

Good morning everyone!
Greetings to our audio and now we also have YouTube listeners!

In our last talk, the first in this series on “Apparitions for the World,” I focused on the lesser known prelude to the vision of the Miraculous Medal. Mary appeared to young St. Catherine Labouré to lay the foundation, as it were, of all the subsequent modern apparitions. I want to continue on the premise that her apparitions are unique pieces of a large mosaic, not rubber stamps of the same message. Only by laying out all of them can we view the mosaic to see the larger message.

Since each of her apparitions is a book in itself, and we are confining ourselves to one hour talks in a nineteen week seminar, I had to determine which apparitions should receive special attention for understanding the mosaic. For awhile, I wasn’t thinking of presenting the pieces in chronological order. After all, after the work is finished, no one really cares if the artist had first worked on this corner or that corner. Although that’s quite true, we’re not talking about bits of colored stone, but living pieces. As we saw in our Genesis talk yesterday on the garden, God loves living things, for as Scripture declares so many times, our God is a “living God!”

Each of these “apparitions to the world” is a world in itself, just as each of the Gospel parables can present almost infinite angles for meditation as one turns a diamond in the sun. The beauty of each one is rich and spectacular. As I pondered this great mosaic before me, I seemed to perceive that it’s like the Shroud of Turin, it’s three dimensional, almost as a living body before me. The persons to whom each revelation are made, are living persons, and they are living in historical times, and we who live long after them, need to appreciate that they were pioneers bravely breaking new trails for us, who thanks to them, now travel along paved highways. So let’s begin with the next set of apparitions that were given after the three gifts that were given to the Daughters of Charity, namely: the miraculous medal, the green scapular and the red badge of the Passion.

Through a Contemplative Order

The Daughters of Charity were the first official active community of Sisters in the Roman Catholic Church, thanks to the inspiration of St. Vincent Paul in the 1600s. And it can be argued that in 1830 they were the most active of all active congregations. Let’s leave it at that, or we’ll get sidetracked comparing charisms and Constitutions. Now the next series of apparitions for the world were directed to a Carmelite Nun who is at the other end of the spectrum, because it can be argued that Carmelites are the most cloistered of all contemplative congregations. All cloistered congregations are bound by papal enclosure, but St. Teresa of Avila established even stricter rules for this charism which tries to emulate the desert fathers who retired to the wilderness or the caves of mountains like Mt. Carmel in the Holy Land, to offer themselves in perpetual worship in atonement for many who don’t love Him or obey Him.

The chosen soul is another French girl, not from the farm as was Zoe Labouré, but a city girl who worked as a seamstress. She was born on the feast of St. Francis, Oct. 4, 1816, and so her parents named her Francoise. I will upload a PDF of her life to the website if you’d like to read her life and vocation which is very interesting, but suffice it to say here that she entered Carmel at the age of 23 and took the name of Sister Marie StPierre of the Holy Family. Some books translate this as Sr. Mary of St. Peter, but her title was “of the Holy Family”. Her name was Mary St. Peter. In Catholic France almost up to the present, every other girl was named “Marie,” and “Joseph” for the boys, so they often get called by the second name. It’s likely that within the walls of the cloister this nun was called Sr. StPierre, or Sister Peter.

Devotion to St. Peter was massive in France at this time because it represented a political struggle in the French Church concerning allegiance to the Pope. The French Revolution was still fresh. The Masonic ideology by which the Catholic royalty were massacred, Catholic churches smashed and thousands of Catholics guillotined, had been temporarily overthrown but it was still alive and well in books, philosophies, schools and the minds of many people. “Liberty, Fraternity, Equality” was the slogan of the revolution, taken right from the Constitution of the Freemasons. Kings could not be above peasants. That defied “equality”. This democratic idea seemed reasonable to many Catholics, especially the educated class, including the clergy, and it carried over into their view of the papacy. The pope should not be above the faithful. This was more complicated by political situation of the Vatican. For many centuries the papacy governed a large portion of what would now be modern Italy. It wasn’t just the revenue of the papal states that were needed to help with the expenses of the Vatican.

a) Traveling expenses: In those days it wasn't possible for a delegate to pick up the phone, or take a short trip by car of plane to a country. Travel was by horse or ocean. It was lengthy and expensive and often dangerous. You couldn't send one man alone. A whole retinue had to travel. It cost the pope a lot of money to govern the Church.

b) The territory of the papal states also provided physical protection, because the Europe of the middle ages was made up of a multitude of feudal kingdoms and they would go to war with one another. The pope had to have a standing army.

So in the minds of the politically “enlightened” ones, the pope represented the royalty, and all royalty needed to go. Many men in those days entered the priesthood because it was a step up in society, a chance for a good education, and a nice steady income with honorable living quarters. Many bishops came from these ranks of worldly priests, who were only devout in appearance, like lambs in sheep's clothing. The devout Catholics were not fooled. They resented this attitude of contempt for the primacy of the one who held the keys of Peter. They composed hymns in honor of the pope. Catholic journalists went to war with the pen against each other. It was a very hot topic. And thanks to the fact that it was discussed in detail, the concept of infallibility, which had never been clearly defined, finally became a dogma in this century.

