



**– FIVE –**

**Poor Clares Convent near Chambery  
April 15, 1534 A.D.**



## TRIALS BY FIRE

“What does she want?” whispered Therese.

Lucie fiddled with her tattered sleeve and gazed at the pink-tinged mountains that surrounded the tiny convent.

“I do not know,” she finally mumbled and straightened up.

Therese clutched Lucie’s arm. “Come. Dusk is near. The others have gone back. We must not tarry. I am certain Our Reverend Mother would not have called us unless it were of the utmost importance.”

Back in the prayer room, Lucie shifted on the kneeler. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, how long had she and the other Sisters waited? She yawned and nervously scratched a small bite on her wrist. Last night, Lucie had tossed and turned on her lumpy straw mattress, but it wasn’t because of the fleas or bone-chilling drafts. It was her dread of rising shortly, in the middle of the night, to prepare for Mass. Would she ever get used to being a nun?

Lucie was the tenth child and thus a tithe to the Lord from her noble parents. They told her life in a religious order such as the Poor Clares was a blessing; no fears of death in childbirth or marriage to an unkind husband. Her mother had even added that a chaste woman was always held in high regard. Perhaps, thought Lucie. The Daughters of Our Lord were said to have overcome the wickedness of Eve. Lucie knew that deep within she had a strong desire to

serve God, but was life in a drab habit and white wimple what *she* wanted? Lucie shook her head, as if to loosen any selfish thoughts from her mind.

In the tiny stone room, minute sounds vibrated like trumpets and Lucie swallowed audibly. She never was very good at the rule of silence. Nor was Therese. The Reverend Mother, the Abbess Louise de Vargin, said silence was necessary if one was to listen for the voice of God. Surely, thought Lucie, God could speak louder than anyone? Could any maiden of fifteen years master holding her tongue? Instantly, a brief recollection flashed through Lucie’s mind.

“Therese,” she said quickly, “remember the meeting with Our Reverend Mother and Messire Vesperis this morning?”

“Yes, we were on our way to devotions and Reverend Mother asked you to fetch the Messire water.”

“It may be a grave offence to repeat what I heard,” sighed Lucie. “What shall I do?”

For a moment, Therese stared at her friend blankly. “Perhaps,” she answered, “it can be called a forgivable error since we are novices and have not yet taken final vows.”

Lucie half-smiled in agreement. “Very well,” she began. “I overheard that our convent might be graced with the Shroud’s holy presence.”

“The Shroud?” Therese’s eyes almost popped out and she immediately covered her mouth with her hand.

"Sssh," whispered Lucie, glancing around the room to see if anyone had heard. Fortunately, no one raised her head except Sister Marie. Only a few years older than Therese and Lucie, she was friendly and understood life as a novice among the Poor Clares. Sister Marie winked at the girls before continuing with prayers. Lucie continued.

"We may be called on to mend it."

"Mend the Shroud?" repeated Therese. "Was it not destroyed in the fire?"

Lucie shrugged her shoulders. Almost two years had passed since Lucie first heard word of the immense fire. It was the fourth of December, barely a week after Lucie's parents had taken her to the convent. The fire spread quickly and inflicted such severe damage to the Sainte Chapelle that only the heroic actions of a local blacksmith had miraculously saved the Shroud. But no one had seen it since, not on its feast day, nor the next Good Friday. Rumours began to fly. Had the Shroud been stolen? Had it even survived the fire?

"St. Barbara must have protected it after all," added Therese, "and those heretics who tried to shame us will burn..."

"No," interrupted Lucie. "We do not know if the fire was set by them. Vengeance is the Lord's alone. We should pray for all the souls of all men." Her eyes suddenly darted upward. The Abbess had entered the room. Moments later, Lucie's suspicions were confirmed as the Abbess announced that, unworthy as they were, the Community of the Poor Clares had been chosen

by His Holiness to mend the damaged parts of the Shroud.

**The Poor Clares are a religious order for women founded by St. Clare in 1212 A.D.**

"I require three Sisters to assist me," announced the Abbess. "Patches must be sewn on Our Lord's Holy Shroud with the utmost delicacy and solemnity."

Lucie bit her lip. Delicacy? If there was one thing she excelled in, it was sewing. Her eyes were sharper than any of the other Sisters. Her fingers were the most nimble. Even Sister Marie called her a gifted seamstress. Surely she could perform such an important task better than the older nuns?

"I will choose my assistants," added the Abbess. "We must prepare for the Shroud. It arrives tomorrow."

