

May 4, 2020. Liturgical Memory of the Holy Shroud

By [Editorial Staff](#)
May 3 2020

Liturgical Memory of the Holy Shroud - May 4



Holy Shroud

The Shroud of Turin, also known as the Holy Shroud or Holy Shroud, is a linen sheet kept in the Cathedral of Turin. On which is visible the image of a man carrying signs interpreted as due to mistreatment and torture compatible with those described in the passion of Jesus.

The Archdiocese of Turin celebrates the liturgical memory of the Holy Shroud every year on May 4th.

The Shroud is a linen sheet, herringbone fabric, measuring approximately 4.42 x 1.13 m. containing the double image juxtaposed for the head of the corpse of a man who died following a series of tortures culminating in the crucifixion. The image is surrounded by two black striated lines and a series of gaps: these are the damages caused by the fire that occurred in Chambéry in 1532.

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According to tradition it is the sheet mentioned in the Gospels which served to wrap the body of Jesus in the sepulcher. This tradition has found numerous proofs from scientific investigations on the sheet and the probability that the Shroud is authentic is very high. Certainly the Shroud, for the characteristics of its imprint, represents a direct and immediate reference that helps to understand and meditate on the dramatic reality of the Passion of Jesus. For this reason, **Pope St. John Paul II called it "mirror of the Gospel".**

THE SHROUD

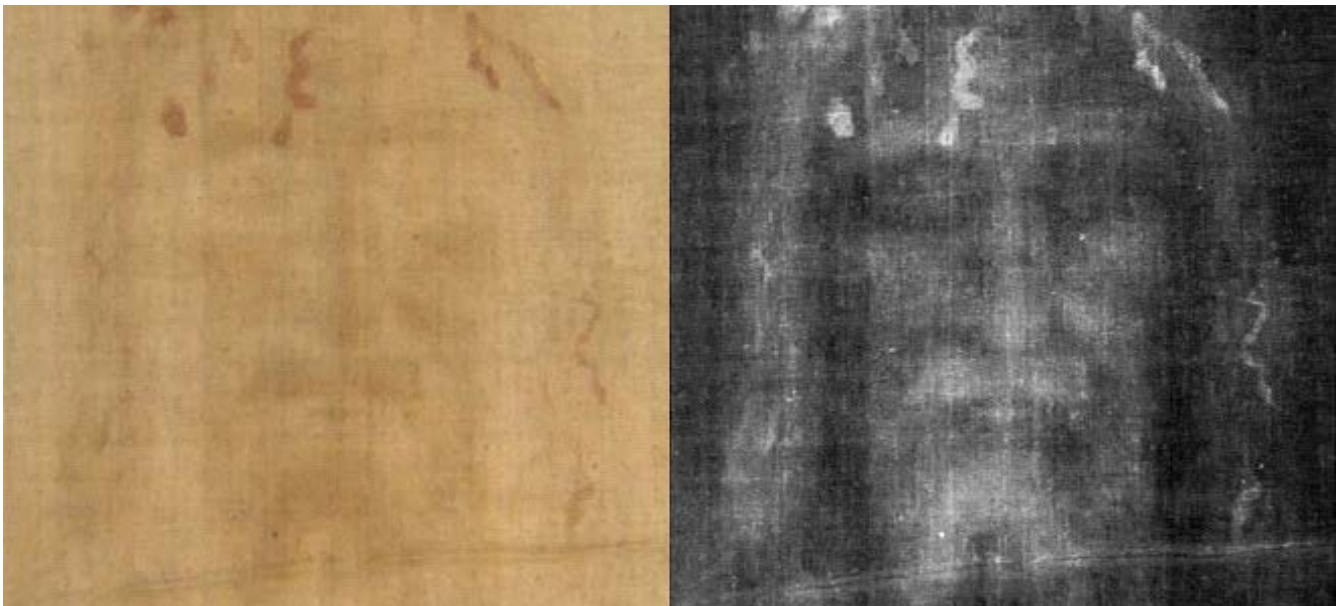
Often when I speak to friends and acquaintances of the Shroud they ask me this question. I have consulted many books, still now on my work desk are piled high mountains of files with the results of scientific research, volumes, photographs, clippings of newspaper articles, but ... do you know how I got my answer? I put all these things aside and went in front of the towel, I let him, the man of the Shroud, look at me.

In this article I will try to accompany you with me, before Him, before the Face of the Man of the Shroud, before the image of that wounded and battered body that lies stretched out, silent and silent, but that ... speaks, indeed screams to our heart. Do you want to come with me to see, to hear what the Man of the Shroud tells us?

