

**Greeting of the Archbishop of Turin Cesare Nosiglia for the presentation of the event
of the TV Exhibition of the Shroud scheduled on March 30, Holy Saturday**

Turin, March 1, 2013

We have convened you to officially announce an event of great spiritual significance but also historical and pastoral which is the TV Exhibition of the Shroud that will be made the next Holy Saturday March 30, Easter Eve.

The idea was conceived starting from the Year of Faith and as the Diocese of Turin we are celebrating with commitment and depth of initiatives of evangelization, catechesis and formation. On pilgrimages to the Cathedral which are held every Sunday of Lent we have also included a special prayer and contemplation of the Shroud as a strong reminder of the centrality the proclamation of Christ dead, buried and risen again for the salvation of the world. The pilgrims pass outside the seat of the Shroud in the Cathedral and stop to pray.

I started thinking about the opportunity to make a TV Exhibition worldwide and therefore open to all nations for many months with the competent authorities of the Holy Seat and I got the consent of Pope Benedict XVI, who encouraged us by giving a cut of evangelization and contemplation of the event in order to encourage in the faithful a moment of great spirituality in the week and on Holy Saturday, of silence and hope of the resurrection which is celebrated at night with the Vigil and the celebration of Baptism for the catechumens (this year we will have about eighty of many different nations and religions!).

Rai Uno accepted to broadcast the event and therefore we have started its concrete preparation. The Exhibition will take place within a celebration of the Word of God which will be held in the Cathedral on the afternoon of Saturday.

I would like to recall why this Exhibition is done on Holy Saturday. During the public exhibition in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI, in his visit to Turin, gave a meditation in which deepened the theme of the Shroud as icon of Holy Saturday. Generally the Shroud is, of course, referring to the burial of the body of Christ and therefore to Holy Friday, day when the Church celebrates the Lord's Passion. Holy Saturday is the day when the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist or other functions until the night of the great Vigil of the Resurrection. Therefore a day of silence, prayer, contemplation of the mystery of the passion and death of the Lord, but also a day of expectation and openness of heart and life in the light of the resurrection.

Now the Gospels tell us that on the morning of Easter Peter and John went to the tomb urged by some women who had gone to anoint with fragrant aromas, according to Jewish custom, the body of the deceased Jesus. They did not find His body and had the announcement that He had risen. Then they ran to the disciples and told them. Peter and John went to the tomb, but the Lord's body was not there. And yet on the stone in the tomb was the Sheet that had wrapped Him, neatly folded on one side. Says the Gospel that John, seeing the cloth and the empty tomb believed that Jesus had truly risen.

So the Sheet that was wrapped around the body of the Lord is connected with the faith in the resurrection. We know that the Shroud shows us the tortured body of a crucified person in a mysterious but real and concrete way presents, in his wounds, what is described in the gospels: the Roman scourging that ravaged the whole body, the crown of thorns, the nail holes, the stroke of the spear in his side, and so on. A striking similarity that remains a fact that, as we know, has been discussed for centuries without finding unanimous nor denied, absolute and certain solutions about the authenticity of the Shroud in relation to that of the burial of Jesus.

To believers, however, what matters is that the Shroud reveals the great sacrifice and suffering endured by Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God who died for our salvation and that of mankind.

Watching this sheet with the eyes of faith believers see and contemplate the Passion of Christ and believe like John that He is indeed the Saviour. At the same time they see and believe that He who was crucified is risen, He is alive forever in the glory of the Father and He is the source of light and certain hope of victory over death that gives to all men who believe in Him.

The Shroud recalls the darkness of death, but also a glimpse of the light of life that from this death comes to all men. The Shroud is not a sign of defeat but of victory of life over death, of love over hatred and violence, hope over despair. This is the greatness of the Shroud. The face of the Man of Sorrows, which is the face of every man on the earth, represents his suffering, his death, it speaks to us of love and gift, of grace and forgiveness. Everything in the Shroud speaks of pain and a time of hope. Who can contemplate with faith, receives strength and power to overcome all evil and difficulties: the blood that you still see so clearly etched in the fabric is not bearer of death but of life, because it is through the blood of Christ the Lord, that we all receive full and definitive life.

The silence that surrounds the Holy Saturday is therefore the same silence in which is the Shroud, but it is a silence of joyful and glad waiting that talks about the future and not the past, a future of love and victory for all of us and a source of a joy therefore unspeakable and full of glory.

We must hear the voice of the Shroud, we must listen to its silence speaking, we have to fill our hearts with a faith that can transform the contemplation of the Holy Shroud in a song of joy and Easter alleluia. The Exhibition of this coming Holy Saturday, therefore, wants to help those who love the Shroud and those who respect the mystery, however, to ask themselves these questions to look for a response and be prepared so to the event of the resurrection that will be celebrated on the evening of Saturday in every church, renewed in spirit and full of joyful amazement for the biggest and shocking event in the history of mankind and in the faith of believers.

I hope that this worldwide event will lead in the hearts of many people who will see it a little light and peace in these complex times and give strength and hope to many sick and poor, but also families and people in need.

Approximately 300 men and women, from among those who carry in their persons the marks of the Passion of Christ, and live by faith and prayer as He lived, will attend the liturgy in the Cathedral and then they will contemplate the Shroud. There will also be a group of young people, because we want the event to be within the path of the Synod which accompanies the young people in recent years. We have also been, as you know, to the last audience of Pope Benedict XVI, and it was a moment full of emotions and feelings of gratitude. The Church of Turin intends to keep the Shroud not only as a precious relic, but as a continuous stimulus to set your life on faith in Christ, recognized and welcomed in all those who are suffering and who are in difficulty: families who have lost their jobs or homes, the unemployed or the many young people without work, families who have lost their homes and many who are in a moral and spiritual crisis; to young people confused by attractive messages of escape and disengagement and in need, instead, of having a bright light to guide them on the path to the future, made not of dreams and empty promises, but of responsibility projects, taken in the first person, and together, both in terms of the vocation to the priesthood and to the consecrated life or marriage, both for serious and motivated guidance on studies in view of a future profession, both in terms of educational and social volunteering. In short, the Shroud should not be a closed Sheet that occasionally reveals itself, but a constant presence of reference for our Church and society that calls us to recover the sense of a sympathetic city where fences and barriers of all kinds are overcome and everyone is looking for ways of citizenship rich in fraternity, mutual acceptance and support material, moral and spiritual.

Now three short integrative interventions will complete the presentation of the event.

Thank you.