

Second National Shroud Encounter in Fátima, Portugal

By Dr. Carlos Evaristo

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Shroud devotees from all over Portugal met at Fátima last November 20, 2010, for the II National Shroud Encounter organized by the Centro Português de Sindonologia e do Estudos das Relíquias da Paixão de Cristo (Portuguese Centre for the Studies of the Shroud and the relics of the Passion of Christ) with the support of the Fundação para a Pesquisa Religiosa (Foundation for Religious Research) and the Consolata Museum.

The event began with a welcome address by veteran Shroud Promoter and Devotee Eng. Fernando Lagrifa Fernandes, President and Founder of the Centre who has dedicated more than 30 years to the study of the Sacred Relic of the Passion of Christ.

Lagrifa, who in 2002, together with Prof. Dr. Frederick T. Zugibe and Philip Kronzer who sponsored the I National Shroud Encounter, were Knighted by the Head of the Portuguese Royal House. HRH Dom Duarte, Duke of Bragança, (Patron of the Foundation for Religious Research).

Lagrifa who has organized hundreds of Shroud Exhibits all over Portugal spoke of his 40 years of devotion to the Holy Shroud and then invited everyone present to visit an exhibit featuring a life-size replica of the Shroud and a collection of books and articles from his decades of work which have been deposited at the Centre's Headquarters in Fátima for public consultation.

The talk by Lagrifa was followed by a guided tour of the Shroud led by Dr. Antero Moreira and then an exhibition of the newest BBC documentary that debunks the 1988 Carbon 14 Test results. The viewing of the documentary was followed by a lunch offered by Dr. Moreira and his wife and followed by a brief talk by Foundation for Religious Research President and Co-Founder Carlos Evaristo, a Catholic Church recognized expert on Holy Relics and Vatican Museums Patrons Office Representative, who recalled the conclusions of the 2002 Encounter which featured a talk on the Crucifixion by the Foundation's President of the research Centre Dr. Frederick Zugibe.

Evaristo, who is an archeologist specializing in Sacred Medieval Iconography. spoke of the funeral practices at the time of Christ and the Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages and revealed for the first time that considerable sections of the Shroud were in fact removed and distributed as Relics by the Savoy Family as early as the XV Century.

A Former executive Director of Marketing for the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, Evaristo also spoke of an organized public campaign in the media to bad mouth the Holy Shroud and undermine its credibility and subsequently the Resurrection of Christ. He used as an example the "James Ossuary" which as he explained has a forged inscription that reads: "...brother of Jesus" but is still presented as a genuine artifact.

Veteran Portuguese TV journalist João Paulo Sacadura then gave a talk on his experiences with promoting the Holy Shroud entitled "The Holy Shroud and Christians" and how talks on the Shroud change people's lives. Sacadura also spoke of his 30 years of promoting devotion to the Sacred Relic and of his pilgrimage to Turin last May for the Solemn Ostentation.

"The Holy Shroud and Catechism today" was the theme chosen by Maria Glória Barroso, a Catechist from Ramalde, in Porto, that resorted to a power point slide program to explain how the Shroud is being used as an instrument for a new evangelization. Barroso also shared photos of the Pilgrimage to Turin organized by the Portuguese Centre.

In his talk on "The Shroud of Turin in the XXI Century" Dr. Antero Moreira, a member of the Portuguese Association of Catholic physicians, related with great expertise all of the different scientific aspects of the Shroud and resumed in a very intelligent way, all of the various theories and scientific intervention referencing all of the important documentation available on the internet and most especially on the oldest site founded by Shroud Scholar Barrie Schwartz.

At the close of the Encounter Carlos Evaristo exhibited various genuine Relics of the Holy Shroud for veneration and read a message from the Centre's Patrons, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Vittorio Emanuele, Duke of Savoy (son of King Umberto II of Italy) and his son Prince Emanuele Filiberto. Evaristo also announced the soon to be opened Lipsonateca (Relic Museum) in Fátima and the organization of an International Shroud Conference to be held in Fátima in 2011 during which a new Study on the History of the Cult of the Holy Shroud with an alternative Theory for the formation of the image as seen in the light of the 1917 Fatima phenomenon will be presented by the Foundation's President Carlos Evaristo and the Research Centre's new Director Barrie Schwartz.

Special thanks was due to the Consolata Missions Museum which for the second time provided the Blessed Joseph Allamano Auditorium in Fátima for the Encounter, a meaningful contribution given the Order was founded in Turin by a pupil of Saint John Bosco.