

## OBITUARY

FR. FRANCIS L. FILAS, S.J.

Professor of Theology at Loyola University, Chicago

Leading proponent of the "coins over the eyes" hypothesis

Well known throughout the world to those interested in the Shroud, Fr. Francis Filas, S.J., one of the subject's most enthusiastic supporters, died in his sleep on 15th February of this year, at the age of 69. Born at Cicero, Illinois in 1915, Filas was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1945, two years later taking up what was to become a passionate interest in the Shroud. From Good Friday 1951 he was to give television presentations on the Shroud on this day annually for the next 32 years. He also visited the Holy Land, and was responsible for a flourishing series of filmstrips on Biblical locations, the Ebla tablets, the Shroud, and other related subjects.



FR. FRANCIS FILAS, S.J.

Born June 4, 1915

Ordained as Jesuit priest June 13, 1945

Died in his sleep February 15, 1985

In 1979, looking closely at the eye area on an Enrie negative of the Shroud, Filas thought he could make out four letters, UCAI, as from the inscription on a tiny coin placed over the eyes. He developed the hypothesis that this was from a lepton coin of Pontius Pilate, and in July 1980 published his ideas in a special monograph *The Dating of the Shroud of Turin from Coins of Pontius Pilate*. In the ensuing years Filas continued to develop the hypothesis further, including identifying a coin on the second eye, and in 1983 commissioned Dr. Robert Haralick of the Virginia State University Spatial Data Analysis Laboratory to study the same areas using digital enhancement techniques.