

# Seventh Grade Honors Literature (7HL)

2017-18 Academic Year

Saint John Academy  
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*"...we should do our utmost that the first stories that they hear (youth) should be so composed as to bring the fairest lessons of virtue to their ears." Plato's Republic*

June 20, 2017

Dear Parents and Students of 7HL,

I am blessed and privileged to be part of the Saint John Academy in teaching this literature course which will explore a small handful of the greatest works of English Literature in the past few centuries. We will investigate why these classics have and always will be read for generations to come. Their themes are so universal, even to the Catholic faith, that these stories will be supplemented by the texts of church documents, spiritual writings of the saints, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Stories will include a variety of characters from monsters and pigs to windmills and hobbits.

With the theme of this course being "*DEFEND US IN BATTLE*," this summer's required reading assignment is *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain (Ignatius Press, ISBN 978-0-89870-268-2). While the American author is more widely known for his other two novels (The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn), it is this story about France's greatest military leader, unorthodoxly a female and a teenager, that Twain considers the best of all his books.

In addition to reading this incredible story, a writing assignment is due on the first day of school. As writing samples will serve as a majority of graded assignments throughout the year, this graded paper (10% of first quarter grade with opportunities for revision) will provide me the necessary guidance in understanding the student's reading and writing abilities. (Read the TIP!)

For the parents of the family (and student, yet not required), I highly recommend for summer reading *The Power of Silence* by Robert Cardinal Sarah (Ignatius Press, ISBN 978-1-62164-191-9). With technology, materialism, and consumerism being so prevalent in our personal lives, this book offers a perspective on how to restore silence to its place of honor and importance. Excerpts of this book will be discussed and reflected on throughout the year.

Looking forward into the school year, skills of reading, writing, collaboration and discussion will be emphasized. These two summer assignments will serve as a foundation for these important life-skills. A complete reading list for the school year will be sent at the end of July. If you have any questions or need assistance with the writing assignment, feel free to email me. Have a great summer!

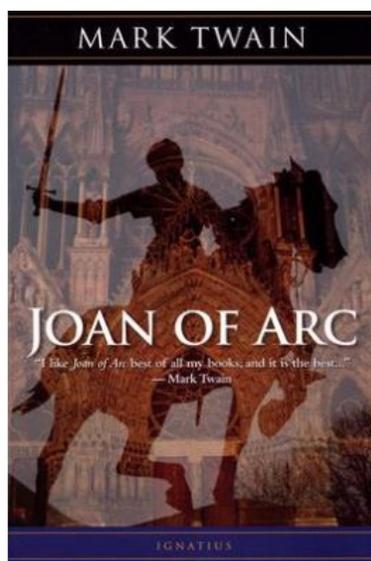
-Maestro Senson

# 7HL Summer Reading and Writing Assignment



## Reading Assignment

While Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble are easy and convenient for purchases, I highly recommend supporting independent bookstores as I have personally worked for one in my past and recognize the importance of local support. For the two summer readings, the WORD Bookstore at the church may be contacted for these purchases ([theword@stjohncatholicmclean.org](mailto:theword@stjohncatholicmclean.org)). Purchasing directly from Ignatius Press is also a good option ([www.ignatius.com](http://www.ignatius.com)). \*Paperback formats required for all reading in this course.



Required: *Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain (Ignatius Press, ISBN 978-0-89870-268-2)

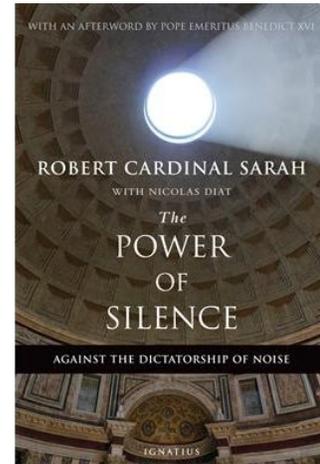
Very few people know that Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) wrote a major work on Joan of Arc. Still fewer know that he considered it not only his most important but also his best work. He spent twelve years in research and many months in France doing archival work and then made several attempts until he felt he finally had the story he wanted to tell. He reached his conclusion about Joan's unique place in history only after studying in detail accounts written by both sides, the French and the English.

