

On March 18, 1983 Humbert II of Savoy died in Geneva. The most solemn obsequies took place on March 24 in Hautecombe abbey, in Savoy, where the body had been transferred privately. The announcement of the Holy Shroud donation to the Holy See in the person of the present Pope John Paul II was given in Geneva on March 25, 1983 by the lawyer Armando Radice, who read the following communiqué:

“On March 23, the Count Fausto Solaro del Borgo has given to His Most Reverend Eminence, cardinal Agostino Casaroli, His Holiness’ Secretary of State, a letter of His Majesty Humbert II’s testamentary executors, His Majesty Simeon of Bulgaria and His Royal Highness the Landgrave Mauritius of Assia, by which they begged him to inform His Holiness John Paul II, that the late Monarch had ordered, in his last will and testament, that the Holy Shroud, kept in the Cathedral of Turin, was given in full property to the Supreme Pontiff. His Royal Highness, the Prince of Naples, also on behalf of his entire family, has expressed the joy of being able, respecting his august father’s will – which aims at definitively guaranteeing for the future the entrusting of one of the most precious relics of Our Lord’s Passion to the Holy See – to fulfil a devotion gesture towards the person of the Roman Church Supreme Pontiff. The Prince of Naples has decided that the late Monarch’s will could be communicated to His Holiness John Paul II on the eve of the Holy Year’s opening.”

Here is the original text of the donation document as it was published by the Princess Maria Gabriella of Savoy in the book *La Sindone nei secoli nella collezione di Umberto II* (The Shroud during the centuries in Humbert II’s collection), Gribaudo, Turin, 1998, pp. 11-15.

*To His Majesty Simeon of Bulgaria
To His Royal Highness Mauritius of Assia*

*In consideration of the secular veneration that the Catholic Church has for the Holy Shroud, kept in the Royal Chapel of Turin Cathedral,
Being sure that the Catholic Hierarchy acknowledges to the House of Savoy, in the person of its Head, the secular rights of property of the Holy Shroud,
Thinking it right and proper for the future to definitively guarantee for the future the entrusting of one of the most precious relics of Our Lord’s Passion to the Church*

I ORDER

That, after my death, the full property of the Holy Shroud be transferred in donation to the Holy See.

Together with the Holy Shroud, also what is linked to the cult of the Same Shroud and kept in the Royal Chapel of Turin Cathedral and turning out to be of my property will have to be donated.

I therefore beg You, as my testamentary executors, to take all the necessary steps, so that the Supreme Pontiff could be made acquainted with my will and he could arrange for the Holy Shroud entrusting.

I want that, for the assignment of the property, a written official document with the Holy See must be drawn up and, in virtue of the present dispositions, You are delegated to proceed to its definition and signing.

Done in Geneva on March 27, 1981

On October 19, 1983 *L'Osservatore Romano* (The Roman Observer), on its first page, had this short communication:

Perfected the Shroud donation document to the Apostolic See.

This morning, October 18, 1983, the Most Reverend Eminence, cardinal Agostino Casaroli, Secretary of State, on behalf of the Holy See, has undersigned with H.M. Simeon of Bulgaria and H.R.H. Mauritius of Assia and in H.R.H. Amadeus of Aosta’s presence, the document by which the

Shroud donation document to the Apostolic See has been perfected, thus enforcing King Humbert II of Savoy's testamentary disposition. At the end of action, the Cardinal Secretary of State has expressed the Holy Father's gratitude for the late Monarch's respectful gesture and for the feelings of devotion towards the Apostolic See, that have inspired it.

Here follows the complete text of the Secretary of State Cardinal Agostino Casaroli's letter, taken from the "*Rivista Diocesana Torinese*" ("Turinese Diocesan Magazine"), November 1983, pp. 957-958:

SECRETARIAT OF STATE

n. 115.046

from the Vatican, 14 November 1983

Dear Cardinal,

As it is known, His Majesty Humbert II of Savoy, on March 27, 1981, by a document signed in Geneva, decided that, after his death, the full property of the Holy Shroud, kept in the Royal Chapel of the Turin Cathedral, had to be transferred to the Holy See property.

Last October 18, in the presence of H.M. Simeon of Bulgaria, H.R.H. Mauritius of Assia, as testamentary executors, and of the duke Amadeus of Savoy Aosta, I have accepted the donation of the Holy Shroud on behalf of the Holy See, as You will be able to find in the record here enclosed in photocopy.

I take care of communicating to You that the Holy Father has appointed the "pro tempore" Archbishop of Turin as the Holy See delegate for all that that concerns the conservation and the cult of the precious Relic, considering that it will continue to stay in Turin.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep respect of Your

*Most Reverend Eminence
Very devotedly in the Lord
Card. A. Casaroli*