

STERA, Inc. and the Museum of the Bible

Museum of the Bible Pre-Exhibit Conference – Russ Breault

The Museum of the Bible in Washington DC held an important conference on the Shroud of Turin as a prelude to the opening of a spectacular new interactive exhibit: **Mystery and Faith—The Shroud of Turin** and is slated to open on February 26 through July 31 of 2022. Brian Hyland, curator for the exhibit gave a highly informative preview. The exhibit will be characterized by arches suggesting an ancient cathedral. Once inside the exhibit, there will be five areas covering different aspects of the Shroud. Most importantly and with great excitement are six interactive displays that will engage young people who love technology. The exhibit will be an out-of-the-park home run and I hope all those intrigued by the Shroud will make plans to visit. Take time to see the rest of the museum as well which will take an entire day. Many other sites in Washington will make it a terrific family trip.

Speakers for the conference were Dr. Cheryl White who did a marvelous job about important historical references clearly showing a historical trail far predating the alleged carbon age of 1260 to 1390.



Fr. Peter Mangum and Dr. Cheryl White demonstrate the folding of the Shroud to VIP guests
Photo ©2021 Dr. Cheryl White

Father Peter Mangum presented a moving presentation on the Crucifixion using the Ricci Crucifix based on the Shroud from the Richard Orareo collection. The crucifix can be seen at the Cathedral of St. John Berchmans in Shreveport.

I was pleased to present the work of STURP with absolutely perfect and perhaps divine timing. The date of the conference was Saturday, October 9, 2021, exactly 40 years to the day when 30 members of the STURP team gathered in the Palmer Auditorium at Connecticut College in New London on October 9, 1981 and presented over the course of two days various scientific papers based on their landmark research. It was a profound moment for me as I was there in 1981 which solidified my forty-year involvement with the Shroud. I was delighted to present a summary of their work 40 years later. I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to give honor to the STURP team whose tireless effort to reveal the mystery of the Shroud still propels work on the Shroud to this day.

Joe Marino was on hand as the preeminent expert on carbon dating to answer the many questions that came up during the Q&A session on this aspect of the cloth's enduring mystery.

The Pope, as the Vicar of Christ on earth, in order to ensure that each country has a tangible sign of his care for the Lord's entire Flock, appoints an Apostolic Nuncio (Ambassador of the Holy See) as his personal and official representative both to the Church in the United States and to its government. Holding that position is His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre who spoke with great praise for the Shroud, the museum, and the upcoming exhibit. It was an honor to have him present for this event.

Last to speak, but certainly not least, was Myra Adams, a frequent writer on the Shroud. Myra was a sponsor of the event through her Sign from God non-profit organization established to promote awareness of the Shroud SignfromGod.org. Pulling all the speakers together was Chief Curator of the Museum, Jeff Kloha, who skillfully introduced each speaker and was the glue for the entire event.

Museum of the Bible – Joe Marino

Dr. Cheryl White, professor of history at Louisiana State University at Shreveport, was the 1st speaker. She said she could have either started with 1353 when Geoffrey de Charny built a small chapel to house the Shroud in France or circa AD 30-33 with the description in John 20.

Dealing with the Shroud entails dealing with both theology and history. Are we dealing with the natural or supernatural? There are always questions. Where was it for 1300 years? Do we have direct or indirect evidence of its existence? What are the primary written records? Many dots have to be connected across time. Was it in Edessa in the 6th century? Is it the same as the "burial linens" that were said to have arrived in Constantinople on August 16, 944? Is it the same as the cloths that were mentioned as being in Constantinople in 1201 and 1204? There is always a vocabulary issue. There are many references to the burial linens of Jesus across the centuries. It's not easy to try to discern which of those references could be referring to the Shroud that is in Turin today.

Dr. White then recounted some of the documented history of the Shroud from 1453 through 1978. One has to distinguish between narrative history and critical history. The latter can sometimes be opinion only. One has to be cognizant of the context of the cloth in the history at that time. Cardinal Charles Borromeo of the 16th century was an intellectual who had been involved in the Council of Trent, which was trying to correct the abuse of relics at the time. Yet, he was a firm believer in the authenticity of the Shroud.

