost homeland, which is symbolized by the four rivers: Warta, Vistula, San and Bug. The song juxtaposes the traumatic present of occupied Poland ('the sword that cut our Homeland' and 'the blood of martyrs') with an imagined collective future when God leads the Polish exiles back to a liberated homeland. Perhaps intentionally, the song invokes parallels with the biblical lamentations of Jews who suffered in the Babylonian exile.

While 'Camp Prayer' was specifically composed for dispersed soldiers during the Second World War, *Boże, coś Polskę*, which can roughly be translated as 'God, save Poland', is a traditional religious and patriotic hymn dating back to the early nineteenth century (Trochimczyk 2000). Polish refugees in Scotland would often sing it at the end of religious services (Tomaszewski 1976: 107–254). The lyrics invoke an image of Poland as God's chosen nation and allude to the golden age of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries waged many victorious wars against Orthodox Muscovy, Lutheran Sweden and the Islamic Ottoman Empire.⁴ The song acquired a new meaning during the German occupation and subsequent Soviet domination of Poland from 1939 to 1989, when Polish Catholics used the last verse of its chorus to implore God to return them to a free homeland. The communal singing of *Boże, coś Polskę* symbolically moved the refugees from the glorious past of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, through the traumatic present of war and exile, towards an imagined future in liberated Poland.

This alternative national anthem remained in vogue even after the fall of Communism, but the last verse of the chorus has been changed to invoke God's blessing upon a free Poland (Trochimczyk 2000). The updated version is still sung by Polish Catholic congregations in contemporary Scotland, usually at the end of Polish-language masses to celebrate national holidays of 3 May (Constitution Day and Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Poland), 15

August (Polish Armed Forces Day and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) and 11 November (Polish Independence Day).

METAPHOR OF THE PILGRIM

Biblical parallels and metaphors of pilgrimage are typical for theologies that are developed by adherents of Christian diasporic religions. Cuban exiles in Miami, for example, claim that their national patroness, Our Lady of Charity, has protected them during the passage across the Straits of Florida. They also hope that one day She will lead them back to their Promised Land of democratic and capitalist Cuba (Tweed 1997: 95–6; 2006: 110–11). Polish Catholics in Scotland likewise interpret the experience of migration through a religious lens. Familiar theological tropes help them to come to terms with their often precarious position in the host society. The metaphor of pilgrimage was introduced with reference to Polish émigrés in the biblically styled *The Books and the Pilgrimage of the Polish Nation* by Adam Mickiewicz (1833), Polish national poet, who spent most of his adult life in French exile. Mickiewicz's literary works, permeated with a spiritual longing for the lost homeland, were very popular among Polish wartime refugees (Tomaszewski 1976: 71; Bober 2005: 223).

The diasporic theology of Polish Catholics in Scotland has been shaped by this metaphor and centres on the veneration of the Icon of Black Madonna of Częstochowa (see Figure 4.1). In August 1940, shortly after the evacuation of Polish troops from France, Field Bishop Gawlina organized a pilgrimage of Polish soldiers to the Marian shrine in Carfin near Motherwell in North Lanarkshire. Poles have visited the Scottish Lourdes ever since and the date of their annual pilgrimage has purposefully been set on the last Sunday of August to fall as close as possible to the Feast of Our Lady of Częstochowa, Queen of Poland, which is celebrated in Poland on 26 August. Polish immigrants visit Carfin Grotto to join in prayer and spiritually connect with their compatriots who participate in the traditional pilgrimages to the Marian shrine in Częstochowa (*Gazeta Niedzielną* 1951; Instytut Duszpasterstwa Emigracyjnego 2017; PCM 2019; Harris 2015: 112–21).

A copy of the famous Icon of Black Madonna was donated to Pluscarden Abbey in north-east Scotland by Polish soldiers as a votive offering after the Second World War. However, this medieval Benedictine monastery has only recently emerged as an alternative centre of Polish diasporic Catholicism. The initiative to organize a Polish pilgrimage to Pluscarden came in 2006 from Peter Moran, the bishop of Aberdeen. Bishop Moran learnt about the tradition of pilgrimaging to the shrine in Częstochowa during a visit to Poland and decided to transplant this annual custom to his diocese, where the arrival of Polish immigrants has doubled the number of Roman Catholics. In 2007, an



FIGURE 4.1: The Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa ('Black Madonna') at the Jasna Góra Monastery, Częstochowa, Poland. Photo by Andrzej Otrębski (13 October 2015), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Czestochowa_MB_Czestochowska.jpg. Creative Commons License (CC BY-SA 4.0), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

estimated 15,000 Polish pilgrims from Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom arrived in Pluscarden Abbey, which was quickly dubbed the 'New Częstochowa'. The collective experience of singing and praying in their native language as well as swearing the traditional oaths of loyalty to the 'Queen of Poland' has reportedly made the migrants-pilgrims feel, as if, for a while, they were transported back to their homeland (Stangret 2006, 2007). The flourishing tradition of Polish Catholic pilgrimages in Scotland perfectly demonstrates the trans-locative feature of diasporic religion which enables migrant devotees to symbolically move between their country of origin and the foreign land in

which they reside. The metaphor of migration as a pilgrimage emphasizes the temporary character of the sojourn and contains within it the promise of a providential return to the homeland.

