

**ATENEO PONTIFICIO
REGINA
APOSTOLORUM**



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Shroud, the renewed exhibition “gift” for the Jubilee Year

It will be a memorable day, next December 11, for the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum: after eighteen years, the permanent exhibition of the Shroud, which has seen thousands of visitors in recent years, will be completely renovated. The new version, created with modern graphics and updated content, was already presented in English in Indianapolis (USA) last July, on the occasion of the tenth National Eucharistic Congress. Participants had to queue for two hours to enter and visit the exhibition, which was a resounding success.

The date chosen for the inauguration in Rome is not accidental: December 11 is a double anniversary. The first is celebratory, because it commemorates the opening of the first exhibition (December 11, 2006), while the second is commemorative, because it is the

anniversary of the death of Father Héctor Guerra, LC (December 11, 2015), who played a major role in the realization of the exhibition and its diffusion in various locations around the world.

Precisely to underline this joy tinged with bitterness, the event that introduces the inauguration will be a commemoration of great scholars of the Shroud, to whom we owe so much for the progress of research and its dissemination. The title of this study day is explicit: "On the shoulders of giants", to echo the phrase attributed to Bernard of Chartres: "We are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more things than they do and further away, certainly not because of the sharpness of our eyesight or the height of our body, but because we are lifted and carried aloft by the stature of giants".

So, we will talk not only about Fr. Héctor Guerra, LC, but also about Mons. Giuseppe Ghiberti, Father Gianfranco Berbenni, ofm cap and Barrie Schwartz, true pillars of sindonology, whom I had the honor of knowing personally. With these giants I have shared a good part of my life as a sindonologist.

The day will be enriched by the memories of two alumni of the Diploma in Shroud Studies, Fr. Andrew Dalton LC and Fr. Joseph Spence FFm, now teachers of the Diploma itself, now in its XV edition and offered in multiple languages, also valid for the purposes of updating school staff, recognized by the MIUR, where the University is accredited through the SOFIA platform. In addition, there will be the delivery of Certificates to students who have completed the Diploma and at the end it will be possible to take a guided tour of the Exhibition.



The University boasts a specific training on the Shroud, with several dedicated programs, offered by the Institute of Science and Faith, by Othonia and by the Higher Institute of Religious Sciences, where I am a guest lecturer with the course "Shroud and teaching of the Catholic religion".



The specificity and uniqueness of the Exhibition Who is the Man of the Shroud? represents a unique opportunity to approach one of the most enigmatic and venerated objects of Christianity. The itinerary unfolds along four themes: history, science, writing, hope. The story ranges from the first depictions of Christ inspired by the Shroud in the early centuries, to the evidence of the presence of the sacred linen in the Middle East, up to the discovery of the photographic negative in 1898, which began the era of scientific research, thanks to which we now know a great deal about the Shroud: it is not a painting, it is not a print made with any means, but it wrapped a corpse for a few hours; the red stains are real blood; the microtraces of pollen, soil and aragonite take us to Jerusalem.

The radiocarbon dating of the Shroud, which placed the origin of the cloth in the Middle Ages, was definitively denied in 2019 by a publication in *Archaeometry*, a scientific journal of the University of Oxford.

The mystery of the image has also been partly revealed, because its chemical characteristics suggest that it originated from an effect of light. But how can a corpse emit light? So it is inevitable to make a comparison with the sacred scriptures, which reveal to us the perfect coincidence between the tortures suffered by the man who was wrapped in the Shroud and what is described in the Gospels. Remembering the Transfiguration, it is natural to think that a luminous phenomenon could also have occurred at the moment of the Resurrection. And here in the exhibition we come to the final theme: hope. In this Jubilee we are pilgrims of hope and the Shroud, a singular relic, offers the possibility of contemplating the mystery of Easter and reflecting on the victory of life over death.

This new exhibition is therefore a further service offered by the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum to the Church and to society, a privileged instrument for the New Evangelization, a further testimony of hope in the Jubilee Year.

Emanuela Marinelli

THE TRADITION

In the Sacred Linen the body of Jesus, everything coincides with the story of the Gospels

The Shroud (from the Greek sindon, sheet) is a linen cloth (cm 441x113) on which two dark lines and numerous holes are visible triangular: they are the traces of a fire that occurred in 1532 in Chambéry (France). In the center you can see a double figure human, frontal and dorsal. An ancient tradition believes that the Shroud is the burial cloth of Jesus Christ. The Sacred Lino was in the possession of Savoy from 1453 until 1983, when Umberto II donated it to the Pope. It has been preserved since 1578 in Turin. The first certain historical news of its existence of the Shroud date back to the mid-14th century, but they exist consistent evidence of its existence already in previous centuries.

In 1988 the fabric was dated with the Carbon method 14, which dated it back to 1260-1390 AD. But currently this result is considered unreliable. The sheet wrapped the corpse of a flagellated man for about 36-40 hours, crowned with thorns, crucified with nails and pierced from a spear on his right side. Everything coincides with the narration of the Gospels. The origin of the human imprint, formed through a process of dehydration and oxidation of the surface fibrils of linen, still remains a mystery. Some experiments suggest that the image does could be explained as the effect of a very powerful light released from the body.

