

## NEWS FROM OVERSEAS

### RETIREMENT OF CARDINAL BALLESTRERO

As expected because of the retirement rules relating to Roman Catholic cardinals and bishops, Cardinal Anastasio Ballestrero, who authorised both the 1978 Shroud testing and the recent carbon dating, will retire this Easter as archbishop of Turin. His successor, with effect from Palm Sunday, will be Giovanni Saldarini, a bishop who has been working with Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan.

Although hitherto a popular, man-of-the-people cardinal, Ballestrero received fierce criticism throughout Italy in the wake of his apparent simplistic acceptance of the results of the Shroud carbon dating. The Vatican appears to have received the news with much greater caution, the official *Osservatore Romano*, often a vehicle for the Pope's personal opinions, having both maintained a studious silence over the issue of the Shroud's authenticity and declined to defend Ballestrero from his attackers. Ballestrero, who even in his sermons during the 1978 Shroud expositions notably forebore from personally declaring the Shroud genuine, has described himself as "embittered and dismayed" by the furore. Throughout he has maintained that the faith of the Church has never rested on the Shroud, and that "the Church has nothing to fear from the truth".

### NEW ITALIAN TESTS PROPOSED

At the end of last year the Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia presented to Cardinal Ballestrero the preliminary draft for new research on the Shroud, in the wake of the carbon dating. The proposals include:

- (1) A study by Prof. Gino Zaninotto of the University of Rome and Dr. Gian Maria Zuccone of Turin to ascertain, with the aid of documents published on the Shroud, what kind of contaminations have been recorded already in historical texts. In particular the study will focus on the historical truth of the story that the Shroud was "boiled in oil".
- (2) An analysis by Prof. Baima Bollone of the amount of oily substances, black smoke, and substances contained in human sweat and human saliva that are present on the Shroud.
- (3) An experimental test by Prof. Alberto Brandone of the University of Pavia to determine the possible influence of "boiling in oil" on radiocarbon content. Prof. Brandone will take an Egyptian cloth previously dated by the carbon 14 method, boil it, then repeat the dating test. Any variation should provide a pointer to reinterpretation of the recent Shroud carbon dating.
- (4) Sophisticated new microscopic tests to locate two proteins in the Shroud linen (fibronectine and osteonectine) in order to show whether the wounds traced on the image were inflicted on a living man. Apparently only a living body, not a dead one, can synthesize these proteins.
- (5) A new analysis of the image via ion laser mass spectrometry.

(6) An independent attempt to date the Shroud linen with a new technique, specifically for cloth specimens, developed by Prof. Diana of the National Restoration Laboratory, Rome. The technique, which is said not to have the contamination problems of carbon dating, is based on the rate of decomposition of a plant's protoplasmic fibres, in the case of the Shroud, those of the flax of its linen. Professor Diana needs a new, postage-size sample of the Shroud for this purpose.

Some of the Italian ideas sound admirable, but if they are accepted (and almost certainly the decisions will need to be made by Cardinal Ballestrero's successor), it will be important that the methodology has international acceptance. Professor Diana's method, for instance, will need a lot further development to win the sort of recognition accorded to carbon dating.

#### AUSTRALIA - REX MORGAN'S *SHROUD NEWS* CELEBRATES ITS 50th ISSUE...

Unfazed by the carbon dating result, this *Newsletter's* Australian sister *Shroud News* published its 50th edition last December, with a bumper issue of 68 pages. This was followed by the 51st issue just received at the time of going to press. Rex Morgan has been tireless in promoting interest in the Shroud not only in Australia, but throughout the world, and the 50th. issue is particularly vigorous in the sheer number of contributions rejecting the carbon dating findings. Warmest congratulations from us Poms.