But now it's 1839 and a very holy young woman is embarking on a life of prayer. She would die before her thirty-third year in the agony of cancer of the tongue, offered in atonement for blasphemy. Her spiritual life would be enriched with special insights into the Holy Family—the motherhood of Mary, the greatness of St. Joseph and the abasement of the Son of God who became a helpless infant—with explicit messages from Jesus who asked for reparation for blasphemies against the Holy Name of his Father and his own Holy Face which represented not only his humanity, but the Triune Godhead. I'll quote directly from a passage from pp. 80-81 [*The Holy Face Speaks*]

On the 26th of August, 1843, the day after the celebration of the feast of St. Louis, who is specially honored as . . . the avenger of the divine majesty outraged by blasphemy . . .

[Jesus] unfolded his Heart to me . . . “My Name is everywhere blasphemed, even little children blaspheme it.” And he made me understand how that dreadful sin pierced and wounded his Heart, *more than all other crimes*. By blasphemy, the sinner outrages him to his Face, attacks him openly, and pronounces upon himself his own judgment and condemnation. Blasphemy is an empoisoned dagger [or arrow in other translations] wounding his divine Heart continually; he told me that he would give me a golden dagger [or arrow] with which to wound him delightfully, and heal the poisonous wounds caused by sin.

Our Lord dictated to me the following the prayer . . . assuring me that every time I said it, I would wound his Heart most lovingly.

May the most holy, the most sacred, the most adorable, the most unknown and the most inexpressible Name of God be adored, praised, blessed, loved and glorified, in heaven, on earth and in hell, by all creatures formed by his sacred hand, and by the loving Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar. Amen.

As I was not a little astonished when our Lord said and in hell, he had the goodness to make me understand that his justice was there glorified . . . and that he did not only mean the place where the wicked are punished, but also purgatory, where he is loved and glorified by the suffering souls. . . . At that moment, I seemed to behold flowing from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, wounded by this golden dagger, torrents of grace for the conversion of sinners.

It's tempting to quote the whole book here. There are many beautiful passages like this, but a lot of the book describes the massive trouble she had in convincing her Prioress and the Archbishop of Tours that God wants the people to be instructed in reparation, not just doing penance for one's *own* sins, but in offering atonement for other sins to obtain fresh graces for souls to help them convert.

This is old hat to us, but it wasn't a common doctrine before 1830. In the Miraculous Medal apparitions, people were encouraged to ask Mary's intercession: Pray for us who have recourse to you [for ourselves or others]. And now these apparitions urge us to pray hard for others. In the context of the piety of the times, God wanted the Archbishop to establish a confraternity for the Reparation for Blasphemy and of the Profanation of the Sunday.

Veronica’s Veil

Sister continued to receive more than fifty revelations, mostly concerning Veronica’s veil and the Holy Face. Here is one: Our Lord gave me to behold in a most vivid manner, the pious Veronica, who, with her veil, wiped his adorable Face covered with spittle, dust, sweat and blood. My divine Savior gave me to understand that the wicked by their blasphemy renew all the outrages once offered to his divine Face; these blasphemies, poured forth against the Divinity, like the vile spittle of the Jews, disfigure the Face of our Lord, who offered himself as a victim for sinners. Then he told me that I must imitate the zeal of the pious Veronica who so courageously passed through the crowd of rough soldiers to offer him some relief, and whom he gave me for my protectress and model. By endeavoring to offer reparation for blasphemy, we render Christ the same service as this heroic woman, and he looks upon those who act thus, with the same complacency as if they had performed this act during his Passion. I observed that our Lord had much love for this holy woman. For this reason he said that he desired to see her particularly honored in our monastery, and he invited me to ask any grace that we wished, in the name of the service rendered him by Veronica.

The Archbishop didn’t know how to evaluate “private” revelations “for the world.” Ultimately, the “Work of Reparation” that the Lord was requiring was nothing less than public adoration of the Holy Trinity, not behind the closed doors of private homes or churches, but in the social life of the nation, in its schools and marketplaces. There was too much adulation of “the god of this world.” If the hierarchy would approve the prayers, then men and women could join together to pray them in public, hence the Lord’s repeated request for Confraternities of Reparation. The prelate didn’t want to suffer any ridicule among the clergy for introducing new-fangled devotions given to an obscure nun. He hesitated, going back and forth, encouraging, then humiliating, then encouraging, then rebuking poor Sr. Marie StPierre. But of course, she just offered up all her sufferings in reparation for blasphemies.

