

SHROUD TESTING - THE AWAITED DEVELOPMENTS

1984 began with high hopes of a new testing of the Shroud later this year. Proposals for a British involvement in this work were prepared and circulated to other interested groups, in anticipation of an Easter publication both in the international Shroud journal *Shroud Spectrum* and in this *Newsletter*.

In the event, the two other groups experienced difficulties assembling their proposals in time, resulting in a general agreement that all publication would be deferred until June. This deadline has, however, again passed without STURP being fully ready. While it had been hoped that this issue of the *Newsletter* could have contained the full text of the British proposals, accompanied by summaries of the proposals of the other groups, in deference to them it has been decided that we should again postpone until everyone is ready. We hope, therefore, that members will understand that this situation has been the one predominantly responsible for the delays in getting this *Newsletter* to you. In recent months, a new spirit of cooperation and information-sharing has developed between ourselves in Britain and the two American groups. For us to publish jointly with them is a way of demonstrating that cooperation, whereas to have published unilaterally could only have 'put us out on a limb'.

We would also like to apologise to members for delays in letter-answering during the past few months; several members of the Committee have been travelling abroad in the course of their full-time employment, and hence mail has been piling up. One-month's worth of correspondence was unfortunately forwarded on to the Gen. Sec. during her absence in Mexico on a working assignment, never caught up with her, and is only now filtering back!

COMMENT FROM FR. OTTERBEIN

Perhaps the best overview of the state of affairs concerning Shroud testing is one expressed in a letter of June 24 this year from Fr. Adam Otterbein, C.S.S.R., President of the US Holy Shroud Guild:

"It is difficult to appraise the present situation. Certainly, many people are interested and scholars and experts in many fields have suggestions and proposals, but I am convinced that there must be more exchange of information and discussion among the experts before a unified proposal is presented to the authorities. Cardinal Ballestrero told us several years ago that we must "build bridges between various groups". A number of proposals from a number of groups will be self-defeating. The authorities are willing to consider proposals which are accepted and agreed upon by the various experts and groups in the various countries, but such a general approval by all these groups is absolutely necessary before ecclesiastical approval will be given. Hopefully, we can work in this direction by personal contact, meetings, perhaps an international symposium...."

The idea of an international symposium preceding any new testing is one being widely discussed at the present time. Ideas and suggestions from members on this subject will be warmly welcomed. (Atlanta, Georgia, and Cambridge, UK, have both been suggested as possible venues

- the latter probably being suitable as a European `base' for a meeting if new testing takes place in Turin).