Today I will tell you about the **Shroud**, but I would like to do it differently than we are used to reading in newspapers or watching on TV. I will not repeat the usual debate on the **authenticity of the cloth**. I will not go back to the controversy regarding the discussed **carbon 14** dating, nor will I tell you about the countless more recent **chemical-physical analyzes** that would seem to position the Cloth in the **right time** (1st century AD) and in the **right place** (Middle East). All topics that I have already covered in my previous article.

READ: [THE PRAYER IN FRONT OF THE HOLY SHROUD. RECITE IT NOW](#)

Today I would like to take you to see the Shroud with the eyes of the heart, forgetting for a moment all the scientific evidence. We will find that, in the end, it is much easier to find the answers to our questions by letting the Man of the Shroud look at us, instead of us looking at Him.

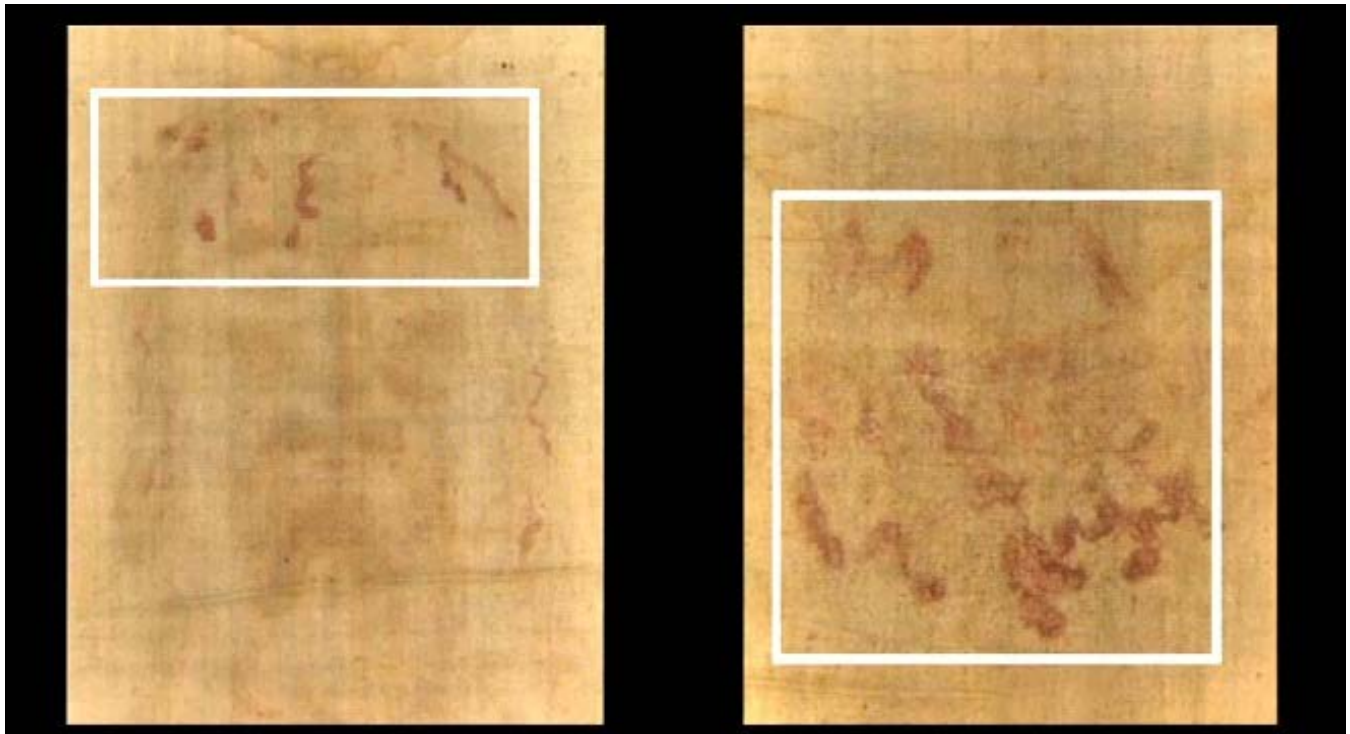


Holy Shroud - Face

I assure you that being in front of the canvas in a cozy atmosphere like that of the Turin Cathedral causes a unique, indescribable emotion, very different from what you can perceive by looking at a photograph, but ... in the absence of anything else ... we start looking here . But let's do it in silence, dwelling at least a few moments on each detail: **what (or rather who) do we see in this image?**

