

## **POPE: I JOIN ALL OF YOU GATHERED BEFORE THE HOLY SHROUD**

Vatican City, 30 March 2013 (VIS) – From 5:15pm until 6:40 this afternoon, there will be an extraordinary exposition of the Holy Shroud in the Cathedral of Turin, Italy. The initiative is part of the Year of Faith that was proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI and will be broadcast by the Italian television channel, RAI1.

For the occasion, Pope Francis recorded a video message, the text of which we offer below.

“Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I join all of you gathered before the Holy Shroud, and I thank the Lord who, through modern technology, offers us this possibility.”

Even if it takes place in this way, our gaze is not a mere 'observing', but rather a veneration. It is a prayerful gaze. I would go further: It is a letting ourselves be looked upon. This Face has eyes that are closed. It is the face of one who is dead and yet, mysteriously, He is watching us and in silence He speaks to us. How is this possible? How is it that the faithful, like you, pause before this Icon of a man who has been scourged and crucified? It is because the Man of the Shroud invites us to contemplate Jesus of Nazareth. This image, impressed upon the cloth, speaks to our hearts and moves us to climb the hill of Calvary, to look upon the wood of the Cross, and to immerse ourselves in the eloquent silence of love.”

“Let us therefore allow ourselves to be reached by this gaze, which is directed not to our eyes but to our hearts. In silence, let us listen to what He has to say to us from beyond death itself. By means of the Holy Shroud, the unique and supreme Word of God comes to us: Love made man, incarnate in our history; the merciful Love of God who has taken upon himself all the evil of the world in order to free us from its power. This disfigured Face resembles all those faces of men and women marred by a life that does not respect their dignity, by war and the violence that afflict the weakest... And yet, the Face of the Shroud conveys a great peace. This tortured body expresses a sovereign majesty. It is as if it let a restrained but powerful energy within it shine through, as if to tell us: have faith; do not lose hope; the power of God's love, the power of the Risen One, conquers all.”

“So, looking upon the Man of the Shroud, I make Saint Francis of Assisi's prayer before the Crucifix my own: 'Most High and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart, and grant me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and understanding, Lord, so that I may carry out your holy and true command. Amen.'”

[http://www.visnews-en.blogspot.com/2013/03/pope-i-join-all-of-you-gathered-before\\_30.html](http://www.visnews-en.blogspot.com/2013/03/pope-i-join-all-of-you-gathered-before_30.html)