

News from Italy

As always, following are some excerpts from the electronic newsletter sent out from Turin and redistributed by AM*STAR.

The Holy Shroud Museum Updates

Over the last few months significant work of implementation and re-mounting has been carried out at the Holy Shroud Museum. As we have said many times, the Brotherhood of the Holy Shroud, who own and run the Museum, keeps a lot of material that cannot be permanently shown for lack of space. Besides this, new material is continually arriving. It has therefore been decided to increase the rotation of the pieces in the showcases, and also to use space more rationally, without losing the characteristic essentiality of the museum. The reorganisation of some showcases has allowed us to show many seventeenth and eighteenth-century prints representing the Holy Shroud, some of which have recently been restored, and some paintings. The installation of new exhibition frames has led to our showing the beautiful painting by Antonio Milocco - a preliminary sketch with some changes to the altar-piece of the Holy Shroud Church - and to enhance a series of sculptural works representing the face of Christ taken from the Holy Shroud.

Besides, many pieces linked to the devotion to the Shroud are now on show. It is now possible to see the two monumental radial processional with the image of the Shroud, and the big cross bearing the Holy Shroud painted at the intersection of the arms (16th century, recently restored), together with other carved and embossed objects dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Thanks to the invaluable help of the Associazione Amici del Museo della Sindone (Friends of the Holy Shroud Museum Association), presided over with love and care by Graziella Moranti, three important pieces of the Face

of Jesus have been added to the Museum. There are two images of the Veronica - a painting on leather dating to the 16th century and an unusual portrayal on canvas glued on cardboard from the 19th century - and an interesting reproduction of the face of Edessa from the 18th century. All these works of art can now be seen and enjoyed.

In the meantime, the restoration of the two rooms on the ground floor has been finished and as soon as the necessary funding is available, it will be used to extend the exhibition area of the Museum.

The five-language audio-guide service, containing the explanation of the Museum in its new configuration, will be redesigned. The text of the audio-guide, lasting about two hours for each language will permit an approach at various levels - from a brief but essential visit to a detailed examination of the single pieces visible in every showcase.

We hope in this way to please more and more the large number of visitors to the Museum - this year we are going to top 10,000 and the number of visitors increases continuously - leading to a better approach and knowledge of the Holy Shroud. This is the main and fundamental mission for which the museum was built.

All this work would be useless without the invaluable and continuous commitment and devotion of the volunteers of the museum, to whom all who have the Holy Shroud at heart owe the deepest gratitude.

A Cardinal from Vietnam

On the 21st of February His Eminence the most reverend G.B. Hujnh Man, Cardinal Archbishop of Ho Chi Min-Saigon, arrived on a pilgrimage to the Holy Shroud. He was in Italy to pay a visit to the Pope, besides some Vietnamese people residing in Italy. He also wanted to revere the Holy Shroud. His highly reserved figure, without the slightest sign of sophistication, represented a church much more tormented than ours. He had behind him years of qualifications in his studies in America and years of difficult ministry in his own beloved country. He came face to face with a reality very different from his own, but he found comfort by exchanging experiences of faith and apostolic activities. The visit to the Holy Shroud was completed by a fraternal audience with our Cardinal, Pontifical Custodian, and a pilgrimage to other holy sites of our city. We left him with the wish for a fruitful apostolate among his believers. The Cardinal left also a message to us: "In this year devoted to the Eucharist, it is beautiful to contemplate the face of the Holy Shroud which lets us see how much God loved us in His Son Jesus Crucified".