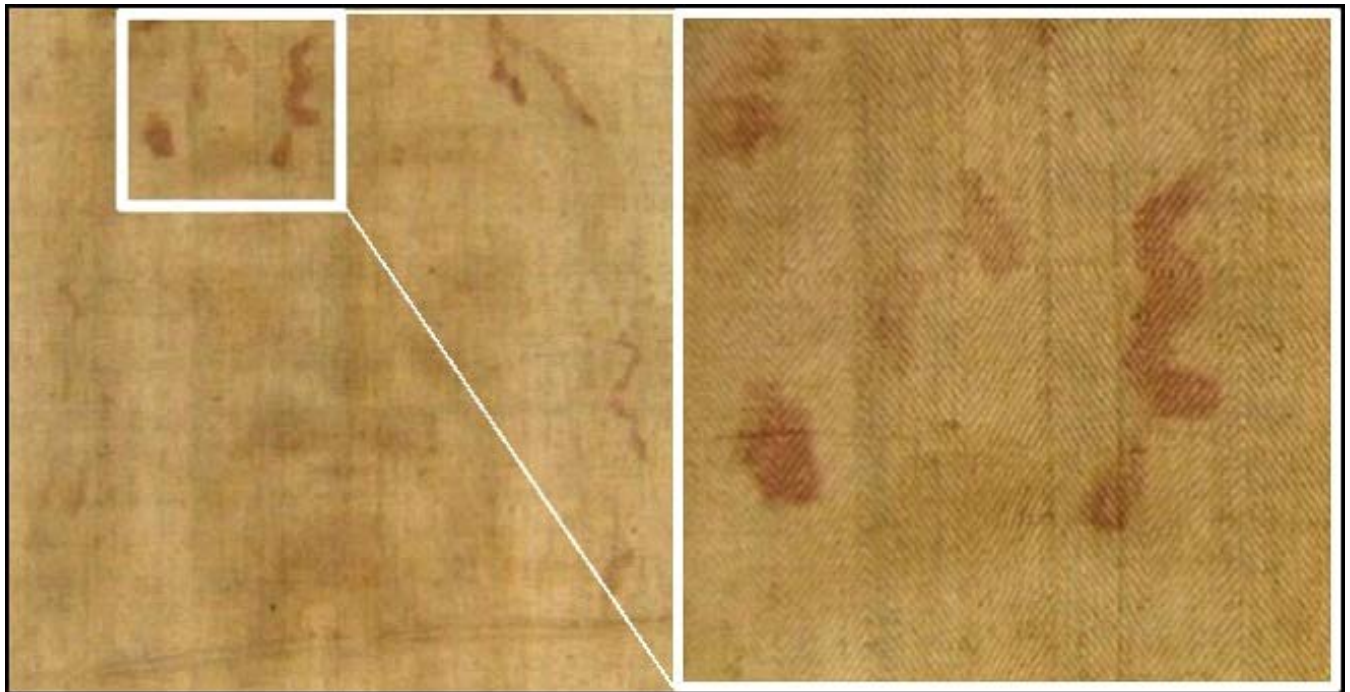
The face

The Face of the Man of the Shroud presents numerous bruises: the right part of the Face is more swollen than the left, and there are traces of hematomas. There are also signs of lacerated-bruised wounds. The nasal septum is deflected due to a fracture. The Man of the Shroud appears to have been wildly beaten in the hours preceding his death.



Holy Shroud

On the forehead, on the nape and along the hair one can see numerous streaks of blood, with a sinuous pattern, which flow from small diameter tip wounds. They are arranged radially around the head and seem to be caused by the imposition of a helmet of sharp spines on the head itself. The characteristics of the blood flow that flows from the wounds allow to distinguish between lesions of arterial vessels and venous vessels.



