

TO SEE THE SHROUD: 2M AND COUNTING

Organizers Meet Goals

By Silvia Gattas

TURIN, Italy, MAY 5, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- It was estimated that 2 million pilgrims would travel to northern Italy to see the Shroud of Turin for its first public display in a decade. In fact, that number has been easily surpassed.

The Shroud of Turin -- the cloth believed to have enwrapped Jesus in the tomb -- is on display until May 23. And Turin already welcomed its most high-profile pilgrim last Sunday: Benedict XVI.

But in addition to the Pope, more than 2 million more will pass through Turin to see the linen cloth that the Holy Father referred to as an "icon written in blood."

"We had two objectives: to have 2 million visitors and to guarantee the reception of pilgrims visiting Turin. Both have been achieved," the president of the Exposition Commission, Fiorenzo Alfieri, told ZENIT. "The objective of 2 million visitors has been easily achieved and it will also be surpassed.

"There are days in which the numbers exceed 50,000 faithful; there are already 1.8 million reservations, to which must be added the 70,000 that arrive every week without reservations. Hence, we have surpassed the 2 million visits."

Alfieri also commented on the expense associated with hosting more than 2 million guests.

"This is an exposition in times of economic crisis" he reflected, and "we have had half of the financing of the last exposition, which took place in 2000."

"We have had some €5 million (\$6.5 million), of which €1 million came from the Piedmont Region, €1 million from the municipality, €750,000 from the province, €250,000 from the Italian episcopal conference, €1.2 million from the Savings Bank Foundation and the rest from St. Paul's Company."

--- --- ---

On ZENIT's Web page:

Pope's reflection after seeing the Shroud: www.zenit.org/article-29116?l=english