

**Name:** Joe Marino, Researcher and Author, U.S.A.

Questions:

1. **When** and **how** did you first hear about the Shroud?

In 1977, I saw a book by Thomas Humber titled "The Fifth Gospel." It had a picture of the negative (lifelike) of the face on the cover and asked the question, "Is this the Face of Jesus Christ? I bought the book, read it in one sitting, and although I did not realize it at the time, was hooked for life.

2. What interested you about the Shroud?

At the time I saw the book, I was agnostic but doing a lot of reading about religion and philosophy. Since Jesus is obviously one of the major figures in world religions, it was a topic I really could not pass up. Also, that face was so haunting but at the same time mesmerizing. To think that we might have something that touched Jesus and actually showed us what he looked like was pretty awe-inspiring, even if it were the Jesus of history and not the Jesus of faith. But being an agnostic, I was totally open to it being a fake. I was going to go wherever the evidence led me. However, after reading the book, the scientific evidence even back then, for me, was pretty convincing that it was probably authentic. And if it were authentic, it would point to the idea that Jesus was who he said he was, which would have repercussions not only for the claims for Christianity, but for all the religions of the world. Regarding Christianity, it would be antidote to the assertions that Jesus never existed and/or was not crucified.

3. Do you believe the Shroud is likely the burial cloth of Jesus Christ, a fake relic, or are you uncertain what to believe?

As it is the most intensely studied object in human history, I believe that if it were a fake, it would have been discovered by now. I wholeheartedly believe the Shroud is authentic, based on the combined scientific evidence, my personal experiences and the experiences of others.

4. What, if any, actions did you take after you first encountered the Shroud (e.g., conduct research, contact people involved with it, etc.)?

I started trying to find all the books and articles listed in the bibliography of the book. I also contacted the Holy Shroud Guild for materials, including slides.

5. Have you ever seen the Shroud at any of the exhibitions? If yes, which years?

I saw it in 1998 and 2000.

6. What did you experience when you were in the presence of the Shroud?  
A feeling of awe since I believed it wrapped the historical Jesus.

7. Have you ever been involved in any scientific study of the Shroud? If yes, please describe **what motivated** your work and **why**.

My late wife, Sue Benford, and I did research to determine if a 16<sup>th</sup> century patch skewed the 1988 C-14 dating of the Shroud. The theory was examined by the late Ray Rogers of STURP, who had thought he would prove the theory wrong in 5 minutes but ended up supporting it. My wife and I also co-authored several articles that were published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal "Chemistry Today." One dealt with the C-14 dating and one dealt with image-formation. We were motivated to study the C-14 question because, assuming the cloth was authentic, until the reason was found why the 1988 showed it to be medieval, most people would not believe it was even possible that it had wrapped Jesus.

8. Have you ever written anything about the Shroud, either factual or fictitious? If yes, please describe **what motivated** your work and **why**.

I have written a monograph focusing on Jewish burial customs and the Shroud. I also have written several articles. I also co-authored various articles with my late wife and 2 articles with a retired NASA scientist. I've just always felt the urge to share knowledge about the Shroud and writing articles is one of the best ways to do that.

9. Do you favor or believe any of the current theories on how the image got onto the cloth? If so please name the theory.

I currently do not favor any of the theories. The article that I co-authored with my wife about image-formation dealt with the role of calcium carbonate in the formation of the image, but we did not scientifically postulate what might have caused the image. Since it is most likely a divine action mixed with natural factors that will never be able to be duplicated in the same way, it may never be known what caused it. If Sue were answering this question and offered her idea from a spiritual point of view of how the image got onto the cloth, she would say that in the context of John 10:34 ("Is it not written in your law, I have said 'You are gods?'"") and John 14:12 ("I solemnly assure you, the man who has faith in me will do the works I do, and greater far than these..."), Jesus, with his heightened spiritual abilities, is trying to enlighten us about our own. (John 2:19, "Destroy this temple (his body)...and in three days I will raise it up" suggests that Jesus' own power was involved in the Resurrection.) Like most smart husbands, I never totally disagreed with my wife.

10. Do you feel that you have a calling or vocation to be involved somehow with the Shroud? If yes, please describe **what motivated** you to make a commitment to the Shroud and **why**.

I have experienced a strong calling to be involved with the Shroud ever since I read my first book. It has just had an irresistible attraction for me. I started giving lectures in the early 80's, as that was another good way of educating many people about it. I started contacting the scientists who were involved, eventually attended conferences, and published both print and online newsletters/bulletins. I always just wanted to be involved in any way that I could because I've always wanted to know anything and everything about it. I also believe that my wife and I were called to be together to work on the Shroud. (Sue believed that as well.) To make a long story short, we both experienced incredible converging synchronicities and eventually, my heart, but more importantly, my conscience compelled me to leave the monastery I was in at the time. Even though a lot of people believed it was a mistake (to put it lightly) for me to have left, I have never regretted my decision. Together, Sue and I accomplished much more than we would have been able to do as individuals. The significant research we did confirms for me at least, that I made the right decision.

