

February 8, 2024

Our Presenter will be Father Timothy Danaher

Father Danaher briefly covered his background as a Dominican priest who currently is the Catholic Chaplain and director of the Catholic Center at Dartmouth College.

Prior to joining the Dominicans, Father had a diverse career including life guard, surfer, working in a salmon canning operation in Alaska and becoming a recording artist. He got his calling and joined the Dominican Friars which is over 800 years old and is also known as the Order of Preachers.

Father then spoke on the topic of the Shroud of Turin. The Shroud is a burial cloth purported to be the one that was used to wrap the body of Jesus after the Crucifixion. It is a linen cloth approximately 14 by 4 feet in dimension which contains the faint image of a crucified man. The current Shroud can be traced back as far as the 14th century, though mention of it occurred as being in the possession of various Byzantine Emperors prior to the sack of Constantinople in 1204 AD. The Shroud passed through the hands of various French nobility until it was acquired by the House of Savoy in Turin who built a chapel to hold the relic. There has been an active debate on the authenticity of the Shroud down through the centuries. Various scientific tests have been performed. After a carbon dating of a patch on the Shroud indicated that it was from the 13th Century AD, other tests found that the cloth contained pollen that was common to the Holy Land around 0-100 AD. The original carbon dating was possibly found to have been faulty due to a fire that damaged part of the Shroud in 1532. The image on the Shroud (best seen in a photographic negative) is of a man with wounds common to a person who had been crucified. Many theories have been offered as to how the image was generated, though it was not a painting. Some sort of spontaneous radioactive occurrence that would have taken milliseconds to generate the image has been offered. Blood samples from the Shroud when tested produced a blood type of AB-. The Catholic Church has not taken a firm position on the authenticity of Shroud, though in an off the record comment Pope John Paul II stated that he believed it was real. In any event the Shroud remains a theological and scientific mystery.