



## LITURGY OF THE CLOTH: HOW THE EARLY CHURCH INCORPORATED THE SHROUD AND SUDARIUM IN THE MASS

by EDWARD PENTIN

New research suggests that the burial cloths of Jesus have been central to the Roman liturgy for more than a millennium, and possibly from the earliest days of the Church.

A German theologian and friend of Benedict XVI, drawing on the writings of a ninth-century bishop, appears to have made a historic and fascinating discovery, revealing how the Shroud of Turin and the sudarium (the Veil of Veronica) were central to the Roman liturgy from as far back as the Carolingian times, most probably before. The two relics and their inclusion in those early liturgies also point to the Real Presence.

The discovery has only now come to light, after debate over the burial cloths has intensified over the past 10 years and interest has developed regarding their authenticity.

The Register spoke recently with German journalist Paul Badde, who has been following the discovery closely and is an authority on the Holy Face of Manoppello, which many believe to be the true sudarium, to find out more.

### Could you tell us more about this discovery and the significance of it?

The discovery was made by Klaus Berger of Heidelberg, a German theologian, an old friend of Joseph Ratzinger and New Testament scholar, who is carrying out detailed research on the Apocalypse of St. John.

During his studies, he came across one of the great commentators on the Apocalypse, Amalarius (775-850), a liturgical expert from the Carolingian times. Amalarius, who used to be bishop of Metz in France and archbishop of Trier in Germany, was a great liturgist of the Carolingian age, whom Pope Sergius II made a cardinal. Even in those times, he said the cloth of the altar resembled the shroud and the sudarium, found and discovered first by the apostles Peter and John in the empty holy sepulcher the first Easter morning.

But we have an enormous gap in documented records from the first Easter morning in Jerusalem and the moment when they first appeared in public. We know that the sudarium appeared in 1208 in Rome in public, when Pope Innocent III put it on public view, and the shroud appeared in 1355 for the first time in the West in Lirey in the Champagne area of France.

But we can be sure that the two cloths have always been part of the “memory of the liturgy,” even though their presence arrived later. Amalarius may have witnessed seeing them there [in Constantinople], and it’s important to note that their presence in the liturgy didn’t begin in Carolingian times, but [they] were probably used from the very beginning. ...

### Where were the cloths kept before that time?

They were stored for many years in the East, but they were always hidden. Showing them to the public wasn’t a big deal in the Orthodox world. In the West, we make historical records, but in the East, they don’t have it that [record keeping as] much. But even in the Dark Ages, in the first millennium, there used to be a tradition in the Roman liturgy that the cloth on the altar had to be linen, and the altar had to be rock to be understood as a sepulcher.

### What is the significance of altar linen — does it date back to these two priceless relics?

Yes, from this we can understand why the altar linen, analogous to the shroud, until 1969, had to be “pure linen” and why the so-called corporal must always be folded in a particular way by way of analogy with the sudarium. John says that, after Christ’s resurrection, it was found by Peter

and John in the empty tomb: “not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up or folded (enteeligenen in Greek) in a separate place.” That corporal is the starched cloth, which, in the old rite, after the priest had come at the altar in contact with the bread and wine, could only be touched by him reverently with his thumb and forefinger.

### How is the altar significant in this?

Since the altar linens of the liturgy are called sindon and sudarium and theologically are in connection with the Real Presence of Jesus in his body and blood, Berger contends that their purpose is to point to the mystery of the Eucharist on the altar stone. There, the inanimate matter of the bread and wine — as the tomb of Christ in the rock in Jerusalem, which had never been used — is always transformed into the “Bread of Life” and living blood of Christ.

After the [Second Vatican] Council, we had the discussion: Is the altar about Communion? Is it a table? Or is it a sacrifice? Until that time, it was clearly a sacrifice. The altar was understood as a sepulcher, where lifeless elements were turned into something living — flesh and blood. That was also the tradition in the eighth century. But whether the actual relics were seen at the altar or not, the shroud and the sudarium have been mentioned by St. John and the liturgical tradition, not only in public, but also been remembered as far back as the eighth and ninth centuries as something very special, very important in the story of the Resurrection. And this we have also to keep in mind.

Very much can be said about the liturgy, and one thing is for sure: The liturgy can also be understood as the “inner hard drive” of the sacred memory of the Church. So it’s quite clear that everything Amalarius reports about it in his time has not and cannot be invented and introduced in the liturgy in the Carolingian age. It must be much older and points right back to the beginning of the Church, just like the holy Eucharist itself.

