



# EOHSJ Orange Area Spirituality Newsletter

## Presentation of the Lord; Lenten Prayer; the Shroud of Turin



### The Feast of The Presentation of the Lord February 2nd

Jesus' presentation in the Temple reflects how the Holy Family fulfilled the Old Covenant. According to Old Testament law a sacrifice had to be offered in the Temple when a child was consecrated to the Lord; it was as early as the fourth century that Christians first commemorated the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. In modern times the feast day is combined to honor the purification of Mary, and the presentation of the child Jesus to God in the Temple. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph go to the Temple offering two turtledoves for Mary's purification. The Gospel explains that the prophet Simeon and prophetess Anna -



were at the Temple that day and, among all the children and mothers coming into the Temple, only Simeon recognized Jesus as the Christ Child. Simeon took and held Jesus and exclaimed a hymn of thanksgiving, "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel" (Luke 2:29). Like Mary, Jesus did not have to undergo these rituals. But His parents willingly complied to pay tribute to Jewish laws to avoid any possible scandal and, in so doing, demonstrated profound humility. One can only wonder how astonished that Mary and Joseph were: first pondering the shepherds who miraculously arrived to adore and praise Jesus - and now Simeon singles out Jesus as the Savior of the world! But there was also anguish as Simeon tells Mary "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted and you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Luke 2:29).

*Prayer: Almighty and ever living God, we humbly pray that, as your only begotten Son was this day presented in the temple, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

### Ash Wednesday and the Beginning of Lenten Prayer February 22nd

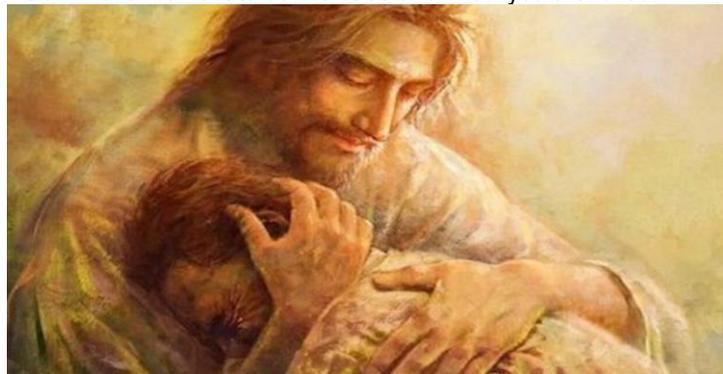
Ash Wednesday is one of the most important dates on the liturgical calendar because it marks the beginning of Lent. This period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving helps us prepare for the joyous Resurrection of our Lord. Because prayer and increased personal spirituality are central to our faith - and a cornerstone of our Order - Lent is the perfect opportunity to improve our relationship with God and we shouldn't hesitate to ask God "what does my soul need?". You may be familiar with an 'early monastic' method of contemplation - *Lectio Divina* - to pray by using scriptural readings, meditation, and prayer. It's quite easy and fosters communion with God and helps to increase our understanding of the living word of God. It begins by taking time to get quiet and comfortable and become aware of God's presence. Then, with a simple beginning prayer (e.g. "Lord help me grow in the fruit of the Spirit to be closer with You"), God is invited to be present with you during this time of prayer. One approach:

**Read:** Select a Bible scripture passage to read slowly (3-5 verses); out loud if possible. In this reading familiarize yourself with the basic meaning of the passage; what it says to you; how it makes you feel. Avoid analyzing . . . savor the essence . . . 'feel' the words.

**Meditate:** Re-read the passage, lingering over a person or word or phrase that speaks to your heart. Reflect on how it might apply to your own life. What - or who - does the text bring to mind?

**Pray:** Read through the passage once again, allowing the scripture to lead you into a prayer response to God. Talk with God about what's come to mind and how he might be inviting you to respond.

**Contemplate:** Rest in the awareness of God's presence; remain open to anything that might stir in your heart. Expect nothing. Enjoy a moment of fellowship with God that goes deeper than words. Relax in this moment to be with God and know you are loved.



*"In prayer we experience, more so than in other dimensions of life, our weakness, our poverty, our creatureliness, because we stand before the omnipotence and the transcendence of God. And the more we progress in listening and in dialogue with God, for prayer becomes the daily breath of our soul, the more we perceive the meaning of our limits, not just before the concrete situations of every day, but in our relationship with the Lord, too."*  
Pope Benedict XVI



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### Turin Shroud: The Burial Cloth of Jesus