What about the missing years after the 1204 mention until the Shroud was exhibited in 1355? Many believe the Shroud had been stolen in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. Pope Innocent III wrote a letter specifying all the relics that had been stolen but didn't specify the Shroud; he excommunicated those who had stolen relics. Many pilgrims were venerating the Shroud without any real knowledge about it. What medieval artist could have conceived of and executed the complexity and perfection of the image?

Next was Russ Breault, president and founder of "Shroud Encounter." Russ always gives engaging presentations with numerous slides and this one was no different. He recounted the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) examination 1978 in which they spent five days around the clock subjecting the Shroud to the best science and technology of that period. He noted that although STURP's mission was to find out how the image was formed on the cloth, they were unable to come up with an answer, but concluded that the Shroud was not the product of an artist. He related that there thirteen positive tests for blood, there was no image underneath the blood, which meant that the blood went on first; that would make sense if the cloth were authentic but would not make sense if an artist produced it. He showed a slide of the many unique characteristics of the image. He addressed the C-14 test of 1988, which produced a date of 1260-1390. He reviewed the work of STURP's chemist Ray Rogers, who found evidence that the C-14 sample contained a spliced cotton/linen thread (the Shroud is all linen) as well as madder root dye and starch, indicators of repair work.

Very Rev. Peter Mangum, rector of the Cathedral of St. John Berchmans in Shreveport, LA, was the third and final speaker. He started off with a quote by Bl. Sebastian Valfre of the 17th century, who did some repair work on the Shroud and who said, "The Cross received Jesus alive and returned him dead. The Shroud received him dead and returned him alive." As such, the cross is a sign of contradiction and the Shroud a banner of triumph. He mentioned the quote of Pope John Paul II, who said the Shroud is "a mirror of the Gospels." The Shroud is thus a confirmation of faith and a wonderful tool of evangelization. Science points to the veritable impossibility of artistry. The cloth is revered by Catholics, Protestants and the Greek Church. All of the wounds shown on the Shroud match to the descriptions in the Gospel accounts. There is no sign of decomposition in the image. The Shroud is Good News. Divine Providence has somehow bridged the physical with the metaphysical and the natural with the supernatural. Yet, many questions remain. However, the image is meant to point to the one person in history that it can fit.

Museum of the Bible Hosts Exhibit Preview Event; Highlights STURP of 1978 Dr. Cheryl White

On Saturday, October 9, 2021, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. hosted a special speaker event to preview the forthcoming Shroud of Turin exhibit, which opens on February 26, 2022. The event featured three main speakers – Dr. Cheryl White, Russ Breault, and Father Peter Mangum, who each addressed various aspects of Shroud studies. Dr. White gave an overview of the known and speculative history of the cloth, Russ Breault focused on the findings of the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) from 1978, and Father Mangum gave a theological reflection on the Shroud as a mirror of the Gospel narratives about the wounds of Jesus Christ.

Also present and making some remarks was Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, and Curator Brian Hyland gave a presentation on the exhibit design planned for the February opening. The main speakers were then joined by Shroud scholar Joe Marino for a panel discussion, led by Chief Curatorial Officer Jeff Kloha. The day's event was sponsored in part by Sign from God and Myra K. Adams.



Myra K. Adams of Sign From God.org, one of the sponsors of the event, with Russ Breault
Photo ©2021 Myra K. Adams

The main exhibit grand opening, set for February 26, 2022, will feature another educational gathering, and will again highlight key speakers. More information on that event is forthcoming from the Museum of the Bible.

You can watch a video of the October 9th event at this link: [Shroud of Mystery YouTube Video](#).

You can visit the Museum of the Bible Shroud Exhibit website at this link:
[Mystery and Faith: The Shroud of Turin](#)

Playing in the background during parts of the event was the [Tribute to the STURP Team 1978-2008](#) video I produced in 2008 for STURP's 30th anniversary. You can watch it at the above link. It is over 140 MB in size so it may take a few minutes to download.

We hope to meet some of you at the Grand Opening of the exhibit on February 26, 2022. See you there!

Barrie Schwartz