



10 June 2026
IN HONOR OF ST. JOAN OF ARC
“Concluding reflection” (Part 12)

I am delighted for—and with—everyone who followed the twelve reflections on the Blessed Virgin of Orléans. This is not the first time I have written about her, and—God willing—it will not be the last. Indeed, every time I write about her, it feels fresh, which is connected to the fact that the Virgin of Orléans was a believer who carried out a mission from God. One can never understand this enough. I invite everyone, as they see fit, to look at my earlier publications and listen to the radio play created in her honor:

- Conference “Jeanne d'Arc and our times”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CAUejmfh0E>

- Radio play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVKE6WCNZ3g>

The title of this series on Joan makes clear what my intention was. I wanted to honor the Maid, who suffered a terrible death by public burning at the stake for her mission. Unfortunately, this is often poorly understood in depictions of her, and even less understood is the fact that glory is due first to God, who intervened in the history of France through her and accomplished this work with her help. If we forget this or allow it to fade too far into the background, then we fail to grasp the essential point and remain trapped in a merely human perspective when considering the events surrounding Joan of Arc.

However, listening to Joan provides the correct perspective. She always testified that she was commissioned by God and that she did everything at God’s behest, even until her death. Like the Lord Jesus himself, who spoke of doing everything on the Father’s behalf, Joan referred to God, who guided her through her saints and whom she loved. It is precisely the unusual circumstances of her appearance in the history of France that demand faith from us. God can intervene in a hopeless situation, as was the case in France at that time, and do so in an unexpected way. In light of the current global situation, which seems disastrous and influenced by external forces in so many areas, we should not forget this.

We have heard the baseless accusations with which Joan’s judges in Rouen condemned her. Almost everything was used against her, and a diabolical distortion of her mission became evident. The ruthlessness with which this “trial of shame” was conducted is shocking. Thankfully, she spoke courageously, guided by her inner voice, and we have

records of the Rouen sessions. These records allow us to gain a better understanding of Joan as a person, since we can hear her own words.

Much of the Virgin's life mirrors that of our Lord Jesus. The Pharisees' unjust accusations echo the tribunal's charges, and the Lord's public crucifixion and humiliation mirror the act of publicly burning the Virgin in the Rouen marketplace. The Savior's public ministry lasted only a short time, and Jeanne had little time for her mission as well. The Son of God raised the dead, freed the possessed, and healed the sick. Yet he was accused by the religious leaders of his time of doing so with the help of the devil. And what of Jeanne? We know her story.

On May 30, the anniversary of her death, I began this series. In the first reflection, I wrote that after Joan's burning, even her heart was thrown into the Seine so that nothing of her would remain, and I added:

However, 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)

Where can we find the heart of this saint, which is indestructible because it is set on fire by the love of God? Even if someone believed they could destroy it physically, they would not succeed.

The heart of the Virgin lives in those who love God above all else and are ready to leave everything behind for His sake. It lives in those who seek justice and are not intimidated by injustice. It lives in those who are ready to fight for the truth. It lives in those who want to fulfill their mission on earth and who rise again when they have grown weak along the way. It lives in those who are ready to go to their death for the Lord. It lives in those who know that everything comes from God and who have mercy on the poor. It is the heart of God that beats within them. Thus, their hearts no longer belong to themselves but have become temples of God.

Such was our Virgin of Orléans, who cried out the name of our Savior seven times as she died in the flames.

Cantor Jean Roquier of Rouen testified to her death: *“Magister Jean Alespée, who was then a canon of Rouen, stood beside me. I heard him say, weeping:*

‘Would that my soul were where I believe hers to be!’”

I echo the canon's words and hope that, in eternity, she will welcome those in whose hearts she burned.