



<https://doi.org/10.15407/uhj2025.05.040>
UDC 27-523(477)“1889/2023”+726.5+94(477)

Andrii TSEBENKO

Candidate of Historical Sciences (Ph. D. in History),
Doctor of Theology (Th. D.), Lecturer,
St. Andrew's College (Winnipeg, Canada)
tsebenko@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5774-0494>

THE CULTURAL-RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE MONASTIC CHURCH OF THE ORDER OF FRANCISCAN SISTERS IN LVIV: FROM CATHOLIC TO ORTHODOX GOVERNANCE THROUGH SOVIET DESACRALIZATION

The objective of the study is a thorough analysis of the use of the church by various institutions: by the Franciscan Sisters of the Roman Catholic Church, by Soviet state institutions, and by the community of the Orthodox Church, as well as the transformations of its sacred space resulting from this process. **The methodology** is based on principles of scientific impartiality, employing problem-chronological, comparative-historical, and culturological approaches. **The relevance** is determined by the need for a comprehensive and multifaceted representation of the institutions that used the church and the dynamics of changes in the sacred space. The novelty lies in the fact that an extensive analysis of this topic has never been the subject of scholarly investigation. **The main results** consist of the reconstruction of the history of the church's functioning, the identification of changes caused by political and religious factors, and the scale of destruction during the Soviet period. It is noted that the contemporary Orthodox community, cooperating

Цитування: Tsebenko A. The Cultural-Religious Transformations of the Monastic Church of the Order of Franciscan Sisters in Lviv: From Catholic to Orthodox Governance through Soviet Desacralization. *Український історичний журнал*. 2025. № 5 (584). С. 40—57. <https://doi.org/10.15407/uhj2025.05.040>

© Видавець ВД «Академперіодика» НАН України, 2025. Стаття опублікована на умовах відкритого доступу за ліцензією CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

with local authorities and patrons, has preserved the church's functionality, restored its identity, and promotes it as a cultural and religious heritage site. Further research should be directed toward a comprehensive analysis of changes in other buildings of this sacred complex, where the Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy and the Monastery of St. John Chrysostom are currently located, taking into account their historical condition, changes during the Soviet era, and recent restoration works.

Keywords: *Order of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Eucharist, Lviv, sacred space, Catholic governance, Orthodox governance, Soviet desacralization, sacred cultural heritage.*

According to the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), religious heritage possesses characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of cultural heritage. These elements serve to articulate the relationship between humanity and the divine, conveying knowledge and appealing to the preservation of centuries-old traditions and values that are closely linked to the spiritual identity of communities.

A significant portion of Ukraine's preserved sacred architectural heritage is concentrated in the western regions of the country. Among the notable examples is the former Church and Monastery Complex of the Order of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Eucharist¹. The history of this church can be divided into three key periods: 1) construction and sacred use by the Sisters of the Franciscan Order (1889—1946); 2) Soviet desanctification (1946—1990); and 3) sacred use by the Ukrainian Orthodox academic community (from 1991). At each stage, the church underwent various transformations.

This study comprehensively illuminates all aspects of the church's history. Previous research has primarily focused on the first period. Among the scholars of this era, special mention should be made of Piotr Krasny and Maria Immaculata Żyduch [1—2]. The founder of the monastery was written about by her “spiritual daughter,” who likely wished to remain anonymous [3].

Information on the second and third periods remains fragmentary. Details about the “Orthodox period” are mainly found in individual interviews and comments from the church clergy, specifically protoiereus Yaroslav Oshchudliak and hieromonk Nazar Lozynskyi², as well as Liliia Onyshchenko, head of the Department of Historic Environment Preservation at the Lviv City Council. Some reflections are presented in the commemorative study “The Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy: From Idea to School” [4] and in the article [5]. Information about restoration work appears in the Church Chronicle³. Supplementary details are accessible via the official websites of the Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy and the Lviv City Council.

¹ The Franciscan Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (later known as the «Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration») is a cloistered women's religious order of the Roman Catholic Church, belonging to the Second Franciscan Order.

² According to the statute, the rector of the Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy is the head of the church, so protoiereus Yaroslav Oshchudliak fulfills this role by virtue of his position. hieromonk Nazar Lozynskyi holds the position of dean (administrator-assistant) of the church.

³ Personal archive of hieromonk Nazar Lozynskyi. Church Register (from April 2, 2014).

* * *

The Order of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Eucharist was founded in France (Second French Empire) in 1854 as a cloistered religious community for women⁴. Its organization and expansion into Polish and Ukrainian territories were led by Ludwika Nałęcz-Morawska. Initially, in 1858, she received the religious name Catherine, and after joining the Franciscan order in 1866, she became known as Maria of the Cross⁵. During her profession of perpetual vows, Priest Alexander Jelovitsky, the head of the Polish Catholic Mission in Paris, remarked that “perhaps God wishes to use a Polish woman as an instrument to convey the worship of the Eucharist to our dear, albeit burdensome, homeland suffering from division” [6—7].

In 1870, Pope Pius IX permitted the establishment of a convent of Franciscan Sisters on Polish territory. Initially, Maria decided to organize the congregation in areas that, according to the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, had been ceded to the Kingdom of Prussia. Consequently, the convent began its activities in Granów but later relocated to Gniezno. However, in October 1873, the authorities of the Prussian kingdom closed the convent, and the sisters were forced to leave Gniezno on October 26 in search of a new location. As a result, on November 18, 1873, they arrived in Lviv, which at that time was the center of a new administrative formation of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy — the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria⁶.

During the first few years, the sisters did not have a permanent place of residence, and according to some sources, they changed their location twice. Among the locations where they lived are the present-day streets of Oleksandr Konyskyi and Piekarska, 45 [8].

In 1875, they obtained Austrian citizenship, and just a year later, they received approval from the secular authorities, consent from the Latin Archbishop of Lviv, Franciszek Weźchlejski, and a blessing from Pope Pius IX to open a novitiate. According to the plans of the abbess, the monastery complex (including the church) was to be constructed as *ex voto*⁷ for the entire region, “as an unceasing plea for the Lord’s mercy towards the Church and for [...] the Poles” [1].

⁴ The Franciscan Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (later known as the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration) is a cloistered women’s religious order of the Roman Catholic Church, belonging to the Second Franciscan Order.

