

THE ST. LOUIS SYMPOSIUM - ANOTHER POORLY ATTENDED SHROUD CONFERENCE

The second U.S. Symposium on the Shroud this year was held at St. Louis, Missouri the weekend of 22/23 June. Despite prior newspaper and radio publicity, the overall attendance was little more than 60, even less than its controversial New York predecessor. Indeed, few who attended were 'locals', most being already dedicated sindonologists who had travelled from some 14 states of the U.S.A., including Alaska; also Australia, France, Spain, and the Philippines.

The Symposium's moderator was Fr. Aram Berard from the Amarillo (Texas) Center for the Study of the Shroud. Previously unknown to many interested in the Shroud, Fr. Berard proved a vigorous and highly-regarded symposium chairman, ably backed up by Brother Joseph Marino of the local St. Louis Abbey, upon whose shoulders had fallen the main task of organisation. Dr. John Jackson, describing himself as a 'Christian who happens to be a scientist', presented the first paper, on science and religion. Others who gave papers included Dr. Kenneth Stevenson, a former spokesman for STURP; Dr. Alan Whanger of Duke University, who again demonstrated his polarized overlay technique; the Revd Kim Dreisbach, who gave two papers: 'Mark 14:51-52: Historical 'Fact' or Sindonological 'Spy-clue' and 'Did St. Peter see more than an empty shroud?'; Dr. David Mayschak from Alaska, who spoke on Thomistic theology and the enigma that 'fleshes out the manifestation of clarity, agility and subtlety' in the Shroud; the controversial French priest Brother Bruno Bonnet-Eymard of the Contre-Réforme Catholique, who spoke on the D'Arcis memorandum of 1389; mural artist Isabel Piczek, who contributed an innovative paper on 'resurrection physics', and Paul Maloney of Quakertown, Pennsylvania, who spoke as general projects director of ASSIST, the Association of Scientists and Scholars International for the Shroud of Turin.

At the end of the Symposium Fr. Berard called a meeting in which was discussed the idea of a 'St. Louis Task Force', to be headed by Fr. Berard, for furthering a coordinated approach to future Shroud studies. Those who attended this meeting are to convene again in Boston on 29 September. Warm wishes have been sent on behalf of the BSTS for this meeting's success.