Holy Shroud

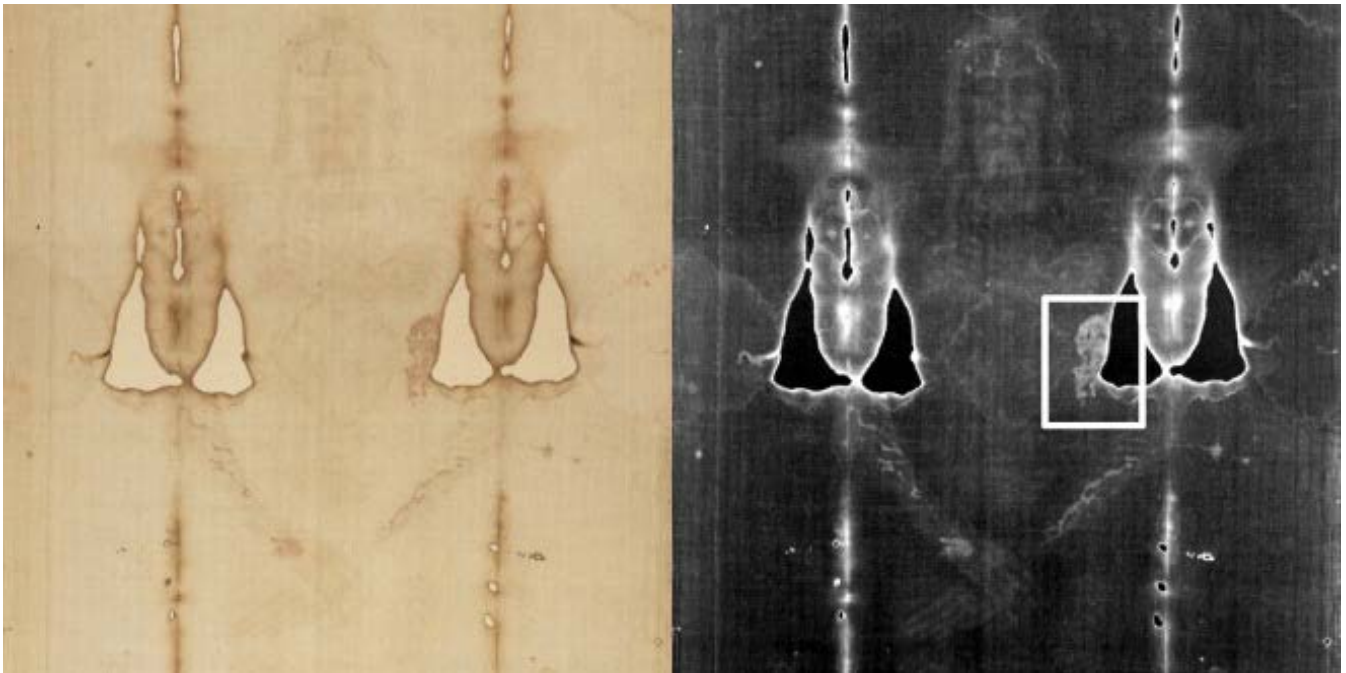
Particularly singular is the pouring gushed from a wound to the frontal artery, which assumes the characteristic shape of an inverted 3, since it follows the trend of the wrinkles of the forehead itself.

(Jn 19: 1-5)

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on his head and put a purple cloak on him. Then they came to him and said, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Behold, I will bring him out to you, for you to know that I find no fault in him." Then Jesus went out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

The wound on the side

On the right side of the chest there is a large patch of blood that emerges from an oval-shaped wound, caused by a pointed and sharp object, which hit between the fifth and sixth ribs and which has penetrated deeply, the characteristics of this wound they are important in that they show that it was inflicted after the subject's death. Even the blood that flows from it is surrounded by a serous halo, as is the case with the blood coming out of a corpse in which the serous part has already separated from the corpuscular part.



Holy Shroud - Bust

(Jn 19: 31-37)

It was the day of Parasceve and the Jews, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath - it was in fact a solemn day on that Sabbath - they asked Pilate that their legs were broken and taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of one and the other who had been crucified with him. However, when they came to Jesus, seeing that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear hit his side, and immediately blood and water came out.

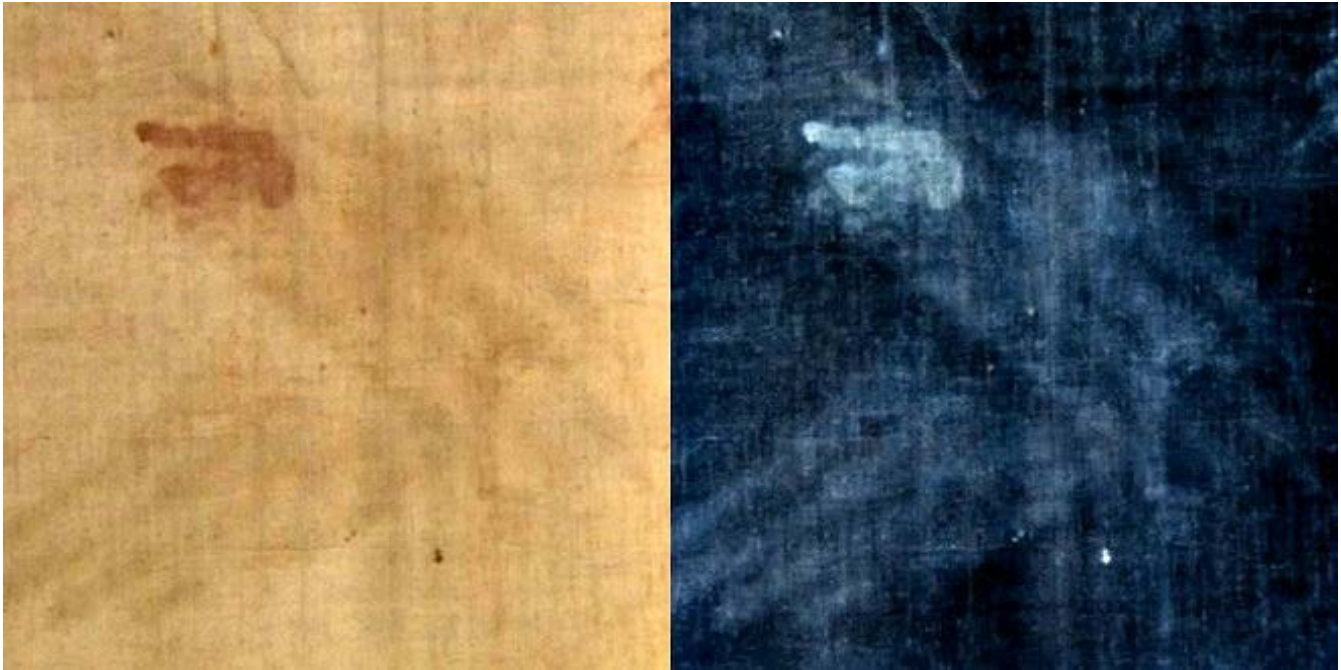
Whoever has seen bears witness to it and his testimony is true; he knows he is telling the truth, so that you too may believe. This indeed happened because the Scripture was completed: No bones will be broken. And another passage of the Scripture still says: They will turn their gaze to the one they have pierced.

