

# Shroud, Science And Faith: Dialogue Or Conflict? \*

11-Oct-2014

10:45-11:30 am

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## Abstract:

The reading, study and meditation on the image of the Shroud of Turin lead essentially at two levels of reflection. On the one hand, the study of the image has a high interest from the scientific point of view, and especially in the last forty years the Shroud has been at the center of a company-wide, articulated and interdisciplinary scientific debate. On the other hand, the tradition has always identified the Shroud with the burial cloth of Jesus of Nazareth, and in more recent times this identification has taken advantage of modern exegetical studies, with relevant results. This has obviously affected the field of Christian faith, thus opening up a debate on the relationship between faith and the Holy Shroud. The recent expositions of the Shroud (1998, 2000 and 2010) have further contributed to highlight its pastoral and spiritual significance.

The two ways of understanding the Shroud are of course often met and clashed, sometimes dividing both the insiders and the common people: Shroud object of faith and worship or object of scientific interest and study? It has grown so much animated discussions, perhaps as never before, favored both by modern means of communication and by the great worldwide interest aroused by the last expositions. But are the two ways of relating to the image really in contrast? The thoughts of many scholars have shown that they can very well coexist as long as their different levels of competence are respected and it is avoided to mix them at all costs forcing conclusions without respecting its peculiarities.