

Dear Shroud Researchers,

I have included, in the following email message, more information that I have acquired, concerning the Holy Shroud of Turin. My particular interest is the involvement of the Holy Shroud - with saints within the Roman Catholic Church. You are probably familiar with some of the information that I present below - but some of it - may be new to you - I hope it is all helpful, and if you wish to share all of this - with others - you are more than welcome to do so.

It's been a rough slog for me, as it has been for many of us - since the days of yore - at KU. But somehow, Our Lord's love and mercy - continue to lead and guide me.

Today, I wish to share with all of my ever deepening awareness of the Holy Shroud of Turin. I first discovered the Holy Shroud - almost eight years ago - at Our Lady of the Snows, in Belleville, Indiana - and the Holy Shroud - has gripped my heart, ever since. Here is the website for Our Lady of the Snows: <http://www.snows.org>

Since then, I have produced a blog site, containing images of the Holy Shroud - from around the world. Here is the link to my blog: <http://resurrectionnowinc.blogspot.com>

I put together this blog to demonstrate that the Holy Shroud of Turin - has long been close to the heart of the Roman Catholic Church - and therefore, it should be close to our hearts, as well. Pope John Paul II - became the first pope to own the Holy Shroud of Turin - back in 1985 - and was always INTENSELY interested in it. In fact, he approved of TWO public exhibitions of the Holy Shroud - back in 1998 and 2000. When the Holy Shroud underwent a 33 day "restoration" - back in 2002 - the Holy Father had a copy of the Shroud - set up at the Basilica of St. Francis - back in Cracow.

The Holy Father - also met with the leading scientists in the world, about the Holy Shroud - John and Rebecca Jackson - and expressed his very "pro-Shroud" views to them. By the way, these same scientists - have conducted research on the resemblances of the Holy Shroud image - with the image of the Divine Mercy. Their findings were taped, and then aired - on EWTN, and guess what? - Mother Angelica's convent contains SEVERAL COPIES of the Holy Shroud of Turin!

These were installed there with the assistance of Barrie Schwartz, who runs the largest website in the world, dedicated to the Holy Shroud. Here is his website:

www.shroud.com

There are a lot of websites about the Shroud of Turin today, but here are the best ones:

www.shrouduniversity.com

www.holyshroudguild.org

www.shroud.it

Anyhow, the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy - is not far from where I am currently living, in Massachusetts. It is in Stockbridge, MA, and I have been privileged to visit there - on many occasions. Here is the website for the same:

<http://www.marian.org/index.php?s=1>

Our current Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI - now owns the Holy Shroud, as well. Indeed, it is the PERSONAL possession of the living pope, on condition that it remain in Turin. Last year, he approved of another public exhibition of the Holy Shroud, and he made a personal visit to venerate it on May 2, 2010.

Photographic replicas, statuary - and other images modeled after the Holy Shroud of Turin - exist IN ABUNDANCE throughout Italy, the Vatican, and Southern France. But they are relatively RARE - outside of these countries - and that is a deficit that, God willing, I hope to remedy.

Even though the Holy Shroud of Turin, of itself, does not PROVE that the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred - still, there have been HUNDREDS of researchers, from around the world - who continue to learn more and more about this mysterious object, since Shroud research, or "sindonology" - began in 1898. Indeed, we know SO MUCH about this one artifact ALONE - that, if all of these data were presented to the public - NOBODY would be able to REDUCE the Person of Jesus Christ - to mere "myth", "legend", "speculation" or "fable" - ever again.

And, if we COMBINE all of THAT awareness of the Holy Shroud - with all that we know of the Holy Scriptures, and all of the archeological and historical evidence pertaining to Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ - and ALL that we know, concerning the history of the Roman Catholic Church that He established - the more we SEEK - the more we FIND - to such an extent that the grace of God OVERWHELMS to even the most formidable post-modern objections - of nihilism, materialism, atheism, "new-age", syncretism, and the "dictatorship of relativism".

Back to the Holy Shroud of Turin. There are some obvious points that I must make right away about it. The first one is this: the IMAGE - that is the Holy Shroud of Turin - has NEVER been carbon-dated! The reason is simple: to carbon-date a sample of material, scientists must DESTROY it, and since the custodians of the Holy Shroud - did not want to destroy the IMAGE - they never permitted a sample to be removed from it!