Arms, hands and wrists

The arms are stretched out, while the hands are crossed at the height of the pubis. We can see copious flows of blood that seem to start from the wrists to go up to the height of the elbow. These are blood streams that formed when the body hung on the cross and the wrists were higher than the elbows.

On the left wrist is clearly visible a characteristic patch of blood formed by two divergent streaks that seem to draw a lying V. The casting diverges because the Man of the Shroud has assumed two different positions on the cross: the slumped one and the raised one. The blood flows from an oval-shaped wound, caused by a pointed instrument: such as a nail. Particular is the position of the wound, which does not appear in the palm of the hand, as it is represented in the iconographic tradition of the crucifixion, but in the wrist.

The hands of the man of the Shroud do not show the thumb, because this is flexed inside the palm. This is most likely due to the fact that the nail has damaged the median nerve and this may have resulted in complete opposition of the thumb. We also note that the thumb is naturally in a backward position with respect to the other fingers and for this reason it may not have come into contact with the sheet.



Holy Shroud - Hands

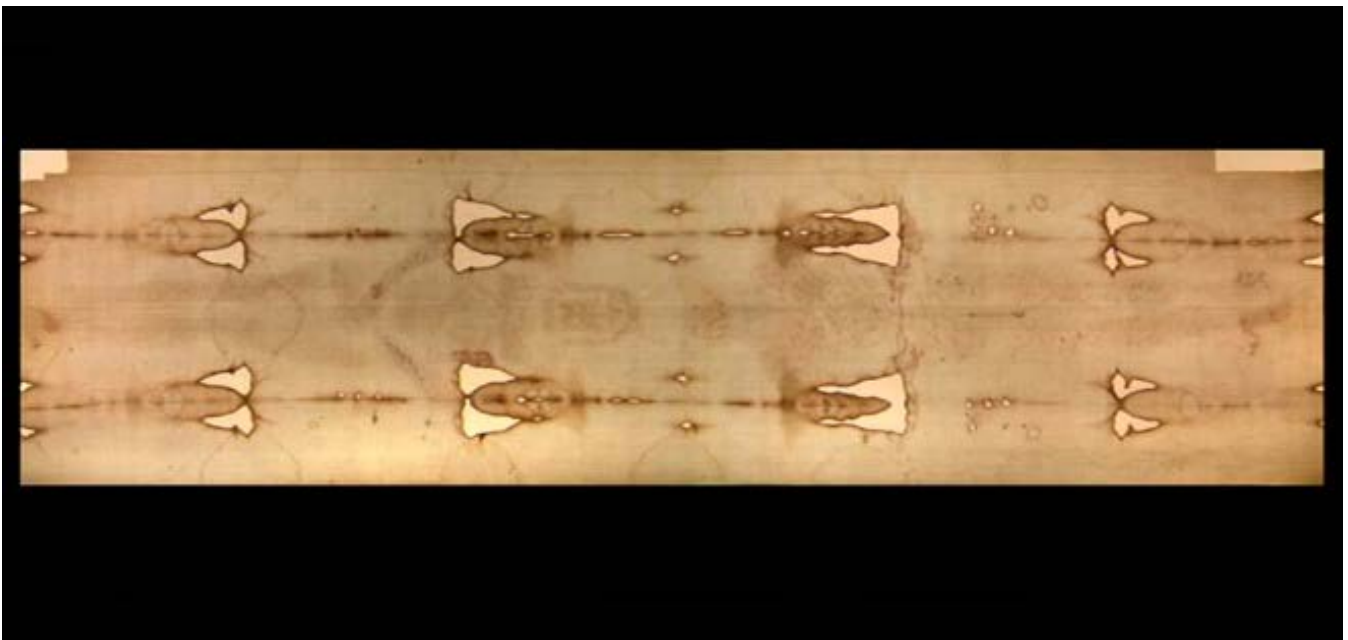
The back

The skin of the chest of the back has over a hundred bruised bruises, consisting of rounded and matched figures, about 2 centimeters long, visible also on the lower limbs. They look like injuries caused by the scourge, a Roman instrument of torture, consisting of a wooden handle from which ropes branch off at the end of which small dumbbell-shaped weights are fixed.