⁵ The founder and general superior of the Franciscan community in Lviv was born on August 22, 1842, in the village of Rokosz (now in the Greater Poland Voivodeship, Poland). She became an orphan at a young age, and as researchers indicate, she dedicated her life to serving God from the age of 16. She passed away in Lviv on January 26, 1906.

⁶ The Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria (abbreviated as the Crown Land) was an administrative-territorial unit of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, defined more by historical than ethnic criteria. This territorial unit included, in particular, Polish ethnic lands, which led to the Ukrainian toponym being used not only to denote Ukrainian ethnic territories. The Austrian government did not support the Ukrainian idea of having a separate ethnic territorial unit. Only in 1918, in an addendum to the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, did the Austrian government promise Ukrainian People’s Republic the establishment of a separate crown land comprising Ukrainian territories; however, this treaty was soon annulled.

⁷ *Ex voto* is a Latin term that means “from a vow” or “by a wish.” In this context, *ex voto* refers to the construction of the monastery and temple as a sign of acknowledgment of God’s mercy and blessing for the Polish people.

To realize this intention, the abbess of the community was able to secure generous support not only from the Polish aristocracy in the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria but also from representatives from other regions of the Habsburg monarchy and the Kingdom of Prussia. In May 1877, she traveled to Vienna for the purpose of fundraising, where she was received by the monarch, Francis Joseph I. There, she also received material support from Maria Theresa, the wife of the monarch's brother Karl Ludwig, who took on the honorary patronage of the monastery's construction [1].

On July 10, 1877, Maria Morawska purchased a plot of land for the construction of the church on Kurkowa Street⁸, measuring 2 hectares, 4 ares, and 34 square meters, while the area of the actual building was 35 ares and 50 square meters⁹. Already on September 13 of the same year, the Papal Nuncio in Vienna Archbishop Ludovico Jacobini consecrated the cornerstone of the building [1, p. 78].

The design of the future monastic complex sparked certain discussions. The first project, developed by architect Karl Gregor in 1877, did not receive approval from the Lviv magistrate. According to the abbess, the project was “too modest and did not correspond to such high goals” [1, p. 78]. This opinion was supported by the prominent architect and professor at the Higher Polytechnic School¹⁰. Julian Zachariewicz who approached the abbess with a proposal to develop a new project free of charge and oversee the construction work. Ultimately, as noted by the abbess, he “created a beautiful project” that was approved by the magistrate [1, p. 78]. The execution of land and masonry work was entrusted to Karl Gregor's firm. The construction management was carried out by architect Jan Janowski¹¹, while the stone decorations were designed by sculptor and extraordinary professor at the Higher Polytechnic School, Leonardo Marconi, and others. As we can see, the design, oversight of the construction, and interior decoration were executed by distinguished specialists of the time, specifically faculty members (associate professors, professors, and extraordinary professors) of the Higher Polytechnic School in the city.

Despite numerous donations from wealthy individuals and the fact that fundraising efforts reached believers from various regions of the Austrian and Prussian territories, there were still insufficient funds for construction. On November 10, 1880, the Franciscan sisters moved into the first monastic building (the west wing), while the construction of the second building (the east wing) continued until 1883 [1, p. 79; 2, p. 92]. The next step was the completion of the church, which took 12 years, finishing in 1889. The church, oriented to the north, was built as a three-nave basilica without

⁸ The modern name of the street is Lysenko M. Until 1871, part of this street, specifically the area where the mentioned plot is located, was called Saint Anthony because there was a church dedicated to him nearby, belonging to the male congregation of Franciscans.

⁹ Sources indicate that the nuns referred to this mountain as *Alwernija*, evidently appealing to the Franciscan tradition, particularly the story of Francis of Assisi, a saint in the Catholic Church. According to tradition, he spent many days on the mountain of the same name in fasting and prayer. This designation may reflect an attempt to emphasize the spiritual connection of the nuns to their Franciscan heritage.

¹⁰ The Higher Polytechnic School is today known as the National University “Lviv Polytechnic”.

¹¹ He was a member of the Polytechnic Society in Lviv and served as an associate professor at Lviv Polytechnic from 1889 to 1902.

plastering, using red and yellow bricks, adorned with stone elements that emphasized its architectural style.

The solemn consecration of the church in honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus took place on September 29, 1889. The rite of consecration was performed by the Apostolic Nuncio of Austria-Hungary, Dr. Alessio (Luigi) Galimberti, assisted by the archbishops of Lviv, who represented the three Catholic rites of the city: the Latin rite — Severyn Moravski, the Byzantine (Ukrainian-Catholic; Union 1596) rite — Sylvester Sembratovych, and the Armenian-Catholic rite (Union 1630) — Izaak Isakowicz [1, p. 79—80; 2, p. 157].

According to tradition, the “reliquary”¹² in the main altar of the church was to be sealed by its architect, Professor Julian Zachariewicz. However, because he was a Protestant, he was denied this honorable task, which was then performed by another architect, Associate Professor Jan (Józef) Kajetan Janowski of the Lviv Polytechnic [1, p. 81].

The festive celebrations marking the consecration of the monastery church, attended by numerous members of the Polish aristocracy, lasted for eight days [1, p. 81; 2, p. 157]. The newly built sanctuary was recognized as a true gem of Lviv and a decoration of the Crown Land, both for its architectural design and its rich artistic embellishments. Nuncio Alessio (Luigi) Galimberti and other distinguished guests were impressed by the interior of the church, noting that “everything [in it] creates a fullness of harmony, architectural beauty, and richness, all worthy of its purpose” [1, p. 81; 3, p. 143].

Due to the high quality of construction, the church did not require repair and restoration work for a long time. Some “project additions” were made in connection with the death of the abbess Maria Morawska on January 26, 1906. According to the original design by Julian Zachariewicz and the wishes of the sisters, it was planned to arrange a crypt under the choir for the burial of the nuns. However, the city authorities did not grant permission to use the crypt for burials, and in 1894, a burial vault was constructed at the Lychakiv Cemetery [1, p. 81; 3, p. 93]. Nevertheless, due to public sentiment, permission was granted for her burial beneath the church. Another crypt was arranged to the left of the altar, where the abbess was buried on February 10, 1906. Her grave was covered with a slab of white marble.

