

GREETINGS FROM THE HOLY SHROUD GUILD  
TO THE ROME SYMPOSIUM

ADAM J. OTTERBEIN

Father Peter M. Rinaldi, S.D.B., was scheduled to present a paper at this Symposium, but he died on February 28th, 1993, in Italy. Many of you knew Father Rinaldi. His parents had twelve children. Five of the eight boys became priests, and two of the four girls became nuns — all Salesians. Father Rinaldi's granduncle, Father Philip Rinaldi, had worked with St. John Bosco, founder of the Salesian Order. He was beatified by Pope John Paul in 1990.

Peter Rinaldi was born at Lu Monferrato on June 5, 1910. At the age of 15, he came to the United States. He attended Fordham University and then returned to Italy to study at the Don Bosco International Theological Institute in Turin. He was ordained July 17, 1935, and later returned to America. In 1948 he was appointed Pastor of Corpus Christi Church, Port Chester, New York, and in 1977 was named Pastor Emeritus.

Father Rinaldi came to know about the Holy Shroud while serving as an altar boy at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin. His interest grew and he published an article in *Sign* magazine in June 1934, and in 1940 the Salesian Press published his book, *I Saw the Holy Shroud*.

I learned about the Holy Shroud from one of my seminary professors, Father Edward Wuenschel, C.S.S.R. I joined the seminary faculty in 1945 and was associated with Father Wuenschel until 1948, when he was appointed Director of our Graduate School in Rome. During his years in Rome he continued his study of the Holy Shroud and accumulated a Shroud Library, which was sent to Esopus when he died in 1964. I then organized the Wuenschel Collection of books, manuscripts, and photographs, and I have updated the Collection regularly.

Father Wuenschel was Rector of Mount St. Alphonsus Seminary from 1946 to 1948. My interest in the Shroud developed under his direction. It was during these years that I visited Father Rinaldi in Port Chester, and received a periodic up-date about the Shroud from Turin. When we decided to establish the Holy Shroud Guild in 1951, with the approval of Francis Cardinal Spellman, Father Wuenschel was the Honorary President and Father Rinaldi was a member of the executive Council. Later he became Vice-President of the Guild. Father Rinaldi was always a great inspiration and help.

Hence, the role of Father Rinaldi in the Holy Shroud Guild should be evident. He was very knowledgeable and eager to spread knowledge of the Holy Shroud. He was in close contact

with the Cardinal in Turin, and thus a great help to the Guild's Executive Council.

According to the Preliminary Plan for this meeting in Rome, Father Rinaldi was scheduled to present a paper. I have searched Father's files, hoping to find an outline of his presentation, but nothing was found. However, from past conversations and discussion of current problems, two topics come to my mind: 1, The need to dispel the general confusion which has resulted from the press reports about the Carbon 14 test on the Shroud; and 2, The need for cooperation and the united effort of Shroud scholars, scientists, and devotees to attain new studies, an evaluation of past tests, and the distribution of accurate information about these matters.

This meeting is an ideal occasion for such discussions and plans; and the representatives of the many and various Shroud organizations assembled here represent an excellent and effective means of obtaining the unity and cooperation for a worldwide review of the question of the authenticity of the Holy Shroud, and the publication of the *de facto* status of the question today.

It is my sincere hope that the long-time scholars and students of the Shroud will not be discouraged, but will be willing to come once more to the defense of authenticity, based on the vast amount of solid evidence in its favor, and to point out the debatable evidence that has been used during recent years to declare that the Shroud is not genuine.



Goodbye, Father Peter

Adam J. Otterbein, President of the Holy Shroud Guild, Esopus, New York.