

A marvellous exhibition of the Shroud of Turin in Salamanca, Spain

By Jostein Andreassen and Oddvar Soevik

Are we who are living up in the high North countries, very provincial? Sometimes we can feel it in that way. Anyway, very important things can happen in the church south in Europe without our knowledge. For example, this:

On the Internet we found that there had been worked on for 15 years an exhibition of the Shroud of Turin that was going to be displayed in Salamanca, Spain. It opened on October 13. 2022, so in December my friend Oddvar Soevik and I took a plane from Norway to Madrid. There we went by a diesel-train up in the Sierra de Guadamarra mountains with peaks up to 2400 m. The line went up to 1165 m. On our way we passed a UNESCO world heritage monastery and art treasure El Escorial 500 years old and then UNESCO's fabulous town Avila, a thousand years old and high up in the mountains. This little town has Europe's best preserved stonewalls, finer than Rothenburg ob der Tauber in Germany and Lucca in Italy. The Spanish saint Theresa of Avila (1515-82) came from there.

After three hours we arrived in Salamanca, about 160 000 inhabitants, 865 m above sea level. This is the most famous university town in Spain, with a university founded in 1218! We were close to the border of Portugal, in the landscape Castilla y Leon.

In the Cathedral of Salamanca, one of the biggest churches in Europe, we arrived to the exhibition, called "The Mystery Man". We went through four rooms, in all 600 square meters, where copies of the Shroud of Turin were to be seen in different shapes, all kinds of equipment connected to it's history, pictures, Roman torture instruments, and so on, were exhibited.

The suffering of Jesus and his death were presented in a way we never had seen before. In one of the rooms, called "The Immersive Room", there was a multi media show presenting all kinds of pictures of Jesus from the Catacombs and churches through history, mosaics and so on. Impressive. All four walls, floor and roof were used.

At last we went into a complete neutral room. On the wall there was a replica of the Shroud of Turin, and there: On a bench a badly wounded body, "a hyperrealistic image" of the dead Jesus, like he probably must have been looking like just before his friends placed him in the Shroud. It is so when you take a picture of the imprint on the Shroud and place it in a computer, you can get a three dimensional figure.

Excellent artists and scientists from Spain have in 15 years worked on a model of the crucified man, stiff in death, whipped, nailed, speared and beaten. It was very realistic, incredibly bad to see, a life time experience! Very near and at just a few meter's distance, one could easily believe that this was a real dead body. We saw the marks from the Roman whip "flagrum" on the body, those on the back of course hidden, but the sight was terrible. The whip with sharp bullets in the ends tearing up the skin. Terrible to see and think what they did with our dear Jesus.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Salamanca, Bishop José Luis Retana, expressed his opinion after visiting the exhibition:

"I liked the work very much," he said. "The truth is that standing in front of what is an exact representation of what Jesus suffered and died leaves a strong impression."

Bishop Retana suggested that the body of the man in the Holy Shroud can represent "the concreteness of God's love that becomes flesh in Jesus Christ who died as an evildoer with a terrible sacrifice for our salvation. There is no greater love in the world."

"The mystery has become flesh, but it has become flesh to die for us, and then rise again," said Bishop Retana, "I believe that the exhibition can foster the faith of believers and arouse the faith of non-believers."

The exhibition in Salamanca will stay there until March 2023. Later it will be sent out in the world. Next stop is Lisbon, Portugal on "The World's Youth day" in August 2023, and later it will be sent to Rome in 2025 as a part of "Jubileum of Mercy".

We just told the Norwegian people in a Christian newspaper about the exhibition. We think we were the first Norwegians to see it and no one in Norway has heard about it up until now. The same story again as with the Sudarium of Oviedo and the coat in Argenteuil in Paris.

We hope it also will come to Norway! Meantime, we recommend you to go to Salamanca!

For more information, see: <https://themysteryman.com/en/the-mystery-man/>

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2022-10/spain-salamanca-the-mystery-man-shroud-turin-christ.html>



Jostein Andreassen in front of the Salamanca Cathedral

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