

## **Celebration of the Solidarity Day of the World Heritage Cities in Krakow**

September is a time when we particularly dedicate our attention to our heritage. On September 8th, historical cities around the world celebrate Solidarity Day organizing exhibitions, conferences, concerts promoting the idea of world heritage and involving local communities in projects for the protection of monuments. On 12 September 1978 Krakow was included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This year's Krakow celebrations on the occasion of the World Heritage Cities Solidarity Day were exceptional and highly symbolic.

On September 8th, 2020, after a long revitalization, the Holy Spirit Square was reopened. The new shape of this unique space abounds in references to its previous functions and traditions. Holy Spirit Square is a place with a rich history - for centuries it has combined many functions, such as the tradition of hospitality, care for the poor and the sick, because since the 13th century a hospital of the Sisters of the Spirit has operated here, where not only the poor and homeless were treated but also cared for. When in 1893 - on the site of demolished former church and hospital buildings - a new city theater building was erected here, one of the most beautiful and famous buildings in Krakow at that time - Holy Spirit Square became the cultural center of the city. Following the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre, the avant-garde Cricot theatre, and then the Theatre Museum in the historical House under the Cross have been located here. In the early 20th century the square was a representative part of Krakow. The "Pollera" hotel situated here gained a renown, and in the café opposite the theater the Krakow bohemia used to have its home. Between 1926 and 1957 city bus station was functioning here, and from the late 60's to the present day this beautiful place was used as a parking lot.

No wonder that Krakowians are happy to welcome a new space to relax among the fragrant roses, in the beautiful surroundings of beautiful historical buildings. Many interesting initiatives are planned to be organized here in the future: like book fairs, artistic events. Above all, the residents will gain a place for meetings and enjoying the atmosphere of the old town.

The centuries-long history and spirit of this place will continue to develop thanks to the creativity and talents of Krakow inhabitants. The House under the Cross, which - as a branch of the Museum of Krakow - has gained a new function of the Interpretation Center of the Intangible Heritage of Krakow. There the space for presentations, storytelling and discovering the "spirit of the locality" - urban and family traditions will bring new power and creativity to the city.

It is worth mentioning that one tree - an oak - was planted on the renovated part of the square. According to the guidelines of the Voivodeship Monument Conservator, aimed at protection of the viewing axes of the square, only one tree could be planted

here. At this particular time, the oak will commemorate Krakow's Presidency in the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC).

Also on September 8th - returning to the old traditions – Mayor of Krakow Jacek Majchrowski launched the so-called Violent Bell on the Town Hall Tower. On this Gothic tower, the remains of the former seat of the city authorities - there are two bells, one of which has been the main timepiece of Krakow since the beginning of the 17th century. The medieval town square had a rich phonosphere. When there were no public media, citizens were informed about important events by sounds. There was the bugle call from St. Mary's Church, and - on the other side of the market - the tower clock of the Town Hall ringing for hours and quarters of an hour.

The bell was ringing the alarm bell ("warning") and announced a danger. In many cities, there was a separate category of "warning" bells and the bell from the Town Hall Tower had this function for several centuries. There is no clear indication when this bell stopped ringing, but on September 8, 2020, we marked the next phase of its history. The Museum of Krakow - the bell's keeper - is working on a calendar according to which the bell will ring. It will be with a joy, glory or grief. The new tradition will be presented on the Museum's website. The bell will remind of important city days and dates or festivities, announce historical and contemporary festivals or encourage the celebration of local traditions.

The cultural heritage of Krakow - both tangible and intangible traditions and rituals – shall be presented and discovered by Krakow's residents, guests and the whole world because is precious, deserving daily protection and consideration. Not only because of its historical value, telling the story of our roots and past, but because on its foundation, people – talented, creative and ambitious - build the future, constantly developing our heritage.