

## DIVINITY

A passage from St Thomas Aquinas is introduced by an English sindonologist who prefers to remain anonymous in order that all attention be focused on the words of the Doctor Angelicus. The translation from the *Summa* is by Rev. Godfrey Anstruther, O.P.

Something God alone knows is how many people have learnt to meditate on the sacred Humanity of His Son—people who would not have done so had not the camera been invented, revealing that image which had lain for nearly 2000 years on the linen, unrecognisable to the unaided human eye.

Reading the Gospel stories, we can now picture clearly what their central figure looked like, and what the man who was born blind saw when Christ sought him out and asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" In answer to the man's question Jesus said, "Thou hast seen him, and it is he who talks with thee". The man said, "Lord, I believe" and he worshipped Him.

We now know what Our Lady and St John saw, through their tears, as they stood by the Cross. And we are comforted by imagining what Mary Magdalene saw as she heard her name spoken in that dear voice and turned in bewildered joy, crying "*Master!*"

But there was a time between those two events. There were those dark, still hours when the dead body lay in the tomb and the stone across the entrance closed all access to God's unfathomable secret. Read what St Thomas Aquinas wrote about that still body in the silent solitude of the tomb:

St Thomas Aquinas: *Summa; Tertia Pars*, Q. 50, art. 2

Whether in Christ's death His divinity was separated from His flesh

I reply by saying that whatever is granted by the grace of God is never revoked without culpability. Hence it is said (Rom. 11:29) 'God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice'.

This is much more so with the grace of union, whereby divinity is united to the flesh of Christ, than with the grace of adoption whereby all others are sanctified. It is also more permanent of its very nature, because this grace is ordained for a personal union, whereas the grace of adoption is ordained for a kind of union by affection. Nevertheless we see that even the grace of adoption is never forfeited except through sin. Therefore, since in Christ there was never any sin, it was impossible that the union with the divine could ever be dissolved from his flesh. And therefore, as before death the flesh of Christ was united to the Word of God, with respect to his person and his hypostatic union; so it remained united after death. In other words, there was not a different hypostatic union of the Word of God and the flesh of Christ after his death.