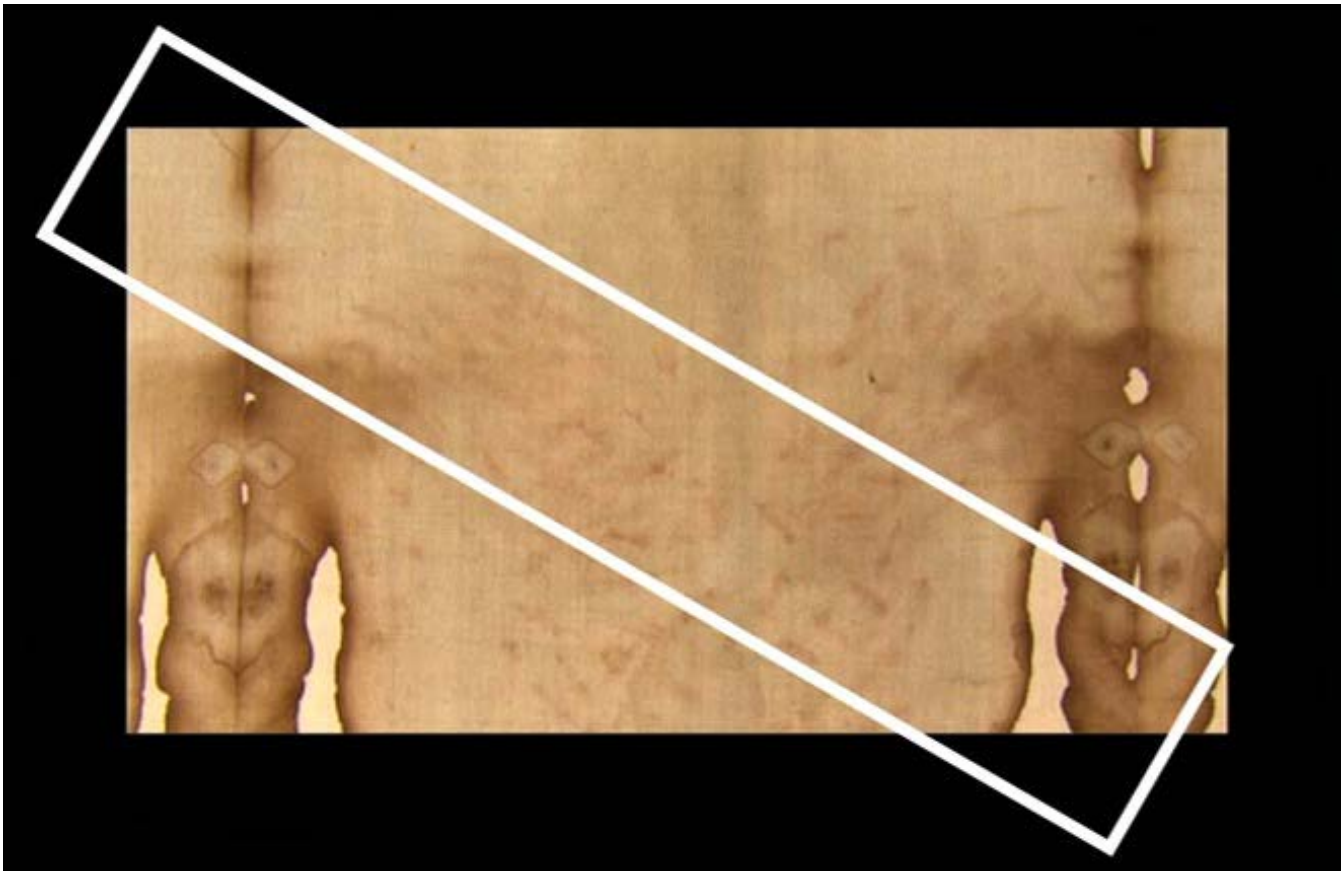
Scourge

It is not easy to trace the number of blows inflicted because we do not know the number of strings of the scourge. What is certain is that the torture was inflicted on a curved back and on the naked body.



Holy Shroud

At the height of the left scapular and right suprascapular area, there are quadrangular bruises referring to the signs left by a heavy and rough object that can be identified with the patibulum, the horizontal axis of the cross that sometimes the condemned man carried on itself to the place of execution.



