

## **News from Italy**

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

### **The new covering of the Holy Shroud's case**

The decisions taken by the Commission for the Conservation of the Holy Shroud to keep the Shroud laid out in a flat position for the future is well known and has been described in many texts as well as in these pages. This decision has involved complex technical and logistical problems which after years of research have led to the production of a high-tech display and conservation case, so that the Shroud may be safely preserved in all respects.

The result has been very satisfactory from this point of view, but it posed other problems especially of an aesthetic and pastoral nature. The great big climate box, over five meters long with a reinforced outside cover, was neither aesthetically pleasing nor did it clearly explain its content. It was therefore necessary to think of a new look that could satisfy these requirements.

The study and design task was lengthy and difficult. In the meantime, the reactions of pilgrims when they approached the area and saw the simple temporary damask cover were also monitored. The test period has been fruitful, because step by step we have introduced the integrations and the necessary adjustments. The small sized copy of the Holy Shroud, which hung above the case, has been replaced by an enlargement of the face and all the space opposite the chapel where it is kept has been transformed into a place of prayer and meditation, without the disturbance of queries and explanations, as befits an object whose prime significance is pastoral. The copy of the Shroud has been moved to the entrance of the Cathedral nave and enriched by the negative image of it, so as to permit pilgrims to have an initial contact with the Shroud

and, should they so wish, to deepen their knowledge by visiting the Museum in via San Domenico 28. The presence of the Holy Shroud in the case is indicated on a panel written in various languages. However, further changes were needed in order to satisfy the described requirements. Our Cardinal Archbishop, open-minded and helpful as usual, gave us his invaluable suggestions and advice, which led us to find the necessary solutions for the new setting:

to make the big case aesthetically pleasant;

to signal address its contents and its message in an attractive but discreet way;

to fit this in with the setting of the new chapel projected by Mr Momo, the Architect;

to ensure the maximum degree of manoeuvrability in case of emergency;

to satisfy security requirements.

The idea has been to once again use a light, fire-resistant and easily removable fabric, whose pale golden colour indicates the precious and holy nature of its content like the great reliquaries of Church tradition. It was also necessary to clearly signal that the Holy Shroud really is kept there. The solution has been to write the traditional prayer which for centuries has accompanied the veneration of the Holy Shroud: "Tuam Sindonem veneramus, Domine, et Tuam recolimus Passionem" - we revere Your Holy Shroud oh Lord and (through it) we meditate on Your Passion. Latin was chosen as a universal language, even though it is not much used today, because even to foreigners, who often know it better than Italians, it enhances the feeling of holiness of the place. Thanks to the generous help of the Graphic Designer Daniele Amedeo and of Cocchi Ballaira by Adfarm&Chicas it was decided to run the text along the front of the case. Daniele Amedeo has moreover realised the difficult task of creating a graphic sign which might better identify the essence of the message of the Holy Shroud. We needed something plain, easy to read, and above all, modern. Personally I thought that the

theme of "Arma Christi" or Passion insignia could be the solution, because it is traditionally linked to the Shroud - the casket which kept the Holy Shroud rolled up until 1998 was decorated with it - and it directly refers to the Passion of Christ. The suggestion has been successfully represented with a modern cross, interlaced with the crown of thorns and the nails, set on a deep red strip which crosses over the centre of the case. The skilled work of the historic Arpas and the dedication of its owner Luigi Trevisan have produced the silk threaded embroidering of the drawing and the text on the fabric in attractive shades of colour, while Liotex by Piero Vercelli - an expert on the fabric of the Holy Shroud and invaluable and disinterested consultant on this occasion - created the decorations for the fringes. It was also necessary to think of a floral decoration of similar symbolic nature. Here the clever hands of Cecilia Serafino came to our assistance, and she created an arrangement that fully responded to the requirements: a base of thorny branches interlaced with different colours from which some Passionflower buds are sprouting, the flower in whose calyx tradition has always identified the signs of the Passion, and which was also widely used by Guarini in the Holy Shroud Chapel. From the thorns a twisted grapevine branch emerges with its buds blooming as a symbolic reference to the resurrection, only possible after the pain and death represented by the thorns and the Passionflowers. The grapevine branch joins the case both materially and symbolically to the large photographic negative print of the face hanging in the middle of the chapel above the case. At this point also the lighting had to be adjusted to the new setting. The wise intervention of Luca Baraldo - who had already successfully provided the lighting systems for the chapels of the pre-reading path during the 2000 Exposition - completed the existing lighting so as to highlight the new setting. We wish particularly to thank the Giant's Club, which on the occasion of their 50th anniversary decided to finance the fabric and the embroidery, and