### Could you explain more about how this points to the Real Presence?

The depiction of the face of Jesus on these cloths could be understood similarly to the so-called Mass of Pope Gregory (540-604). Gregory I saw, appearing to him, a bloodied Lord, directly in connection with the transformation of the Eucharistic species. The shroud and the sudarium of Jesus would, therefore, be understood as the direct expression and the personified Real Presence of Jesus on the altar and would be directly related to the Eucharist as the center of the holy Mass. In this way, they agree as biblically confirmed evidence of the resurrection of Christ with the mystery of the Eucharistic transformation (transubstantiation).

You could, therefore, say: Instead of the vision of Gregory, in Amalarius, there is the real, symbolic content of the altar cloths. In both cases, it is



## THE BEDBUG EVANGELISTS AND WHAT THEY TAUGHT US

*We had to throw everything out, but we're happy with our choice and would do it again*



“Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't after you.”

I don't know much about Joseph Heller, but if he could pen these words I'm certain he was well acquainted with bed bugs.

My wife and I unknowingly opened our doors to these satanic agents about a month ago, and in short order the beasts had claimed their territory and were conducting strategic maneuvers to gain control of the whole apartment. Within a matter of days, their kingdom had been established, and my wife and I had been displaced, and with my wife seven months pregnant, this aggression could not stand!

Unable to use traditional gaseous bombs used by exterminators, we went the natural route, but our paranoia was ramped up. There was no way we were going to risk bringing bed bugs into our new apartment, so with extreme measures called for, we made the difficult decision to purge ourselves of our belongings. We threw out our mattress, couch, chair, coffee table, end tables, book shelves, anything that was wood (bed bugs like wood). Ultimately, we kept only one bookcase and our baby's crib (which we thoroughly wiped down with rubbing alcohol). Our decision to get rid of everything wasn't easy and might even seem drastic to some, but we're happy with our choice and would do it again.

A by-product of all this? We've learned two lessons that have not only improved our quality of life but have improved our relationship with God.

### 1. Some things are out of our control

When the bed bugs infiltrated our apartment there was nothing we could do. It didn't matter that my wife and I kept a tidy home. Once they were in, they were in. The only thing left for us to do was choose how to respond. If it was left to me, I would have burned the whole house down, but my wife chose to employ the use of reason and convinced me that everything would be fine. And she was right. We've successfully moved into a new apartment and we're still alive.

Although our situation appeared dire, we knew that God would help us overcome the insidious creatures that had seized control of our home, and He did. Accepting our situation was nothing less than a grace from God, and through the lens of faith we were able to assess our situation and proceed in a rational manner.

### 2. We don't need very much stuff

Getting rid of our possessions was one of the most disconcerting things I've done. But as I sifted through all of our belongings, separating them into keep/discard piles, I realized that we really didn't need that much. We had been swimming in useless garbage that was cluttering our living space and our lives for far too long. I found items in closets and hidden nooks that I had completely forgotten about. They sat collecting dust and probably bed bugs, which made the decision to throw them in the trash easy. Some of our finer possessions were more difficult to discard, but as we let go, we were able to embrace an idea of simplicity, and through that freedom. Since our material purge, we have fewer clothes to clean, less furniture to dust, and more time for each other.

### Conclusion

As it turns out, bed bugs were a blessing. We're less concerned with our possessions and more focused on each other, and those around us. When our son was born our priorities were in their proper place. We welcomed him into a home where possessions had no part of our priorities.

Bedbug evangelism: that's one way to get pulled back to where Jesus said we should be:

*“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. – Matthew 22: 36-39*

See more at: <http://aleteia.org/2016/07/06/the-bedbug-evangelists-and-what-they-taught-us/#sthash>.

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an expression of the Real Presence of Christ. What is true for Pope Gregory is the content of the vision, namely, the real, bodily presence of Christ (particularly of the suffering Christ). According to Amalarius, it would be expressed sensibly (sinnenfällig) in the liturgical altar linens. On the burial cloths, showing the stigmata on the shroud and on the sudarium the face of Jesus, there appeared a lasting imprint of what happened for an instant in Gregory's vision.

### What does this mean for Holy Face of Manoppello?

To me and to many, there's no doubt that Manoppello is the historic sudarium, also called the Veil of Veronica. It was kept in Rome and often venerated until 1527. It is, in fact, the very veil that had been laid on the face

of the dead Lord when he was laid to rest in the sepulcher. So it contains the first breath of the resurrected Christ. No wonder that nobody can explain how the image — without any colors! — got into the sacred veil.

Now, the Easterly sudarium of Christ is coming back into history, at the beginning of an enormous “iconic turn” caused by the digital revolution — not to the eyes of a chosen few anymore, but to the eyes of all men. And it doesn't come back to tell the Gospel anew with more words, but to reveal the Resurrection of the Lord from the dead with one true and unique image.

Edward Pentin is the Register's Rome correspondent. Read more <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/liturgy-of-the-cloth-how-the-early-church-incorporated-the-shroud-and-sudarium>