



## THE VENERATION OF RELICS

The veneration of relics is not a question of proof or science but an act of faith. Throughout history, there has been an unbroken chain of tradition in the veneration of relics and reference can be found in both the Old and New Testaments that the Holy Scriptures fully supports the true virtue of relics and the request to honor them. (See II Kings 13:20-21, Exodus 13:19, Mark 5:25-29, Acts 5:15-16)

Historically their significance differed from place to place, and from person to person, there was no class of individuals, be they theologians, kings, or peasants, for whom relics were not of the greatest importance.

From the church where they were required equipment of the altars, to the court of law where they were necessary for oath taking, to the battlefield where they helped bring victory, relics were an indispensable part of daily life.

A piece of the **True Cross** discovered by Saint Helena.

Skeptics have said that if all the Relics of the True Cross were put together there would be enough wood for two or three crosses. In 1870 a Frenchman, Rohault de Fleury, catalogued all the relics of the True Cross including relics that were said to have existed but were lost. He measured the existing relics and estimated the volume of the missing ones. Then he added up the figures and discovered that the fragments, if glued together, would not have made up more than one-third of a cross.

The Holy **Column of Flagellation** was transported from Jerusalem to Rome by John Cardinal Colonna, one of the leaders of the sixth Crusade, in the year 1223, and was placed in his title church of St. Praxedis.

The **Crown of Thorns** was documented as being in Jerusalem in 409 AD. It was transferred to Constantinople in 1063, although it seems that the thorns were removed and presented to various rulers in Europe at an earlier date. In 1238 Baldwin II, the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, anxious to obtain support for his tottering empire offered the crown of thorns to Louis IX King of France who built the Sainte-Chapelle to house it. During the French Revolution, the crown was kept in the Bibliotheque Nationale until 1806 when the thornless remains were deposited in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

The **Holy Nails** were discovered by Constantine's mother the Empress Helena about 300 years after the Crucifixion. According to legend, one nail was tossed into the Adriatic to calm a storm. The other two were used by the Empress to protect her son. One was placed in his crown and another formed into a bridle for his horse. Filings were taken from the true nails and imbedded in copies to make relics of a lower class. Some of these are presented as true nails rather than copies but it is safe to say that the one kept at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, in Rome is among those most likely to be one of the True Nails used in the Crucifixion.

**St. Longinus** is the centurion who pierced the side of Christ while He was hanging on the cross and it was he who was to exclaim. "Indeed this was the Son of God." St. Longinus then converted; left the army, took instruction from the Apostles, and became a monk in Cappadocia. There he was arrested for his faith and beheaded. St. Longinus' relics are now in the church of St. Augustine in Rome. Part of his lance is contained in one of the four pillars over the altar in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome.

## The effigy of the **Veil of Veronica**.

The veneration of a "Veronice" can be dated back to the pontificate of John VII (705-707), according to the chronicle of Benedetto di Sant'Andrea. In 1011, Pope Sergius IV consecrated a special altar for the veneration of this "sudarium" (veil, sweat cloth). As Benedetto stated, a regular veneration was established in the 12th century, adding to its status and popularity, which grew with the establishments of the Holy Years in 1300 by Pope Bonifaz VIII.

St. Veronica was the woman who wiped the face of Christ with a veil while he was on the way to Calvary. According to tradition, the cloth was imprinted with the image of Christ's face. The relic is still preserved in St. Peter's, and the memory of Veronica's act of charity is commemorated in the Stations of the Cross. The veil shown here is one that has been touched to the original as attested to by the stamp of the Vatican.

### **Scientific Investigation**

Ultraviolet examinations of the cloth, carried out by Prof. Donato Vittore of the University of Bari, confirm that the image is not paint. Particularly noteworthy are several small flecks of reddish brown presumably drops of blood from the wounds caused by the crown of thorns. Enlarged digital photographs of the veil reveal that the image is identical on both sides of the cloth -- a feat impossible to achieve by ancient techniques. These photographs have also been used to compare the veil with the face on the Shroud of Turin, which millions of Christians believe to be Jesus' burial sheet. Striking similarities were apparent: the faces are the same shape; both have shoulder-length hair with a tuft on the forehead, and the beards match.

