

Famous Painting of Christ Attracts Crowds to Ranchos de Taos Church

Journal Special

RANCHOS DE TAOS—The famous painting "The Shadow of the Cross," by artist Henri Ault, is one of the many attractions in the venerable old Mission Church of St. Francis, Ranchos de Taos, where it has found a permanent home.

By daylight the picture is a simple life size portrayal of Jesus standing on the shore of Lake Genesareth. But at night, with lights turned off, the figure changes posture and a cross appears over the right shoulder—a cross which is not visible by daylight.

Too, the sea and sky, which form the background of the painting by daylight, give the effect at night of moonlight on the water.

The painting has been exhibited more than 50 years in many parts of Europe and North America, and always with increasing interest in its mysterious qualities.

The artist himself seems to have been the most affected by the discovery made as he entered his studio one night and beheld the strange phenomenon. He called several of his friends to witness the mystery as he could not believe his own eyes.

The humble man disclaimed any knowledge of the reason for the change which takes place in the painting.

Church authorities note that the picture was painted several years before the discovery of radium, and no luminous paint has been developed so far which will not darken and oxidize within a relatively short period of time.

Recent Geiger counter tests, examinations of scrapings, and exposure to lights of varying intensity proved unsuccessful in explaining its marvelous change when exposed to light or darkness.

Such has been the case since



ARTIST HENRI AULT'S painting, "The Shadow of the Cross" by daylight shows Jesus standing on the shore of Lake Genesaret.

the painting was first observed by the British physicist, Sir William Crooks, and other British chemists and physicists of note.

Mrs. H. F. Griffin of Wichita Falls, Tex., and Ranchos de Taos, found the painting in an Atlanta gallery and presented it to St. Francis Church along with other

historic and valuable objects of art.

Although little publicity has been given to the painting since its arrival in the old Mission Church of Ranchos de Taos, thousands of visitors who have seen it have passed on the word of its compelling interest. In-



AT NIGHT, WITH THE LIGHTS OFF the figure of Jesus in Artist Henri Ault's painting changes posture and a cross appears over the right shoulder which is not visible by daylight.

creasing numbers of viewers make their way to the ancient church, where the doors are always open.

The greatest numbers come in the evening between the hours of 8 and 10 p.m. when two lectures are given each night by Msgr. Joseph Maguire, pastor, who talks on the mysterious qualities of "The Shadow of the Cross."