The process of joining the Lviv monastery of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament of the Franciscan order in Kenty (modern-day Poland) was activated at the end of the first decade of the 20th century. This process was caused by difficulties in the official approval of the Kenty monastery by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities. In these circumstances, as Rafała Rapacz notes, “the Capuchin sisters from Kenty decided to unite with another religious family, spiritually related to them and one that had official permission” [8]. On January 10, 1910, a delegation from Lviv arrived in Kenty, led by Ab-

¹² A reliquary is a small, specialized container or capsule in which the relics, usually a small piece of the body, of saints are stored. In the Christian tradition, particularly in Catholicism and Orthodoxy, relics are often included in the altars of newly built churches or chapels, although in different ways. Placing a relic in the main altar is a symbolic act that emphasizes the sacredness of the space and its connection to the heavenly realm, and it is also part of the ritual of consecrating the church.

bess Izabela Markewicz, to solemnly confirm the act of incorporation. This group also included sisters appointed to key positions in the Kenty monastery: the newly appointed abbess Anna Pozorska (1875—1944) and her vicar Michaela Żychalska (1871—1941). From that time on, the Lviv monastery obtained a branch in Kenty [8].

In the second decade of the 20th century, significant geopolitical changes occurred in Europe due to World War I (1914—1918). The loss of power by Austria-Hungary activated national movements in its former territories, notably the Ukrainian and Polish movements. In November 1918, Ukrainians proclaimed the West Ukrainian People's Republic in Lviv, while the Poles expressed claims to Ukrainian territories, leading to the Polish-Ukrainian War of 1918—1919. For a certain period, the front line passed through Lviv. This affected the church, which sustained minor damage: on October 22, 1918, two bullets struck a stained-glass window depicting Saint Melania the Roman, and on April 19, 1919, a shell damaged the wall of the altar area.

After the defeat of the Ukrainian national struggles, most of the territories of the West Ukrainian People's Republic became part of interwar Poland. The community continued to develop the monastery. The abbess of the monastery, Maria-Izabella Markewicz, even initiated interior enhancements in the church [1, p. 83]. It is likely that in the 1930s, a mural appeared in the church, the author of which, as researchers suggest, was Julian Krupski, a well-known artist and teacher at the School of Applied Arts.

With the onset of World War II, significant geopolitical changes once again impacted the religious life of the region, particularly concerning the status of numerous sacred structures. Following the establishment of Soviet authority, a systematic campaign was launched to destroy, close, and desacralize religious objects, repurposing them into archives, hospitals, museums, warehouses, and other secular facilities.

A portion of the monastic premises of the Franciscan sisters was requisitioned by the Soviet authorities as early as December 1939 for archival purposes [9]. Other premises remained under their management until May 13, 1946 [1, p. 83; 3, p. 176]. During their departure to Poland, they were prohibited from taking any property; however, some monks managed to secretly transport certain relics and portions of the monastery's assets [1, p. 83]. All requisitioned monastic premises, including the church, were transferred by the Soviet authorities to the Ministry of Health. Here, a hospital for veterans of the German-Soviet War (1941—1945) was established, which later became the 7th department of the 1st Infectious Clinical Hospital. The frescoes were whitewashed, the altar dismantled, and numerous unique interior elements, including altars, the pulpit, pews, and sculptures, were destroyed. Among the few preserved artifacts is a white marble statue of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was transferred to the Museum of Religion and Atheism (now the Museum of the History of Religion).

A new socio-political and religious reality began to take shape in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The intensified activities of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, coupled with the conservative policies of the Russian Orthodox Church and the inconsistent actions of the state authorities, exacerbated inter-confessional relations, leading to disputes over ecclesiastical properties [4, p. 55]. Local authorities often acted in a “conjunctural” manner, influenced by

their own religious affiliations. As a result, Ukrainian Orthodox communities not only lost access to “contested sacred territories” but, in some instances, were deprived of churches that were part of their historical and spiritual heritage.

Thus, Orthodox communities were largely forced to finance the construction of new churches independently. At the same time, despite their active involvement in interconfessional processes, public authorities did not initiate any effective compensation mechanisms — unlike, for example, the Slovak government, which partially implemented such a policy in similar circumstances [10].

The Roman Catholic community in Lviv had diminished in both size and influence compared to the pre-war period. Most of its inactive churches were transferred by the local authorities to Catholic communities of the Byzantine (Eastern) rite. However, among these, two former churches — St. Nicholas¹³ and the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus — along with their monastic buildings, were handed over to Orthodox communities. It is likely that the local authorities viewed this decision as a form of “compensation” to the Orthodox for the loss of numerous other churches, including the cathedral, which had been transferred to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.

The decision to transfer the building of the Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the left wing of the former monastery of the Franciscan Sisters to the Lviv Diocese of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was adopted by the Lviv Regional Council in 1991. Within a year, the diocese relocated the Lviv Spiritual Seminary (today Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy), which had been temporarily operating in the town of Briukhovychi, to these premises [11, p. 14]. Starting from March 1993, the seminary and the church came under the newly established¹⁴ jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate)¹⁵.

Thus, the desecrated space of the former Roman Catholic Church was repurposed and consecrated as an Orthodox seminary church. The process of resacralization required significant resources, which the Orthodox community lacked, so many of the repair and restoration works were carried out by students and graduates of the Theological Seminary, as well as by clergy members¹⁶. Since the devotion to the Sacred Heart

¹³ The Church of St. Nicholas of the Latin monastic order of the Holy Trinity was desacralized by the Soviet authorities and repurposed as a library space. Currently, the building has been adapted to function as the cathedral of the Lviv-Sokal Eparchy of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

¹⁴ The jurisdiction was established after the Unifying Council between the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and a part of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) on June 25—26, 1992.

¹⁵ That same year, the representative of the President of Ukraine in the Lviv region issued Order No. 223 on March 23, 1993, which transferred the premises to the Lviv Eparchial Administration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate for free use for the needs of the seminary. The right wing of the monastery, which was still occupied by the city’s skin and venereal diseases dispensary for some time, was also transferred to the Lviv Theological Seminary in 1998 — now the Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

¹⁶ The first priests of the church were appointed as follows: Rostyslav Protsiuk, Ivan Bonys, Dmytro Andrukhiv, Oleksandr Matviienko, and Oleh Hrytsyniak (2003—2004).

of Jesus is characteristic exclusively of the Catholic Church, the Orthodox community decided to dedicate the chapel to Saint John Chrysostom — a saint revered by both Orthodox and Catholics. This renaming may reflect the church's adaptation to a new identity while respecting those who had previously worshiped there, which may emphasize the inclusiveness of the shrine's new status.