What was actually TESTED - was only one small piece from the edge of the CLOTH (which nobody disputes is man-made) - and this was done in complete disregard for international protocols that recommended SEVERAL small samples to be removed from different areas of the cloth. Anyhow, this one small piece was subdivided into three or four smaller pieces, which were sent to three different laboratories: Zurich, Oxford, and Arizona. Each lab came back with DIFFERENT results for their samples, which were amalgamated into a range of 1260-1390.

As for the rest of the CLOTH - upon which the IMAGE of the Holy Shroud rests - the age of all of this remains UNKNOWN! - and the cloth is quite large - it measures approximately 14 feet long, by 4 feet wide.

Anyhow, these testing results for the one small sample of the CLOTH - have proven so CONTROVERSIAL and INCONCLUSIVE - that, at the end of the day - we must simply THROW THEM OUT! In a court of law - these testing results - would utterly FAIL to stand up with any scientific certainty. I know experts who could clearly testify to these inconclusive results. One of them, by the name of William Meacham, has written a book, called the "Rape of the Turin Shroud", in which he goes into this whole business, in great detail.

The other "myth" that pervades our culture - is that the Holy Shroud of Turin - is medieval in ORIGIN. It first appeared INDISPUTABLY in history, in a tiny French country town, called Lirey at approximately 1350 - where a knight by the name of Geoffrey DeCharnay - began to exhibit the Holy Shroud in a small church built there, for that purpose. The town - is still tiny (the little church has long since disappeared).

While we don't know HOW Geoffrey DeCharnay - obtained the Holy Shroud - there is NO positive evidence that the Holy Shroud - with so many UNIQUE and EXTRAORDINARY features - could have possibly been MANUFACTURED in Lirey, France, or during any other time, within the Middle Ages - and even in OUR TIME today, with our own post-modern scientific advances.

Back in 1978 - a team of approximately twenty-five scientists - called STURP (Shroud of Turin Research Project) - examined the Holy Shroud of Turin, firsthand, for a round-the-clock period of 120 hours. After gathering enormous amount of data from the Holy Shroud, and taking thousands of high-quality photographs of the same - the scientists published their findings in 24 peer-reviewed scientific papers, back in 1981, in some of the most prestigious scientific journals in America.

One of the leading scientists - was named Raymond Rogers (he died back in 2005). Here is the interesting thing. The IMAGE of the Holy Shroud of Turin - is comprised of thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of slightly darkened linen FIBRILS. Each fibril - is only about 3 or 4 microns thick! Imagine this for a moment: if a thread is your physical arm - a fibril is a hair on your arm. The image of the Holy Shroud - doesn't read on threads: it rests upon FIBRILS of threads.

And Raymond Rogers - using all sorts of equipment at the government laboratory where he worked - could not duplicate ONE fibril of the Holy Shroud of Turin! And that's just ONE THING - nobody has been able to duplicate! Nobody has been able to duplicate or explain, how the image of the Holy Shroud of Turin - has properties of a photographic negative, even though it is not a photograph (this was the astounding discovery that Italian photographer, Secondo Pia - made back in 1898). The STURP scientists PROVED that the image of the Holy Shroud - is NOT a painting, or a rubbing, or a scorch, of any kind.

Indeed, the STURP scientists - came together during the mid 1970's - when military scientists, John Jackson, Eric Jumper, Bill Mottern, and others - REDISCOVERED that the image of the Holy Shroud of Turin - contains three dimensional encoding. No other two dimensional image in the world - has three dimensional information within it, the way that the Holy Shroud of Turin does.

That discovery - was made as early as 1913 - by earlier researchers examining the photographs of the Holy Shroud - but these military scientists found this out independently, using a special machine, called a VP8 analyzer. Only about 100 of these machines - were ever made (there was never really a demand for them), and guess where they were made?

They were made by a small company, called Interpretation Systems, Inc. - on Haskell Avenue, in Lawrence, Kansas! I probably walked by the place, during the errant days of my youth, and was completely unaware that it was there.

One of the technicians for Interpretation Systems, is a wonderful man, named Pete Schumacher (he is now a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church). He was asked to install a VP8 analyzer, in the home of Dr. John Jackson (he had never heard of the Holy Shroud of Turin before). Since then, Pete Schumacher has gone on - to open up a center devoted to education about the Holy Shroud of Turin - in a SHOPPING MALL - in Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Here is his website: www.shroudnm.com

His work - is fully approved by his local bishop.