Because of Mark Twain's antipathy to institutional religion, one might expect an anti-Catholic bias toward Joan or at least toward the bishops and theologians who condemned her. Instead one finds a remarkably accurate biography of the life and mission of Joan of Arc told by one of this country's greatest storytellers. The very fact that Mark Twain wrote this book and wrote it the way he did is a powerful testimony to the attractive power of the Catholic Church's saints. This is a book that really will inform and inspire.

*“If I am not in the state of grace, may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me.” - Saint Joan of Arc*

Recommended for Parents and Students: **The Power of Silence, Against the Dictatorship of Noise** by Robert Cardinal Sarah (Ignatius Press, ISBN 978-1-62164-191-9)

In a time when technology penetrates our lives in so many ways and materialism exerts such a powerful influence over us, Cardinal Robert Sarah presents a bold book about the strength of silence. The modern world generates so much noise, he says, that seeking moments of silence has become both harder and more necessary than ever before.



Silence is the indispensable doorway to the divine, explains the cardinal in this profound conversation with Nicolas Diat. Within the hushed and hallowed walls of the La Grande Chartreux, the famous Carthusian monastery in the French Alps, Cardinal Sarah addresses the following questions: Can those who do not know silence ever attain truth, beauty, or love? Do not wisdom, artistic vision, and devotion spring from silence, where the voice of God is heard in the depths of the human heart?

After the international success of *God or Nothing*, Cardinal Sarah seeks to restore to silence its place of honor and importance. "Silence is more important than any other human work," he says, "for it expresses God. The true revolution comes from silence; it leads us toward God and others so as to place ourselves humbly and generously at their service."

### Other Recommended for Summer Enjoyment:

- ✓ **FORMED.org** - FORMED has the best Catholic content all in one place! Books, audiobooks, movies! Go to the Saint John Catholic Church website to get the parish code! [www.stjohncatholicmclean.org](http://www.stjohncatholicmclean.org)
- ✓ **The Spiritual Combat (book)** - written by Dom Lorenzo Scupoli, salvation and spiritual perfection should not be sought haphazardly; a strategy is needed to win the battle for our souls.
- ✓ **Pope John Paul II (TV series)** - starring Jon Voight and Cary Elwes (*Yes, the guy who played Westley from The Princess Bride!*) as JP2, Karol Wojtyla endures Nazi occupation, embraces religion and, as pope, promotes faith and peace around the world.
- ✓ **The Way (movie)** - directed by Emilio Estevez, an American father travels to France to claim the body of his estranged son, who was killed on the trek through the Pyrenees.
- ✓ **For Greater Glory (movie)** - José Sánchez del Río, martyred at age 14, was proclaimed a saint by Pope Francis on October 16, 2016. While this movie positively features him as one of the main characters, note that this movie is Rated R for violence and parents should decide whether appropriate for watching.
- ✓ **iPIETA (app)** - developed by a local priest, this is the best Catholic app out there (4.8 rating, you'll see why)!

## Writing Assignment

Write a five paragraph essay on one of the quotes listed below. Along with an introductory and concluding paragraph, include in the other three paragraphs a commentary with evidence from the book that support the quote you have chosen. Be sure to write this essay in the **third-person point of view** (avoid writing in the *first person* such as “I believe that...” and avoid in *second person* such as “you can consider...” ). For a quick refresher on point-of-view, see this [video](#).

**(TIP!:** Before reading the book, choose the quote that you relate to the most or understand the best. Then while reading, take notes on anything that you read relating to the quote you chose. These notes will help you in developing your thoughts for the essay.)

*This essay should be typed with size 12 font (Times New Roman), double-spaced, at least 800 words, due on the first day of school and is 10% of first quarter grade with multiple opportunities for revision. **Have fun and be creative in this essay!***



### Quote 1:

“The common eye sees only the outside of things, and judges by that, but the seeing eye pierces through and reads the heart and the soul, finding there capacities which the outside didn't indicate or promise, and which the other kind of eye couldn't detect.” - Book 2, Chapter 11, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, Mark Twain

### Quote 2:

“A perfect woman, nobly plann'd, to warn, to comfort, and command; And yet a spirit still, and bright with something of an angel light.” - William Wordsworth

### Quote 3:

“Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing, and so they give their lives to little or nothing. One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it... and then it's gone. But to surrender who you are and to live without belief is more terrible than dying - even more terrible than dying young.” - Joan of Arc