From November 2004, for a period of nine years (16.11.2004 — 12.03.2013), the administrative duties in the church were performed by Priest Petro Hatala. Under his leadership, the restoration of the stained glass located above the choir, depicting the Mother of God, was completed. After Priest Petro took monastic vows and was consecrated as a bishop, Priest Andrii Lototskyi cared for the church for a certain period. In 2013, Priest Nazar Lozynskyi was appointed as the priest for the academic church, and he continues to fulfill his duties to this day¹⁷. Since then, under his guidance, a number of important repair, restoration, and renovation works have been carried out on both the interior and exterior of the church (see Fig. 1, 2).

On January 6, 2019, the Ukrainian Church joined the family of Orthodox Churches as an autocephalous Church. A year later, in 2020, the Lviv City Council transferred the church and monastery buildings into the ownership of the Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy¹⁸. One of the important aspects of the modern functioning of this architectural complex is the fact that the LOThA and the Men's Monastery of St. John Chrysostom operate simultaneously in two wings of the monastery premises. Thus, the church functions under conditions of dual use, serving as both an academic (for a theological seminary) and a sacred monastic space. This organization of the space of the church facilitates the integration of spiritual and educational life, providing the necessary conditions for forming new generations of clergy and monks.

It is worth noting that an interesting opinion is that the cultural and sacred process continues here not only in the Orthodox tradition but also in the Franciscan tradition. Evidence supporting this may be the burial of the monastery's founder, Maria Morawska, in the crypt¹⁹ of the church, along with the active interest in her figure today.

Interest in her and her burial site, especially after the church was transferred to the Orthodox community, gradually grew due to the attention from the Franciscans, including both the Poor Clare sisters from Poland and the male Franciscan congregation with a nearby church. From time to time, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church have made prayer visits to the crypt of the church. As a result, the beatification process of Maria Morawska was initiated on October 25, 2002, under the leadership of the Latin Archbishop-Metropolitan of Lviv, Cardinal Marian Jaworski, and with the participation of the Poor Clare sisters. On January 29, 2006, marking the 100th anniversary of her death, a Mass was celebrated in the crypt, led by Marian Buczek, Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Lviv. Two years later, the

¹⁷ On April 19, 2021, he took monastic vows with the name Kyprian.

¹⁸ Archive of the Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy (hereafter — ALOThA). Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Lviv City Council dated July 19, 2019, No. 693 (copy).

¹⁹ Currently, the marble tombstone has several damages, likely caused during the Soviet period.

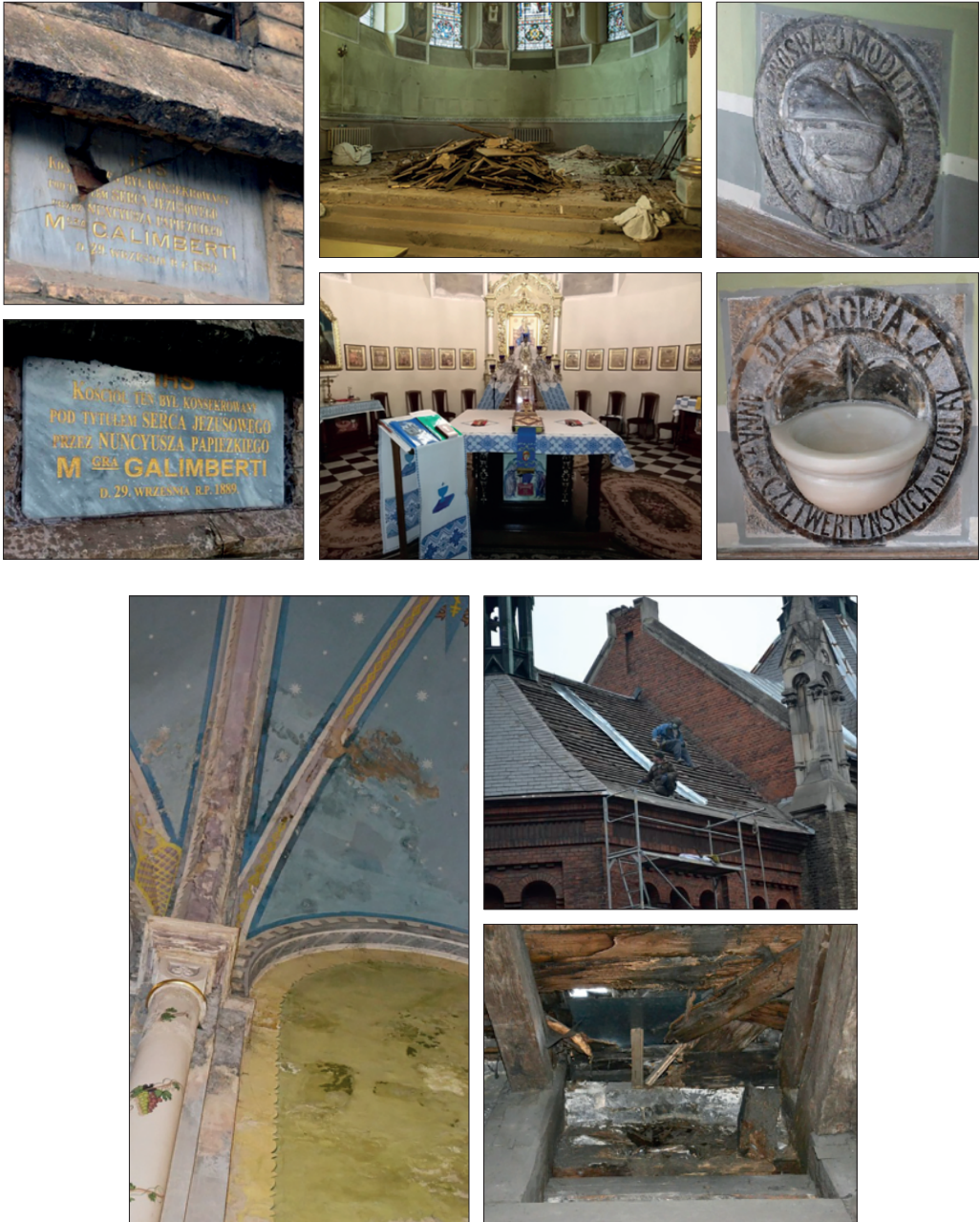


Fig. 1, 2. Image of some restoration and renovation works

Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome issued a decree confirming the validity of the canonization process.