Holy Shroud

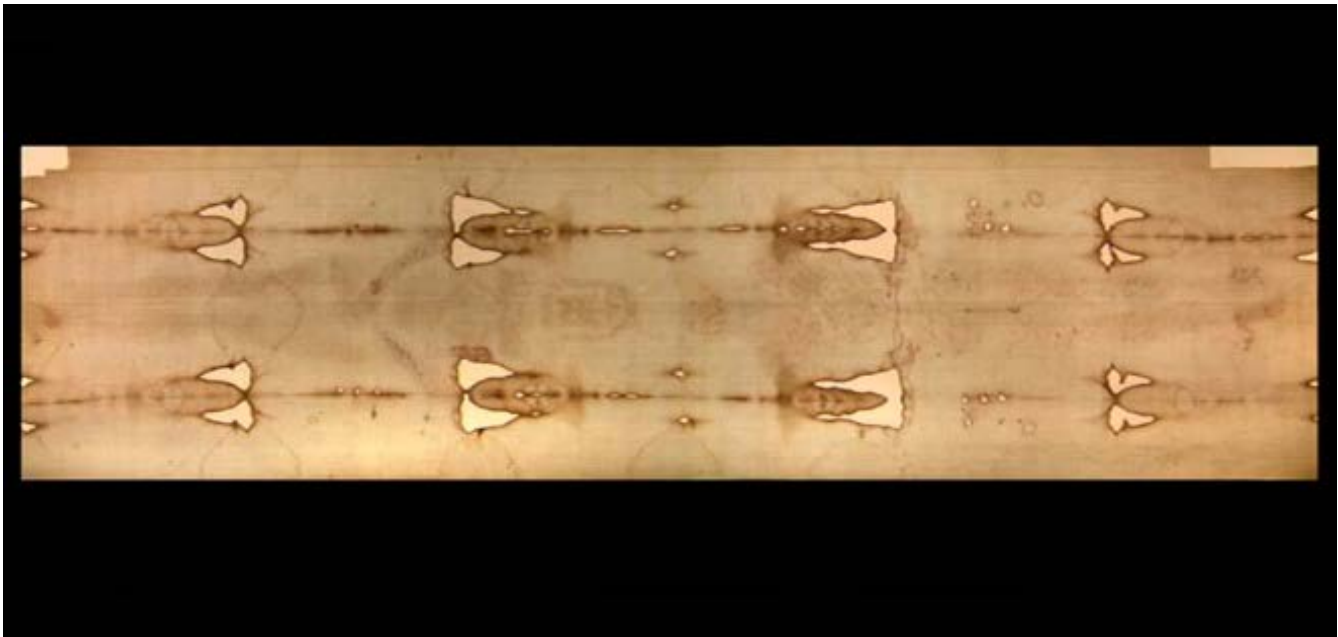
(Jn 19: 16-20)

They took Jesus and he, carrying the cross, went to the place called the Skull, in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him and with him two others, one on one side and one on the other, and Jesus in the middle. Pilate also composed the inscription and had it placed on the cross; it was written: "Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews". Many Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; it was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek.

At the height of the kidneys, a transversal blood flow is observed that crosses the whole back, it is the blood gushed from the wound to the side that flowed here when the body, once laid down by the cross, was placed in a horizontal position.

The lower limbs

The lower limbs of the Man of the Shroud are clearly identifiable both in the front and in the rear figure. Both knees show bruises, most likely due to falls, since in these areas, as on the soles of the feet, traces of mold have been identified. It should also be noted that the left knee was fixed by the cadaveric stiffness in a more flexed position than the right, therefore the left limb is shorter in the image. The sole of the right foot is clearly impressed, while only the rear part of the left foot is visible, near the heel, which suggests that the crucifixion occurred using only one nail and superimposing the left foot on the right one. On the plant of the latter you can see the exit hole of the nail from which streams of blood that descend towards the fingers depart.