The Sisters gasped, but Lucie did not move. The Abbess called the chosen nuns: Sister Peronette, Sister Colette and finally, Sister Marie. Lucie would not have the honour of mending the Shroud.

At eight o'clock, the church bells echoed throughout Chambery. Dizzy from the strong beeswax scent of the candle she clutched, Lucie closed her moist eyes. When she opened them, she saw the procession heading for the Church. Behind the Messire the Legate, His Highness and the Bishop were dozens of canons, barons and nobles. Behind them stood a sea of people larger than any Lucie had ever seen.

Once the Shroud was placed on the choir table, Messire the Legate faced the multitude and spoke.

“These four chosen nuns, whose names have been given to the notary, shall mend Our Lord’s Holy Shroud. It shall be the gravest of sins, under penalty of excommunication, should anyone else touch the Holy Shroud.”

Lucie gulped. She knelt close to the grille before the Shroud but saw nothing on the yellowed cloth. Where was His Image? Hundreds of people had now flocked into the church, straining for a glimpse of the cloth. Lucie wondered if they too could not see His Face.

Messire the Legate continued with his sermon and presented a letter, direct from His Holiness, stating that those from the Observance of Sainte-Claire-dans-la-Ville de Chambery were blessed to mend the Shroud. All bowed as he led the crowd in prayer while Lucie remained kneeling.

Therese grasped her friend’s hand. “Absolution,” she whispered. “We are being given absolution.” Lucie drew in a deep breath of the stale Church air and silently begged for forgiveness.

Lucie watched as the Shroud was gently placed onto a long cloth. She and Therese had been given the task of holding lit candles near the four menders so that they might see every stitch. Like every soul in that huge crowd, Lucie wished she could touch the Holy Cloth, if only for a moment. From the corner of her eye, she

saw one mother lift up her small child’s withered leg against the grille. Lucie and the other nuns began to sing and suddenly, the mother’s face brightened. Although the limb had not miraculously healed, the mother and child smiled peacefully and finally left with joyful praises.

Lucie rose at midnight. After prayers she assisted the guards in holding candles near the Shroud. Sister Marie continued to work diligently, her face serene as a summer’s meadow. She glanced up from her task and spoke to Lucie.

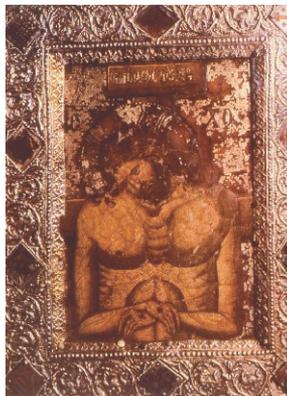
“My dear, please bring the candlelight nearer. See what we have sewn over each burn mark?” She pointed to a triangular patch. “Terrible, so terrible a fire.”

Lucie gingerly stepped forward as Sister Marie continued. “How blessed are we, His Daughters. We have the privilege of poverty, of having no material security. But here in His Presence, we are richer than the richest of earthly women.” The cloth was now only a few arm lengths away but Lucie still could not see the Image. Was God punishing her for her selfish desires?

“Look,” continued Sister Marie. “Such a miracle that His Holy Image was not destroyed.” She motioned to Lucie. “Come closer, child and see the wounds. Don’t worry, you won’t touch the Cloth.”

Lucie drew in a deep breath. A smoky odour still permeated the cloth. Suddenly, she saw the

image. Hundreds of wounds covered His Body, no doubt from the horrible scourging. She studied the cloth intently, scouring every inch with her sharp eyes.



Mosaic in the  
Santa Croce,  
Gerusalemme, Rome.  
(image courtesy of  
Dan Scavone)

“His Precious Blood,” she gasped. There, about his forehead, were trickles of blood from the cap of thorns and on his cheek, the swollen evidence of cruel blows. Lucie trembled slightly and after several moments stepped back. “Thank you, Sister,” she whispered.

“You have been crying?” asked Sister Marie. She held out her hand and delicately wiped a tear from the young novice’s chin. “I understand. The wounds are so frightening. Our Lord must have loved us dearly to have endured so much suffering.”

Lucie bowed her head. She wanted to tell Sister Marie it was not only the Shroud’s testimony that caused her to weep. Overwhelmed by her blessings, she could not utter a word.

