

Shroud At Turin

Photograph Of Buried Savior

By JAMES C. O'NEILL
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

Rome — A part-time detective in love with his work, Redemptorist Father Edward A. Wueneschel is a passionate defender of the genuineness of the Holy Shroud preserved at the cathedral in Turin, Italy.

The shroud, a cloth about 13 feet long and four and a half feet wide, is believed by many to be the cloth in which Christ was wrapped when His body was laid in the tomb on the evening of Good-Friday.

The cloth bears the imprints of a man who was crucified, crowned with thorns, who had his side pierced and who had been brutally scourged.

For Father Wueneschel, who has devoted 25 years of off-and-on study to the shroud, there is not the slightest doubt that the man in the shroud was Christ.

But to others, the matter is still debatable. For the person who looks up the article on the shroud contained in the Catholic Encyclopedia, doubt of its authenticity is quite normal. The article, written by Father Herbert Thurston, takes a dim view of the relic and favors the idea that it was a painting made in the 14th century.

"But that article was written 47 years ago," Father Wueneschel says, "and it is based on views formulated 50 years ago. And that's where all the scholarship of those who don't believe in the authenticity of the shroud stops."

Father Wueneschel has written often and spiritedly in defense of the shroud at Turin. The relic is enclosed in an ornate silver casket and is wrapped in silk. It is the property of the House of Savoy, the former ruling house of Italy, and is displayed only at rare intervals.

The last time it was displayed was in 1933 when extensive and scientific photographs were made of it.

It was first photographed in 1898. At that time it was learned for the first time that the stains on the cloth were a negative picture of the person enclosed in it. This was learned when the photograph, which is necessary for us to find a positive image with clear and easily recognizable features even to the forked beard.

Critics of the shroud maintained at the time that the negative image was accounted for by the fact that whoever made it stained only those parts which would have been touched by a body.

However, when the shroud was photographed for the second time in 1931, much better and more detailed pictures were obtained. The intricate details were so clear that they could be traced on the ground supporting the idea that the form on the cloth was that of a man.

In his book, "Self-Portrait of Christ," the priest describes how the markings on the shroud show that the person in it had sustained a brutal scourging. They also show that the whip was apparently two leather things tipped with dunghill shaped pellets.

Research has proved that these dunghill pellets were actually used in the time of Christ by the Romans, Father Wueneschel points out.

Another piece of internal evidence which weighs strongly in favor of the shroud, Father Wueneschel says, is the fact that it shows that the person enveloped in it carried not a complete cross, as Christ is shown doing in most Christian art, but only the crossbar. This, according to the normal method in use at the time of Christ's death, is a fact that was not known to scholars of the 14th century, he states.

The priest, a native of Erie, Pa., says that research and investigation in favor of the shroud's authenticity receives much support from the United States. He is a member of the International Brotherhood of the Holy Shroud, who make serious scientific studies of the field now known as syndonology, the study of the shroud.

One of the main stumbling blocks for critics of the shroud is that it appears in European history for the first time in the 14th century. Father Wueneschel notes. There is no collection of historical documents that can trace its origins back to the time of Christ. On the other hand, there is a document of 1390 which claims that the shroud is a forgery and that its design had confessed to the forger, the Redemptorist adds.

But supporters of the shroud claim it is certain that this document came from



The crucified Saviour, wrapped in a shroud, is laid in a tomb near Golgotha.

Constantinople where there was a shroud venerated as that of Our Lord at least as far back as 1171, he goes on. Another field of investigation being pursued by supporters of the shroud is the field of Byzantine art.

By expanding the countless Byzantine representations of the Crucifixion and the suffering Christ, it is hoped to show that certain details, particularly of the face, recur again and again and match the details of the face of the man in the shroud.

This would appear to prove, circumstantially at least, that the artists of ancient Constantinople drew their inspiration for their pictures of Christ, not from imagination, but from the actual face of the shroud now kept at Turin.

In recent years Father Wueneschel has had little time to devote to his absorbing

passion. He came to Rome in 1949 to become the director of the Redemptorist College of International Studies. At present, he is on a leave of absence from that post to take part in the revision of the Redemptorist Rule and to serve on the committee of education.

However, it is Father Wueneschel's ambition and that of both critics and supporters of the shroud's authenticity that it be subjected to the most modern means of scientific tests. Others have heard calls for chemical analysis of the blood on the shroud, for spectroscopic analysis which would reveal the presence of minute tissues or cells.

The methods of radioactive carbon dating could determine approximately if the shroud dates from the beginning of the Christian era. X-ray could also prove if the

shroud were painted or not. To each of these techniques objections have been raised, principally based on fears that they would destroy the shroud in the process. The House of Savoy has refused permission for the tests, although the 1950 International congress of syndonology in Rome passed resolutions favoring further tests.

The veneration of the Holy Shroud recently presented Pope John XXIII with 18 volumes of the basic scientific research that has been done on the shroud. The Pope recalled the fact that St. Charles Borromeo, one of his favorite saints, was convinced that the shroud was genuine.