Emanuela Marinelli

<https://www.avvenire.it/chiesa/pagine/la-sindone-si-racconta-tra-scienza-e-fede>

Rome. The Shroud tells its story. Between science and faith

Riccardo Maccioni Tuesday 10 December 2024



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At the Regina Apostolorum a day of study for the inauguration of the new version of the permanent exhibition on the cloth that wrapped the body of Christ taken down from the cross



Young visitors of the permanent exhibition - Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum

Faith and science in dialogue before the Shroud. It has been happening since research has smoothed out mutual prejudices. It is happening in particular at the Regina Apostolorum, which has become a point of reference for the study of the cloth that, according to tradition, wrapped the body of Christ taken down from the cross. The Pontifical University dedicates, in fact, a permanent exhibition and a specific course of study to the Shroud. "This particular attention - explains Father Rafael Pascual, professor of philosophy at the Regina Apostolorum and coordinator of Othonia (a research group on the Shroud) - was born because we saw in the Shroud a privileged reality of the encounter, of the dialogue between science and faith to which an Institute of our university is dedicated. We started

with a master's degree and conferences but then we realized that it wasn't enough, that a much broader study program was needed. And so it was also for the exhibition "Who is the man of the Shroud?" which we inaugurated 18 years ago while the Diploma in Shroud Studies has reached its fifteenth season. Today we offer it in three languages, eight years ago the course was born in English, six years ago the one in Spanish».



In front of the copy of the Shroud, identical to the original - Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum

To take stock of the research and, above all, to inaugurate the new version of the permanent exhibition, a day of studies has been organized in Rome (via degli Aldobrandeschi 190) tomorrow, from 3:30 pm to 6 pm. The choice of date is not accidental. December 11th marks the opening of the permanent exhibition, in 2006, and the death, five years later, of Father Héctor Guerra, creator of the exhibition and one of the promoters of the diploma. "As for the exhibition, with the exception of the fundamental elements such as the copy of the Shroud, the three-dimensional sculpture by Luigi Mattei and the crown of thorns - continues Pascual - we have renewed all the panels that needed updating both in terms of content and graphics. In addition, it will be possible to access further information via QR codes that are being prepared. Tomorrow we will inaugurate the Italian version of the new exhibition that, in English, we presented in the United States last July during the National Eucharistic Congress, held in Indianapolis, with lines at the entrance and truly great appreciation".



A detail of the exhibition - Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum

The December 11 meeting in Rome has a significant title: "On the shoulders of giants". It recalls a famous expression by Saint Bernard of Chartres: "We are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more and farther things than they do, not because of the sharpness of our eyesight or the height of our bodies, but because we are lifted up and carried aloft by the stature of giants". As can be understood, the aphorism highlights the importance for the advancement of research and cultural growth of the work carried out by the greats of the past. Tomorrow, in fact, we will remember figures who have made a decisive contribution to research on the Shroud, such as Monsignor Giuseppe Ghiberti (Bruno Barberis of the University of Turin will speak), Father Gianfranco Berbenni (Antonio Cassanelli of the Giulio Ricci Diocesan Center for Sindonology in Rome will speak about it), and Barrie Schwartz (the memory is entrusted to Paolo Di Lazzaro, former Enea researcher). "They are scholars who contributed to both the exhibition and the diploma," Father Pascual emphasizes. "The Day is intended to be an opportunity to remember how their commitment has favored subsequent progress."



The exhibition is entitled "Who is the man of the Shroud?" - Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum

The afternoon will end with the delivery of certificates to students who have completed the diploma in Shroud Studies. A unique event in the panorama of academic proposals. «It is the most complete course on the Shroud that exists, in Italy but I would also say at an international level, with two semesters of lessons and conferences in which a multidisciplinary vision of the studies is offered with the contribution of specialists who constantly update us on the state of the art of research». The launch of the Diploma has also had effects outside the university. «A group called the “apostolate of the Shroud” has been formed, committed to transmitting the knowledge acquired, in conferences, in parishes, etc. At an Italian level but also internationally». In other words, these are training projects that are not limited to themselves. «This is even more true for the permanent exhibition, now almost an obligatory point of reference for those who come to the University. Visiting it certainly leaves a mark on visitors». The Shroud cloth not only as an object of study, in short, but also as an instrument of human and cultural growth. As well as Christian. «The Shroud, as Saint John Paul II said, is a kind of challenge to the intelligence, because it has been the object of many scientific investigations by experts who have had the opportunity to study it directly, in a non-invasive way. Think of the famous Sturp (i.e. Shroud of Turin Research Project, i.e. research project on the Shroud of Turin which in 1978 was allowed to carry out a series of research on the cloth - ed.). And this without finding the answer to how that image on the sheet was formed. On the other hand,

to quote Saint John Paul II again, the Shroud is a mirror of the Gospel, it refers to the central moment of the mystery of salvation, which is the Paschal Mystery. It speaks to us of the passion and death because it is the Burial Cloth that covered the body of Jesus as well as of the resurrection, because that body was there only a few hours, it showed no sign of decomposition. The Gospels tell us that when the disciples went to the tomb, they saw the cloths lying there. Yes, the Shroud, I repeat, brings us to the heart of Easter.