Meanwhile this archbishop confided in a friend of a layman, a wealthy lawyer, who persuaded the archbishop to allow him to pay for the printing and distribution of some of the prayers and messages of our Lord. These were like seeds that would fly across France and blossom in many hearts. This man’s name was Leo Dupont, whom Pope John Paul would declare Venerable, and now his cause for beatification is advancing steadily. Leo Dupont would work more miracles than any saint on record, and he would do it by using oil from a lamp burning before the image of the Holy Face. Specifically, what image?

The First “Public” Holy Face

An event occurred in 1848 which came to be called the “Miracle of the Vatican.” The pope was not present. He had to flee for his life from the anti-Catholic Italian forces who were influenced by Masonic ideals. Blessed Pius X sent word from his refuge in Naples to expose the ancient Veil of Veronica throughout the Christmas octave (Dec. 25, 1848 —Jan. 6 1849) along with a large relic of the True Cross. Many persons anxiously gathered to pray for besieged Christendom. Because the “Veronica” (as the veil was called) had long ago faded into a featureless brownish smudge on its aged piece of silk, it was respectfully curtailed with another silken veil, even during rare public expositions.

Suddenly, on the third day of the exposition, a clear image of the Holy Face, diffused with “living” color, appeared *between* the two veils. The Face appeared distinctly, illumined by a soft light. The features assumed a death-like hue, and the eyes, deep-sunken, wore an expression of great pain. Tears flowed from the partly lowered eyelids. The Canons immediately notified other clergy and called in many more laypeople to come and witness the “vision” which lasted three full hours. It was December 27th, feast of St. John the Beloved, the author of the Apocalypse.

There were no handy cameras in those days. A pen-and-ink sketch was made, a notary summoned, and a certificate drawn up with witnesses, who attested that the likeness truly resembled what they had seen (although the image was only in black and white). The “Holy Face” miracle produced a massive sensation. For days, the prodigy was the sole topic of conversation at Rome. Copies of the ink sketch were printed on white silk and disseminated throughout Europe and beyond. In that era, of course, there were no automated means of making color reproductions in quantity. The silk copies were touched to the “Veronica” (*Vera Ika*: True Icon) and stamped with an “authentication” bearing a Latin inscription officially attesting that the

image resembles what had been observed during the prodigy of the Christmas octave:

*Vera Effigies Sacri Vultus Dominio Nostri Jesu Christi
Qua Roma in Sacrosancta Basilica S. Petri in Vaticana*

Sensations normally pass away as quickly as they come, but this public “vision” gained an amazing momentum which continued for decades through one of the copies which reached the parlor of the lawyer in Tours during Holy Week of 1861. It was a gift of the prioress of the Tours Carmel where Sr. Mary St. Peter had died six months before the “Miracle of the Vatican.”

Leo Dupont had it framed, and devoutly lit a lamp in front of the silken copy. On the morning of Holy Saturday a lady came to his home-office on business relating to his work as an attorney. He noticed that she was suffering from eye trouble. She said that doctors had been unable to help her. In imitation of a custom of a church Rome, in which oil from a lamp that burns before an image of Mary has healed the sick, he urged the lady to rub some oil from the Holy Face lamp over the painful area. An instant cure! It was the first of thousands of miracles to follow.

In a year’s time, by May of 1852, Leo had given away more than 8,000 vials of oil from his lamp. By 1854, 60,000 vials of oil had been distributed. Letters from all over the world—many addressed simply to “The Holy Man of Tours, France”—arrived on his doorstep daily. It was before this “Vatican Holy Face” that he passed the remaining twenty-five years of his life ministering to an unending stream of pilgrims. With the precision of his legal profession he kept careful records of the prodigies worked with the oil. Ordinarily there were several healings a day, besides conversions and other favors.

The devotion excited the whole nation. Even the pope exclaimed over it. But the local bishop of Tours tried not to notice. Why? Because the miracles performed before the image of the Holy Face at Tours were obviously an uncomfortable corollary to the *Revelations* of the Holy Face made to the Carmelite of Tours. Those locutions, with their political messages, were at odds with the policy of compromise pursued by the French hierarchy who were eager to stay in the good graces of the unstable government. Last week we already touched upon the presence of Karl Marx in the Communes of Paris and how the ideology of these revolts developed into the Communist Manifesto which now guides countries all over the world. [*Mary’s Apparitions for the World: Paris, Rue de Bac*]. The unfolding of political events especially in the last months of the life of Sister Mary St. Peter involved the impending revolution. The toppling of the French monarchy in 1848 had repercussions in Italy, the Vatican States, and the status of the Pope. Heaven was very concerned about Communism. God wanted prayers to prevent its rise.