And while he did not take sides on the issue, Pope John blessed the association and urged them through study to explore ever more widely the divine mystery of the sufferings of the Redeemer.

Don't Miss The Vigil

Lent's 40 days of preparation for Easter will climax with the impressive ceremonies of the Vigil and midnight Mass Holy Saturday night.

Unfortunately, many devout Catholics who have kept an exemplary Lent will by-pass this service and thereby miss one of the Church's most inspiring rituals.

Certainly every Catholic should make it a point to attend the Vigil if at all possible and every Catholic family should be represented by at least one member at it in their parish church.

The colorful ceremony is not a mere pageantry nor survival of ancient customs.

The rite is a dramatic reality which links three turning points in religious history.

First, the Church recalls the Jewish Passover — when that nation was liberated from its slavery in Egypt and passed over to freedom in the promised land of Israel. This historic event was a forecast of events yet to come.

Christ, by His death on the cross, passed over from life in this sin-laden world to the freedom of His risen and glorified life. Even this is but a forecast too.

Now we, plunged by Baptism into sharing Christ's life, are able to pass over from a mere human existence to a life lived in union with the Saviour — a prelude and a promise of a glorified life in heaven. To those who have faith, this is not poetry but our truest destiny.

These three chapters of the spiritual life are dramatically portrayed in the ceremonies of the Easter Vigil and those attending are encouraged to participate actively to affirm their faith and rededicate themselves to the goals given them by the sacrament of Baptism.

And that is perhaps why the Vigil rite is so little understood — because Baptism is too often considered a ceremony for infants, done once and then forgotten.

This sacrament is, however, the gate-way and the key-stone of our faith. Its effects stamp a man's soul for all eternity. Its impact should affect our every day life, otherwise we betray the vows our Godparents made for us.

That is why we don't want to miss the Vigil. Now we are old enough and convinced in our faith so firmly that we want to speak those vows ourselves and pledge ourselves to a more Christ-like life.

SERMONETTE

Let him take up his cross.
By the REV. JAMES D. MORIARTY

Suffering is a necessary part of our existence. So necessary is it that if by chance our life would be without suffering it would be necessary for us to invent it. But we will ever have our share. Our job is to make it valuable.

The man who is hospitalized with an incurable cancer which will take him to his death may lose the value of his suffering as readily as the pagan in the wilds of Borneo. Pain is no respecter of persons but the attitude of mind with which it is borne can change its value completely.

The little cross which dangles at the end of the rosary beads in our pocket or our purse is only indicative of the larger cross which rides the shoulders of our daily life. Take away the motive and the carrying of this cross becomes just so much pain which cannot be escaped. Elevate the motive by welding our cross to the cross of Christ and we are buoyed-up on the wings of intention.

Things seem big in proportion as we are close to them. There are times when perhaps our own cross seems the largest of all. We look about us and wonder how others are able to escape the crosses which afflict us. We may even complain to God. But we learn sooner or later that each cross which He puts upon our shoulders is put there tenderly and lovingly. After all life is not so much a bowl of cherries. We live in a vale of tears.

We may be sure that everyone has his own cross to carry, however hidden it may be. If we could only see the total picture of each life we would learn then how little is the cross on our own shoulders.

This is not to say that we should not try to avoid pain and suffering. Rather only that when it does come into our life we must use it well.

For it was Our Lord Himself who told us, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me."

Strange But True . . .

VALENCIA, SPAIN, has an astonishing way of celebrating St. Joseph's Feastday "FALLAS" — curious figures often satirical caricatures — are constructed and paraded through the streets. **ORIGIN WAS MEDICAL** — WOODWORKING APPRENTICES CELEBRATING WINTER'S END AND THEIR PATRON'S BIRTH.

OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION — **PICTURE IN TURIN, ITALY**, is believed to be **1500 YEARS OLD**.

THESE ARE BOTH CATHOLIC CHURCHES — **ERECTED IN POST-WAR GERMANY** — **ST. ANSGAR, WEST BERLIN**.

Good Morals Have Rights

Los Angeles — (NC) — "The right to speak out in favor of good morals can hardly be challenged in a democracy such as ours," Auxiliary Bishop Aiden J. Bell of Los Angeles, said here.

He discussed censorship in an address before the Southern California chapter of the Knights of Columbus at its annual breakfast in the Statler-Hilton Hotel. Bishop Bell is a member of the Episcopal Committee on Motion Pictures, Radio and Television.

"It is a longstanding tradition of this country," said Bishop Bell, "that groups large and small have given expression of their concern over injustice, political, social and economic.

"Their efforts, not only within the framework of the law, but even directed toward dislodging evils against which the law itself is powerless."

Bishop Bell said the work of the National Legion of Decency and the National Office for Decent Literature is carried on in this tradition.

