

## **ST. COSMUS AND ST. DAMIAN, PATRONS OF PHARMACISTS**

The world of pharmacy has very rich traditions. Cosmus and Damian, born in 3rd century Asia Minor, have long been its patron saints. Their devoted service aroused general respect, and still does today. The brothers' martyr deaths contributed to a relatively early advent of a widespread cult – in the East as well as in the West. Even Jan Dlugosz mentioned the occurrence of it in Poland.

However, there were also times when such beautiful traditions were forgotten. Not so much by the pharmacists as by the authorities who were reluctant for any manifestation of holiness. Fortunately those days are in the past now.

Since 1993, the pharmacists of Poznan have celebrated their holiday again under the patronage of Saint Cosmus and Saint Damian. Since then, not only has it become an event recognized locally, but also all over Poland. A picture representing the saints, painted by Sister Rafaela Szymkowiak (1900-1995), was rediscovered. It was based on a painting created in Switzerland in the 17th century, which can be found in the parish church in Oeschgen in Aargau Canton. This fact has been established through a German researcher, Hannsgeorg Löhr from Lipsk.

Contemporary pharmacy, in many aspects, refers to its patron saints, who were kind, devoted to people and served them with their knowledge and experience.