On the 29th March 1847 Sr. Marie StPierre wrote:

God has imposed on me a new mission, at which I would be disturbed were I of any consequence, but as I am nothing but a feeble instrument in his all-powerful hand, I am not alarmed. He has commanded me to cross swords with the Communists who, as He told me, were the sworn enemies of the Church, and of his Christ. He gave me to understand that the greater number of these renegades were born in the bosom of the Church, of whom they now declare themselves the most bitter enemies. Then He added: “I have already made known to you that I hold you in my hands as an arrow, now I will shoot forth my arrow upon my enemies. To combat them, I give you the arms of my Passion, my Cross, of which they are the enemies, as also all the other instruments of my sufferings. Wage war against them with the simplicity of a child, but with the courage of a valiant warrior. For this mission be signed with the blessing of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”

Leo, the layman, was humiliated all his life by the hierarchy, but he ascribed it to a spiritual immaturity. He wrote to a friend: Let me confide something to you. When I witnessed the indifference and opposition to the “Work [of Reparation]” of the Holy Face, I was at first bewildered, especially because so many miracles had attested to its power. Eventually I came to the conclusion that the world was not yet ready for this devotion. For you see, my friend, devotion to the Holy Face is the highest and most exalted worship there could be, since its aim is to adore the Triune God Himself. In the Face of Christ we see mirrored the very attributes of the Blessed Trinity, as well as his human perfections. When we pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus we are essentially concerned with his humanity, but, I repeat, when we look on the Face we are concerned with the Divinity, for “the Head of Christ is God” as St. Paul says. [*The Holy Man of Tours* by Dorothy Scallan ©1952, ch. 25, p. 184]

Sunday

As I said, this Carmelite received over fifty revelations. One series concerned keeping holy the Lord's day:

"My justice is aroused because of the profanation of the holy day of the Lord. I seek a victim!" From that moment, it seemed to me that our Lord, accepted the act of abandonment which I had made him, and I perceived that He was going to take possession of my entire being, in order that He, Himself, would in some manner, suffer in me to appease his justice; then He commanded me to receive Holy Communion every Sunday, [rare in those days] first as an honorable amend in reparation for all the servile work performed on this sacred day; second, to appease his justice ready to strike mankind, and to ask for the conversion of sinners; third, to obtain a respite from all manual labor on the Lord's Day. Then it seemed to me that our Lord invited me to offer his Holy Face to his heavenly Father, in order to draw down mercy. [*The Holy Face Speaks* p.179-180]

Eventually, after her death, Confraternities would spread throughout the world, especially popular with men. In America you can still find "Holy Name Sunday" on some calendars. On the Second Sunday of the month men would sit together in a section of the Church at Mass with a banner of the Holy Face. They had all gone to confession, and they all received Holy Communion at that Mass for the public intention of offering atonement for blasphemies against cursing and for the sins of manual labor on Sunday. They took pledges to avoid using bad language, and to say certain ejaculatory prayers when they heard bad language if they couldn't persuade their co-workers to stop using the Lord's name in vain. They also promised to refrain from working on Sunday or attending places which required someone to wait on them, such as restaurants. The parents of the future St. Therese of the Child Jesus *and the Holy Face*, made a pilgrimage to Tours and were quite caught up in this whole pious movement. The father of the saint would make every Sunday a little piece of heaven for his family. They would take long walks, have a picnic in the park, and window-shop downtown. But Louis Martin would not allow his family to enter a shop or purchase anything on Sunday.

The "Miracle of the Vatican" Holy Face image is specially connected to God the Father. The initial *Revelations* were concerned with the Holy Name of the Father, not the name of Jesus. The concept of fatherhood carries over to the *papa* in Rome, the "father" of Christendom who rules the Church as Vicar of Christ [Son of God, and "vicar of his Father"]. The *Revelations* were made to a nun named Sr. Peter; the prodigy occurred in St. Peter's basilica, to people who were praying for the persecuted successor of Peter. The emphasis on fatherhood is also noticed in the frequent mention of St. Joseph in the *Revelations*. Sister St. Peter of the Holy Family was especially devoted to the head of the Holy Family. In that very era the Pope was consulting bishops and laypeople about a formal declaration of St. Joseph as the "protector of the universal Church." This was precisely the era in the which the whole concept of authority was undergoing a cosmic challenge in the revolutions which were overthrowing various systems of government.

There is also a fatherly aspect in the sketch of the "Miracle of the Vatican." Even though it is portrayed as the Face of Jesus during the *via dolorosa*, the expression is majestic, commanding, awe-inspiring. The eyes are downcast as of a parent who is grieved and disappointed with the behavior of his children. Respect, adoration and reparation are due to right authority!

St. Therese

When reading the *Revelations* of Sr. Marie StPierre for the first time, many have the impression that it is *not* the first time. Where did they hear this or that insight before? From the more famous French Carmelite who was born a few decades later, St. Therese the "Little Flower." Why was the name of the Tours Carmelite never mentioned by St. Therese or by the early testimonies and her commentators? Because in Catholic France of the late nineteenth century the writings and sayings of the holy nun of Tours had become common lore. The thousands of miracles at Tours had been attracting thousands of pilgrims for decades where more healings took place than at Lourdes. To the early, contemporary readers of the *Story of a Soul* it was perfectly obvious that the humble little Sister Therese of the Holy Face was only offering a fresh "angle" about prayer and Reparation which had been revealed from heaven to Sr. Marie StPierre.