There are still MORE reasons why the Holy Shroud of Turin - could NOT have been manufactured in the Middle Ages. The blood marks on the Holy Shroud - are ALL anatomically correct - some to a microscopic level - and exhibit a medical knowledge that no medieval artist, or doctor - could have possessed. Even if a doctor or artist DID possess the medical knowledge at that time - nobody know how a person could have APPLIED medically accurate blood marks - to a linen cloth, in such a way that the blood marks appear on the linen - in the very same way they would appear on a human body.

STURP scientists, Joseph Heller, and Dr. Alan Adler - demonstrated that these blood and serum marks - are comprised of real human blood products, and blood products, from WOUNDS - not whole blood. These scientists also found BILIRUBIN within these blood marks - which is secreted by the liver when a person is undergoing great trauma - which makes the blood marks a CARMINE orange, and not a dull-brown that a viewer would expect. (French medical doctor, Pierre Barbet - observed this unusual coloration, when he saw the Holy Shroud - up close in a public exhibition approved by Pope Pius XI in 1933, and later wrote his classic book, "Doctor on Calvary").

How would an artist, or forger - been able to mix bilirubin - into everything else that we observe in the blood marks of the Holy Shroud of Turin? It simply is NOT possible!

1933 was also the year, when the great sindonologist, and Salesian priest - Father Peter Rinaldi - saw the Holy Shroud, as well. The founder of the Salesians, St. John Bosco - saw the Holy Shroud of Turin - on two separate occasions - in the nineteenth century. His predecessor, St. Francis de Sales was a bishop who HELD the Holy Shroud personally - to exhibit the Holy Shroud to the public in Turin. Recently, I learned that St. Jane DeChantal, who founded the Visitation Sisters, after a spiritual encounter with St. Francis de Sales ALSO enjoyed a private viewing of the Holy Shroud.

There is a monastery of Visitation Sisters, right here in Massachusetts! Here is their website:

<http://www.vistyr.org>

You will see the images of both St. Francis DeSales, and St. Jane DeChantal.

One of the Visitation Sisters, St. Margaret Mary Alacaquoe - would experience the apparition of the Sacred Heart in Paray-le-Monial. Her spiritual director, Jesuit Saint Columbiere - would be canonized after a inexplicable cure took place in California for a priest (Father Huel). I learned this from Tom Serafin, who is the guardian of over 1000 Holy Relics. Tom currently works for the Knights of Columbus, in New Haven, CT. Here is his website:

<http://www.apostolateforholyrelics.com/home.php>

For myself, I have become quite a relic hunter! My goal - for the service of the Roman Catholic Church, and the entire world - is to create the first global catalogue of all the relics of St. Anne and St. Joachim, all the relics pertaining to the lives of Our Lord and Our Lady, and the relics of the Holy Apostles. Did you know that the St. Pius X Church - in St. Mary's Kansas - has a collection of approximately 700 relics? I have seen the collection, but would like to have the collection digitized, so that I can post it on my blog. If anyone can help me in that department - I would greatly appreciate it!

Anyhow, other great saints - also were aware of the Holy Shroud of Turin. Indeed, the Holy Shroud was first brought to Turin in 1578 so that the aged St. Charles Borromeo - could venerate it. I suspect that the founder of the Passionists - St. Paul of the Cross - probably had some awareness of it. I suspect that the founder of the Redemptorists, the great St. Alphonsus Liguori - also had some awareness of the Holy Shroud, since copies were made of the Shroud and distributed throughout Italy.

And, given the fact that St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane DeChantal - were so close to the young Jesuit order of that time - I am sure that the Jesuits - were aware of the Holy Shroud, as well. St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, had a great devotion to the Holy Face, and Shroud researchers simply LOVE St. Therese of Lisieux. As things turned out, Therese's older sister, Celine, obtained copies of the first photographs taken of the Holy Shroud, back in 1898. She created a painting of the Holy Face, modeled after the Shroud.

Blessed Giorgio Frassati, whose body is incorrupt (it was taken to World Youth Day in Australia, back in 2008) also hailed from Turin, and even though he died at twenty-four - was probably aware of the Holy Shroud - since images of the same - exist in churches all over the city.

