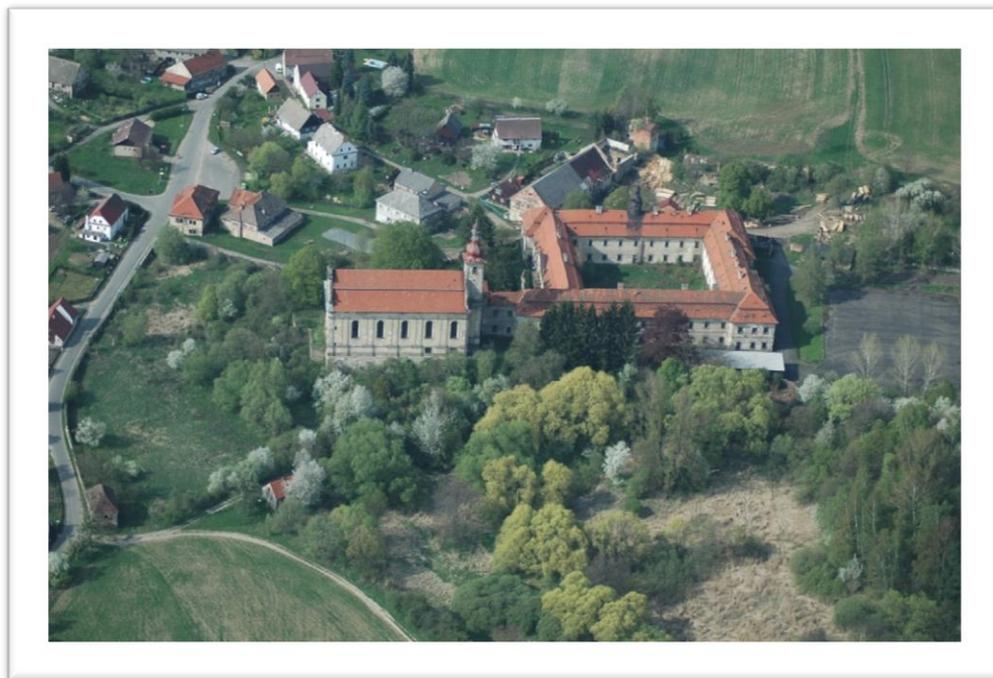


The baroque Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Konojedy



The baroque Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary stands on a rocky knoll in the village of Konojedy, about six kilometers away from the town of Ústě̀k. It is part of the former Servite Convent. The adjacent monastery is the most prominent of the five Servite monasteries in Bohemia. The church, together with the former convent, is of substantial cultural and historical significance.

The church and the Servite monastery were founded by Francis Charles Swéerts-Sporck and his wife Anne Catherine. Anne Catherine was the daughter of F.A. Sprock the renowned founder of the complex in Kuks. The monastery was founded in gratitude for the triple healing of their only child after the application of a scapular with relics of the founders of the Servite Order.

The establishment of the church was approved in Vienna in 1746 and in the following year the cornerstone was laid. In 1786 the church was ordained by bishop Waldstein of Litomě̀rice. After the dissolution of the Servite Order in 1786, it functioned as a parish church and later fell into private ownership.

The late baroque Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary was built on the site of an older early baroque church (only its crypt was incorporated into the new structure). The construction took place from 1748 to 1752. Although it was ordained in 1762, furnishing of the interior and other minor works continued. The original master builder was Wenzl Hebeck of Lysá nad Labem, but the construction was later overseen by Anton Miller.

From 1912 to 1914 the church underwent a major reconstruction of both the exterior – restoring the roof and facade – and interior – repairing cracks in the vault, re-tiling the floor and repainting. In 1915 many of the altar paintings were restored. In 1945 the church was damaged by blasts in a nearby quarry; in the second half of the twentieth century the grounds were used by the

army and gradually fell into disrepair. In the 1980s the church was gradually vacated and repeatedly burgled.



The Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is an impressive single-nave structure with a tower behind the orthogonal presbyterium and the sacristy and oratory attached on the north side. The west-facing front facade is rather terse, standing on a tall supporting wall divided by groups of pilasters which also line the corners. Its dominant feature is the tall semicircular window, complemented on either side by vaulted alcoves for statues. Finally, the front face is topped off with a triangular gable with volute wings and a metal carving of God's eye embedded in the gable's apex. The side facades are rhythmically divided by tall arched windows and pilasters.

The church's single-nave interior features chapels between the retracted pillars on the flanks. Above a vault on the western side stands the organ matremonium (the organ itself did not survive), while on the east side a tall triumphal arch transitions the main vault into an orthogonal choir with a two-story triforium. The nave is spanned by several segments of barrel vaults, separated by wide bands.



Up until the 1970s, the church was very lavishly furnished. The richly embellished altars were built with marble imported from Italy and Austria and were adorned with many statues. Prague sculptor I. F. Platzer and Liberec painter F. Leibner both contributed greatly to the decór. The sad torsos of the main and auxiliary altars, remnants of the pulpit and a handful of benches are all that remains of its former beauty.

Today the church is structurally unsound, the inner and outer facades are in critical condition and the interior has been severely devastated and looted.