Fifteen days later, Lucie and Therese stood in silence while the prelates carefully rolled the Shroud back up in a sheet of silk. As the procession exited the Church, Lucie noticed the gold cloth, which covered the Shroud, glitter like a precious jewel in the morning sunshine. Lucie sighed. Intuitively, she knew she would never set eyes on the Shroud again, yet she felt content, her heart and body refreshed after a fortnight of peaceful rest.

As they retreated into the Church for devotions, Lucie turned to Therese, “I shall never forget His Image,” she whispered softly, “not even for one day in my life as a truly blessed Poor Clare.”

*Based on “The Report of the Poor Clares” Dorothy Crispino, Shroud Spectrum, March 2, 1982*



Poor Clare nuns unstash one edge of the Shroud in 1978. A silk lining had been sewn on by Princess Clotide of Savoy in 1898.

(© Barrie Schwartz)

## The Shroud's 'New Look'

In July 2002, under a veil of secrecy, the patches sewn on by the Poor Clares in 1534 and the Holland-cloth backing were removed from the Shroud. This restoration uncovered large amounts of carbon debris under the patches. The debris was removed (but saved for further study), and a specially-chosen replacement cloth was carefully sewn in place of the Holland Cloth backing. When news of the procedure was leaked to the media, some Shroud experts argued that discussion and debate should have preceded any such radical change on the Shroud. Ecclesiastical authorities replied that they feared the public attention might have made the Shroud a terrorist target after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, and to allay the fears of many sindonologists, invited thirty renowned experts to personally view the 'new' Shroud up close.

Interestingly, the restoration revealed a fainter, yet identical, image on the *reverse side* of the Shroud. Both images are only on the surface fibres of the cloth. The discovery of this new 'Shroud face' makes the possibility of hoaxing much more remote.

### Pre-1532 A.D. L-Shaped Burn Holes

Around 1192 A.D., Benedictine monks wrote and illustrated a manuscript, later referred to as the 'Pray manuscript' of Budapest, Hungary. It

shows a herringbone pattern similar to the Shroud and depicts Jesus without clothes, without thumbs, with a nail wound in the right wrist, a bloodstain on the forehead and four little holes. These holes are actually found on the Shroud and occurred before the 1532 fire and may have been burn marks from spilled incense. They have been called 'poker holes' after the theory that a molten poker (or a similar metal object) fell or was deliberately put through the Shroud.



The 'Pray'  
Manuscript in the  
National Szechenyi  
Library, Budapest,  
Hungary  
(image provided by  
Barrie Schwartz)

### The 1997 Fire

On the night of April 11-12, 1997, another fire threatened the Shroud. Although the chapel which housed the Shroud was destroyed, a heroic Italian fireman named Mario Trematore

miraculously rescued the undamaged Shroud.

*"When I entered the cathedral my sensation was, 'This is what it would be like to be in Hell,'"* Trematore recalled...

The shroud itself was protected in a silver box encased by four layers of bullet-proof glass. *"My first emotion was of dying,"* he said, *"...it was as if a voice were saying...Go over and break the glass."*



Fireman Mario Trematore rescues the casket containing the Shroud.  
(© Associated Press/La Stampa)

Trematore, thinking of his wife and children, said he was arguing with the voice saying, *"If I go over there I'm going to die. It's not my moment to die yet."*

*"Don't worry about it, go over there and break the glass,"* the voice said to him. In a moment everything changed. *"...I was not afraid of dying and I knew exactly what I was supposed to do."*

Trematore told his colleagues he was supposed to break the glass and save the Shroud.

They followed him over and were dousing the area with water as he began beating against the glass with a sledgehammer. After a while the glass started breaking and others came and started helping him.

*"When the glass had fallen down I took the box with the Shroud and put it on my shoulder. At that moment I was even more afraid than I was at first,"* he said. *"I was shocked..."*

Trematore, who considers himself a rational thinker, said the box had no feeling of weight. While he was walking with the box, Trematore said he started feeling the loss of his own weight and had the sensation of floating across the floor.

The most extraordinary thing happened as Trematore was exiting the church. When he was on the steps he heard the cries of a newborn baby. *"I turned around and realized the cries were coming from the box...I had the physical sensation of holding a small baby...it was a beautiful sensation."*

Trematore says he has no recollection of going down the steep steps as he exited the cathedral. He also has no memory of the reported 2,000 people who were outside clapping as the Shroud was brought out.