"The rights these agencies seek to protect are among the most important and sacred: the right of parents to bring up their children in an atmosphere reasonably free from defilement, the right of children to be protected from grave and insidious moral danger, the right of all not to be assailed at every turn by a display of indecency," he said.

Bishop Bell said the evaluations of these agencies are a guide to Catholics, applauded by those conscious of the gravity of the problem of safeguarding moral standards.

"It would be most gratifying to find it unnecessary to carry on this work," he continued.

"One could wish that the sense of responsibility of those who write and those who produce motion pictures would make superfluous an action of this nature.

"Far from curtailing the work of these agencies we must have them continue. Nor can we fail to be watchful over the fields of radio and television."

"People are awakening with fright as to the growing volume of this unwholesome material and the relationship it has with the sliding morals,

particularly of youth," the Bishop said.

TWO QUESTIONS regarding censorship are suggested by these facts, the Bishop continued.

"1) Are existing laws censoring the obscene an abridgment of our constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech and expression?"

"2) Does the popular agitation for broadening censorship legislation indicate a healthy desire to put order in the law, or a ready arm of an overprotective state?"

Some would say yes to both questions, the Bishop conceded. But he questioned that such a stand was realistic in the face of a growing demand for control from a large bloc of Americans.

"The realistic Catholic view answers 'No' to the question as to whether existing censorship laws abridge our constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech," he said.

"Just as there are laws that govern the physical nature of man, so there is a body of laws that governs the spiritual and moral nature of man.

"Just as we have rights stemming from this law so too there are limits within which we may exercise these rights."

"That right of free speech that cloaks all this evil that circulates is not an absolute right," continued the Bishop. "Man must respect the rights of others and show deference for those human, moral and social values which we recognize as our heritage as children of God.



Joseph Breg's Column

Aid To Pupils

I do not think that Sen. John F. Kennedy or anybody else can succeed in sweeping under the rug the question of a square deal in distribution of tax aid to education.

The issue is bound to keep coming up until some measure of justice to all parents and children is written into our laws.

Sen. Kennedy was much too facile in dismissing as unconstitutional the idea that students in independent, as well as public schools, might share equitably in such aid.

Persons attending religious and private, along with state-owned, colleges were included in both the GI Bill of Rights and the National Defense Education Act.

Both Acts are constitutional. And there is nothing either inlaw or unjust to the present extension of the same principle to pupils in grade and high schools.

The best approach in this matter is through students and parents to schools, not through schools to parents and students. That was the approach of the GI Bill.

Each veteran, without discrimination, was entitled to a certain amount of assistance in getting a college education. It was up to him and his parents to decide what colleges would educate him.

Sen. Kennedy, in my opinion, is very much mistaken if he imagines that parents are going to be content with his position that only aid to public school pupils is constitutional.

The fact is that American constitutional respect for conscience and for freedom of religion points to an entirely different concept. This is the situation:

1. Parents are required by law to send their children to school.
2. The Supreme Court has ruled that under the Constitution they may select any school which meets state educational standards.
3. Millions of parents consider it their duty in conscience, to select religious schools.
4. If, for doing so, they are discriminated against in distribution of tax benefits, their constitutional rights as citizens are violated.

When You Say

Deo Gratias

Deo gratias — Thanks be to God.

This expression of gratitude is said three times at Mass — after the Epistle, at the dismissal and after the Last Gospel.

A sincere word of thanks is a polite person's way of showing gratitude for any favor. Certainly the people of God owe their heavenly Father a definite "Deo gratias" after hearing his revealed word read to them from Holy Scripture.

The thanks voiced at the dismissal of the Mass is not meant in the disrespectful sense, "Thank God our duty is done and we can go now!" The "Deo gratias" is not just a dismissal, it is the acknowledgment of a mission.

As our Lord told His Apostles, "Go into the whole world . . ." as the priest sends forth today's Christians to live their Mass. As

Penny For Cathedral

Trenton — (NC) — The smallest donation received for building the new St. Mary's cathedral here, along with other mementoes of the day, was enclosed in a metal box and sealed in the cornerstone of the new edifice by Bishop George W. Ahn of Trenton.

Joseph Molyneux, 7, a student in St. James' school, Red Bank, who made the smallest donation, assisted the Bishop in placing the cornerstone.

The letter, dated March 25, 1959, which his mother, Mrs. Eric Molyneux, wrote in forwarding the penny was among the mementoes sealed in the cornerstone. The letter read:

"Dear Bishop Ahn: Enclosed please find one penny from our son Joseph. When he heard of St. Mary's burning down he went to his little old wallet and opened it, took out the one and only penny he had and said, 'Mommy, will you send it to them to help build a new church?' He added, 'I wish I had more money to send.' He is only four years old. I promised I would send it to the Bishop for him."

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Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, March 29 — Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ (white), Gloria, Sequence, Creed, Preface of Easter.
Monday through Saturday, March 30 through April 4 — Mass each day as in missal (white).