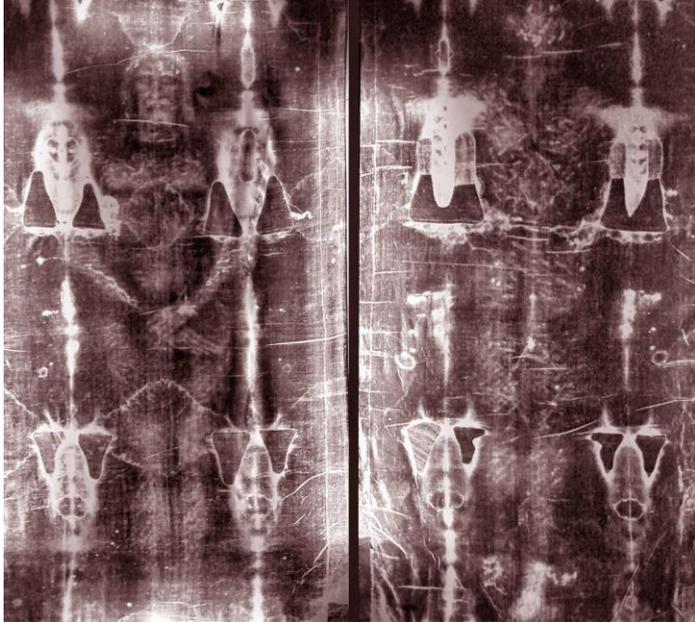
A 'winding sheet', or burial shroud, was a cloth in which a body was wrapped for burial. The Turin Shroud measures 14' 3" in length by 3' 7" in width. The Shroud has undergone significantly more scientific testing than any other relic in human history. A 1978 STURP Investigation, and subsequent scientific studies, have been remarkably thorough. Except for a questionable 1988 carbon dating event, all the evidence points to the Shroud burial cloth of Jesus. Many historians feel the Shroud wrapped a man who was crucified



in a manner like Jesus, who underwent a unique type of crucifixion including being crowned with thorns, being flogged, and being pierced in the side by a spear similar to a Roman pilum. The confluence between the Shroud and the Gospels is so close that it is difficult to imagine how it could be anyone other than Jesus.

### Turin Shroud: Evidence

It is improbable that the Shroud is a medieval forgery as some people suggest. The origin of the fabric has been dated to between 300 B.C. and A.D. 400; the pollen grains date back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. There are no paints, dyes or other pigments on the cloth,



and the anatomical precision of the blood stains—which are real human blood that congealed on the Shroud before the formation of the image—are in precise anatomical correlation to the image itself.

*"By means of the Holy Shroud, the unique and supreme Word of God comes to us."*  
Pope Francis

### Turin Shroud: Evidence (Cont'd)

The blood stains on the Shroud match those of the Sudarium (facecloth) of Oviedo which touched the same face. The match of the blood stains themselves, the blood type, and the male genetic character suggest that these characteristics came from the same face that touched both cloths. There are three probative elements pointing to this being the Shroud of Jesus:

1. The material of the Shroud, the pollen grains on it, and the coins on the man's eyes all have an origin in First Century Palestine.
2. The blood stains come from a crucifixion event identical to the one described in the four Gospels.
3. The Shroud's image suggests a 'trans-physical' burst of vacuum ultraviolet radiation was the catalyst, but the light necessary to reproduce the image exceeds the maximum power released by all ultraviolet light sources available today. The time for such a burst would be shorter than one forty-billionth of a second, and the intensity of the ultraviolet light would have to be around several billion watts. This suggests a transformation of Jesus' body from a physical to a spiritual-glorified one.

### Turin Shroud: 3-Dimensional Image of Jesus

Based on measurements taken from the Shroud, Professor Giulio Fanti of the University of Padua created a 3-D model. It is the actual size of the 'Man of the Shroud', created by following the precise measurements taken from the cloth in which the body of Christ was wrapped after the crucifixion. Jesus' height was concluded as nearly 5' 11"; hundreds of wounds are evident from the brutal flagellation and other aspects of Jesus' crucifixion. "On the Shroud," the professor explains, "there were 370 wounds from



the flagellation without considering the wounds on his sides. In total we can hypothesize a total of at least 600 blows to head and body."

### Turin Shroud: Jesus' Sixth Wound

In the 12th century Saint Bernard of Clairvaux asked Jesus in a vision what His greatest suffering was, and the Lord answered: "I had a grievous wound on My shoulder while I bore My Cross on the Way of Sorrows, that was more painful than the others, and is not recorded by men." In the 20th century another saint confirmed this sixth wound: Saint Padre Pio. For more than 50 years he bore the wounds of Christ on his body. Padre Pio once had an interesting conversation with Karol Wojtyla, the future Saint Pope John Paul II, wherein Father Wojtyla asked which wound of his stigmata caused him the most pain, expecting Padre Pio to say it was the wound in his chest. Instead, Padre Pio replied, "It is my shoulder wound, which no one knows about and has never been cured or treated."

*"The Holy Shroud . . . the most splendid relic of the passion and the resurrection."*  
Pope St. John Paul II