In 2016, the head of the Federation of Monasteries of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Poland, in a letter addressed to the “church authorities of the temple,”

expressed gratitude for providing free access to the crypt “for the sisters of the order and for a group of Roman Catholic faithful”²⁰. She also requested permission for the exhumation of the remains of Maria Morawska. The letter noted that in recent years, trips to Lviv had been neglected due to “the great distance and political situation,” and also clarified that the Federation of Monasteries had made the decision to exhume and transfer the remains to one of their monasteries in Poland²¹.

In response, the leadership of the Lviv Theological Academy expressed consent to the reburial; however, the process was never carried out. It is assumed that the secular authorities of Lviv and the local leadership of the Roman Catholic Church prefer to keep the relics of Maria Morawska in Lviv due to the potential increase in pilgrimage and tourist flow in the event of her beatification. Meanwhile, the beatification process is ongoing, and during this time, thanks to cooperation with the clergy and the Academy’s administration, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church have the opportunity to pay devotional homage to Maria Morawska directly in the crypt.

An important aspect of the researched topic is the Soviet desacralization of the church and the process of resacralization by the Orthodox community. Soviet governance, after which the church was transferred to the Orthodox community, led to numerous damages and even destruction. A critical issue in the exterior was the emergency state of the church’s roofing, which caused further damage to the interior. However, the lack of funding to address the leaking roof resulted in a prolonged delay in resolving this issue. Negotiations with the city authorities dragged on, and it was not until the early 21st century that certain progress began to emerge on this matter.

In 2012, there was an intention to commence roofing work; however, due to changes in the documentation submission process, the city council postponed the project’s implementation. The discussion of the problem was resumed in 2014. In an interview with the newspaper *Lvivska Poshta*, the head of the Department for the Protection of Historical Heritage of the Lviv City Council, Liliia Onyshchenko, noted that the department was preparing the necessary documentation for the project’s implementation, and subsequently, it planned to seek a contractor to carry out the work. She emphasized that currently, a small volume of work was planned for this site, and to accomplish everything needed would take “years and considerable funds” [12]. The most problematic areas of the roof, where the covering was completely destroyed, were identified as priorities. According to her, the complexity of this work lies in the fact that the church used a roofing material that is uncharacteristic for Lviv, which was applied only on a few buildings. According to her, the last time restoration with such material was carried out in Lviv, it was brought from the Czech Republic²². Additionally, the complexity of the roof’s structure was noted²³.

²⁰ ALOThA. Letter of the President of the Federation of Monasteries of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Poland, dated May 11, 2016.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The church covering was made of eternit, while the roofing of the monastery complex was made of slate.

²³ The roof structure over the narthex, presbytery, and apse is gabled, while a tented roof covers the nave. Above the nave rises a small octagonal tower, clad in sheet metal, with a sharp spire topped by a cross.

As of December 2014, information about the completed work on the dismantling of damaged asbestos-cement sheets and shingles, the replacement of part of the cladding, and the roofing of the church's part with sheet steel was published on the Lviv City Council website [13]. According to the report of the Department for the Protection of Historical Heritage for 2015, "repair and restoration work on the roofs of the church of Saint John Chrysostom" was "completed based on the developed project and cost documentation" [14].

The facade of the church has required restoration work²⁴. Some of these were completed by 2023; however, some remain unfinished. For example, the pediment, which was originally topped with a stone cross (lost, presumably, during the Soviet period), still needs restoration. The church portal features a distinct triangular pediment supported by two columns with capitals adorned with floral ornamentation, crowned with a large stone cross. At the center of this pediment is a semicircular arch with a stepped profile, above which is a round niche containing a Florentine mosaic of *The Most Holy Sacraments*²⁵. Over time, this mosaic began to deteriorate, prompting restoration and conservation work in the summer of 2016 to prevent its complete destruction. This work was carried out by a team of restorers led by Sviatoslav Primate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, with funding provided by the church community [15]. Additionally, above the door in the semicircular arch is another mosaic, significantly larger than the previous one, depicting Christ²⁶. In 2016, the entrance doors were also restored, and new white stone steps were installed. Three years later, in 2019, stone railings were constructed for the stairs.

In the lower part of the facade (to the right) is a damaged ancient memorial plaque, likely from the Soviet period, commemorating the consecration of the church on September 29, 1889. This plaque was renewed in 2017. Furthermore, on the other side, a memorial plaque dedicated to the first rector of the Lviv Theological Academy and Seminary (now Lviv Orthodox Theological Academy), Priest Vitalii Politylo, was installed in 2020.

Compared to the exterior, the interior of the church sustained significantly greater damage, requiring considerable effort and time to restore it to its original condition. The restoration involved undertaking a series of comprehensive restoration and rehabilitation works aimed at preserving the architectural value and cultural heritage of the church. The original altar was destroyed during the Soviet period. Consequently, the Orthodox community, upon receiving the church, installed a new altar. During the renovation works in the altar area from 2014 to 2015, heating connections for the floor were installed, new tiles were laid, the stairs from the presbytery to the apse were reconstructed, and the altar was replaced with a new one [16].

²⁴ The distinctive feature of the church's construction lies in the fact that the side walls are fully integrated with the monastery buildings. Although windows were designed in the nave's side walls, their function has been lost.

²⁵ The mosaic depicts a monstrosity with the monogram of Jesus Christ, surrounded by rays and two cherubim.

²⁶ The mosaic depicts Christ in a crimson robe, blessing with his right hand while holding the Globus cruciger in his left. Above the halo, on both sides of the mosaic, are the inscriptions *IC* (Jesus) and *XC* (Christ).

Arguably, the most valuable preserved heritage of the church is the stained glass windows from the late 19th century (1887—1889), crafted by the Ferenc Mayer company in Munich. These windows impress with their vibrant colors, intricate designs, elegant compositions, and the skillful use of large glass surfaces, a trend in stained glass art at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries [17, p. 747]. In the apse of the altar area, there are three stained glass windows: the central one depicts the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, while the side windows are dedicated to St. Melania the Roman and the Archangel Michael. Although these stained glass windows were neither destroyed nor dismantled during the Soviet period, they required restoration [18]. The restoration work was carried out in 1994 by the *Ukrzakhidproiektrestavratsiia Institute*. Later, another Mayer glass window, located above the choir, was also restored.

