



*He will return with his immense heart, with his heart of fire, his poor man's soul and his smile. He will return ! And the Immaculate Heart of Mary will triumph !*

## PILGRIMAGE TO TURIN

### THE MONSTRANCE OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

ONE year, the brothers put the Crib under the altar and our Father wrote an admirable *MYSTICAL PAGE* about it: « Here, as in Venerable Chevrier's painting at Saint-Fons, the Crib, the Cross, the Tabernacle are evoked. My gaze continually goes from one to the other to contemplate, adore and love your grandeurs. »

This year, our gaze goes from the Crib to the Cross and to the Holy Shroud that dominates the portrayal of the five mysteries of the Rosary as a monstrance on its "pedestal". In the Crib, « everything is joy and tenderness of hearts, in touching poverty »; « does not this Crib call to mind the most singular, the most marvellous instant of all of human history, O Jesus, when You came into this world? » (CRC n° 28, January 1970, p. 8)

The Holy Shroud, on the other hand, reminds us that « this newborn Child in the charm of Christmas will soon be the Man of Sorrows nailed to the Cross, giving expression to the complaints of His dereliction. Sweet Jesus, is it possible? Yes! It is true, because it was necessary! Your Incarnation had no other intention, no other goal than this hill of Golgotha where men, Your brethren, raised You up and put You to death. Let us not forget, all of us who are rejoicing around Your Crib, that we are like slaves whom You are coming to free, like condemned men to whom You are coming to grant a pardon, but at the cost of unspeakable sufferings » that the Holy Shroud puts, as it were, under our eyes.

« It is our sacred egoism that makes us sing with joy when You must already be suffering in this cold, humiliated in this contempt and this abjection, knowing nevertheless that it is for You the beginning of a life of crosses and martyrdom.

« I encompass Your Crib and Your Cross with a single gaze. It is like an ascension, and I understand that at Bethlehem You were the seed buried in our earth in order to be one day raised up in the sky like an ear of wheat in the fullness of its maturity. From the Incarnation to the Redemption, the line of Your life is straight, simple, perfect. You then became what Bethlehem announced, the Bread of our souls, procuring eternal life for them. » (*ibid.*)

#### REAL PRESENCE

But at what price! This is what we contemplate on the Holy Shroud: at the price of Your Precious Blood that still impregnates it. We can see it with our eyes and the scientists have confirmed it: « *The blood stains are composed of haemoglobin and also*

*give a positive result to the albumin test.* » We shall soon be able to imitate the crowds of pilgrims who have venerated this renowned Relic throughout the centuries in Jerusalem, Constantinople, Chambéry, and Turin. In Turin, we shall join this crowd Saturday and Sunday, 15 and 16 May, and fall to our knees as Doctor Barbet did, on Sunday 15 October 1933, on the steps of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, when twenty-five prelates presented the sacred Relic « *for the veneration of the immense crowd that had congregated in the square behind a double cordon of foot soldiers standing at attention* », as he relates.

« *I was in front of them, on the cathedral steps, and His Eminence, Cardinal Fossati, Archbishop of Turin, very kindly placed the frame on the edge of the steps for a few minutes, so that we could have a good look at it. The sun had just gone down behind the houses on the other side of the square; the bright but diffused light was ideal for observation. I therefore saw the Shroud in broad daylight, without the barrier of glass, at a distance of less than a metre, and suddenly I experienced one of the strongest emotions of my life. For I saw, without expecting it, that all the wound images were of a clearly different colour from the body as a whole; and this colour was that of dried blood which had impregnated the cloth.* »

The colour was « *more marked on the sides, on the head, on the hands and on the feet; paler, but still very perceptible, on the countless wounds left by the scourging... But the surgeon understood, beyond any possibility of doubt, that it was blood with which this cloth had been impregnated, and that this blood was the Blood of Christ!* »

Barbet hastened to add: « *I may have erred through being excessively concise. But I am not so naive as I appear.* » Then he concluded: « *Of course, a rigorous scientific proof that these stains are of blood would require (if allowed) physical or chemical tests.* »

Today, those tests have been done. It remains for us to imitate the attitude of this holy and learned man, Pierre Barbet, a Catholic surgeon. Relating how, in 1933, to his great surprise, « *the crowd broke into applause* », he added:

« *As for me, a Catholic and a surgeon, my soul overwhelmed by this sudden revelation, and enthralled by this real presence which was inescapably evident to me, I went down on my knees and adored in silence.* » (*LA PASSION DE NOTRE-SEIGNEUR JÉSUS-CHRIST SELON LE CHIRURGIEN*, 1950, pp. 32-33 – *The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to the Surgeon*)

**THE PRICE OF OUR SALVATION**

From His Agony on, Jesus lost a great deal of Blood, for a reason mentioned only by St. Luke, « *with the unsurpassable precision of a clinical physician* », writes Barbet; perhaps this was because St. Luke had questioned St. John, the beloved disciple who did not fall asleep on the Mount of Olives:

« *And being in an agony, He prayed all the more earnestly. And His sweat became as drops of Blood trickling down upon the ground.* » (Lk 22:44)

The scourging has left countless marks on the Holy Shroud, where we can count the blows raining down on His shoulders, on His Back, on His loins, His thighs and on the calves of His legs; we can also count the marks of the blows to His chest and to the front of His legs.

The sacred Head has left blood clots that testify that Jesus' Head was engaged, squeezed into a helmet of thorns from the nape of the neck to the forehead and that the thorns penetrated the scalp. Long streams of blood flowed over the forehead, the cheeks and the nape of the neck. The blood flowing over the temples, in the form of an upside down "V", shows that it took two directions alternatively, as the Head, which was buffeted by the soldiers, tilted to one side or the other.

