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**CHRIST'S DOUBLE DEATH
NOTE FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH
ABOUT THE CAUSES AND THE MEANING OF CHRIST'S DEATH**

Abstract

The Holy Shroud contains a great deal of information that coincides completely with the description of the physical events, concerning the passion and the death of Jesus told in the Gospels. The historical fact of the Nazarene's death, linked to the meaning that theological interpretation of faith gives to it, is a central dogma of Christianity.

Christians consider the Gospels as the original source of the revelation from which comes the dogma of Christ's redeeming death. The detailed, definite and even more understandable information about the Holy Shroud makes it possible to better comprehend the meaning of this truth of faith.

Many doctors, who have deeply analysed the evangelical accounts and the Holy Shroud, suggested different hypotheses to explain the physical causes of the death of the man those documents refer to. At the present state of the research, the most likely hypothesis seems to be the one of the death caused by hemopericardium consequent to miocardic infarct. According to this hypothesis, the range of the investigation of Jesus' death expands from the scene of the crucifixion on Golgotha to that of the agony in Gethsemane, where the infarctual process broke out, going through the stages of the trial and of the tortures.

How does this new information reflect on the theological understanding of the meaning of Christ's death? Maybe the Holy Shroud can help us to comprehend in a fairer way how we should take the assertion of the Christian faith, according to which Jesus was crucified for us and for our salvation.

The interdisciplinary theological research we are going to develop, first of all, sets itself a general purpose: to highlight the information on the Holy Shroud which is useful to better understand the relationships between the conditions and the causes of Christ's death and the saving effect of such a historical event. In the second place, it means to verify backwards (that is, to go back over the historical path, from the interpretation to the facts) the plausibility of the hypothesis that Christ's death has been a complicated and basically bifocal event.

The route of this research appears, therefore, extremely developed. The complexity of the work to do requires a long developing time. In this paper we set ourselves some more limited and partial aims. We intend to show, first of all, the targets and the articulation of the research, generally speaking. Then we bring the first results concerning the comparison between the information about the Holy Shroud and the evangelical data, that can be grouped under the following hypothesis: Christ's death is a complex event, that can be historically positioned between the agony in Gethsemane and the crucifixion on Golgotha, and its details make possible to understand fairly the saving meaning that the Christian faith gives to it.