FESTIVE RITUALS AND RITES OF PASSAGE

Diasporic rituals help displaced devotees to forge horizontal bonds with others in the homeland and in exile. Using shared national and religious symbols, Cuban Catholics in Miami can ritually align with their compatriots and coreligionists who remain on the home island (Tweed 1997: 97). Poles in Scotland have also engaged in rituals that unite them with their families and homes back in Poland. Wartime refugees have passed Polish Easter and Christmas traditions onto their children and sometimes even grandchildren. When the more recent immigrants arrived in Scotland after 2004, they found Polish priests performing the traditional blessing of food baskets on Holy Saturday as well as celebrating the Resurrection Mass (*Rezurekcja*) on Easter Sunday morning and the Shepherds' Mass (*Pasterka*) at midnight on 24/25 December.

The Christmas Eve vigil supper, known in Polish as *Wigilia*, is arguably the most important family ritual in Poland. During the Second World War, instead of joyfully singing Christmas carols, Polish refugees would immerse themselves in recollections of their loved ones who were left behind in occupied Poland or were scattered across the four corners of the world (EUA GD46/5; Tomaszewski 1976: 77–9; Ryn 1979: 106; Mitus 2006: 476–7; Bober-Michałowska 2013: 89–93). Polish families in contemporary Scotland cultivate their attachment to the homeland by celebrating the traditional *Wigilia* supper of twelve meatless courses, which are often prepared from products bought in the local Polish deli shop. The age-long custom of setting aside one empty plate for an unexpected guest assumes new meaning for families separated by migration. Some Christmas Eve rituals, however, reconnect Poles in Scotland with their loved ones both symbolically and materially. At the beginning of *Wigilia* supper, Polish families would traditionally break off and exchange pieces of a special rectangular wafer, called *oplatek*. This non-sacramental bread not only reminds one of the Host but also symbolizes forgiveness and reunion of the family. Poles in Scotland have engaged with their relatives in Poland in a trans-locative ritual of sending and receiving pieces of *oplatek* since the 1940s (Ryn 1979: 105; *Scotsman* 2013).

Diasporic rituals also surround rites of passage, such as births, marriages and funerals. The function of diasporic funeral rites is to preside over the future of the departed and to revitalize the migrant group which has been disturbed by the death (Tweed 2006: 143–7). For example, a typically Polish diasporic ritual was observed in 1942 at the funeral of a refugee pathologist, Waclaw Stocki, who was buried in Mount Vernon Catholic Cemetery in Edinburgh. As part

of the graveside service, a piece of Polish soil was thrown into the tomb of Dr Stocki (*Scotsman* 1942). In fact, during the Second World War, many refugees would stop just before crossing the Polish border to pick up a piece of their native land and take it with them into exile (Tomaszewski 1976: 255–6; Arend 1964: 420). Different diasporic burial rites have been introduced in the early twenty-first century by Polish-owned companies that specialize in organizing funerals in Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom in cooperation with Polish consulates and Polish parishes. The available services include not only burial and cremation but also repatriation of bodies and ashes to Poland.

Polish immigrants in contemporary Scotland have likewise given a new meaning to the *zaduszki* ritual of commemorating the dead on All Saints' and All Souls' Days (1–2 November). Unable to visit family graves in Poland, they light candles and lay wreaths on the tombs of Poles who were buried in Scottish cemeteries, for example on the graves of 381 Polish soldiers in Wellshill Cemetery in Perth or in the burial plot known as the 'Tomb of Lonely Poles' in Mount Vernon Catholic Cemetery in Edinburgh (Zeller 2019). Through this adaptation and re-interpretation of the *zaduszki* ritual, Poles in Scotland preserve national traditions abroad and maintain spiritual communion with dead members of the diaspora.