Please describe below any other *personal* reflections, experiences, insights, or thoughts about the Shroud of Turin that you would like to share.

There has not been a day since I saw that first Shroud book that I have not at least thought about it. The Shroud was instrumental in my having joined a monastery as well as moving from St. Louis, Missouri to Columbus, Ohio to be with Sue, who I met only because she called me to get information about the Shroud.

In 1986, while in the monastery, I attended my first Shroud conference (Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania), which had 7 speakers, 5 of whom believed the Shroud was probably authentic and 2, Walter McCrone and another skeptic, who believed the Shroud to be a hoax. McCrone presented his painting theory, which he had been advocating for over 5 years at that point. (In the question and answer session, I asked McCrone how his supposed forger was able to incorporate details that would not even be known for several hundred years until certain instruments, eg., the microscope, were invented. His answer: "I'm not going to answer that."!! It is hard to believe that a scientist who is expecting to be taken seriously would give that as a response to a legitimate question.) The Associated Press article about the conference highlighted McCrone's point of view and made it look like this was the most recent revelation about the Shroud. The article really made me angry that it was slanted and misleading, and I immediately decided I would write a letter-to-the-editor. On the day the story came out, I had a full day of duties at the school run by the monastery. When my duties were over, I was literally rushing to my room to write the letter when I experienced something out of the ordinary--an inner voice that told me to go pick up trash.

Picking up trash on the grounds was not a job actually assigned to me but something I did on my own because no one else was doing it. The last thing on earth I wanted to do at that point was to pick up trash, but as I knew the voice was coming from outside of me and as it was so compelling, I went out and picked up trash. After about an hour, I had picked up all the trash on the grounds and started rushing back to my room to write that letter. Just as I headed for my room, I heard a car door close in the parking lot where I had just finished. When I turned around, I saw the man who was the Regional Vice-President of the big CBS affiliate radio station in St. Louis, KMOX, a 100,000-watt station that could even be picked up in Canada at times. He was in the habit of coming to the monastery church to pray. I asked him if he had seen the article about the conference. He said that he heard about it but hadn't actually read it. I then proceeded to tell him how biased and misleading it was. He proposed putting me on the radio about it. They did a Sunday program called "The World of Religion," which was recorded at the station's studios and then sent out all over the country to other affiliates. He gave me a person's name at the station to call. The next day I called and I was told that they had already been planning to interview none other than McCrone, so they invited me to debate with him. Now I had not done any radio or television at the point and was very nervous about getting my feet wet in a debate with a world-famous microscopist. Even though I felt it was a David vs. Goliath matchup, I agreed to do it. I defended the authenticity of the Shroud as best I could; afterward the moderator told he was not very impressed with McCrone's arguments. This debate had only come about because an inner voice (in theological terms, a "locution") was heard and heeded to go pick up trash. I do believe it was a divine prompting, given so that witness could be borne to the Shroud. This experience certainly strengthened my conviction that I had a calling to be involved with the Shroud.

In 1989, also while I was in the monastery, I had lost a small booklet called "The Holy Shroud and Four Visions," which compared the scientific evidence on the Shroud with the visions that 4 Nuns in different times and places had about the crucifixion. The booklet was excerpted from a bigger book, which I had on order, so I was not concerned that I could not find it. I had what I thought at the time was an authentic relic of the Shroud (it turns out that a STURP scientist looked at it and determined it was actually from the backing cloth). A nephew of mine at the time had a brain tumor so one day I was going to take the relic and touch it to his head. As I started to think about the theology of relics effecting cures, the lost booklet, which also dealt with the mystical, came to mind. The very second that the thought about the booklet came about, I heard a noise behind me. When I turned around I saw that the booklet had hit the floor in the center of the room! It could not have fallen from a bookcase or anything else and it certainly hadn't been stuck on the ceiling. There was no rational explanation for that book appearing and hitting on the floor. I think it was God's way of saying, "Yes, the mystical exists."

