

HOLY WEEK

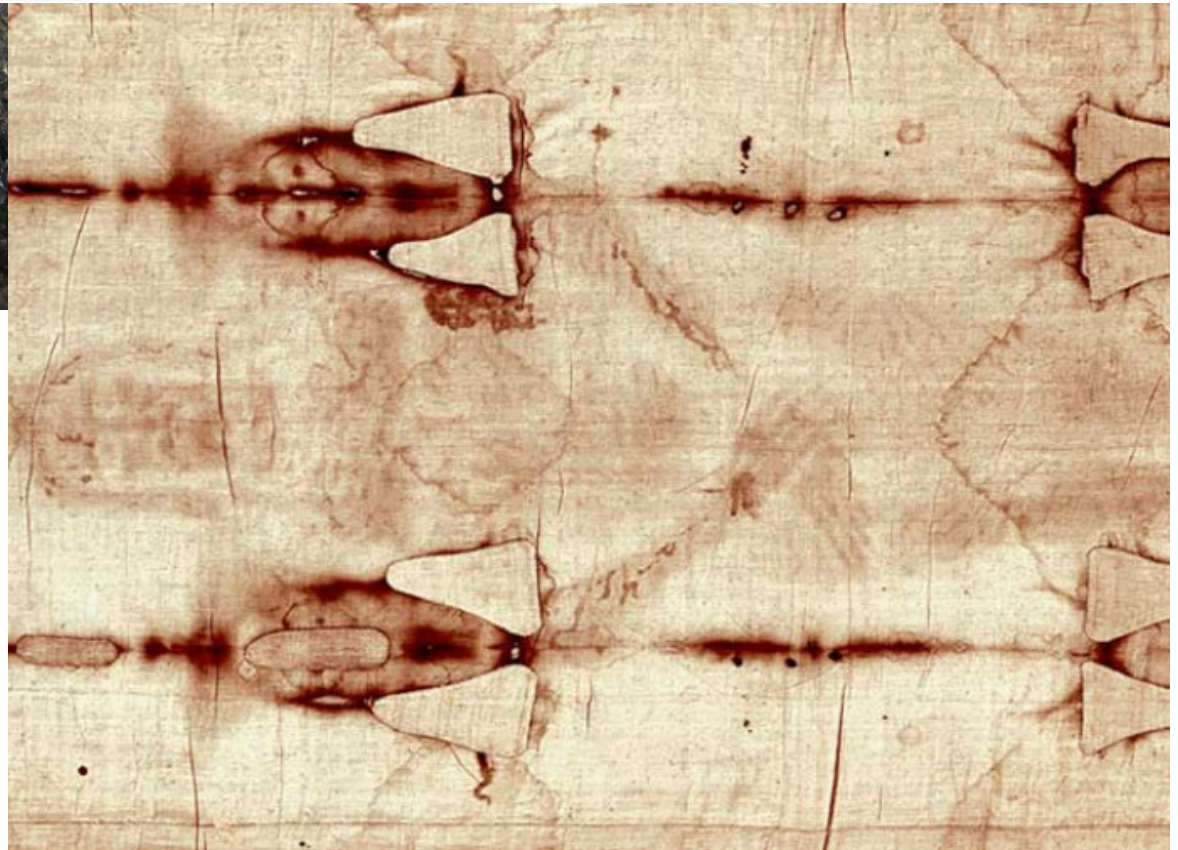
Turin Shroud unexpected Easter extension

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An unexpected piece of news has filled enthusiasts of the Holy Shroud with joy: Holy Saturday, April 11, the Archbishop of Turin, Msgr. Cesare Nosiglia, will lead a liturgy of prayer in front of the revered relic, in a live broadcast. In making the announcement, Archbishop Nosiglia said that “during this time of contemplation, the image of the Holy Cloth which reminds us of the passion and death of the Lord and also opens our hearts

to faith in his resurrection, will be displayed for everyone all over the world”.

In this period of suffering and loneliness, we all need to feel that the light of the resurrection reaches us and heals our wounds, both physical and spiritual. We are all experiencing a new form of total disorientation, one we did not anticipate. We have lost our certainties, our points of reference. We are all ill, some in body, some in spirit, some in both. The Shroud helps us find something solid to hold on to, like a sailboat in a stormy sea. Like the cloak of Jesus, which the sick woman wanted to touch in order to be healed.

The Shroud reveals all the devotions of the Stations of the Cross in one single

image: the traces of the flagellation, the crowning of thorns and the beatings that prelude the death sentence; the dirt left in the wounds of the knees, caused by the falls; the traces of the crossbar on His shoulders made by the cross. We can imagine His Mother's torment and the emotion of the pious women in seeing the atrocious sufferings to which Jesus was subjected. We are enabled understand the tradition that hands down the delicate gesture of a woman, Veronica, who wipes the face of Jesus: the Shroud, that inexplicable image on a cloth inspired this episode. We can also see the reopening of the wounds caused by the scourging, when Jesus' tunic is removed; the holes left by the nails on the wrists and feet, an evident trace of the crucifixion; the sign of death, in the great wound in the side from which blood and serum flow. Finally the deposition and burial in the white sheet procured by Giuseppe d'Arimatea.

We need the physicality of those wounds, which make Jesus so close to us and ignites the hope - which becomes certainty - that life does not end with death. "Love is stronger," said Bishop Nosiglia. And he continued: "This is the Easter announcement that the Shroud brings to revive us and fill our hearts with gratitude and faith". "Faith in His resurrection", these are the comforting words of the Archbishop of Turin.

The Shroud not only reveals the wounds of the Lord. We see the image of his body, composed and solemn in death, but imprinted in a mysterious way by a phenomenon that has stained the linen in the same way light does. The remaining blood crusts, partially redissolved, testify to a contact time of about 36-40 hours. The hours of the evening of Good Friday, of Holy Saturday, of the dawn of Easter. Not more. That body did not remain in the sepulchre, there are no signs of putrefaction.

At a time when we feel the fear of death more strongly, which hovers in the risk of contagion, which we fear considering the disease of those who are struggling in the hospital, which snatches many loved ones from our affection, the Shroud wraps us with

the warmth of love of the One who gave His life for us.

Archbishop Nosiglia reminds us strongly: "Yes, the love with which Jesus gave us His life and that we celebrate during Holy Week is stronger than any contagion, any trial and discouragement. Nothing and nobody can ever separate us from this love, because it is faithful forever and unites us to Him with an unbreakable bond. Yes, the Shroud repeats incessantly to our hearts: love is stronger".

The vision of the Shroud on Holy Saturday will comfort our hearts which are fasting from the Eucharist. When we can return to receiving communion, it will be with new awareness, after suffering this distance from the Body of the Lord. That body that our eyes see imprinted on the Shroud, dripping with the blood of its wounds, that we are all responsible for. But the closed eyes of the Face, serene among so many torments, speak to us of the mercy of God, who does not want to look at our sins.

"The love that the Shroud shows us supports us in believing that in the end light will overcome the darkness of discouragement and fears," said Mgr. Nosiglia, "and life will overcome death and every other evil that torments humanity. ".

Being before the Shroud, therefore, contemplating that body, that blood, that face, we can feel the great comfort of this certainty: love is stronger.