**History of The Jesuit College in Jindřichův Hradec**

The Jesuit College in Jindřichův Hradec, the fourth such college established in Bohemia, was founded in 1954 as a centre for spreading the catholic religion in a predominantly non-catholic town and its surrounding area. The Jesuits came to Jindřichův Hradec following an invitation from the then landlord of the town and its estates, Adam II of Hradec and his wife Catherine of Monfort. The extensive complex of the college and the nearby seminary, with the originally medieval chapel of Mary Magdalene, was bulit at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries in the proximity of the castle and the parochial church. As the construction work was nearing completion, the college interiors received their embellishments, which we can admire even today, in the form of gorgeous frescoes, especially in the refectory and auditorium.

For as long as 180 years, the college provided a firm base for the Jesuits, whose task was to make sure that churchgoers follow their faith. A Jesuit gymnasium was established in 1595 within the college complex, thus the House of the Order also became a centre of learning. The five classrooms of this gymnasium offered a high quality education to hundreds of aristocratic students as well as students from lower social origins of the town and other places in Bohemia, Moravia, Austria and even other European countries. Amongst them were, for example, the Jindřichův Hradec – born poet and musical composer, Adam Vaclav Michna of Otradovice ort he son of the rebellious leader of the Hungarian aristocrats, Ferenc II Rákóczi, who was sent there for re-education at the end of the 17th century. The eminent baroque historian Bohuslav Balbín taught there in the mid 17th century.

In 1773 the Jesuit Order was abolished and the premises of the Jindřichův Hradec college were adapted to the needs of the military. The army stayed there up until 1995, when the building was handed over to the town of Jindřichův Hradec.

Since 2002, successive reconstructions of the building for the purposes of a museum of photography have been under way. In   Currently, almost all of the building premises have been restored. The building is a cultural landmark.