

The Holy Shroud on display in the parish of the Holy Trinity

by **Renato Passerini**

Among the relics of the Holy Trinity church, there is now a fragment of the Holy Shroud from which, from the 4th century onwards, all the representations of Christ are inspired

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In the Oratory of the parish of the Holy Trinity, an exhibition dedicated to the Holy Shroud (the linen cloth on which the figure of the body of a tortured man is imprinted, considered by many to be a relic is open from last Saturday and continues until Sunday 4 October. of Jesus Christ). The visit to the exhibition provides an opportunity to discover what we know, which studies and which scientific advances have been carried out, and above all how it fits into the relationship between Science and Faith.

Last Sunday the relic of the Holy Shroud was shown to the parish community, a fragment about 1 centimeter long, authenticated in 1839 by Cardinal Giuseppe della Porta. There would be no more than four threads detached from the original relic, including the one that now constitutes the relic to the Holy Trinity, donated to the parish by the Holy See, thanks to the interest of a person who remains anonymous.

The parish will soon have a second important relic: a small cruet with the blood of Saint John Paul II, taken in the last months of the Pope's illness: the exposition of this sacred relic is scheduled for next 22 October, liturgical feast dedicated to the Polish Pope.

The theme of the Holy Shroud and the mystery that surrounds it, as if it were a "fifth Gospel" that allows us to look out on the threshold of the Resurrection of Christ, was treated last Saturday at the Holy Trinity by the sindonologist Emanuela Marinelli, graduated in Natural and Geological Sciences, one of the leading Shroud experts at an international level and author of several books on the subject.

THE ABSTRACT OF THE ARTICLE AND INTERESTING INTERVENTION BY PROF. MARINELLI

The Shroud (from the Greek sindon, sheet) is a long linen cloth (442 cm by 113 cm) which certainly wrapped the corpse of a tortured man. An ancient tradition considers it the funeral sheet of Jesus Christ. The precious relic was in the possession of the Savoy family from 1453 until 1983, when Umberto II donated it to the Pope. Since 1578 the Shroud has been kept in Turin.

The first certain historical information of the existence of this relic dates back to the mid-fourteenth century, when Geoffroy de Charny delivered the Shroud to the canons of Lirey, in France. His wife, Jeanne de Vergy, was a great-granddaughter of Othon de la Roche, a Crusader knight who most likely took her away from Constantinople during the sacking of the Fourth Crusade (1204). The Shroud could have arrived in Constantinople on August 16, 944 from Edessa (today Urfa, Turkey) with the name of Mandylion, a cloth on which the image of Jesus was believed to have been miraculously imprinted. All the representations of Christ, from the 4th century onwards, are inspired by the Shroud. An ancient tradition attributes to Saint Jude Thaddeus the Apostle the transport from Jerusalem to Edessa of the cloth with the imprint of Christ.

In 1988 the Shroud was dated with the Carbon 14 method. On the basis of this analysis, it would date back to a period between 1260 and 1390 AD. for fabrics that have gone through vicissitudes such as those of the Shroud they are considered unsatisfactory by a significant number of scholars.



In 2013, three new analyzes, conducted at the University of Padua, dated the Shroud to the time of Christ. These are two chemical dating, based on vibrational spectroscopy, and a mechanical dating method.

The results from the statistical analysis of the raw data, i.e. the data derived from the single measurements of 1988, were published in an important article, written by Tristan Casabianca, Emanuela Marinelli, Giuseppe Pernagallo and Benedetto Torrisi, which appeared in *Archaeometry* in 2019.

This statistical analysis definitively demonstrates that the samples examined were not homogeneous, therefore they cannot be considered representative of the entire sheet. The result of the 1988 test, therefore, does not allow us to

consider the medieval Shroud. It is remarkable that this article appeared in a scientific journal of the University of Oxford, right where one of the laboratories that carried out the radiocarbon analysis of 1988 is located.

Many other scientific analyzes confirm the authenticity of the Shroud: the great abundance of pollen from the Middle East and of aloe and myrrh; the rudimentary manufacture of cloth; the presence of aragonite similar to that found in the caves of Jerusalem; a side seam identical to those existing on first century Jewish fabrics; conspicuous traces of Middle Eastern DNA.

The negative imprint of the body that was wrapped in it is visible on the Shroud, in addition to the stains of his blood. There is a perfect coincidence between the wounds that are observed on the Shroud and what is described by the Gospels: scourging, crowning with thorns, carrying the cross, crucifixion with nails, spear blow to the side, short stay in the sheet. The human footprint, due to dehydration and oxidation of the superficial fibrils of linen, can only be explained by admitting that the body has emitted a light radiation. The Shroud therefore takes us to the threshold of the mystery of the Resurrection.