

From: POPE JOAN II

by Pat Montley

Play Synopsis: Urged by apparitions of her namesakes Saint Joan and the apocryphal 9th-century Pope Joan I, and armed with an infusion of the Life Force, Sister Joan—faster than a speeding angel, more powerful than a prayer, able to leap clerical hierarchies in a single bound—blackmails her way to becoming pope, so she can fight the never-ending battle for truth, justice, gender equality, and the American way by transforming the Catholic Church into a liberal democracy and saving the world from overpopulating.

In the first scene of the play, Saint Joan—19, a coach/cheerleader with radical ideas, French charm and a French accent, tries to persuade Sister Joan to become the next pope.

Scene: Late night, urban neighborhood. SISTER JOAN, 50's, is seated, at meditation. She prays, nods off, wakes up, nods off. There is a sudden flash of bright, white light, a loud clatter. The teenage SAINT JOAN appears in full armor. SISTER JOAN wakes up.

SAINT JOAN

Bonjour, ma Soeur! Greetings, Sister Joan.

(Gesturing to herself.)

The armor and helmet are over the top, I know. But it gives me cred. You American nuns with your “radical feminist ideas” are in big trouble, *n'est-ce pas?* Agitating for ordaining women makes you the new witches. Beware the stake. I've come to warn you—

(Change of tone.)

—against giving up! There is work to be done. The cathedrals are empty. The Church is hemorrhaging—and for good reason. People are fed up with a pampered, medieval hierarchy out of touch with the modern world, with archaic dogma and the self-righteous claim to infallibility, with a male, celibate clergy telling them how to behave in their bedrooms. Who cares about any of that? There are more pressing problems: Rome fiddles while the world burns! The fiery apocalypse has begun—and humans are responsible. Global warming—fueled by overpopulation! Soon— *très bientôt*—there won't be enough food or water or clean air.

Just think—*penser!*—what a progressive pope could achieve. What if the Vatican sold its buildings: St. Peter's, the Papal Palace? Think what the artwork would bring: the Caravaggio, the DaVinci, the Raphaels. And what if all the cardinals and bishops lived like...well— like nuns. We could use the money to finance massive sex education. Condoms for every community. A Rubber Revolution!

Time is running out. The Church—the World—needs to be saved. And you are just the one to do it. You will be the next pope. You are *exactement* what the world needs. Embrace your Destiny. The Life Force has chosen you—to be used for a mighty purpose.

(Formally, Angel Gabriel to Mary.)

Hail, Sister Joan, blessed art thou among women!

You've got the mission. You've got the caring heart. And now...kneel and prepare to receive the Life Force!

(Draws her sword.)