Having arrived at the summit of Mount Calvary, Jesus was stripped of His garments and placed on the cross. The Holy Shroud enables one to imagine the scene by contemplating the Wounds « *dug* », as Psalm 22 says, in the hands and feet of Jesus by the nails, and in His Heart too by the thrust of the spear.

The imprint of the hands bears witness to unspeakable suffering. Only four fingers are visible: the thumb is hidden in the palm by a contraction reflex, which testifies to the most atrocious pain imaginable, caused by a lesion of the median nerve. « *One would need to be blind*, Barbet wrote, *not to see in all these blood images the pure effect of reality.* »

**TO LOVE AND TO MAKE LOVE LOVED**

« *O Jesus, allow me to tell You that You have committed follies for Your little spouse.* » Thinking of all these sufferings, these dreadful pains that Jesus foresaw and premeditated throughout His life and willed out of love for her, to save her,



THE NAPE OF THE NECK : « *On close consideration, the nape of the neck is seen to have been more tormented than the rest and the thorns more deeply embedded, with thick clots of blood matted with the hair.* » (Testimony of the « Poor Clares » of Chambéry, in the year of grace 1534)

the predestined soul is filled with that charity which inflamed the heart of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus at the age of thirteen, and which in a few years would entirely consume her.

« *One Sunday, looking at a photograph (sic!) of Our Lord on the Cross, I was struck by the Blood which fell from one of His divine hands, and I felt great sorrow at the thought that this Blood fell to the ground with nobody hastening to collect It, and I resolved that I would stay in spirit at the foot of the Cross to receive the divine dew flowing therefrom, with the understanding that I would then have to pour it over other souls... The cry of Jesus on the Cross constantly resounded in my heart: "I thirst." Those words enkindled within me an unknown and very vivid ardour. I wanted to slake the thirst of my Beloved, and I felt myself consumed with the thirst for souls.* » (St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus of the Holy Face, *STORY OF A SOUL*)

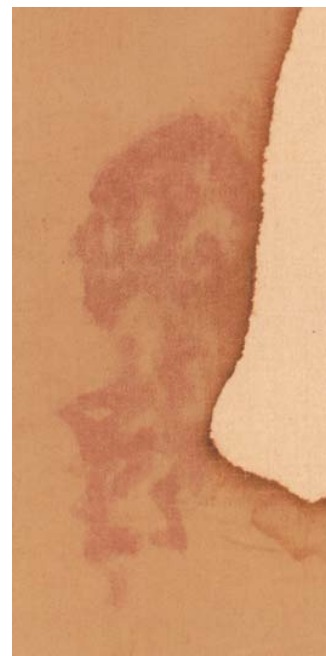


THE SMALL OF THE BACK : on the dorsal image, a transversal flow of blood comes from the lower cave vein (on the left for the reader), by the Wound of the right side, after His being lowered from the Cross and placed in a horizontal position for the burial.



*On the right* : THE WOUND OF THE HEART. On the frontal image, it is possible to see the clots of a massive flow of blood that gushed out from a Wound that is oval in shape, slightly oblique and opened by the thrust of the soldier's spear.

*On the left* : THE WOUND OF THE HANDS. The blood clot at the left wrist is not due to a single vertical flow, but two clearly distinct flows separated by an angle that bears witness to the movements of Jesus Crucified, who struggled against asphyxia, in order to hoist Himself up and to pronounce the seven words, a whole Gospel in themselves.



**THE LORD'S BURIAL**

Attention is first of all concentrated on the study of the linen cloths that enveloped the Body of Jesus after His agonising death, and their arrangement in the tomb on Easter morning. On this point, as on so many others, John appears to be in serious disagreement with the Synoptics. In fact, the Synoptics relate the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea in a *sindôn*, a sheet which wrapped the whole Body of Jesus. (Mk 15:46; Lk 23:53; Mt 27:59).

John, on the other hand, who writes as an eyewitness, does not mention this *sindôn*. According to him, Joseph and Nicodemus « took the Body of Jesus and bound it with *othonia*. »

The verb *dein*, « to bind », and the plural *othonia*, generally translated as « narrow bands », seem to exclude any identification of these bandages with the *sindôn* of the Synoptics and, *a fortiori*, with the venerable cloth of Turin (Jn 19:40).

At the Congress of Bologna (27-28 November 1981), I made a contribution which figured in the *ACTS* of this Congress, but which seems to have remained a dead letter due to the authority of Fr. Feuillet, the learned professor of exegesis from my seminary years at the *Institut Catholique de Paris*. Certainly, it will seem very bold to object to his interpretation of the Johannine account of the empty tomb on Easter morning (Jn 20:3-10).



THE WOUND OF THE FEET: a single nail pierced the two feet, the one crossed over the other. That is why only the right foot marked the Shroud with a complete imprint of the sole, from which a flow of blood has spilt over onto the linen, visible *on the left*. The left foot (*to the right*) has only left an imprint of the heel, because the extremity of this foot rested on that of the right foot.

This is so especially because his exegesis is regarded as definitive by a conglomeration of associations more or less devoted to the « scientific » study of the Holy Shroud and the defence of its authenticity.

For my part, I followed the path opened by the Abbé de Nantes, my master, which begins by setting aside all “concordism” tending to interpret the accounts of the Resurrection according to the Holy Shroud, and by resolutely distinguishing the two disciplines: exegetical science and sindonology, not to oppose the one to the other as Fr. Braun did in 1939-1940, but so that, through comparing the one with the other, further light might be shed.

*Brother Bruno of Jesus.*

NEXT MONTH :  
**THE JOHANNINE « SOUDARION »,  
 A NEGATIVE  
 OF THE DIVINE GLORY.**