I feel that the events that led to Ray Rogers writing his peer-reviewed article in *Thermochimica Acta* that indicated that the C-14 sample was not representative of the main cloth were pretty amazing. The theory of a 16<sup>th</sup> century patch (or "invisible reweave") only came about because I had felt compelled to leave the monastery and join with Sue. Ray Rogers had been away from Shroud research for about 20 years and at the time we sent him our paper about the patch, he had only recently returned to sindonology, and that was because he was upset about some of the science that was being presented in a recently-published book. After setting out to prove the theory wrong and then supporting it, he was able to actually conclusively test the theory because he was given actual leftover C-14 samples from the 1988 dating. Thus, he was the only one in the world who had the chemical expertise and the necessary samples to test the theory. Although Ray had been sick for many years, he did a prodigious amount of research in his last years and passed away only 2 months after the *Thermochimica Acta* paper had been published. I think that the Shroud kept Ray going until he produced that most important work, and God was ready to reward him for all of his work.

It boggles the mind to think how many hours have been spent since 1898 by numerous people in myriad disciplines and from all over the world, and to realize that we are probably not even close to solving all its mysteries. Given the fact that some of the STURP team that studied the Shroud in 1978 were men who built nuclear weapons and in our space program and the average person wouldn't dream of questioning their judgment in those areas, it is amazing how many people there are who put more stock in their own (usually grossly-undereducated) armchair opinions about the Shroud than the opinions of those who have spent decades studying it. People who have little or no training in biblical exegesis, archaeology, chemistry and myriad other disciplines needed to study the Shroud see themselves as experts in sindonology (the science of the study of the Shroud). Just once it would be nice to hear someone say, "Some of the greatest minds in the world have studied this object and say the mystery has not been solved. Maybe I should read more than just the one newspaper article that I saw before I declare it to be a fake."

One of the silliest arguments that skeptics make is that the Shroud is just one cloth, but the gospel of John mentions more than one cloth. Why this invalidates the Shroud is beyond me (if a pair of earrings were lost and a single one was later found, would anyone say that the single one could not be one of the pair?). Expanding on the assertion that many disciplines are needed to study the Shroud and to give a specific example, it is poor biblical exegesis to bring up only the gospel of John—there are 3 other gospels, after all. Matthew and Mark mention only a "*sindon*," the Greek word for "shroud." Luke first mentions "*sindon*" when describing what Joseph of Arimathea bought and then uses the word "*othonia*," the same word that John used. That word is plural and basically means "burial cloths," (which can include things like a chin band or strips used to bind the hands and feet). Countless articles have been written about all the verses mentioning the burial cloths, and while not everyone agrees that the Shroud matches the

biblical descriptions, the general consensus is that the accounts are in no way obviously incompatible with the Shroud. But skeptics rarely want to do anything more than make a negative pronouncement about the Shroud's authenticity based only on the translation in their native language of the verses and their own interpretations of them. This argument also points up the skeptics' refusal to look at all the evidence pertaining to the Shroud. If one is going to prove the Shroud the fake, numerous points have to be addressed. There is good reason why more hours have been studying the Shroud than any other object in human history.

Another example of skeptics not looking at all the evidence is the assertion by some that there is no mention of a shroud of Jesus in religious or historical writings before what we know now as the Shroud of Turin surfaced in France in the 1350s. That is simply not true. A shroud or burial linens are referred to in quite a few writings, including the apocryphal Gospel to the Hebrews (2<sup>nd</sup> century), St. Nino (4<sup>th</sup> century), the Venerable Bede (6<sup>th</sup> century), St. Brailion, St. John Damascene, St. Willibald (7<sup>th</sup> century), Ishodad of Merv (9<sup>th</sup> century), William of Tyre (10<sup>th</sup> century), Peter the Deacon (12<sup>th</sup> century), Robert de Clari and Nicholas Mesarites (13<sup>th</sup> century). Obviously, none of these can be proven to have been the Shroud of Turin, but if skeptics would do the appropriate research, they would realize (but probably would never admit) that they simply have not sufficiently looked at all the data.

It is very tiresome to see skeptics bring up the fact that there have been bogus relics in history and use the logic "there have been many fake relics, the Shroud is a relic, therefore the Shroud is a fake." Using that logic, because there are paintings by the great masters that are fakes, anything claimed to be a Rembrandt original has to be a hoax. I find it amazing how quickly the media is apt to grab onto a claim by skeptics who believe their assertion disauthenticates the Shroud, and run with it. Another 1<sup>st</sup> century burial shroud is recently discovered in Jerusalem and since it is not exactly like the Shroud of Turin, the Shroud must be a fake. Why do they have to be identical for them to both have originated in 1<sup>st</sup> century Jerusalem? They do not, but debunking the Shroud makes a great story. An Italian scientist, Luigi Garlaschelli (funded by a group of Italian atheists and agnostics), having used the Shroud as a model, claims he has reproduced it. Therefore, this proves the Shroud cannot be authentic. (As others have asked, what did the "artist" who "reproduced" the Shroud use as a model?) Garlaschelli admits that he put the image on first and then added the "blood." Do the media in their stories point out that it is known that on the Shroud, the blood went on first and then the image because there is no image underneath the blood? No, because they rarely read anything in the peer-reviewed literature and debunking the Shroud makes a great story.