At Tours, Ven. Leo Dupont had lamented that too many were drawing near to the Holy Face to receive a bodily cure but not to express gratitude or to contemplate the wounded Face and offer reparation. St. Therese was concerned that in a milieu still

infected with Jansenism, some kept their distance from the Holy Face out of dread of reproaches from an angry God. It was her mission to inspire confidence in the ability of the ordinary person to offer acceptable reparation by *re-revealing* God’s Holy Face, aglow with love and mercy. It will be the Martin family that will make popular another image of the Holy Face, not the faded veil of Veronica, but the Shroud of Turin.

The Second “Public” Holy Face

A “Holy Face,” on woven linen, began capturing the attention of the world in 1898. Another Catholic lawyer is involved, Secondo Pia. He was a self-taught expert in the newfangled invention of the camera which helped him in his work with art displays. King Umberto appointed him to be in charge of an exposition, and permitted him to make the first-ever photograph of the Shroud of Turin. The plates “revealed” that the image was a negative! The positive was stunningly evident in the dark-room. Thenceforth, the nearly forgotten relic became the object of world-wide interest, enthusiasm and veneration.

Celine Martin, the sister of Saint Therese of the Holy Face, played a role in the publicity through her award-winning painting which was reproduced as holy cards by the millions. These historical events are summarily listed in the chronological table. It is not our intention to relate numerous details which are commonplace knowledge today. The Shroud of Turin is a world-class tourist attraction, not only for devout Christians, but for millions of persons who are curious about this enigma to scientists. Popes took the image very seriously:

- Pope St. Pius X expressed the desire that it be venerated in the homes of all Christian families.
- Pope Pius XI gave pictures [photos] of the Holy Face from the Shroud to youths saying, “They are pictures of the divine Son of Mary; they come, in fact, from that object known as the Shroud of Turin; still mysterious, but certainly not the work of any human hand.”
- Pope Pius XII asked that knowledge be spread and veneration be given to “so great and sacred a relic.”
- Pope John XXIII, on seeing it said, “This can only be the Lord’s own doing.”

By 1970, after the distraction of two world wars and a cold war, the Shroud was actually forgotten and the upcoming generation was not informed about it. Once again, God used a Catholic layman, this time he chose a Canadian businessman named Gordon Deery. At the prompting of grace he combined his salesman expertise to personal devotion and almost single-handedly mailed thousands, even millions, of copies of the Shroud of Turin to pastors and bishops all over the world until the Shroud became a household word among the devout. Many wanted to learn more about it.

In the pre-Internet days, various groups and individuals began working on different aspects of the Shroud without any awareness of each other. They naturally concentrated in their own disciplines—history, physics, religion, chemistry, biology, forensics, microscopy, anatomy, art, textiles, and more—without coordinating their findings. Things mushroomed in the mid-1970s when a [carbon dating] controversy arose about its authenticity, causing the Shroud to make world headlines. This led to intense scientific investigations at university and professional levels. The object of piety of devout Christians became an exciting challenge that sparked the interest and curiosity of non-believers.

Thanks to the work of professionals, the assumption that the Shroud’s “photographic negative” had been made by anointing oils rubbed on the dead body was thoroughly disproved. The mysterious image is compared to what might be made by a nano-second scorch, because only the outermost fibers of the linen are affected. No one has been able to reproduce anything like it. Furthermore, the frontal image on the cloth is three-dimensional, while the dorsal image is not. Most fascinating is the latest explanation proposed by Dr. John Jackson of Colorado Springs, Director of the Turin Shroud Center. He explains that the image is a sort of video or motion picture:

The body and blood images were formed directly from a human body that was enveloped in the Shroud because the image aligns vertically over the features of a human body in the supine position. Gravity was a significant factor in the production of the image, meaning that whatever produced the image must have been able to transfer body surface information *only* in the vertical direction. The Shroud was in two different draping configurations when the body and blood images were formed, because the body image features and the bloodstains are in significant mis-register. Therefore, the bloodstains were

transferred in the initial draping configuration, but when the body image was generated, the Shroud apparently flattened, so that the images of the sides of the face are several centimeters inside the bloodstain pattern. Dr. Jackson believes that the cloth collapsed into and through the underlying body structure.