The church's wall paintings suffered almost irreparable damage due to repeated whitewashing with various materials during the Soviet era. Additionally, prolonged water leakage from the damaged roof contributed to the growth of mold on the walls. Some of the original paintings were discovered in the early 1990s when fragments of the original artwork appeared during the removal of Soviet whitewash. However, due to a lack of financial resources, it was decided to conserve these areas using temporary whitewashing with "chalk," over which decorative ornaments were applied in some places. This measure was considered temporary, as the roof leakage problem remained unresolved until 2015. However, some fragments of the paintings in the altar area were left uncovered. In February 2021, restorers began examining the wall paintings to assess the scope of the necessary work and the required resources [19]. Probes were conducted on several sections of the walls, revealing cherubim images under the altar columns, as well as gilded decorations on the columns themselves [19] (see Fig. 3).

As for the church's interior, there were originally five altars, all of which were destroyed during the Soviet period. It is believed that their remnants were used to reinforce the embankment at the entrance to the monastery courtyard [20]. During the same period, the ambo, wooden confessionals, pews adorned with carvings and inlays, and other elements were also destroyed. However, today, the church is once again filled with wooden pews, giving it an authentic appearance. It is worth noting that the marble floor in the main part of the church has been preserved and remains authentic. The wooden partition wall, featuring authentic carvings of the Resurrection of Christ and the Evangelists, which separates the choir from the nave, also holds historical value.

In the narthex, as part of restoration work, the "inserts" for holy water in the narthex wall were restored. These marble elements, designed by Leonardo Marconi, were destroyed during the Soviet era. During that same time, the altars located in the side sections of the narthex, which serve as passageways connecting the eastern and western parts of the monastery complex, were also destroyed. While examining the state of the wall paintings in these sections, fragments were discovered that provide evidence of the original decor.

In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war, particularly after the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation into Ukrainian territory in 2022, local authorities implemented a series of measures to protect sacred buildings. One of the key aspects of these measures was ensuring the safety of churches, which involved covering stained glass windows with

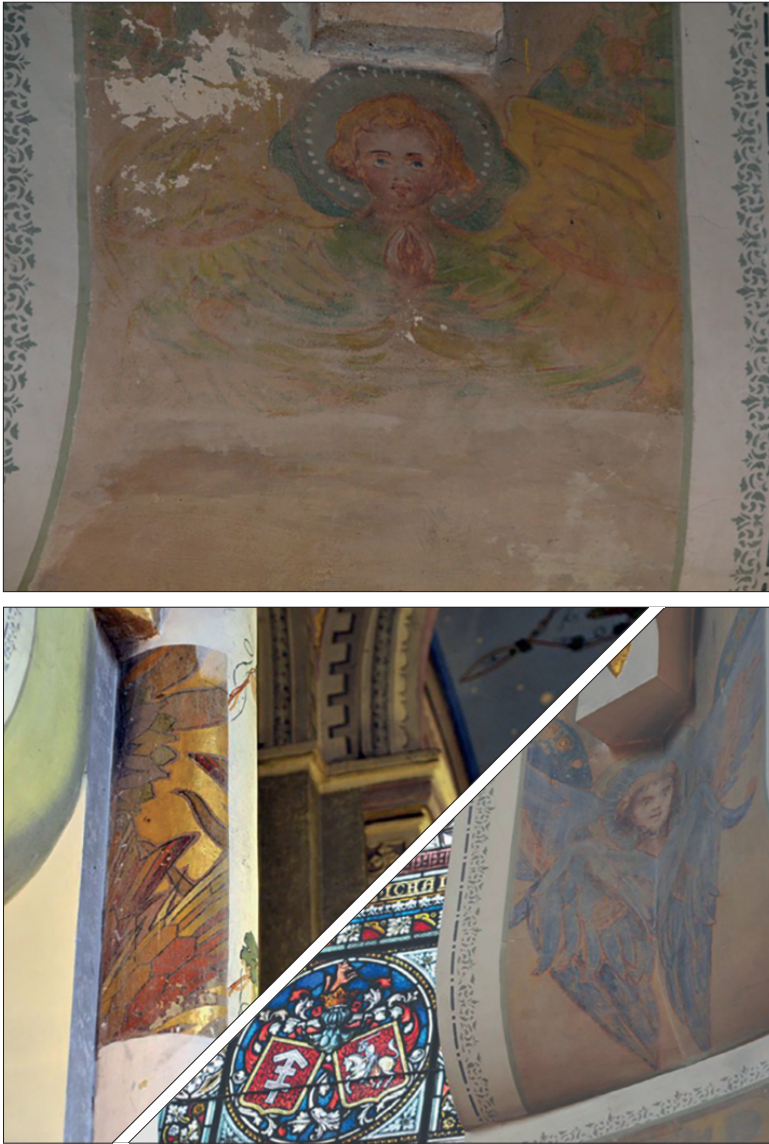


Fig. 3. Image of preserved fragments of murals

protective elements to prevent damage from blast waves. The large stained glass windows in the altar area of the church were fitted with special protective structures. However, the round stained glass window above the entrance could not be protected on-site due to its poor condition, so it was temporarily dismantled. The restoration work was funded by the *ALIPH Foundation* and carried out by restorer Mariia Shumska-Barvinok [21].

It is worth noting that one of the most effective methods today for documenting virtually every element of cultural heritage monuments — color, size, texture, and more — is 3D scanning. Data converted into a 3D model can also facilitate the resto-



Fig. 4. 3D model of the Franciscan Sisters Monastery complex

ration or reconstruction of buildings. As noted on the website of the Department for the Protection of the Historical Environment of the Lviv City Council, the creation of 3D models of monuments has gained particular importance since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The *Skeiron Team* processed over 40 objects with financial support from the *Polonika Institute*, the *ALIPH Foundation*, and later other international funds and institutions [22]. The priority for digitization was determined in collaboration with the Department for the Protection of the Historical Environment and preservation experts. Among these was a 3D model of the former Franciscan monastery complex, including its church (see Fig. 4).

* * *

A historical analysis of the monastic church of the Order of the Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Eucharist in Lviv reveals the multifaceted impact of political, religious, and cultural transformations on the development of this sacred architectural monument. The arrival of the Franciscan Sisters in this region was directly tied to the dissolution of their Polish Catholic mission in the Kingdom of Prussia, a consequence of broader political shifts, including the aftermath of the Reformation and changes in state-church relations. However, the favorable conditions in the Habsburg Monarchy, particularly in the capital of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria — Lviv, allowed the Franciscans to reestablish their mission. They received authorization for their novitiate, citizenship, and financial support to expand their monastery. During the interwar period, when Lviv was under Polish rule, the monastic community even expanded the boundaries of its presence and influence and actively took care of enhancing the church's interior.