Two other things I wish the media would do is to point out that the fact that C-14 dating is always only used in conjunction with other data. If there are 9 pieces of evidence that point in one direction and the C-14 dating contradicts that data, the C-14 dating is routinely discarded, even when it is not known why the dating was

off. In the case of the Shroud, there are hundreds of pieces of data that point in the opposite direction of the C-14 dating. Also, when the circa 1389 D'Arcis memorandum is brought up, in which Bishop D'Arcis claimed that his predecessor had stated that the painter who produced the image confessed to him, it should be stated that the memorandum has no historical value. For one thing, it is not known for sure that a copy of the Shroud is not what is being referred to here. To take this statement at face value would be akin to saying the world is flat because someone writing in Columbus' day wrote that it was. It seems that rules of logic that apply to most things do not apply to the Shroud.

I do not think God could have chosen a more effective way to get and hold our attention for the physical component of our nature than leaving a cloth with the pictograph of a crucified but serene man on it, which can be studied and contemplated, very possibly as long as there human beings around. That would be fitting, since the man who was purportedly wrapped in the Shroud had said, "And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world (Mt. 28:20)."

### **Writings/Websites/Blogs:**

(As single author): 2 articles, 1 monograph and 1 conference presentation:

"The Shroud of Turin: a Loveletter from God?"  
*St. Louis Priory Journal*, Spring 1984, 20:8.

"The Shroud of Turin and the Carbon-14 Controversy." *Fidelity*. February 1989, 8(3):36-45.

The Burial of Jesus of Nazareth and the Shroud of Turin. Monograph. Privately published. Now out of print.

Presented a paper at the 1996 Esopus conference: "The Disciples on the Road to Turin." <http://www.shroud.com/marino.htm>

Co-author with M. Sue Benford on various Shroud articles and 4 conference presentations on the Shroud:

"Evidence for the Skewing of the C-14 Dating of the Shroud of Turin Due to Repairs." Presented at Sindone 2000 Worldwide Congress, Orvieto, Italy, August 28, 2000. ([www.shroud.com/pdfs/marben.pdf](http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/marben.pdf) )

"Historical Support for a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Restoration in the Shroud C14 Sample

Area." Internet paper. [www.shroud.com/pdfs/histsupt.pdf](http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/histsupt.pdf)

"Textile Evidence Supports Skewed Radiocarbon Date of Shroud of Turin." Internet paper. [www.shroud.com/pdfs/textevid.pdf](http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/textevid.pdf)

"The Shroud of Turin: Bridge Between Heaven and Earth?" *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*. April 1999, 22(2):95-105.

"Rebirth, Resurrection, and the Millennium." *Journal of Religion and Psychical Research*. January 2000, 23(1):17-26. (Contains some material regarding the Shroud.)

"Did C-14 Dating Bury the Shroud of Turin?" *Phenomena*. Jan/Feb 2004, issue 2, pp. 52-55.

"New Historical Evidence Explaining the 'Invisible Patch' in the 1988 C-14 Sample Area of the Turin Shroud." Presented informally at the September 2005 Dallas conference.  
<http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/benfordmarino.pdf>

"Role of calcium carbonate in fibre discoloration on the Shroud of Turin." *Chemistry Today*. March/April 2008, 26(2):57-62.

"Discrepancies in the Radiocarbon Dating Area of the Turin Shroud." *Chemistry Today*, July-August 2008, 26(4):4-12. (Accessible at <http://chemistry-today.teknoscienze.com/pdf/benford%20CO4-08.pdf>. Version of this paper presented at Columbus Shroud conference, August 14-17, 2008.

"Invisible Mending and the Turin Shroud: Historical and Scientific Evidence." Presented at Columbus Shroud conference, August 14-17, 2008. (<http://www.ohioshroudconference.com/papers/p11.pdf> )

Co-author of 2 articles with retired NASA scientist Edwin J. Prior:

"Chronological History of the Evidence for the Anomalous Nature of the C-14 Sample Area of the Shroud of Turin." (Internet paper)  
(<http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/chronology.pdf> )

"ADDENDUM TO Chronological History of the Evidence for the Anomalous Nature of the C-14 Sample Area of the Shroud of Turin." (Internet paper)  
(<http://www.shroud.com/pdfs/addendum.pdf> )

**Website:** [www.homestead.com/newvistas](http://www.homestead.com/newvistas)

