

September 2011

# A.D.:Anno Domini

A Church history supplement for adult Catholics

This Month's Focus: A.D. 1400-1500



### Diocesan Mission Statement

"We the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Scranton, in union with our Holy Father, the Pope, are called through baptism to share in the mission which Jesus Christ has entrusted to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Priests, deacons, religious and laity, under the leadership of our Bishop, cooperate to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the teaching of the Church to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, for the salvation of all, and to witness by grace to the Kingdom of God so as to promote a culture of life, justice and peace."

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### Key Events: A.D. 1400-1500

**1406:** Gregory XII elected pope.

**1412:** St. Joan of Arc born

**1414:** Council of Constance, 16th Ecumenical, meets to end the Western Schism.

**1425:** St. Joan of Arc begins to hear voices and has a vision of St. Michael the Archangel, St. Margaret, and St. Catherine of Alexandria. They tell her that she will help liberate France, specifically Orleans, and ensure the coronation of Charles VII.

**1429:** St. Joan of Arc leads French victory at Orleans and Rheims. Charles VII crowned King of France.

**1431: Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence, 17th Ecumenical, meets to try and reunite the Western and Easter churches.**

**1453:** Constantinople falls to the Turks.

**1455:** Gutenberg Bible printed.

**1461:** St. Catherine of Siena is canonized by Pope Pius II.

**1465:** Music is first printed on a printing press.

**1475:** Michelangelo is born. A true Renaissance man, he was an accomplished sculptor, painter, and architect whose work still amazes today. Commissioned by

four different popes, his most famous accomplishments are probably the Sistine Chapel and the dome of St. Peter's Basilica.

**1478:** St. Thomas More is born. Possessing a gifted intellect, he would eventually be appointed Lord Chancellor by King Henry VIII.

**1483:** Raphael is born. A student of da Vinci and Michelangelo, he is most famous for his Madonnas.

**1492:** The Moors are conquered in Spain and Columbus lands on islands off North America.

**1498:** Leonardo da Vinci finishes his famous *Last Supper*.

### Key Concept: The Renaissance

French for "re-birth," this period in history was characterized by "a popular desire to return to the civilization of the Greco-Roman world and reawaken a sense of human beauty and personal achievement."

In a certain sense, the foundation of the Renaissance went back to William of Ockham (d. 1347) whose philosophy emphasized the

importance of the individual. In the 15th century the average person had more social and geographical mobility than ever before. While St. Thomas Aquinas saw human activity as a means to salvation, some figures of the Renaissance saw it as an end in itself. This led to an emphasis on the individual achieving as much as they possibly could with the gifts they possessed. This is what

is meant by calling someone a "Renaissance Man"—they are accomplished amateurs in a number of areas (music, writing, sports, theology, philosophy, etc.).

When most people think of the Renaissance they are thinking of what is known as the "high" Renaissance. This period began in the late 15th century and saw the emergence of great artists.



**St. Joan was very private about her visions— withholding them even from her confessor.**

*“She also said that the voice seemed to her worthy, and she believes that it was sent by God”*



**St. Joan of Arc was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.**

## Get to Know: St. Joan of Arc (A.D. 1412-1431)

St. Joan was born in Champagne on January 6, 1412, the youngest of five children born to a peasant farmer. When she was 13 years old she began to hear heavenly voices and reported having a dazzling vision in which St. Michael the Archangel, St. Margaret, and St. Catherine of Alexandria revealed themselves to her. Over time the saints revealed to her that she was to help liberate France, especially the city of Orleans, and instructed her to go and tell Charles VII that he would be crowned king.

Joan had many obstacles in getting Charles VII to see her and allow her to lead troops into armed

battle, but when she picked him out of a crowd (he was in disguise and she had never seen him before) and told him a secret God had revealed to her, he helped her to carry out her mission.

In May 1429 she led a small army against English troops who occupied Orleans. They succeeded and liberated not only Orleans, but also Loire, Troyes, Chalons, and Rheims. True to her prophecy, Charles VII was crowned king that year in Rheims.

After his coronation Charles VII became apathetic towards Joan. When, during a subsequent battle, Jane was captured by the Eng-

lish, he did not attempt to negotiate her release. The English put her on trial for heresy—supposedly because of her visions— but her real crime was being a French heroine.

Before Joan had led the French troops in battle, Charles VII had had her examined by both doctors and Bishops. They found nothing physically or theologically wrong with her, however their findings were not admissible in the English trial. She was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431.

In 1456 Pope Callistus III overturned her sentence and she was canonized in 1920.

## In Their Own Words: Excerpt from *The Trial of Joan of Arc*

“Again asked whether she confessed her sins each year: she answered yes, to her own curé; and when the curé was hindered she with his permission confessed to another priest. Sometimes also, twice or thrice as she believed, she confessed to the friars. And this was in the said town of Neufchâteau. And she had been in the habit of receiving the Eucharist at Easter. Asked whether she had been in the habit of receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist at any other feasts save Easter: she told her questioner to pass on. She further confessed that when she was thirteen years old she had a voice from God to aid her in self-discipline. And the first time she was greatly afraid. And this voice came about noon in summer in

her father's garden, and she had fasted the day before. And she heard the voice on her right hand toward the church, and she seldom heard it without a light. Which light comes from the same side as the voice, but is usually great. And when she came to France she often heard this voice. Asked how she saw the light which she said was there present when it was on one side; to this she answered nothing, but passed to other things. She moreover said that if she were in a grove she distinctly heard voices coming to her. She also said that the voice seemed to her worthy, and she believes that it was sent by God; and after she had heard it three times she knew that it was the voice of an angel. She also said

that it always guarded her well, and that she knew it well.

Asked about the teaching which her voice gave her respecting the salvation of her soul, she said that it taught her to govern herself well, to go often to church, and that it said she also must go to France....She further said that her voice had told here that she should go to Robert de Baudricourt, Captain of the fortress of Vaucouleurs, and he would give her attendants; and she then answered that she was a poor girl who knew not how to ride a horse nor head a campaign. She also said that she went to her uncle and told him that she wished to stay with him for a little while; and she stayed there about eight days....”