However, the onset of World War II and the Soviet occupation drastically altered the situation. The USSR's policies toward religious institutions, marked by atheism and

totalitarianism, led to the desanctification of the church. The Franciscan complex suffered extensive interior and exterior damage, and the church lost its sacred function.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there was a revival of religious communities, accompanied by strong societal and institutional responses. The restitution of religious property led to the return of many buildings to religious denominations, including both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. A notable feature of this period was the “exchange” of religious buildings, with Eastern Rite Catholics receiving former Orthodox churches or monasteries, while Orthodox communities gained structures that had belonged to Latin Rite Catholics. The Franciscan church followed this pattern, as it was transferred to an Orthodox community and rededicated to a saint venerated in both Orthodox and Catholic traditions — Saint John Chrysostom, a father and teacher of the Church.

The transfer of the church to the Orthodox community (initially the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, later the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate), and now the Orthodox Church of Ukraine) marked the beginning of a restoration process that continues to this day. Over the past three decades, significant repair efforts have been made to restore the building’s authentic appearance. However, due to the scale of the damage, restoration work requires substantial financial investment.

Today, the church serves as a place of worship for the students of the theological academy, monks, and the local community. The presence of the remains of the monastery’s founder, Maria of the Cross Morawska, in the crypt — whose beatification process is ongoing — symbolically bridges the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions. This merging of the past and present seems to emphasize their ancient shared religious ties. The church’s new dedication to Saint John Chrysostom serves as a testament to this common spiritual heritage, uniting both traditions around a figure revered by both.

REFERENCES

1. Krasny, P. Kościół p. w. Najświętszego Serca Jezusa i klasztor SS. Franciszkanek. *Kościóły i klasztory Lwowa z wieków XIX i XX*. T. 12, cz. I. Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2004. 77-101 [in Polish].
2. Żyduch, M. Zakon Franciszkanek Najświętszego Sakramentu w Polsce w latach 1871—1939. Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1981 [in Polish].
3. Żywot Matki Marii od Krzyża (Ludwika Nałęcz-Morawskiej). Fundatorki Franciszkanek N. Sakr. w Polsce, 1938 [in Polish].
4. Tsebenko, A. & Kmet, V. Lvivska pravoslavna bohoslovska akademiia: vid idei do shkoly. Lviv, 2021 [in Ukrainian].
[Цебенко А., Кмет, В. Львівська православна богословська академія: від ідеї до школи. Львів, 2021].
5. Tsebenko, A. Architects of the Higher Polytechnic School and the Construction of the Neo-Gothic Sacred Space on Lychakiv Hill. URL: <https://lpnu.ua/news/arkhitektory-vyshchoi-politekhnichnoi-shkoly-ta-sporudzhennia-neohotychnoho-sakralnoho> [in Ukrainian].
[Цебенко А. Архітектори Вищої політехнічної школи та спорудження неоготичного сакрального простору на Личаківському пагорбі. URL: <https://lpnu.ua/news/arkhitektory-vyshchoi-politekhnichnoi-shkoly-ta-sporudzhennia-neohotychnoho-sakralnoho> (дата звернення: 28.07.2025)].

6. Ostrowska, W. Klaryski od Wiczystej Adoracji. URL: <https://kapucynki.pl/klaryski-od-wieczystej-adoracji/> (дата звернення: 27.07.2025) [in Polish].
7. Matka Maria Od Krzyża. URL: <https://kety.klaryski.org/2022/10/18/matka-maria-od-krzyza/> (дата звернення: 28.07.2025) [in Polish].
8. Rapacz, M.R. Lwowskie ślady w keckim klasztorze Klarysek od Wiczystej Adoracji. URL: <https://kety.klaryski.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Lwowskie-slady-w-keckim-klasztorze-Klarysek-od-Wieczystej-Adoracji.pdf> (дата звернення: 27.07.2025) [in Polish].
9. Khram sviatytelia Ioana Zolotoustoho. URL: <http://lpba.org.ua/hram/istoriya2/> [in Ukrainian] [Храм святителя Іоана Золотоустого. URL: <http://lpba.org.ua/hram/istoriya2/> (дата звернення: 28.07.2025)].
10. Tsebenko, A. Pravoslavna tserkva v Cheskich zemliakh i Slovachchyni v 1945 r. — na pochatku XXI st.: orhanizatsiinyi rozvytok i diialnist. *Candidate diss. of the historical sci.* Lviv, 2014 [in Ukrainian].
[Цебенко А. Православна церква в Чеських землях і Словаччині в 1945 р. — на початку XXI ст.: організаційний розвиток і діяльність: Дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Львів, 2014].
11. Tsebenko, A. Piv tysiacholittia z Khrystom: narys istorii pravoslavnoi parafii smt. Briukhovychi. Lviv, 2023 [in Ukrainian].
[Цебенко А. Пів тисячоліття з Христом: нарис історії православної парафії смт. Брюховичі. Львів, 2023].
12. Yashchenko, I. Chy buva ne rozvalytsia Lviv? URL: <https://archive.lvivpost.net/lviv-news/n/26336> [in Ukrainian].
[Ященко І. Чи була не розвалиться Львів? URL: <https://archive.lvivpost.net/lviv-news/n/26336> (дата звернення: 27.07.2025)].
13. U Lvovi restavruvut dakhy dvokh tserkov. URL: <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/culture/architecture-and-historic-heritage/221895-u-l-vovi-restavruyut-dakhi-dvokh-tserkov> [in Ukrainian].
[У Львові реставрують дахи двох церков. URL: <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/news/culture/architecture-and-historic-heritage/221895-u-l-vovi-restavruyut-dakhi-dvokh-tserkov> (дата звернення: 26.07.2025)].
14. Zvit pro robotu upravlinnia okhorony istorychnoho seredovyshcha za 2015 r. URL: <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/lmr/proekty-upravlinnia-okhorony-istorychnoho-seredovyshcha/2730-zvit-pro-robotu-upravlinnia-okhorony-istorychnoho-seredovyshcha-za-2015-rik> [in Ukrainian].
[Звіт про роботу управління охорони історичного середовища за 2015 р. URL: <https://city-adm.lviv.ua/lmr/proekty-upravlinnia-okhorony-istorychnoho-seredovyshcha/2730-zvit-pro-robotu-upravlinnia-okhorony-istorychnoho-seredovyshcha-za-2015-rik> (дата звернення: 26.07.2025)].
15. U khrami sviatoho Ioana Zolotoustoho vidnovyly florentiisku mozaiku. URL: https://galinfo.com.ua/news/u_hrami_svyatogo_ioana_zolotoustogo_vidnovyly_florentiysku_mozaiiku_234748.html [in Ukrainian].
[У храмі святого Іоана Золотоустого відновили флорентійську мозаїку. URL: https://galinfo.com.ua/news/u_hrami_svyatogo_ioana_zolotoustogo_vidnovyly_florentiysku_mozaiiku_234748.html (дата звернення: 28.07.2025)].
16. V akademichnomu khrami svt. Ioana Zolotoustoho tryvaiut kapitalni remontni roboty. URL: <https://gradleva.in.ua/news/v-akademichnomu-khrami-svt-ioana-zolotoustoho-tryvayut-kapitalni-remontni-roboty> [in Ukrainian].
[В академічному храмі свт. Іоана Золотоустого тривають капітальні ремонтні роботи. URL: <https://gradleva.in.ua/news/v-akademichnomu-khrami-svt-ioana-zolotoustoho-tryvayut-kapitalni-remontni-roboty> (дата звернення: 26.07.2025)].
17. Tserkovne mystetstvo Ukrainy: u 3-kh t. T. I: Arkhitektura. Monumentalne mystetstvo. Kharkiv, 2018 [in Ukrainian].