**During World War II, the Shroud was sealed in a wooden box and hidden under an altar in a remote Italian monastery. Not only did this secrecy keep the Shroud away from the Nazis, but if the monastery were bombed, the monks could quickly hide it in a nearby mountain cave.**

The events of that night obviously have caused Trematore to do a lot of soul searching. *“Whoever looks at the shroud, even if they don’t believe it— it will change his life,”* he said. *“The mystery is so big.”*

From an excerpt from an interview in the Terrell Tribune newspaper, June 4, 2001 (*“Courage Saving Grace”* by Alison Walker, reprinted with permission).



An inside view of Turin Cathedral where the Shroud is housed today.  
(© 2005 Aldo Guerreschi)





**- SIX -**

**Turin, Italy  
May 29, 1898 A.D.**



## PICTURE OF A LIFETIME

Market day. Everyday is market day, except Sunday, of course.

I am Vincente, my father's eldest son. We sold fruit over there, by that wooden stand. Plums, grapes, pears and more. My grandfather sold in this marketplace and so did his father. I thought perhaps that I, too, would sell fruit here, long after my hair turned grey and my face leathered from the Italian sun, but I will explain that in time.

It was here that it happened. As long as I live, I will never forget that day years ago, a few weeks before my fifteenth birthday. I awoke at dawn, as I did every morning during the selling season. I filled our bushels with fruit and set them out under the green-striped canopy. The usual customers strolled by. They bought the same fruits they always bought.

There was Basilio, my good friend even if though he was five years older than me. And of course, Florina, the baker's daughter. Her eyes sparkled in the morning sunshine and her raven-black hair skimmed her shapely waist. When Father was not looking, I tucked a few extra berries into her basket, just so she would like me. There was Signora Sophia, the widow from the valley. My mother said Sophia had married at sixteen and her husband died three months later of consumption. As was the custom, Sophia wore black for a year, but she never stopped. Fifty years later, she still wore black.

Then there was gruff old Signoro Antonio. I don't know why Father permitted him to return to our fruit stand. Every day, he pinched the peaches, wrinkled his bulbous red nose and threw a grape onto the cobblestones.

Signor Antonio coughed violently for a moment before proceeding to insult us. "You call these fresh?" he stammered. "Tasteless! The bunch I bought yesterday was tasteless."

As usual, Papa's replied calmly. "Please don't bruise the fruit."

"Papa," I whispered for the hundredth time, "why don't you tell him to go elsewhere?"

"God gives everyone a good soul."

"Even him?"

Papa chuckled. I laughed heartily and said something about not waiting until hell froze over. Papa raised his eyebrows and told me to watch my language.

That morning, the one that remains etched in my memory, was different. Signor Antonio was again inspecting our fruit when Basilio ran over, fast as a rabbit.

"Have you heard?" he shouted. "Have you heard of Secondo's wonderful discovery?"

I smirked, "Secondo? The lawyer? Since when does a lawyer make a good discovery?"

"No, no," retorted Basilio. "His photographs—he was chosen to create a photograph of the Shroud for the Nicholas Sacra exhibition."

"Ah, that new invention."



Secondo Pia  
(image courtesy of  
Aldo Guerreschi)

“Yes,” continued Basilio. “Last night, he discovered a miracle! It is true. I heard it from a reputable source!”

“What miracle? What source?”

“A friend,” said Basilio trying to breathe deeply, “who happened to be a friend of the assistant to Pia’s nephew.” When he finally settled down, Basilio explained. Soon a small crowd, including Signoro Antonio, gathered around our little fruit stand.

The miracle had to do with the Shroud. We all knew about the famous cloth that supposedly wrapped Jesus’ body and had lain locked away in the city of Turin for as long as anyone could remember. It was one of countless holy relics each with a magical legend. Secondo Pia had been permitted to take a photograph of this Shroud. Apparently, he had discovered in the process a clearer imprint of Our Lord’s image.

“The dripping plate almost fell out of his hands,” exclaimed Basilio. “Even Pia said this was a miracle!”

While we listened to the tale of this ‘miracle’, I noticed Signoro Antonio stood quiet as a mouse.

“If this truly is a miracle,” I told Basilio, “it will reach the newspapers.”

“Yes, of course,” said Basilio.

“And what do you think, Signor Antonio?” I asked, turning back to the ever-opinionated man, but he had already gone.

Two weeks later, on the fourteenth of June, Basilio ran through the marketplace waving the *Corriere Nazionale*. The article described Pia’s photographs as “*an exceptional value to history, science and religion.*” Had he been there during those first centuries, I wondered, to lay eyes on the face of Christ?

Papa believed. He never told me but I knew he did. Most of us believed as well but some doubted convinced that one day the photographs



Shroud photographer Barrie Schwartz  
with Secondo Pia’s camera in 1978.

