



DON PIERO COERO-BORGA

IN MEMORIAM

Piero Coero-Borga
1924 — 1986

The Reverend Piero Coero-Borga, one of the Shroud's most distinguished scholars and promoters, died in Turin, Italy, on 23 September 1986, after a short illness.

Don Coero was secretary-general of the Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia and editor of *Sindon*, the prestigious Shroud journal known throughout the world to students of the Turin Relic.

He was born in Barge, near Turin, in 1924 and was ordained a priest in 1948. He taught mathematics and physics at Turin's Seminario Metropolitano until 1954 when he was appointed rector of the church of the Royal Confraternity of the Holy Shroud. In 1959, by a special mandate of Maurilio Cardinal Fossati, then archbishop of Turin, Don Coero established the Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia in affiliation with the ancient Confraternity. While the aim of the latter was to promote devotion to the Holy Shroud and engage in charitable pursuits, the Center's purpose was specifically to advance the study and research of the Relic. As part of this program, *Sindon* was created by the same statute.

For all of twenty-nine years, Don Coero was the soul of both the Confraternity and the Center. His love for and dedication to the Shroud were exemplified by an extraordinary activity to promote knowledge of the Shroud throughout the world. The volume of mail which daily reached his desk was fearsome. A visitor to his tiny, rather cluttered office would more than likely find him bent over his typewriter, yet ever ready to listen and lavish his assistance on all who came for information. Nothing pleased him more than to escort visitors through the Center's museum, which over the years he had enriched with all sorts of valuable and interesting Shroud memorabilia.

Tireless in promoting meetings and symposiums, he had a major role in organizing the II International Congress held in Turin at the close of the 1978 exposition of the Shroud. On the national level in Italy, he initiated a series of congresses held every three years. The published proceedings of these meetings constitute a very valuable contribution to sindonology.

Don Coero was a man of vast culture and encyclopedic memory. He was a serious and exacting scholar, too scrupulous to abide imaginative or superficial notions wherever he encountered them.

While he encouraged study and scientific research, he occasionally voiced disapproval of what he called "useless and dangerous tests on the Shroud". He said recently: "We have made enough tests already. Is the Shroud to become merely an object for scientific experiments? Are we forgetting the message of faith and love its incomparable image has for the entire world?"

Such was Don Coero's whole-hearted approach to the Shroud. As the Vicar General of the Turin Archdiocese said at the funeral: "The Shroud, for Don Coero, was first and foremost a means of bringing Christ to the people. This is something he did as few other Shroud scholars have done."

A glimpse into the inner spirit that drove Don Coero so relentlessly to advance the cause of the Shroud was revealed to this writer on his last visit to the little office shortly before Don Coero died. Things were not going his way at all. He was ill, the work kept piling up on his desk, problems loomed ahead of him. But he was his usual confident self. His hand and eyes on the photograph of the Holy Face, always alight on his desk, he said: "Anyway, it is all worth it. It is all for Him."

He was buried from the church of his native village.

Rest in peace, valiant servant of the Lord! And may the light of His Holy Face shine on you for evermore!

PETER M. RINALDI, S.D. B.

In those twenty-nine years since the Centro Internazionale di Sindonologia was created, Don Coero's ceaseless activity in promoting Shroud studies reached inestimable extent. His counsel and encouragement to groups and individuals, incalculable. I feel that it would be remiss on my part not to reveal that on one of my visits to that cubby-hole which Father Rinaldi—correctly of course, but still euphemistically—calls an "office", Don Coero engaged me in a step-by-step conversation leading up to something he had on his mind: a Shroud journal wherein all research, European as well as American, and all historical studies over the centuries, would be published in the English language. Therefore, reader, if you have benefitted in any way from *Shroud Spectrum International*, you will remember in whose generous mind it originated.

DOROTHY CRISPINO