- [Церковне мистецтво України: у 3-х т. Т. I: Архітектура. Монументальне мистецтво. Харків, 2018].
18. Novyk, A. Tserkva Ioanna Zlatoustoho: Unikalni vitrazhi chudom vtsilily, koly khram nyshchyla radianska vlada. URL: https://galinfo.com.ua/photo/tserkva_ioanna_zlatoustogo_unikalni_vitrazhi_chudom_vtsilily_koly_hram_nyshchyla_radyanska_vlada_foto_188075.html [in Ukrainian].
[Новик А. Церква Іоанна Златоустого: Унікальні вітражі чудом вціліли, коли храм нищила радянська влада. URL: https://galinfo.com.ua/photo/tserkva_ioanna_zlatoustogo_unikalni_vitrazhi_chudom_vtsilily_koly_hram_nyshchyla_radyanska_vlada_foto_188075.html (дата звернення: 26.07.2025)].
 19. Oblychchia kheruvymiv: unikalni rozpysy, prykhovani za radianskoiu pobilkoiu. URL: https://galinfo.com.ua/news/oblychchya_heruvymiv_unikalni_rozpysy_prykhovani_za_radyanskoju_pobilkoju_361506.html [in Ukrainian].
[Обличчя херувимів: унікальні розписи, приховані за радянською побілкою. URL: https://galinfo.com.ua/news/oblychchya_heruvymiv_unikalni_rozpysy_prykhovani_za_radyanskoju_pobilkoju_361506.html (дата звернення: 27.07.2025)].
 20. Khram sviatytelia Ioana Zolotoustoho. URL: <http://lpba.org.ua/hram/istoriya2/> [in Ukrainian].
[Храм святителя Іоана Золотоустого. URL: <http://lpba.org.ua/hram/istoriya2/> (дата звернення: 28.07.2025)].
 21. Tserkva sviatoho Ioana Zolotoustoho: yak u Lvovi pid chas viiny restavruiut vitrazhi. URL: <https://www.uois.lviv.ua/tserkva-sviatoho-ioana-zolotoustoho-iak-u-lvovi-pid-chas-vijny-restavruiut-vitrazhi/> [in Ukrainian].
[Церква святого Іоана Золотоустого: як у Львові під час війни реставрують вітражі. URL: <https://www.uois.lviv.ua/tserkva-sviatoho-ioana-zolotoustoho-iak-u-lvovi-pid-chas-vijny-restavruiut-vitrazhi/> (дата звернення: 26.07.2025)].
 22. Spadshchyna Lvova u 3D. URL: <https://www.uois.lviv.ua/spadshchyna-u-3d/> [in Ukrainian].
[Спадщина Львова у 3D. URL: <https://www.uois.lviv.ua/spadshchyna-u-3d/> (дата звернення: 27.07.2025)].

Received 09.08.2025

Андрій ЦЕБЕНКО

кандидат історичних наук, доктор богослов'я, викладач,

Колегія св. Андрія (Вінніпег, Канада)

tsebenko@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5774-0494>

КУЛЬТУРНО-РЕЛІГІЙНІ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ МОНАСТИРСЬКОЇ ЦЕРКВИ ОРДЕНУ СЕСТЕР-ФРАНЦИСКАНОК У ЛЬВОВІ: ВІД КАТОЛИЦЬКОГО ДО ПРАВОСЛАВНОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ ЧЕРЕЗ РАДЯНСЬКУ ДЕСАКРАЛІЗАЦІЮ

Мета — аналіз використання храму різними інституціями: римо-католицькими сестрами-францисканками, радянськими державними установами, православною церквою (академічною спільнотою та монастирем), а також відповідних трансформацій його сакрального простору. **Методологія** базується на принципах наукової неупередженості, застосовуються проблемно-хронологічний, порівняльно-історичний, культурологічний підходи. Актуальність визначається потребою всебічного й комплексного представлення інституцій, які використовували храм, та динаміки змін у сакральному просторі. **Наукова новизна**

полягає в тому, що комплексний аналіз цієї теми ще ніколи не був предметом фахового дослідження. **Основні результати.** Реконструйовано історію функціонування храму, виявлено зміни, зумовлені політичними й релігійними чинниками, а також визначено масштаби втрат у радянський період. Відзначено, що православна спільнота, співпрацюючи з місцевою владою та благодійниками, забезпечила функціональність храму, відновила його ідентичність і презентує його як об'єкт культурно-релігійної спадщини. **Перспективи подальших досліджень** пов'язані з комплексним аналізом змін в інших спорудах сакрального комплексу, де нині розташовані Львівська православна богословська академія й монастир Св. Іоанна Золотоустого, з урахуванням їх історичного стану, змін у радянський час і новітніх реставраційних робіт.

***Ключові слова:** орден сестер-францисканок, Львів, сакральний простір, католицьке управління, православне управління, радянська десакралізація, сакральна культурна спадщина.*