

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

We apologise for the late publication of this *Newsletter*, largely due to waiting upon recent developments regarding Shroud testing.

By far the most important step forward took place on October 16 last year when Tom D'Muhala and Dr. John Jackson, president and vice-president of STURP (the Shroud of Turin Research Project), spent an hour and a quarter meeting in Turin with Cardinal Ballestrero. At this meeting the two Americans formally presented the STURP group's proposals for new tests on the Shroud, a document of some 170 pages inclusive of detailed recommendations for radiocarbon dating.

The Cardinal received the proposals warmly, and commented:

"It might be best to proceed a step at a time. It would hardly be proper to publish all sorts of details, such as the probable dates of the testing and detailed procedure of the tests, before your proposals are actually accepted by the 'competent authorities'"

By this remark Cardinal Ballestrero appears to have made it clear that the ultimate power of decision on any new shroud testing will rest not with him, but with the Vatican. But he also made clear that he will make it his duty to forward any and all new proposals to the Vatican, and that he will welcome receiving proposals from other groups. He specifically recommended that STURP consult and collaborate with such groups. As commented by Fr. Rinaldi, who was present at the meeting:

"It is my conviction that the meeting has set things in motion again."

Diplomatically the one topic to avoid appears to be that of speculating on the actual dates when tests might be allowed.