(© Barrie Schwartz)

would be proven to have been altered. That day never came.

Strangely, after Basilio's announcement, I never did see Signoro Antonio again. He died that summer and my father attended his funeral. I remember joking that perhaps his final moments were spent choking on one of our tasteless grapes.

Signor Antonio had no family, but years later I met someone who knew of him. It was during the Great War. I was with my troops, in a cold and muddy trench, trying to keep them awake with meaningless talk and crude jokes. We had been there two weeks. Two weeks with little food and even less sleep. One soldier, a young fellow from my hometown, reminisced out loud.

"I would give anything for an egg," he moaned.

"An egg?" I asked.

"Yes. A tasty, boiled egg like the ones my aunt sold. How I loved those eggs. They were perfect and fresh, even if that red-nosed Antonio said they weren't.

My eyes opened wide. "Signoro Antonio?"

"Yes, my aunt said she sold him some every few days. She said he complained about the eggs constantly, but somehow kept buying them."

Complain? I stifled a laugh. Who but Signor Antonio would complain about eggs?

"It's strange what happened to him," added the soldier.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "He was merely a grumpy old man."

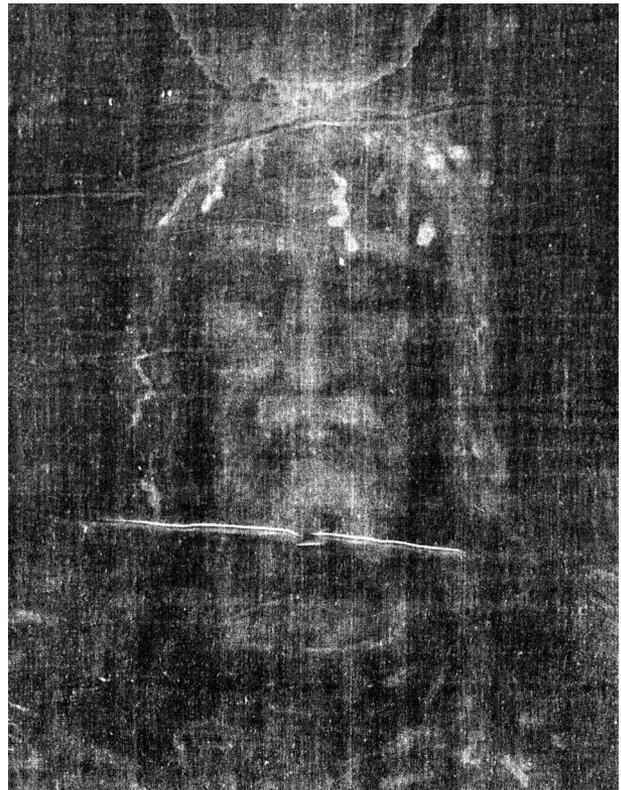
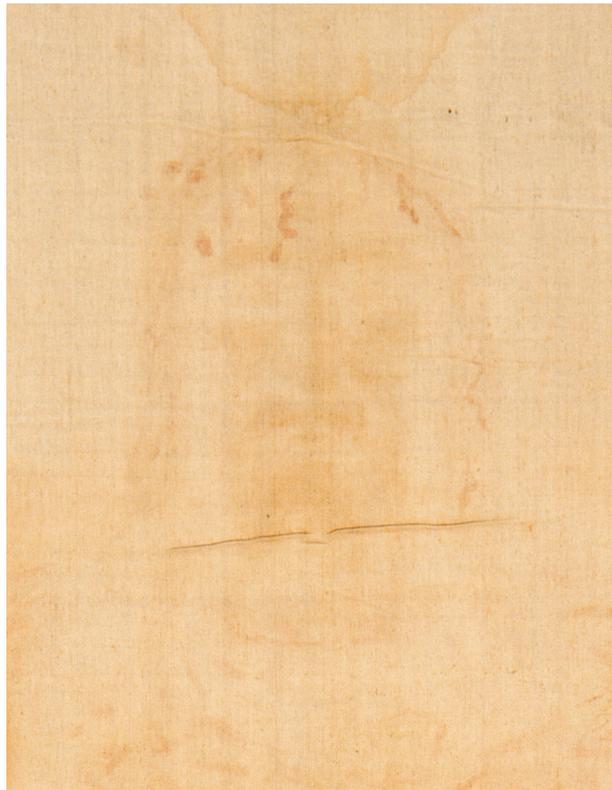
The soldier shook his head. "The day before he died, my aunt brought him the eggs as usual. She said he was smiling and strangely polite, as if he were at peace. He thanked her profusely and said he would tell the whole town of his newly found gratitude but his coughing fits prevented him from leaving bed."

