

Travel & Summer Recreation

Shroud of Turin draws thousands by the day

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

As president pro tem for the Holy Shroud Guild since 1995, Father Frederick Brinkmann, CSSR, has given talk after talk about the Shroud of Turin.

But only this year — on April 28 — did Father Brinkmann see the actual shroud. The 14'3" long piece of linen is believed by many people to be the burial cloth of Jesus. It bears the image of a man who shows wounds resembling those that would be caused by crucifixion.

Father Brinkmann and an Episcopal priest shroud expert from Atlanta led a tour of 50 people from around the country to see the shroud. It is on display, for the first time since 1978, from April 18 to June 14 this year in the Cathedral of Turin, Italy.

"To stand in the presence of it even for a few moments is worth it," Father Brinkmann said after he returned to the Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, where he is director. "It looked just like the pictures."

Visitors are usually limited to two or three minutes in front of the shroud, to accommodate thousands viewing it each day. It rarely has been displayed more than once or twice a century.

The shroud continues to mystify examiners despite studies that began in 1898. At that time the first official photograph of the shroud was taken, and the negative revealed a striking image of a body. How the image was made is still unknown. However, marks and stains apparently correspond to, for example, a side wound, scourging, nail wounds in the

foot and wrist, and wounds on the forehead and back of the neck.

In 1988 carbon dating estimated the shroud dated to between 1260 and 1390. Yet the dates are being questioned, Father Brinkmann noted, partly because the tests had limitations, and the material has been contaminated from its handling over the centuries. And linen wrapping of mummies has tested to be 800 years younger than the mummies are known scientifically to be, he noted.

The shroud, he maintained, "confirms the Resurrection or is the most ingenious forgery the world has ever seen."

"The church has certainly treated it as if it's real," he continued. "I'd be very surprised if they (scientists) proved it wasn't the real McCoy. I stand with the church on that. You can't say one way or another. ...Whatever it is, it is an extremely interesting artifact."

Father Brinkmann recalled looking up at the shroud in Turin for a few minutes from a platform 10 to 15 feet away. The shroud is protected in bulletproof glass.

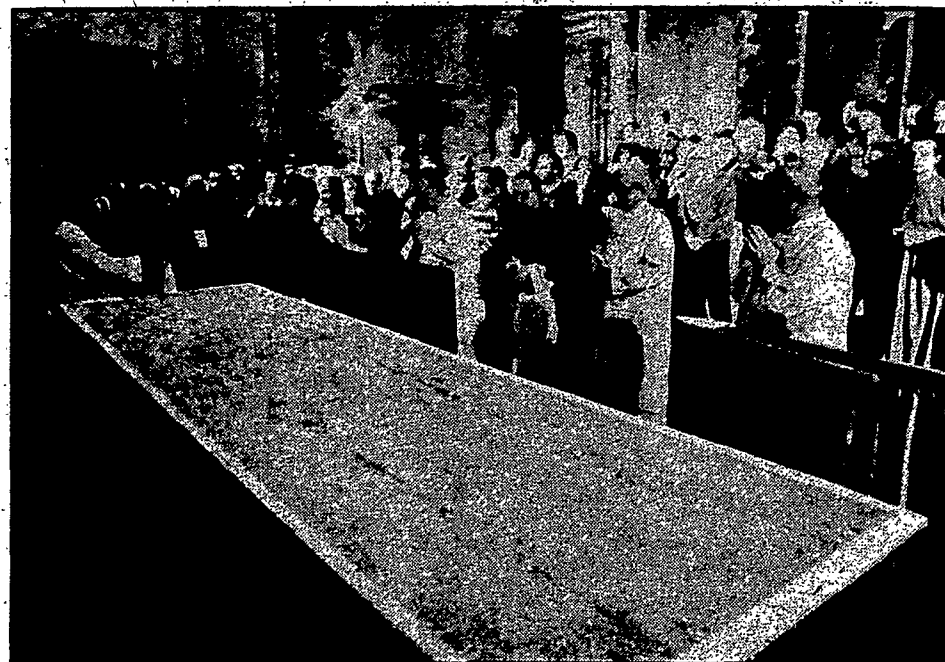
Father Brinkmann said he returned to the cathedral later to sit in the pews and view the shroud from a distance.

David Yockel of Irondequoit, a parishioner of Corpus Christi Church, was also on the tour.

"You almost felt like you saw it before," he said. Yet, he added, "If you weren't there, you missed it."

"The crucifix you know and see on your living room or church wall isn't even close to what happened to this man," he said.

"If you ever saw the shroud, you'd see what a brutal murder it was. People don't know



CNS/Reuters

Cardinal Giovanni Saldarini blesses the Shroud of Turin before it is put on display in Turin's cathedral April 18. The shroud, believed by many to be the burial cloth of Christ, will be displayed through June 14. It will not go on public display again until 2000.

what he did for us. ..."

Yockel said the trip was more a special pilgrimage, one he feels will continue to inspire him and the others in following Christ.

"Everyone felt they were chosen by God to be on this trip," he said. "It was like the Holy Spirit had prompted these people to go."

Most other tours to see the shroud this year have already taken place. However, the Web site www.shroud.com lists some yet to take place. The site, hosted by Barrie M. Schwartz, photographer of the shroud, also lists numbers to call for reservations, which are free but are required to see the shroud.

The shroud also will be on display April 29-June 11, 2000. Although Father Brinkmann said he plans to return, neither he nor travel agencies contacted knew of any tours planned.

The priest plans to write about his trip on the Holy Shroud Guild's Web site, www.shroud.org. That site also lists reservation information for this year.

The April tour was organized by Joan Schnabel through Carlson Wagonlit Travel of Quincy, Mass., who said she believes the shroud was Christ's.

But no matter what naysayers may believe about it, she said, "It keeps you focused on Jesus, which I think is the most important aspect."

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