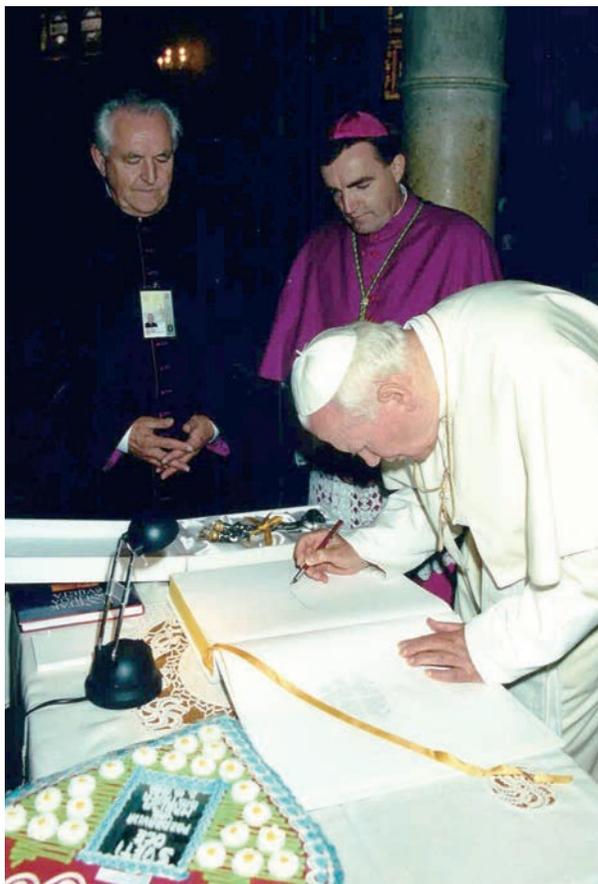


The first large celebration in Marija Bistrica was on **15 August 1971** when the **XIII. International Marian Congress** was held there. That year, the bishops proclaimed the shrine **Croatian national shrine of Saint Mary of Bistrica**.

The most glorious day in the history of Marija Bistrica was **03 October 1998** when **Pope John Paul II** visited Marija Bistrica and **proclaimed** the deceased Zagreb Archbishop and pilgrim to Marija Bistrica, **Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac** as **blessed**.



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TOURIST BOARD  
MARIJA BISTRICA  
ZAGREBAČKA BB  
HR - 49 246 MARIJA BISTRICA

Phone: + 385 49 468 380  
Fax: + 385 49 301 011  
E-mail: [tzo.marija.bistrica@gmail.com](mailto:tzo.marija.bistrica@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.tz-marija-bistrica.hr](http://www.tz-marija-bistrica.hr)  
Facebook: TZO Marija Bistrica

MARIJA  
BISTRICA  
A PLACE  
OF RICH  
HERITAGE



ENGLISH



**Marija Bistrica** is the largest Marian sanctuary in Croatia located in the southeast of Hrvatsko Zagorje on north slopes of Zagrebačka gora, around 40 km from the capital Zagreb.

When mentioning Marija Bistrica everybody will first think of pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Marija Bistrica.

The focal point of the place is **the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary** which compels admiration by its size, surroundings and significance. **A mass of believers from all parts of Croatia but also from abroad have been coming for centuries to Marija Bistrica** as well as the individuals coming in silence of personal pilgrimage seeking and finding inner peace.



**Shrine in Marija Bistrica** became the national shrine in 1715 when the Croatian parliament built a big votive altar at the church in Marija Bistrica. As Marian devotions grew and many prayers got answered by seeking intercession of Saint Mary of Bistrica, the shrine's church became tight and too small so Bistrica's parish priest Juraj Žerjavić had the church and the parish house with arcades extended and reconstructed following the designs of architect Friedrich von Schmidt and his student Hermann Bollé. The new church was built in Neo-Renaissance style.