



## **DIOCESE OF THE MISSOURI VALLEY**

**TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN CHURCH - Anglican Church in America**

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March 18, 2024

Beloved in Christ, called to be light in the Lord,

The Feast of Feasts will soon be here. The Light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not put it out. Christ is our life. We proclaim Christ crucified and risen bodily in glory. I would like to highlight, this year, one tiny facet of this, the fulfilment of many types and patterns in Scripture about clothing, going all the way back to Genesis 3.<sup>1</sup>

When Peter and Paul run to the tomb, they find Our Lord's graveclothes left behind. What does this matter? Why did the Holy Spirit lead the Evangelist St. John to especially highlight this? What do Our Lord's graveclothes tell us?

They are untorn, the wrappings around His head neatly folded in a corner. The ointments used- a hundred pounds of mixed myrrh and aloes (John 19:39)- would have bonded the clothes to the skin. So how could the graveclothes not be torn, yet the body be absent? Jesus' resurrected body passed through them. Jesus also passed through locked doors and walls afterwards (see John 20:19, 26). But how?

The Shroud of Turin, long identified as part of Jesus' graveclothes, was, early in the 20th century, misdated to the Middle Ages. More complete and recent examinations in 1981, 1988, and 2010 confirmed the date of the Shroud as first century, and the pollen grains embedded in the shroud placed it specifically to the area in and around Jerusalem. The latest studies also explain, in a way, how the image of Jesus got there. No form of dye or even any kind of current technology can explain this.

Physicists at Italy's National Agency for New Technologies conducted five years of experiments, using lasers to simulate the image's coloration. Every scientific attempt has failed. Its precise hue is highly unusual, and the

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<sup>1</sup> This is a theme about several things: offices (like priest, king, and prophet), authority, and specific roles. People losing and gaining clothing are an important way of highlighting what happens to them. Think of Joseph, who loses his coat of inheritance, gains a new robe, loses it to Potiphar's wife, then gains a new set of clothes as Vizer of Egypt. Or think of Elijah's mantle being dropped when he is taken into heaven and given to Elisha, who is given a double portion of his spirit. Or think of the disciple fleeing naked from the garden of Gethsemane, and then Peter putting his clothes ON to jump in the water and swim to Jesus on the seashore. There are many other examples.

color's penetration into the fabric is extremely thin, less than one-thirtieth the diameter of a single linen fiber. The ultraviolet light necessary to make the image on the Shroud of Turin "exceeds the maximum power released by all ultraviolet light sources available today." It would require "pulses having durations shorter than one forty-billionth of a second, and intensities on the order of several billion watts." That's far greater power than is generated in the instant all the lights of the Dallas Cowboys stadium are turned on, concentrated into a 14-foot-tall area. Think of the Transfiguration, an unimaginable blast of light passing through the clothes.<sup>2</sup>

This explosion of divine life passing through the graveclothes is often assumed by people today to be like a ghost passing through something solid. The apostles in the upper room at first thought so, too. But that is the inverse of the reality. Jesus' glorified Body is not less physical, but more. Jesus says, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself. Touch Me and see. For a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Lk. 24:39). Jesus' glorified Body is more solid, more powerful, having greater energy, than this current physical world. The graveclothes and the walls of the Upper Room are what are less dense, less solid. Everything is now changed, as heaven is joined to earth in a new way. This is connected to Jesus' Words to Mary Magdalene at the tomb: "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God'" (Jn. 20:17). And so also the message from Colossians 3:1-4 come in: "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ...you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ Who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

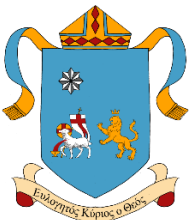
Our Lord's resurrection brings us life that is *more* real, *more* full, *more* physical and solid. It is life that is deathless: unconquered by physical death and radiant with God's life. This is what God will give us if we do not shut His life out forever by clinging to our sins. As Jesus says, "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43). Or again, in Ephesians, "at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk [i.e. live] as children of light" (5:8). Our glorified bodies, conformed to His glorious Body, will live in a whole world more vivid and real than we can possibly now imagine, infinitely above death and evil. This is part of the message and hope of Easter, of Our Master's graveclothes left behind: to prepare us for the difficult path of following Him, anywhere and everywhere He leads. So Our Master says, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

God, forever now in His glorified Flesh, make us shine like the stars and call all peoples to Himself and give us joy to sing His praises always! Christ give you all a very rich and blessed Easter!

In Christ our God,



III Bishop of the Missouri Valley



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<sup>2</sup> For a helpful presentation of some information see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IMQII32wE>.