This would require two assumptions: that the body became “transparent” to its physical surroundings and, secondly, that a stimulus was generated that recorded the passage of the cloth through the body onto the cloth as an image. According to Jackson’s hypothesis, this stimulus would be radiation, capable of interacting physically with cloth. Radiation effects on the cloth could begin, until it intersected with the body surface, one-to-one mapping between a given point on the body with a point on the cloth; in other words, the image is well-resolved. As the cloth entered the body region, the fibrils on the surfaces of the cloth received a greater dose of radiation than those inside, leading to a superficial body image. Also as the cloth collapsed, internal stresses caused it to bulge away from the sides of the body and at the top of the head; hence, no image is visible there. [a condensed citation from *Sacred Blood, Sacred Image: The Sudarium* p.166-168]

There are many other scientific disciplines that give us fascinating information on the shroud. Here are extracts from *The Roman Observer* May 5, 2010:

In a review of an article by Professor Avinoam Danin’s book: *Botany of the Shroud: The Story of Floral Images on the Shroud of Turin* (Israel 2010: Danin Publishing, pp. 104) he explains that what has occurred on the Turin Shroud is similar to the process of drying flowers between the pages of a book. Hundreds of plant images have remained imprinted on the cloth.

Danin was able to observe that there is “an almost continuous carpet” of more than 300 flowering heads that were arranged in an orderly fashion on the forehead of the “Man of the Shroud.”

Also decipherable are the images of nine thorns--considered among the “most ferocious” plants in Israel, once “used by Arab farmers to make the ‘knife’ of the plow”--- It was a helmet—not a crown—of thorns that was used to torture the Man.

A reed laid alongside the body of the “Man of the Shroud”; and partial images of a rope or cord.

“March-April is the time of year when some ten of the plants identified on the shroud are in bloom.”

In recent years scientific attention has been focused on a forgotten tomb-cloth which had come to light in a mountain town of Oviedo, Spain which helped to identify the Man of the Shroud of Turin as none other than Jesus Christ:

The Shroud of Turin and the Sudarium of Oviedo, although separated for most of their history, had been placed on the *same* human victim of crucifixion. The bloodstains, blood type, manner of death, facial characteristics and other considerations not only match on both cloths, but are also consistent with the biblical accounts of the passion, death, and burial of Jesus. Their study has engaged the efforts of more than forty dedicated and reputable scientists for many, years, who have not been able to find a single piece of evidence that would prove the invalidity of the cloths, not even the radiocarbon testing [*Sacred Blood, Sacred Image: The Sudarium*, p. 89, and *passim*]

The Third “Public” Holy Face

I now want to jump into our own 21st century. Atheistic communism is a bloody attack on the dignity of man, even as it attacks the personhood of God. God is Three Persons, and we have been given three precious images of the Face of God. The first we saw at the Vatican had paternal aspects, the second of the Shroud is obviously that of Jesus who died for us, and then a third image emerged: colorful, elusive, never quite still enough to be photographed, a slight smile, and can we say a bit “special” as if there is reference to the *Spiritual* dignity of every person [even the handicapped]?

This third “Holy Face,” on woven byssus, was “discovered” by journalists at the turn of the millennium and began capturing the attention of the press. Once again God employed a nun and a layman. A little white cloth bearing the Face of Christ had been hanging for 500 years in the church of St. Nicholas in Manoppello (mah-no-PAY-lo), Italy. The local citizens honored their *Volto Santo* with an annual procession on the Feast of the Transfiguration, but the place had never been a tourist attraction —

until Paul Badde [*bab-day*], a talented German journalist began writing about it. He ascribed the discovery of the mysterious “Holy Face” to the diligence and persistence of a Trappistine nun.

“Without her, I and many other people would never have heard of the image on the cloth. Without her, this book would not exist.” (*The Face of God* by Paul Badde, p.57)

The German Cardinal Ratzinger followed Badde’s publications with keen interest and personal conviction from the outset. Soon after Ratzinger’s election as Pope Benedict XVI, he made a public pilgrimage to the little town in September 2006 to kneel in prayer before that mysterious image. Once again the Face of Christ was identified with the Vicar of Christ. It was a fresh call from St. Peter to worship face to face, in loving adoration, “the God who has a human face.”

Sr. Blandina had learned the art of iconography, and painted the Face of the Shroud countless times. In 1979 she read an article in a German Marian magazine (*Das Zeichen Mariens* “The Sign of Mary”) by Renzo Allegri which mentioned some similarities between the Face of Turin and the Face of Manoppello. She immediately noticed numerous points not mentioned by Allegri. She obtained transparencies to superimpose the two images. For fifteen years she sent pictures and comments to different artists and firms hoping to inform the public of this treasure. Finally, in 1999, an Innsbruck publisher released an entire book (*Der Schleier von Manoppello und das Grabtuch von Turin* by Sr. Blandina Paschoalis Schlömer, OCSO) and its popularity prompted an editor to send his best journalist to Manoppello “in search of a story.” Once again a “Holy Face” set in motion an ever-increasing stream of books, articles and pilgrimages. Even from Japan, people are journeying to Manoppello to kneel and gaze in wonder at an image of God—“not made by hands.” Paul Badde, in his book *The Face of God*, introduces the “lost” or “forgotten” image to the reader with all the excitement of a mystery thriller:

