

THE LEGEND OF THE TRUMPETER OF KRAKOW

One of the most famous legends about the city of Krakow is the Legend of the Trumpeter.

Historically, the city of Krakow could be seen from the tallest of the two towers of the Mariacki Church of Saint Mary. In a little room at the top of the tower a watchman stood guard over the city protecting it from danger. If an emergency arose, he would blow his trumpet alerting the people.

In the 13th century, the brutal Tartars invaded the land, burning farms, plundering and killing. One night on his watch, when most of the townspeople were in church, the watchman noticed a group of Tartars approaching the city intending to attack. He immediately blew a loud, clear warning on his trumpet. The townspeople responded to the alert. The Tartars shot arrows at the tower but the watchman continued to sound the trumpet until he was struck in the throat by an arrow. The enemy was forced out by the people, and the city was saved, but the trumpeter died from his wound.

Since that time, a trumpeter plays a little hymn called, "The Hejnal" every hour repeating it four times - once in each direction of the compass: north, south, east, and west.

The song always ends suddenly on a high note in honor of the trumpeter who gave his life for his people and his city.