

## COMMEMORATIONS

May 4 marks a milestone in Shroud history; it is the day appointed by Pope Julius II for the Feast of the Holy Shroud. Those sindonologists who are of the Roman Catholic faith will celebrate by attending Mass.

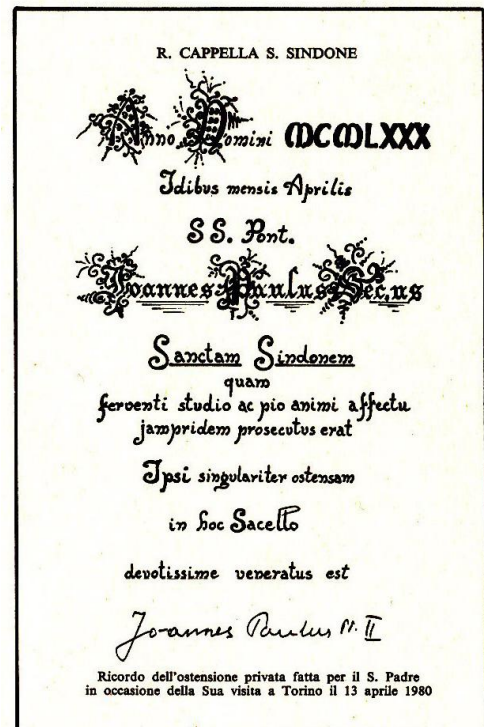
Originally intended only for the Holy Chapel of Chambéry, where the Shroud was kept, this feast was instituted by Pope Julius II in a Bull of 21 April 1506 and appropriately assigned to the day following the Feast of the Finding of the True Cross. On 17 October 1514, Leo X extended the holy day to all of French Savoy. This was confirmed by his successor, Clement VII who, after the Holy Chapel was burned in 1532, sent envoys to Chambéry to make an official recognition of the damaged relic. In 1578, the Duke of Savoy took the Shroud to Turin, his new capital, and on 12 April 1582 Gregory XIII extended the Feast of the Holy Shroud to include all of the Duchy "on this side and that side of the Alps".

While the Feast of May 4 has not been extended to the whole Catholic world, there is a movement to petition the Holy See for this purpose.

Another date in May is the 28th, on which, in 1898, Secondo Pia made the first photographs of the Shroud, revealing the negative character of the imprints. The revelation astounded the world, catching the serious attention, still unabated, of science.

Just two days later, on 30 May 1898, in faraway Erie, Pennsylvania, a child was born who would become an outstanding sindonologist: Edward Wuenschel, C.S.S.R. (d. 1964), whose exhaustive research resulted in a large collection of ancient texts relative to the Shroud.

One of the pilgrims at the Exposition of 1898 was Mons. Achille Ratti, a longtime friend and mountain-climbing companion of Paul Vignon. Mons. Ratti, a scholar and scientist, became Pius XI; a gigantic spirit not only as Pope but also as a promoter of Shroud studies and devotion. It was he who requested that the Shroud be



placed on public exposition at the 1933 jubilee anniversary of the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

Another pilgrim who became Pope was Karoli Card. Woytyla. During the great Exposition of 1978, the Archbishop of Krakow mingled with other millions from every nation of the earth, adding his prayers to theirs. That same evening he celebrated Mass in the Presence of the Shroud.

What were his thoughts as he contemplated that splendid expanse of suffering and victory? Did he remember the day back in 1947, when as a young priest, recently ordained, he had climbed the black marble stairway to the Holy Chapel and prayed in solitary silence before the altar in which the mysterious relic was locked and hidden from view?

Perhaps that memory came to mind; but on that Friday, first day of September 1978<sup>1</sup>, he could not have guessed that six weeks later he would change his purple vestments for the papal white; for only six days before (Saturday, 26 August 1978) a new Pope calling himself John Paul I had waved to the waiting crowds in St. Peter's Square and his bashful smile answered their shouts of *Viva il Papa!*

In fact, by an extraordinary coincidence, the Patriarch of Venice, Albino Card. Luciani, was elected Pope in the same hour that the Archbishop of Turin was offering a Mass inaugurating the opening of the Exposition of the Holy Shroud. After a reign of thirty-three days, John Paul I died on 28 September, ten days before the Exposition closed (Oct. 8).

As a cardinal, Karoli Woytyla was only one of hundreds of ecclesiastics who stood in line to view the Shroud. A more profound significance lies in the fact that he returned to Turin as the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, and there, on 13 April 1980, privately venerated the sacred Image and kissed the hem of the Cloth<sup>2</sup>.

Going back in history to a more troubled year, another Pope who kissed the Shroud was the unfortunate Pius VII. Traveling to France by command of Napoleon—who, marching to the tune of political expediency, evidently chafed at the thought of being overshadowed by Charlemagne; Pius VII, then, proceeding to Paris for the grand coronation, stopped in Turin where, on 13 November 1804, he knelt before the evidence of Another's humiliation. Later on, having displeased the Emperor, Pius VII was arrested (1809) and in 1812 the prisoner was removed to Fontainebleau. After the tyrant's fall, the Pope returned to Rome, arriving 24 May 1814. A year later he was, again in Turin where, after a private viewing of the Shroud, he himself, assisted by other prelates, joyfully held the Banner of Triumph at the palace balcony for all the people to see. The date was 21 May 1815.

## NOTES:

1. The date of 21 Sept., sometimes given, is erroneous.
2. In his allocution on that occasion, John Paul II said: "Quando, al inizio di settembre 1978, veni a Torino come pellegrino, ansioso di venerare la Sacra Sindone, insigne reliquia legata al mistero di nostre redenzione, non potevo certamente prevedere, al indomani dell'elezione del mio amato predecessore, Giovanni Paolo I, che io avrei ritornato, a meno di due anni di distanza, con altre responsabilità e in altre cornice." (When, at the beginning of September, 1978, I came to Turin as a pilgrim, eager to venerate the Holy Shroud—extraordinary relic related to the mystery of our Redemption—I certainly could not foresee that, so soon after the election of my beloved predecessor, John Paul I, I would return, in less than two years, with other responsibilities and in other circumstances.)

## CHIEF REFERENCES:

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