

## THE OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT OF CANONIZATION

In 1904, almost 450 years after she was rehabilitated, Joan was declared Venerable by the Church. In 1908, she was further elevated to the designation Blessed, and finally she was raised to the Church's highest rank when she was canonized in 1920. The following pronouncement was made by the Church at that time. It is translated from the official Vatican commentary, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, for that year, by Samuel E. DeMerit.

*AT THE SOLEMN CANONIZATION* of Blessed Joan of Arc, held in the Vatican Basilica, on the sixteenth day of May, 1920, on the Sunday within the Octave of the Lord's Ascension.

To the threefold petition, "fervently, more fervently, most fervently," made through the Consistorial Advocate, Dom. Virginius Iacoucci, by the most distinguished gentleman Antonius Vico, Prefect of the Holy Roman Congregation, Procurator of Canonization, the following response was given by the most reverend Dom. Aurelius Galli, Secretary of State, in the name of His Holiness:

I. It is with the greatest good will that the Most Blessed Father opens these solemn proceedings, and with a heart most grateful to God, through Whose kindness he not only witnesses the happiness of the day, but himself takes first place in the celebration thereof. For it is the order of the day that he who has by Jesus Christ been appointed teacher of truth and champion of justice canonize with inalterable decree the sanctity of the bravest maiden within the recollection of men and the most innocent; and by decreeing for her the highest honors, forever erase from memory the stain of her unjust condemnation. Here may we admire the design of Divine Providence. For inasmuch as it was before an unlawful tribunal that Joan was tried, it was more than once that she was heard voicing an appeal to the Roman Pontiff; this very appeal, although it did not suffice to stay her cruel punishment, was nonetheless destined to exercise a power and evoke an effect beyond all expectation. It was therefore not many years later that Callixtus vindicated the name of the Maid of Orleans from every accusation; and now, almost five centuries later, it is with the authority and approval of God that our Most Blessed Lord,<sup>1</sup> here in this most solemn assembly of the nations of the world, proclaims this very Maid an exemplar of sanctity and commends her to the entire Christian world, an object of veneration, of imitation. And in this great throng of local people and guests from abroad, he is especially delighted by the visible presence of France, whose most distinguished citizen, he who publicly represents her, he here beholds, together with many of her bishops; nor has he the least doubt but that this noble nation's lively devotion to Joan of Arc, the venerable savior of her country, will be of great spiritual benefit to her. Meanwhile, in view of the gravity of this occasion, he wishes that all here present pray to God for him, invoking the intercessions of Mary, the immaculate Mother of God, her Most Blessed Spouse Joseph Peter and Paul, the Chiefs of the Apostles, and the rest of the entire company of heaven.

II. Before he proclaims the solemn edict, the Most Blessed Father, deeming it fit that we press more insistently our humble petition for divine enlightenment, requests of us an ever more fervent invocation of the author of wisdom, the Holy Spirit.

III. Behold, that moment of *time*, so long awaited by good men, has now come, when the sanctity of Joan of Arc, supereminent in every respect, is ratified by the authority of Peter. May the whole Catholic world hear, and just as it has come to admire her brave deeds in defense of her country, may it now and henceforward venerate her as a most brilliantly shining light of the Church Triumphant.

[<sup>1</sup> That is Pope Benedict XV. ]