SACRED ARTEFACTS WITH NATIONAL MEANING

Tweed (1997: 97–8) points out that religious artefacts, such as utilitarian objects, art works, architecture and cultural landscape, have the ability to symbolically transport migrants to their homeland's constructed past and imagined future. The common use of sacred objects with encoded national meaning by Polish Catholic immigrants can be seen as a quintessential example of diasporic religiosity. Aleksander Jabłoński, a refugee physicist, who arrived in Scotland from the Soviet Union in 1943, was born into a Polish noble family in the Russian Empire. Before he left the parental manor to study at a private Russian-language gymnasium, he had received from his father a medallion with the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa and an inscription on the reverse: 'Remember that you are a Pole' (Jabłońska-Frąckowiak 2004: 38). The same icon was invoked by a batch of Polish medical students who offered a special gift to Sydney Smith, dean of the Medical Faculty of the University of Edinburgh, as a token of their gratitude for his role in preserving Polish science and learning during the Second World War. The students carved their signatures and a dedication on a silver pectoral plate with the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa on one side, and the White Eagle, the coat of arms of Poland, on the other (Tomaszewski 1976: 280).

A similar combination of national and religious symbols was used by soldiers from the Polish garrison in Edinburgh who commissioned and donated a



FIGURE 4.2: Image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes and Saint Bernadette in Carfin, Scotland. Photo by Natalie Warren (17 March 2007), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Our_lady_carfin_grotto.jpg. Public Domain. The Polish inscription reads: ‘Mary, Queen of Poland, we fly to thy protection – Poles in Scotland.’

monstrance to St Mary's Cathedral in 1944. This late baroque-style religious artefact was embellished with stones brought from Poland and ornamented with emblems of different Polish provinces and the Cross of St Andrew, the national symbol of Scotland (*Catholic Herald* 1944). The monstrance is still occasionally used by the local Polish parish which congregates in St Mary's Cathedral. The use of religious objects to construct a sense of belonging in contemporary Scotland is also visible in the PCM's Chapel-Chamber of Merciful Jesus (*Kaplica-Izba Jezusa Miłosiernego*), which is located on the first floor of the *Dom Polski* in Glasgow. Decoration of the chapel resembles the interior of a traditional peasant cottage and the walls are adorned with votive offerings and devotional images, including two copies of the Icon of Black Madonna and a painting of John Paul II.

A votive altar with a sculpted image of the Black Madonna (see Figure 4.2) has become the focal point of Polish pilgrimages to Carfin Grotto. The chapel, adorned with national symbols of Poland and Scotland, and inscribed with a bilingual invocation to Our Lady of Czestochowa, Queen of Poland, was erected on the grounds of the Scottish shrine in the 1980s, following the initiative of Fr Wincenty Nagi-Drobina, the then rector of the PCM. Twenty years later, Joseph Devine, the bishop of Motherwell, unveiled a statue of John Paul II next to the Polish chapel. Although the Poles welcomed this attempt to honour the Polish pope on Scottish soil, the artistic quality of the monument has been criticized (Więcaszek 2020). The importance of sacred objects with inscribed national meaning was further demonstrated when Polish Catholics filled churches in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Carfin to venerate a copy of the Icon of Black Madonna, which visited these three locations in November 2012 as part of its 'From Ocean to Ocean' peregrination around the world 'in defence of life'. The visit of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Scotland was co-organized by Scottish Catholics and attracted participation of local pro-life activists. The events in Glasgow and Edinburgh were also attended by representatives of the Greek and Russian Orthodox communities. Black Madonna's transnational appeal demonstrates that certain elements of diasporic religiosity can actually foster integration of immigrants within the universal church.

CONCLUSION

The conventional manner of looking at Polish Catholics in Scotland from the vantage point of narrowly understood 'integration' with the host society ignores the way in which many Poles actually perceive their own experience of migration. This chapter has instead demonstrated that the form of Catholicism which emerged among Polish migrants in contemporary Scotland can be analysed from a broader perspective that takes into account the significance of its various features, such as autonomous parishes and Polish-language

chaplains, traditional Polish songs with interwoven religious and patriotic lyrics, diasporic theology centred on the metaphor of the pilgrim, translocative rituals and rites of passage and sacred artefacts which are inscribed with national meaning. All these elements of diasporic religiosity enable Polish migrants in Scotland to spiritually connect with their homeland, and at the same time, empower them to reconstruct a sense of belonging in the Scottish society.