### **Story of the Relic**

History records the existence of this relic from the fourth century, but only from the Middle Ages was it strongly linked to the Passion of Christ. From the 12th century until 1608, it was kept in the Vatican Basilica as a popular goal of pilgrims, mentioned in Canto XXXI of Dante's "Paradise." When the part of the Basilica containing the relic was scheduled to be torn down for remodelling, the relic disappeared overnight. According to records in the monastery, the wife of a soldier sold the veil to a nobleman of Monopello in 1608 to get her husband out of jail. The nobleman, in turn, donated it to the Capuchins. In 1618, it was placed in a walnut frame adorned in silver and gold between two sheets of glass. It remained in the monastery ever since. Fr. Pfeiffer invested 13 years of searching through archives to prove that this is the same cloth that disappeared in 1608.

### **Mensae Coenae D.N.J.C.** (the room where the Last Supper took place)

This relic is from the table or the ROOM (upper) where the Last Supper took place.

### **Sindonis D.N.J.C** (from the burial shroud of Our Lord)

This relic is believed to be from the exterior wrapping that the Shroud was rolled up in when it was not being venerated. Throughout history, references have been made to this practice.

**June 6, 1483:** Jean Renguis and Georges Carrelet, respectively chaplain and sacristan of the Sainte Chapelle at Chambéry, draw up an inventory in which the Shroud is described as "enveloped in a red silk drape, and kept in a case covered with crimson velours, decorated with silver-gilt nails, and locked with a golden key."

**1498:** King Louis initiates extensive remodeling of the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. An inventory detailing the Shroud when at Turin in this same year describes its case as "a coffer covered with crimson velours, with silver gilt roses, and the sides silver and the Holy Shroud inside wrapped in a cloth of red silk."

**December 4, 1532:** Fire breaks out in the Sainte Chapelle, Chambéry, seriously damaging all its furnishings and fittings. Because the Shroud is protected by four locks, Canon Philibert Lambert and two Franciscans summon the help of a blacksmith to pry open the grille. By the time they succeed, Marguerite of Austria's Shroud casket/reliquary as made to her orders by Lievin van Latham has become melted beyond repair by the heat. But the Shroud folded inside is preserved bar being scorched and holed by a drop of molten silver that fell on one corner.

**April 16, 1534:** Chambéry's Poor Clare nuns repair the Shroud, sewing it onto a backing cloth (the Holland cloth), and sewing patches over the unsightliness of the damage. These repairs are completed on 2 May. Covered in cloth of gold, the Shroud is returned to the Savoys' castle in Chambéry.

**April 28, 1868:** Princess Clotilde of Savoy (1843-1911), daughter of Victor Emanuel II and wife of Prince Gerolamo Napoleon, changes the Shroud's former lining cloth of black silk that had been sewn on by Bl. Sebastian Valfre back in 1694, substituting for it one of crimson taffeta. An official record of this, with sample of the former black silk lining, is preserved in Turin. On this same date, the Shroud is 'scrupulosamente' measured by Monsignor Gastaldi, then bishop of Aluzzo, and later archbishop of Turin, and found to be 410cm. x 140 cm.

**May 11, 1955:** Cheshire receives letter from Mrs. Veronica Woollam of Gloucester, asking if her ten-year-old daughter Josephine, crippled with osteomyelitis in the hip and leg, 'could be blessed with the relic of the Holy Shroud'. Unable to travel by air because of his lungs, Cheshire takes Josephine and her mother by train, first to Portugal, for ex-King Umberto's permission, then to Turin in the hope of her being healed via the Shroud. The Shroud is taken out of its casket, its seals are broken, and Josephine is allowed to put her hand in beneath the silk covering. But it is not unrolled. Although there was no immediate change in Josephine's condition, she later recovers to lead a normal life, though she will die young.

**April 21, 1988:** At 5 a.m., the Shroud is secretly taken out of its casket. At 6.30 a.m., Dr. Tite and the representatives of the three laboratories assemble at the cathedral. In the cathedral sacristy, the Shroud is unrolled and shown to assembled representatives of the three chosen radiocarbon dating laboratories. Professor Testore of Turin Polytechnic, Gonella's choice as textile expert in place of Mme. Flury-Lemberg, reportedly asks 'What's that brown patch?' of the wound in the side. Professor Riggi and Professor Gonella reportedly spend two hours arguing about the exact location on the Shroud from which the sample should be taken. During the event, it is Riggi who seems in charge of the operation.

**APOSTOLATE FOR HOLY RELICS · PO BOX 21301 · LOS ANGELES, CA. 90021**

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