

31. May 2021

“God's Glory and the honour of St. Joan of Arc”

As I mentioned yesterday, I do not want to fail to remember St. Joan of Arc again and again. The day of her death was 30 May 1431, when she was publicly burned as a witch in the marketplace of Rouen, France. I cordially invite you to listen to the radio play, which gives a good impression of the mission of the saint (<https://youtu.be/pVKE6WCNZ3g>). The unjust ecclesiastical trial against her was annulled twenty-five years after her death. In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonised.

There is an infinite amount to say about St Joan of Arc. Her life is very well documented. Her story is so unusual that to this day people are always looking at her anew whenever they come into contact with her.

There is a peculiarity between the saint and our community which I am happy to share with you today, as brothers and sisters in faith. Inner experiences need verification, because they are not to be proven like scientific knowledge. However, this experience became a fruitful impulse that continues to this day.

It was in the year 2004 when I was in Rouen with some members of our community to visit the place where St. Joan of Arc was burnt. We prayed at the respective place of the market place and sang Vespers there. During the prayer I heard someone singing softly. It could not have been one of us and there was no other person around. When Vespers was over and we were still in silence, I heard a voice and identified it as the voice of St Joan. She was expressing her joy that we were honouring her with our visit to this place. Then I heard a sentence that still moves us today and also explains why we are so connected to St Jeanne (Joan) of Arc in particular.

I understood within myself that Joan was asking that we should help that her honour be fully restored on earth.

I was so taken aback by this sentence that I kept it to myself at first and did not tell the brothers and sisters about it. It was incomprehensible to me at first. I thought to myself that Jeanne was in heaven, where she would surely have been received with all honour as a martyr. I also knew that she had already been canonised. Why was it her concern that her honour should be fully restored on earth?

It took me some time to understand why Jeanne requested this.

First of all, when I studied the saint more closely, it became clear to me that a distorted image of her was often conveyed in literature. Not infrequently, there were attempts to disregard the supernatural dimension of the events. Some authors even wanted to portray her as a psychologically disturbed person. The films about her are also often trivialising and much more... When I noticed all this, the question was still not fully answered for me.

But finally I understood.

The honour of a saint is the honour of God! When we honour a saint, we first honour God, who has done great things for that person. Let us think of the Blessed Mother: *"The Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name"*(Lk 1:49).

So Jeanne was not primarily concerned with her personal honour. She certainly wants God to be honoured and glorified through her life and death, He who worked in such a wonderful way in her life. If the image of Joan of Arc is distorted, ridiculed and deprived of the supernatural dimension, then people will not be able to recognise the message and goodness of God which is so evident in the life and mission of Jeanne. It is precisely through her life that it becomes abundantly clear how God intervenes in a hopeless situation and testifies to Himself. Innumerable examples from Jeanne's life could be pointed out and faith awakened.

We regard Jeanne with great love as our sister and have chosen her as patroness of Balta-Lelija.

Serving God's glory is a powerful drive. It is hurt so infinitely and it pains the heart that far too little honour is shown to our heavenly Father on earth. Jeanne gave Him all the honour and also accepted from His hand the death by fire, that she had feared the most. She was nineteen years old when she suffered it and was betrayed on several levels. The king, who owed her his coronation in Rheims, did not care for her when she fell into captivity. A foreign occupying force carried out the death sentence. The Bishop of Beauvais, and with him many learned clerics, condemned her as a witch.

Parallels to the death of the Lord are obvious.

It is therefore a great concern for us to comply with our sister's wish. It is primarily for the glory of God, but then also for her honour. She was faithful to the Lord

until death and did not hesitate to serve the mission entrusted to her. Thus she showed us that one can love God more than one's own life.

An invitation is going out again for the radio play. We will return to Joan of Arc from time to time.