The arrival of thousands of Polish immigrants in predominantly Protestant Scotland has generally been welcomed by the local Catholic clergy. After enduring centuries of sectarian discrimination, the Catholic Church in Scotland has struggled in recent decades with ongoing secularization, declining priestly vocations and dwindling numbers of parishioners. Many Scottish clerics have therefore hoped that churchgoing Poles would revive their own congregations. The bishop of Aberdeen, for example, invited priests from Poland to provide pastoral care to the newcomers in the belief that religious service in Polish would be a 'transition stage leading to the full integration of Poles into the local parishes' (Trzebiatowska 2010: 1062). Far from gradually disappearing, Polish-language chaplaincies have actually become a permanent feature of Catholic life in Scotland. While most churchgoing Poles consider Mass in their native language indispensable, local clergy and parishioners, many of whom are descendants of Irish and Italian immigrants, bewail the newcomers' unwillingness to interact and express concerns over the appropriation of shared church buildings (Trzebiatowska 2010: 1061–6).

The expectation that Polish immigrants would simply assimilate into the local church was rather naïve. Polish priests, who were invited by Scottish bishops to their dioceses after 2004, have revived diasporic institutions and traditions that go back to the 1940s. The newly arrived Poles have adopted theological narratives, religious rituals and sacred objects that had been introduced by Polish wartime refugees. From a broader historical perspective, the claim that 'religio-national mythologies' (Trzebiatowska 2010: 1069) are hampering the integration of Polish immigrants seems to be a moot point. Many recent immigrants regard their stay in Scotland as a temporary sojourn with the expectation that they will one day return home. Even though this 'myth of return' (Anwar 1979) is not always fulfilled, there is little incentive for these immigrants to integrate with local church structures. At the same time, however, an ethnic form of Catholicism did not inhibit the upward social mobility of Polish refugees in post-war Scotland. In fact, some of their Scottish-born children and sometimes even grandchildren are still attending the Mass in Polish. Despite unavoidable conflicts between the 'old' and 'new' generations, there is a clear continuity in the religious life of the Polish Catholic diaspora in Scotland.

The persistence of Polish Catholicism in contemporary Scotland can be best explained with the help of Tweed's model of diasporic religion. It is difficult to measure the number of practitioners of this form of spirituality, but devotees of diasporic Catholicism are certainly a minority among recent Polish immigrants in Scotland. The shallow religious identification of many nominal Catholics has been weakened by migration to a more secularized country, where social and familial pressure to attend church services is much weaker than in the homeland (Gallagher and Trzebiatowska 2017). It is estimated that only 10 per cent of Polish immigrants in Britain attend church (Grzywaczewski et al. 2013: 177–8; Romejko 2015: 292). It should be kept in mind, however, that some religious Poles keep Sunday observance only occasionally, while others attend the Mass in English for various reasons ranging from more suitable timeslots (the Polish-language Mass is usually held on Sunday afternoons) to a desire to blend in with the locals. Yet the sheer amount and geographical spread of locations where the Mass is available in Polish demonstrates that there is a significant demand for diasporic religiosity among the Polish community. In some churches, such as St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh, the Polish Mass is celebrated every day of the week and twice on Sunday, and is attended both by the newly arrived immigrants and the Scottish-born descendants of wartime refugees. At any rate, the number of practitioners of Polish diasporic Catholicism in Scotland is constantly fluctuating, as members of the 'old' generation pass away, seasonal workers return home or re-emigrate to another country and new immigrants continue to arrive. The availability of religious services in Polish has been restricted by social distancing measures introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic and it is yet to be seen what the effect of Britain's leaving the European Union will be for the future of Polish immigrants in Scotland.

Polish diasporic Catholicism has in the past ameliorated the alienation of Polish wartime refugees. Those who were unable or unwilling to return to Communist-dominated Poland often found in Polish parishes a trans-temporal and trans-locative nucleus of their lost homeland. The 'old' generation of the Polish diaspora established autonomous religious institutions and preserved national traditions, which, in turn, helped Poles who arrived in Scotland after 2004 to reconstruct a sense of belonging in the new country. Unlike workplaces, schools, public offices and other locations where immigrants are constantly reminded of their otherness, the Polish-language Mass creates a space where churchgoing Poles can feel at home. Communal prayer and song in their native language, observance of age-old festive rituals and veneration of sacred artefacts with encoded national meaning enables Polish immigrants to cultivate spiritual, sentimental and sometimes even material bonds with the families and friends they left behind. Maintaining such links is especially important for those who do not intend to permanently settle in Scotland. In turn, performing some religious rituals, such as the lighting of candles on the graves of Polish soldiers

on 1–2 November, symbolically unites the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ generations of the Polish community and demonstrates to the newcomers that, as Poles, they already have a recognized place in a multicultural Scottish society. Polish diasporic Catholicism has been practised in Scotland for the last eighty years and, in the foreseeable future, will most likely continue to serve its purpose of spiritually connecting alienated immigrants with the homeland of their memories and dreams.