

Pastor's column Easter 2021

Many of us enjoy detective stories and are impressed by the way these imaginative sleuths can weave seemingly disconnected pieces of evidence into a coherent and converging narrative, ultimately unmasking the culprit; whether it is Agatha Christie's Monsieur Poirot, or Chesterton's Father Brown or the OCD sufferer, Monk created by Andy Breckman. All these characters would delight in the fascinating evidence of Jesus Resurrection, evidenced by the burial cloths remarked upon by John in his Gospel not just once, but twice. There must have been something significant about them? Fr Robert Spitzer, a Jesuit and philosopher of science, argues cogently as to the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin being those same burial cloths and the Sudarium of Oviedo, being the bloodied face cloth that also enveloped Jesus face. (the cloth that had been over his head; this had not been with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself) The percentage correlation of blood type and blood stains connecting both cloths is indisputable. Fr Spitzer argues that the formation of the image on the Shroud is a silent witness to the Resurrection event itself! A cogent case has also been argued as to the identity of the beloved disciple, being the man Jesus loved, his friend Lazarus. Given his recent encounter with death and exiting his own tomb, would explain his reluctance to enter Jesus tomb, even though he arrived first. The mystical and otherworldly insights of John's Gospel and other writings bespeaks of a man who has seen things well beyond earthly experience. As Churchill said of Russia, we can say too of the Resurrection of Jesus; a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma. Jesus Resurrection was emphatically a bodily Resurrection, He ate and was touched, not a resuscitation, like that of Lazarus, but an event both historical and a-historical, in time and not of time. It is, as St Paul tells us, the lynch-pin on which hinges our faith in Jesus and the hope we have of sharing in His Resurrection. Simply put, Christians don't stay dead!