Father John Hardon, my instructor at the Notre Dame Graduate School back in 1988 (whose cause for canonization is in process) - wrote an article about the Holy Shroud of Turin. Other Jesuits, like Father Robert Brungs, the founder of the first faith-science organization in the country - edited the proceedings of a conference devoted to the Holy Shroud - back in 1992. Here is the website of his organization (he has since died):

www.faithscience.org

Even the well-known Trappist monk, Thomas Merton - was curious about the Holy Shroud of Turin. He commissioned an artist to create two crucifixes modeled after the Holy Shroud. One of these - went to the Vatican, while the other - is still in the refectory of the Trappist monastery of Gethsemane, in Kentucky.

Back in 1870, French religious archeologist, Charles Rohault de Fleury - travelled throughout Europe cataloguing the relics that he could find, of Our Lord's Passion. He was aware of the Holy Shroud of Turin, and found relics of the Crown of Thorns that show that Our Lord wore a HELMET or FULL CAP of thorns on His head - unaware of the fact that the head wounds, and blood flows, on the Man in the Shroud - indicate the very same thing!

Indeed, the Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center - right in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem - contains a permanent exhibit dedicated to the Holy Shroud of Turin. If you go to the following page, you will see a replica of the Crown of Thorns (that St. Louis purchased from the Emperor Baldwin) - in a case with the Frontispiece of DeFleury's book - showing Our Lord wearing a full CAP of thorns:

<http://www.notredamecenter.org/articulos/articulo.phtml?se=330&ca=769&te=578&id=13650>

As for Father Peter Rinaldi would go on to establish the first Shrine dedicated to the Holy Shroud of Turin - back in 1970 - at Corpus Christi Parish in Portchester, New York. He would also serve, as an exemplary pastor of the Church, for twenty-nine years. He would also serve on the board of the Holy Shroud Guild - which was established at the Redemptorist Seminary in Esopus, New York, in 1951 - with the approval of Cardinal Francis Spellman, the Archbishop of New York - and which received an Apostolic blessing from Pope John Paul II, in 1981.

Here is another interesting fact. One of Father Peter Rinaldi's altar boys: Father Frank Pavone - would go to found the largest pro-life organization in the world: Priests for Life, starting it up right in Portchester. My sister in Christ, Jeanette Ibrahim - was there at the beginning of this. Here is the website for Father Frank's organization:

<http://www.priestsforlife.org>

Recently, Father Frank Pavone has started the Missionaries for the Gospel of Life, in Amarillo, Texas. Here is the website for this organization:

<http://www.priestsforlife.org/missionary>

Outside of Amarillo, Texas - is a small town called, Groom Texas. Perhaps the largest cross in the United States - is erected there - in the middle of nowhere. At the same site, is a memorial for the unborn, and there is also an image there of the Holy Shroud of Turin. More and more - I am finding a mysterious connection - between the Holy Shroud of Turin - and the whole pro-life cause. The great French pro-life biologist, Jerome Lejeune - was also a great Shroud of Turin scholar.

Here is the web link of Dr. Lejeune, giving a talk about the Holy Shroud of Turin, at a conference sponsored toward that purpose, in Rome, along with other presenters:

<http://www.shrouduniversity.com/rome93.php>

Not only can you see a video-tape of Dr. Lejeune (by the way, his daughter has recently written a biography about him). You can also see that Father Rene Laurentin ALSO had a great devotion to the Holy Shroud. He is famous in the Catholic world, for his Marian devotion.

The great Shroud researcher, Dr. Frederick Zugibe - was also very pro-life. Sadly, he has dementia now, but he studied the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the Holy Shroud - for over sixty years, and operated the ONLY laboratory in the world - devoted to understanding the Crucifixion - in Rockland County, New York.

was privileged to meet with him one time, and to speak with them, on several occasions over the phone, although I was never able to meet him, at his home.

Here is a little website of his, that presents his Shroud research, and pro-life position, based upon the sciences:

<http://e-forensicmedicine.net>

Here is some remarkable testimony that he gives, concerning a recent Eucharistic miracle. Go to the lower right hand corner of the website - to see his video-taped testimony:

<http://loveandmercy.org>

Here is a brief history of the Holy Shroud Guild, taken from the website of Barrie Schwartz:

<http://www.shroud.com/crispino.htm>

Sadly, the entire seminary (which is now the Mount St. Alphonsus Retreat Center) - will be closing at the end of this year, and its fate (and its priceless Holy Shroud materials) - remains uncertain. I have heard that the Bruderhof community - may be taking it over. I can only hope that they don't destroy the gorgeous chapel there - filled with windows depicting the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori, because they THINK they are "idolatrous".