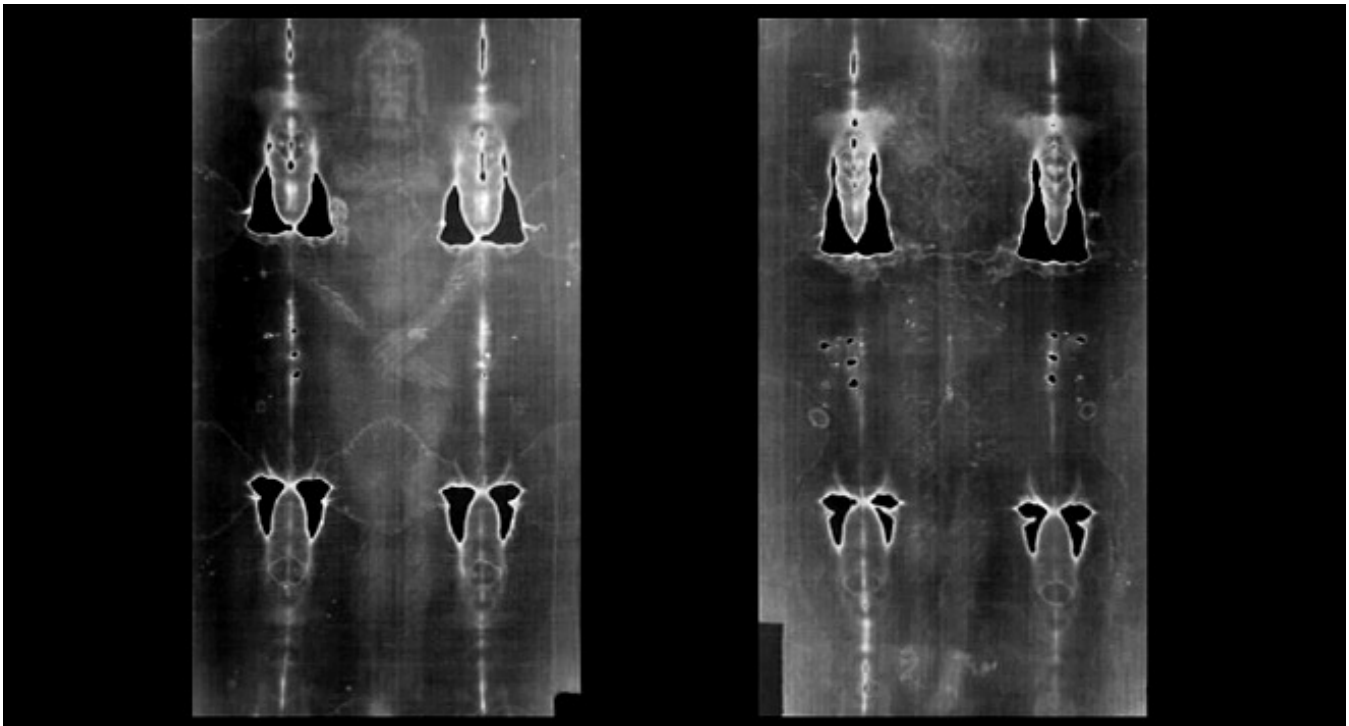


Holy Shroud

From the book of the Prophet Isaiah (53, 4-6)

*Yet he took on our sufferings,
took on our pains
and we judged him chastened,
beaten by God and humiliated.
He was pierced for our crimes,
crushed for our iniquities.
The punishment that gives us salvation has fallen on him;
for his wounds we have been healed.
We were all lost like a flock,
each of us followed his own path;
the Lord made the iniquity of us all fall upon him*

The body prints that are seen on the Shroud are dark in correspondence with raised areas, while they are clear in the others, the image therefore presents itself with a distribution of brightness opposite to that which we perceive in reality. The imprint therefore behaves like a photographic negative.



Holy Shroud - Negative

By transforming the image of the Shroud into its photographic negative the chiaroscuro are inverted and the true aspect of the Man of the Shroud appears, as we could observe him if he were in front of us.

(Mk 15, 42-46)

By now evening had arrived, since it was the Parascève, that is, on the eve of the Sabbath, Giuseppe d'Arimatèa, an authoritative member of the Sanhedrin, who also awaited the kingdom of God, bravely went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that he was already dead and, called the centurion, questioned him if he had long since died. Informed by the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then, having bought a sheet, he lowered it down from the cross and, wrapped it in the sheet, placed it in a sepulcher dug in the rock. Then he rolled a boulder against the entrance to the tomb.

Well. Now that we have before us the image of the Man of the Shroud, let us pause for a few moments to contemplate it. We try to do it, as I wrote at the beginning, with the eyes of the heart.

We are looking at a man who has been scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified and injured on his right side after being forced to carry the wood on which he was nailed and tied. The man we are looking at fell one or more times along the way.

This Man suffered the pains of the Passion of Jesus.

But, is it really Jesus? And above all how important is this question? For now, science has not given us the certainty that it is Jesus, but science has not yet been able to explain how the image was formed on the sheet. **What is certain is that the wounds and traces of blood on the Shroud coincide impressively with the sufferings of Jesus narrated in the Gospels.**

St. John Paul II, during his visit to Turin on May 24, 1998, defined the Shroud as "**Mirror of the Gospel**".

Benedict XVI, on May 2, 2010 before the Shroud declared: "**It can be said that the Shroud is the Icon of this mystery, the Icon of Holy Saturday**".

By Alessandro Ginotta for PAPABOYS 3.0