Up to the time the new Saint Peter’s was built [early 1600s], this image drew millions of pilgrims to Rome. A relic that was also an enormous source of revenue. During the so-called jubilee years, it used to be shown to people, in front of the church, every Friday and on all feast days and, later, even every Sunday and daily during Holy Week....In those days, people did not come to Rome for the sake of the popes; people made the pilgrimage to Rome in order to see the Face of the invisible God. In those days, people who were coming back from Jerusalem adorned themselves with a palm frond; the sign of the pilgrim to Santiago [St. James church in Spain] was, to this day, a shell. But pilgrims visiting Rome, on their way home from Italy, stitched onto their cloaks little pictures of that very same image of Christ, the “*Sancta Veronica Ierosolymitana*.” the “holy Veronica from Jerusalem.” Veronica painters constituted a particular trade in Rome, sufficiently large and important to organize their own guild. Since the rebuilding of Saint Peter’s, however, it was as though that very pillar had swallowed up inside it the most precious relic in all Christendom [*The Face of God*, p. 69-78].

Why did the Veronica cease to be a major attraction at Rome? Badde becomes a detective, tracing the secret journey of the image to its hiding place in Manoppello.

Up until a few years ago the Abruzzis [a mountain range] were still the most distant part of Italy. Far into the twentieth century, until the freeway was built, this part of Italy was the end of the world. Palermo was nearer—by ship. In contrast to that, Manoppello might have been on the far side of the moon. Drive there from Rome by way of the ordinary roads, and not the freeway, then you still get some idea of that. In that area there are *trulli*, Stone Age huts built of untrimmed stone, in which people still live. In short, you could hardly take the image anywhere that was farther away than Manoppello, and there was scarcely anywhere better for hiding it. (p. 151-154)

In Supplement B [*The Holy Face Speaks*] the biblical significance of the byssus fiber of the cloth is discussed, and in Supplement C the dual identification of the first and the third Holy Face with the one same Veil of Veronica is explored. In this section, the Trinitarian aspect is highlighted. The First Holy Face was only seen briefly in color for a few hours during the “Miracle of the Vatican,” and then popularized in a black-and-white ink sketch. The Second Holy Face is, appropriately, the colorless image of a corpse. But the Third Holy Face is viewed from both sides of the cloth in full color that can be described as “living.” The image almost scintillates on the golden sea-fiber, eluding photographers who claim that the expression on the Face doesn’t hold still and just *cannot* be captured by any camera. Is this not a prerogative of the ever-

moving, invisible Holy Spirit who hovered over the watery abyss while God separated the land and the sea, and today over the sea of nations, eager for the conversion of the world? All three Faces are of a wounded man, but the expression on the Third Face is so tender. Instead of blood, tears, and suffering, the green eyes convey candor and innocence:

...an inexplicable peace in his wide-open eyes. Bafflement, amazement, astonishment, too; and a mild pity. No pain, no anger, and no curse on his lips.

Paul Badde says that the slightly opened mouth seems to be asking “Would you like to be my friend?” A case could be made for associating the image with a resurrected man entering into a new grace-filled life, a Pentecostal movement. As Badde remarked:

It looked like the face of a man
who was just waking from sleep.

God is alive! He speaks, thinks, loves! The powerful theme of “personhood” runs through every locutionary *Revelation* concerning the Holy Face, and especially in the image of the Third Face. The whole concept of reparation is founded on the principle that God relates to us as a friend to a friend, face to face. Reparation is really nothing less than the process of restoring friendship after there has been some breach of trust, or comforting a friend who is grieving over the loss of another friend. The message of the Holy Face/Holy Head *Revelations* is a great antidote to the concept of God as an impersonal energy force without feelings, speech or cognition. [confer the Holy Head or Sacred Head revelations to Theresa Higginson].

The appearance of a third “Holy Face” also loops back to France. The *fleur de lis* is the national symbol of France. Unlike the majority of nations which employ an animal symbol to represent it (e.g., eagle, lion), France chose the tri-petalled lily-flower to mark itself as an adherent of the pure doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity. France was the first nation to publicly embrace the Christian faith by acknowledging the authority of the pope of Rome, who crowned King Charlemagne in the year 800 to rule as the “eldest daughter of the Church.”

When did the *Vera Ika* disappear from Rome? Exactly at the time that the Holy Roman Empire of Christian Europe was disintegrating. Protestants were *protesting* against the authority of the papacy. Perhaps the underlying motive for the theft of the sacred veil was Catholic fear that Protestants would invade Italy and burn Rome. Perhaps the underlying concern was the sumptuous building projects in Rome which were attracting pilgrims eager to obtain a jubilee indulgence. The controversy over indulgences had been the spark that scandalized so many Christians. Did well-meaning persons want to remove the Veil that was a lucrative tourist attraction, to induce the worldly Roman hierarchy to concentrate on spiritual matters? Or did God take away his own Holy Face so that people would better understand that Rome was not the seat of his image on cloth, but the seat of his Vicar whom the Protestants were spurning?