International Serra Club district 69 - Piedmont, which contributed towards the realization of the new lighting. Altogether this work has achieved a stimulating, simple setting which is above all able to inspire prayer and meditation.

### **Shroud Symposium in 2006**

Next year will see an important anniversary for believers and scholars of the Shroud: the five hundredth anniversary of the concession, by Pope Julius II, of the Holy Shroud liturgy (with Mass and Holy Office), which established May 4th as the date of its celebration that at that time was the day following the celebration of the finding of the cross. The Diocesan Commission for the Holy Shroud of Turin is organizing some events for that day. The most important is a symposium devoted to a particular perspective of Shroud studies, that of liturgy, theology and pastoral issues.

The proposal was put forward by Gian Maria Zaccone, who writes: 1506 marks a division as regards the religious aspect of the Shroud. What until that year was a "private" devotion - though widespread and popular - became "official", with the acknowledgement of the Holy See which allowed its cult and which established a day for its celebration, office and Mass. The initial liturgy, whose drafting is attributed to the Dominican Antonio Pennet, has gone through some radical changes in the course of time, to adapt it to liturgical and pastoral demands. However, this development, which is extremely interesting as a testimony of the pastoral and liturgical value regarding the Shroud, has not yet been studied precisely or in depth. The lesson of the past when, contrary to what one might think, the pastoral question of the Shroud was developed with great attention and rigour, may invigorate the renewed attention to this subject which was dealt with during the expositions at the end of the last century. On the other hand, it is quite certain that even before being given to the Savoy family the Shroud had a particular cult, perhaps even a "para-liturgy" of which we have some traces. This

emerges especially in the documents of the Lirey quarrel, and when these are studied from this angle and freed from the meanings regarding the origin of the Shroud - which have been discussed ad nauseam elsewhere - they can reveal some very interesting points.

The only authors to have dealt with these topics in the last century were Savio (P. Savio, *Ricerche storiche sulla santa Sindone*, Torino, 1957), especially as regards the publication of sources, and Vismara (E.M. Vismara, *La liturgia della Sindone*, in *La Santa Sindone nelle ricerche moderne*, Atti del Convegno di Studi sulla santa Sindone, Torino, 1941, 1950, 2. ed), and finally Molfetta (F. Di Molfetta, *La celebrazione del Mistero pasquale nella liturgia della Sindone*, in *La Sindone nuovi studi e ricerche*, Atti del III Congresso nazionale di studi sulla Sindone, Cinisello Balsamo 1986). Nor should we forget the important contribution of reflections and information in Piano's volume (L.G. Piano, *Commentarii critico archeologici sulla Sindone di Torino*, Torino 1833).

The first draft of the programme was the subject of profound reflection, especially for the theological and spiritual part, guided by the president of the Commission on Giuseppe Ghiberti.

The date of the Symposium is 3 and 4 May 2006: it will start at 10.30 on Wednesday 3rd and end with the official Eucharistic liturgy by Cardinal Severino Poletto, our Archbishop and Pontifical Custodian of the Shroud, at 6 o'clock pm on Thursday 4th. The first part, on Wednesday, will be devoted to the topic of "Piety and Liturgy" and the second, on Thursday, to "Theology and Pastoral issues". The Symposium will be held in the lecture-hall of the Metropolitan Seminary of Turin in Via XX Settembre 83. The speakers have all accepted and we are most grateful to them. In the evening of 3 May at 9 pm a concert of Shroud music will be held in the Cathedral, conducted by M<sup>o</sup> Massimo Nosetti.