In its day, the Holy Shroud Guild - was an extremely VIGOROUS organization. It earned its revenues from the classic Shroud of Turin document entitled, "The Silent Witness", whose maker, is still alive. The Guild operated a distribution center in the Bronx, which is now closed down.

It was the members of the Holy Shroud Guild - who cooperated with the military and other scientists that would come together during the 1970's to create the STURP project. Indeed, it was Father Peter Rinaldi's diplomatic skills and connections - that gained the approval of King Umberto II (the owner of the Holy Shroud at that time) and the custodians of the Holy Shroud - access to study the Holy Shroud directly - back in October of 1978 - an exhibit held to commemorate the Holy Shroud's four hundredth anniversary of its existence in Turin.

It was during that exhibition of the Holy Shroud - that the future Pope John Paul II - saw the Holy Shroud for the first time. Pope John Paul I - wanted to see the Holy Shroud - but was unable to. Cardinal Terence Cooke - the Archbishop of New York - whose cause for canonization is in process now - also saw the Holy Shroud - along with hundreds of other bishops. Indeed, over four million people saw the Holy Shroud - during that unprecedented exhibition. And, right after that exhibition concluded, on October 8, 1978 - the STURP scientists commenced their work.

The Holy Shroud Guild - continued its work of research and education - after these scientific examinations were completed. In Summit, New Jersey, there is a contemplative order of Dominican sisters. Here is their website:

<http://nunsopsummit.org>

The Dominican sisters obtained a "True Copy" of the Holy Shroud of Turin - in gratitude for assisting a sister community in Europe, after World War I. I have personally seen this True Copy, and have photographs of the same, on my blog.

The True Copy of the Holy Shroud of Turin was made in 1624, and pressed against the Holy Shroud, to such an extent that there is a blood-stain on the cloth, from the heart wound - the blood of which - may have come from the Shroud. In any case, the blood-stain - has never been tested.

The members of the Holy Shroud Guild, assisted by another great Shroud researcher, Paul Maloney - studied this True Copy - in the hopes of creating a STURP II - that would conduct STILL MORE tests and research on the Holy Shroud of Turin.

Indeed, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger approved of 25 new tests on the Holy Shroud - back in 1985 - but then the carbon-dating took place in 1988 - and a STURP II team - never materialized after that. Even after the carbon-14 dating disaster - the Holy Shroud Guild continued its work, although sadly, the priests involved with Shroud research - had to distance themselves from the scientists involved - because the cooperation that existed among the scientists back in 1978, broke down into outright hostility and acrimony - once they publicized their findings back in 1981 - to the point that the scientists began to sue one another!

By the end of the 1990's, all of the priests involved with the Holy Shroud Guild: Father Adam Otterbein, CSSR, Father Peter Rinaldi, SDB, Father Francis Filas, SJ, and Father Edward Wuenschel CSSR - had all died - and toward the end of his life, Father Otterbein mourned, "Where have all the priests gone."

Oh yes, there is a monastery of the Holy Face, in Clifton, New Jersey. I have been there several times, and pictures from there - appear on my blog. Here is the website, for the same:

<http://holyface.all-catholic.net>

Father Hilary Conti, O.S.B. - , a Sylvestrine Benedictine - was also a very active member of the Holy Shroud Guild: he, too, is now deceased.

It was a very sad situation, and the carbon-14 dating - nearly killed research on the Holy Shroud of Turin - altogether. But today, given the sad situation within our Roman Catholic Church - and our world in general today - all of this research MUST resurface!

There is no hiding the FACT that Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - was Crucified and Rose from the Dead!

All sorts of people may try to "obliterate" or "rewrite" history, as they do today. But for all of that, we cannot CHANGE HISTORY!

Rather, the time has come to REAWAKEN to our history that Jesus Christ, the Son of God - was Crucified and Rose from the dead!

I hope that all of this - may be a blessing to you all!

Peace in Christ,

Francis J. DeStefano