



30 May 2026
IN HONOR OF ST. JOAN OF ARC (Part 1)
“The heart of the Saint”

It was May 30, 1431, in Rouen, France, one day after the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity.

A large crowd had gathered that morning in the old market square near the Church of Our Savior. In addition to the gathered people and clergy, many soldiers were present. However, these were not French soldiers. They were English, as Rouen was still under English rule during the Hundred Years' War between France and England.

A scaffold had been erected, and standing on it was a young woman, nineteen years old. The people had gathered to see this woman—both clergy and laymen.

All eyes were fixed on this young woman.

Who was she? Why was she standing there?

Then Nicolaus Midi, Doctor of Sacred Theology, delivered a sermon to the entire assembly on verse 26 of the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, chapter 12:

“If one member suffers, all suffer together.”

What did this text have to do with this still-so-young woman?

Then a bishop stepped forward. It was Monseigneur Cauchon of Beauvais, who pronounced judgment on the woman.

This woman was Joan of Arc.

The bishop passed a terrible judgment on the woman who would later be recognized as a saint by the Church. It was a judgment full of falsehoods, preceded by an unjust trial that was later annulled.

Just a few of these words suffice to give us a sense of what this young woman, whom we honor today as the Holy Maid of Orléans, endured.

Thus spoke the bishop:

In the name of the Lord. Amen.

Whenever heresy infects a member of the Church with its pestilential poison and transforms them into a member of Satan, one must, with burning zeal, prevent the dangerous infection from spreading to the other parts of the mystical Body of Christ. Thus the decrees of the Church Fathers have prescribed that obstinate heretics are better removed from the midst of the righteous than that—to the great peril of the faithful—the poison of the serpent be nurtured in the bosom of Holy Mother Church. Therefore, We, Pierre, by God’s mercy Bishop of Beauvais, and Brother Jean le Maistre, deputy specially charged with the trial of the illustrious Doctor Jean Graverent, the Inquisitor for heretical errors, declare you, Joan, commonly called the Virgin, to be an apostate, an idolater, and a sorceress.

After the verdict was read, Joan was handed over to the secular authorities and burned alive at the stake immediately.

How could such a thing have happened?

But when we think of the Lord Himself, things become clearer. If the Son of God was condemned to death and crucified despite never having committed a sin, and if the Father’s messenger and the Messiah of humanity—who healed the sick, raised the dead, and freed the possessed—was persecuted by those to whom He was sent, then even a holy virgin like Joan of Arc could also be burned as a heretic and a witch.

It is the same powers of darkness at work, using people, deceiving them, and strengthening their evil inclinations in order to extinguish as much as possible all that bears witness to God. It was not enough for Joan’s enemies to destroy her reputation, humiliate her publicly, and burn her before everyone’s eyes.

In 1450, Brother Ysambert de la Pierre reported that the executioner of Joan came to him and a fellow brother in utter despair and remorse. He assured and affirmed that despite the oil, sulfur, and charcoal he had added to burn the entrails and the heart, the fire had not consumed them, and neither the entrails nor the heart had been turned to ashes, which astonished him as if before an obvious miracle.

Yet they sought to destroy even this testimony and threw Joan’s heart into the Seine. (Witness accounts in defense of Joan)

But one cannot destroy God's presence in a saint. Everything done out of love and in truth is never forgotten in God's memory, and in Joan's case, her life is well documented. Those who seek it will discover a wonderful and great love story. Certainly, attempts were made later to obscure and exploit the memory of Joan of Arc, often creating a distorted image of her. Her testimony shone too brightly for the darkness not to try to cover it with its shadow.

But whoever sets out in search of the heart of Saint Joan of Arc will find it and recall the words from the Song of Songs:

"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned." (Song of Songs 8:6)

The Saint's great love belonged to God and her fatherland, France. She lived and died for the mission entrusted to her by the Heavenly Father. There we find her heart, in which the holy God so wonderfully glorified Himself and poured out His love upon this virgin. Joan died with the words of Jesus on her lips; seven times she called upon the name of Jesus before her young life came to an end and the Heavenly Father called her to Himself into eternity.