Why was this miraculous Holy Face discovered at this particular moment in history? It comforts a troubled world. God is with us. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter is illuminating the dark night of social chaos.

Lord Jesus, remain with us. *For the sun is setting. It is almost evening. . .
And they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread* (Lk 24).

In Biblical time, the setting of the sun marks the beginning of a new day. The great day of Trinitarian and Eucharistic worship is close at hand!

Laying Foundations of Reparation

Looking back at the variety of *Revelations* made to Sister StPierre we see that foundations were being laid for Mary’s future apparitions. She would call us to offer prayer, penance, and the rosary because these would be the weapons to reclaim the world for Jesus Christ.

I understood that, as the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the visible object offered to our admiration to represent his immense love in the most Blessed Sacrament of the altar, likewise, in the Work of Reparation, the Face of our Lord is the sensible object

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offered for the adoration of the Associates, to repair the outrages of blasphemers who attack the Divinity, of which it is the figure, the mirror and the image. In virtue of this adorable Face, offered to the Eternal Father, we can appease his anger and obtain the conversion of blasphemers [Sr. Marie StPierre, *The Holy Face Speaks*, p.155]

Our Lord showed me that the Church, his spouse, is his mystical body, and that religion is the face of this body; then He showed me this face as the butt of all the scoffs coming from the enemies of his Holy Name; and I saw that blasphemers and sectarians renew in this “holy face”, all the opprobrium of the Passion. I beheld, also, by this divine light, that the wicked, in uttering profane words and in blaspheming the Holy Name of God, spat in the divine Face of our Lord and covered it with filth; that all the blows aimed at the Church and at religion by sectarians, were the renewal of the numberless buffets which our divine Lord received in his Holy Face, and that these unfortunate wretches drew forth perspiration in drops of blood from his divine Face, by thus maliciously destroying his works. [*ibid*, p. 156]

The world was being instructed in the art of reparation

of the value of the Holy Family
of the importance of the Papacy

France was particularly being instructed because:

in the 19th century it was the gateway to the world evangelism (India, Africa, Asia)
and a hotbed of radical fervor (for and against Christ)

St. Therese would be the new doctor for the up-and-coming generation. She and we are all standing on the shoulders of those who went before us. We are called to be saints to fight a great battle

LaSalette

The next “apparition to the World” would be at LaSalette and this grace for the world was acquired by the prayers and penance of the humble Carmelite [Sister Mary St. Peter]:

Monseigneur would not take any decided step to forward this work; his prudence preventing him taking the initiative. I saw quite plainly that there was neither hope nor consolation for me but in prayer, and the intercession of Mary, our most powerful advocate; and I recited the rosary every day to obtain grace for France, and also the establishment of the Reparation in all the cities of the kingdom. All my prayers, all my Communions, all my aspirations and all my thoughts were offered for the establishment of this work, so dear to my heart. I desired, if it were possible, to proclaim it all over France, by making known to my countrymen the misfortunes which menaced them. O, how I suffer in being the only confident in a matter of such importance, and which I am obliged to keep secret within the walls of the cloister! O holy Virgin, I implore you to come to some pious soul in the world, and make her a partaker of that which has been communicated to me in reference to France!

[*The text continues*] We all know in what a striking manner the Blessed Virgin heard this prayer. Mary again showed that she is the “Refuge of Sinners”; she interposed herself as an afflicted and loving Mother, between the wrath of God and guilty France. She presented herself to her divine Son whom she had nurtured in his hours of infancy, and begged of him to extend his mercy to these, her other children; and that mankind might not be in ignorance of her intervention, she descended to the earth. With her own feet has she tread our soil, and has chosen the most humble messengers, who have since become so celebrated, Maximin and Melanie, two poor peasants of that part of the Alps, called “LaSalette.” Through their infantine mouths, the Blessed Virgin has rebuked her people, as she lovingly styles France, her cherished kingdom, reproaching them for their impiety, so openly manifested by their contempt of the commandments of God, notably by blasphemy and the profanation of the Sunday. “If my people will not submit, I shall be forced to let fall the avenging arm of my Son; He is so justly irritated that I can with difficulty restrain his anger. Oh! if you knew how much I suffer for you!” And the tears streamed from her eyes; the image of the crucifix was on her heart; the instruments of the Passion image of the crucifix was on her heart; the instruments of the Passion, the hammer and the nails on either side, lay on her breast. [*The Holy Face Speaks*: chapter, *LaSalette*]

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We'll discuss the apparition of LaSalette in the next conference.

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