I was dumbfounded. Signor Antonio? Grateful? The next words the soldier spoke shot through me like a bullet.

"Signor said he was so fortunate to have seen the Face of Christ."

Perhaps our lives had changed because of Secondo's discovery. Basilio eventually joined the priesthood and I heard Florino married a wealthy Venetian businessman and started an orphanage. As for Sophia, well, she soon passed away and was buried beside her husband.

After the Great War, I packed my bags and, with my father's blessing, boarded the next ship bound for America. I intended to seek my fortune but little did I know that it had always been with me, far back when I was a young man selling fruit in a simple farmer's market...



The Shroud Face in colour, with contrast slightly enhanced,  
and as viewed on the black and white negative.

(© Barrie Schwartz)

## The Positive and Negative Image

When Secondo Pia took those famous photographs in 1898, the Shroud's journey took a new path. For the first time in its history, the image on the Shroud was seen more clearly than ever. The world's scientists and thinkers were intrigued.

When camera film is developed, the actual photos (the positives) and the negatives appear very different. Tape a photograph to the window. Now tape its negative beside it. On a photo, a person looks normal. In the photo's

negative, the light parts of the photo are dark, and the dark parts are light.

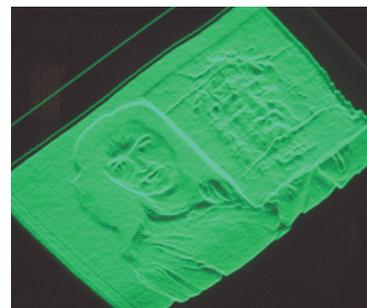
In essence, the Shroud contains photographic negative properties. The nose is thin, the eyes appear open and the image itself seems strange.

When a photograph of the Shroud is developed, the negative reveals a unique image. The face is portrait-like, with closed eyes, minute details and a serene expression.

## Did An Artist Paint the Shroud?



Unlike normal photographs of the face, the Shroud's image is not distorted under the VP 8 Image Analyzer.  
(© Aldo Guerreschi)



There are numerous ideas about how the image was formed. Here are a few:

1. Radiation
2. Painting with red ochre
3. Created using a hot statue
4. A rubbing method

The list could go on and on.

*(quoted from Joseph Durham's Shroud Message Board)*

**Like an X-ray, the Shroud shows skeletal features, including long fingers such as those in a hand X-ray. In 1976, the Shroud was discovered to have three-dimensional properties unlike any other cloth image, drawing, painting, or photograph of its kind.**



The Shroud shows skeletal features.  
(image courtesy of Alan & Mary Whanger, CSST)



"If (the artist were) working up close, he would have the greatest difficulty seeing the overall effect he was creating. If working at a distance, he would have needed something like a twelve-foot paintbrush!"

From Ian Wilson's *The Mysterious Shroud*,  
Doubleday, New York, 1986 p.82

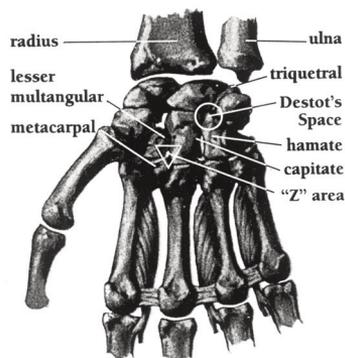
•  
If the Shroud is a forgery, how could a medieval artist know about positive and negative images as photography was not invented until six hundred years later?



© Barrie Schwartz

**In 1978, over 3.5 million pilgrims flocked to Turin for the Shroud Exposition.**

In 1932, Pierre Barbet, a French surgeon, performed 'crucifixion' experiments on cadavers. He discovered that nails through the middle of the palms would not support a body's weight. Most medieval artists took the word 'hands' from the Gospels and painted Jesus with nail wounds through his palms. The Greek translation for 'hand' is the word 'cheir', which can include the wrist. Most scientists now believe that Jesus was nailed to the patibulum or crossbeam either through the wrist or upper palm area.



Nails likely went through the 'Z' area between the bones. (image courtesy of Dr. Frederick Zugibe)



Experiments now prove that crucifixion victims did not die of asphyxiation as previously thought. (image courtesy of Dr. Frederick Zugibe)