



The Holy See

EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY SHROUD

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Holy Saturday, 30 March 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I join all of you gathered before the Holy Shroud, and I thank the Lord who, through modern technology, offers us this possibility.

Even if it takes place in this way, we do not merely “look”, but rather we venerate by a prayerful gaze. I would go further: we are in fact looked upon upon ourselves. This face has eyes that are closed, it is the face of one who is dead, and yet mysteriously he is watching us, and in silence he speaks to us. How is this possible? How is it that the faithful, like you, pause before this icon of a man scourged and crucified? It is because the Man of the Shroud invites us to contemplate Jesus of Nazareth. This image, impressed upon the cloth, speaks to our heart and moves us to climb the hill of Calvary, to look upon the wood of the Cross, and to immerse ourselves in the eloquent silence of love.

Let us therefore allow ourselves to be reached by this look, which is directed not to our eyes but to our heart. In silence, let us listen to what he has to say to us from beyond death itself. By means of the Holy Shroud, the unique and supreme Word of God comes to us: Love made man, incarnate in our history; the merciful love of God who has taken upon himself all the evil of the world to free us from its power. This disfigured face resembles all those faces of men and women marred by a life which does not respect their dignity, by war and violence which afflict the weakest... And yet, at the same time, the face in the Shroud conveys a great peace; this tortured body expresses a sovereign majesty. It is as if it let a restrained but powerful energy within it shine through, as if to say: have faith, do not lose hope; the power of the love of God, the power of the Risen One overcomes all things.

So, looking upon the Man of the Shroud, I make my own the prayer which Saint Francis of Assisi prayed before the Crucifix:

Most High, glorious God,
enlighten the shadows of my heart,
and grant me a right faith, a certain hope and perfect charity,
sense and understanding, Lord,
so that I may accomplish your holy and true command. Amen.