

**Saint Joan of Arc:** Why is a young woman dressed in a suit of armor? Why does she look like a medieval knight? Because she is Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, a patron saint of France, a young woman whose story is exciting, tragic, and, ultimately, triumphant. Born on January 6, 1412 in Domrémy, France, Jeanne (in English, Joan) was the daughter of Jacques d'Arc, a farmer, and his wife, Isabelle. When she was thirteen years old, she heard a voice, saw a flash of light, and eventually told others that she was hearing the voices of St. Michael, St. Catherine, St. Margaret, and others. Because of her visions, Joan became convinced that she needed to save France by aiding the Dauphin (the king's eldest son) in his battles with the English. At first ridiculed, Joan was eventually listened to when her prophecies about a French defeat near Orléans came true. After being examined for possible heresy at Poitiers, Joan was permitted to lead an expedition. Think of how remarkable that was in the fifteenth century; it would be remarkable even today. Wearing a suit of white armor, Joan of Arc led her soldiers to victory in two separate battles. When the Dauphin was crowned king of France in 1429, Joan was there. After she failed to capture Paris, Joan was seized in 1430 and sold by John of Luxemburg to the British. Accused of heresy and witchcraft, she was condemned and burned to death in Rouen on May 30, 1431. In 1456, Pope Callistus III found her innocent of the charges, and she was canonized in 1920. She has been the subject of many paintings, dramas (e.g., George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*), and films, including Carl Dreyer's silent screen masterpiece, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, and the 1948 technicolor film, *Joan of Arc*, starring Ingrid Bergman. The feast day of most saints is their day of death, since that is the date of their entry into heaven. Joan's feast day is, in fact, on May 30, the very day she was burned at the stake. Our window was donated by Margaret Smoyer in honor of the Smoyer and Benzing families.

