



1 June 2026  
IN HONOR OF ST. JOAN OF ARC  
“The mission takes shape” (Part 3)

Joan kept this secret between God and herself, hidden within her as she grew up over the following years. She spoke to no one about it—not to the local priest, nor to her parents or friends. Guided by her saints, she oriented her entire life toward this mission, and little by little, her saints revealed more and more of it to her.

Young Joan was well aware of France’s dire wartime situation, for the Hundred Years’ War between England and France did not spare her village. The political fragmentation of the country, the various warring factions, and the roaming, plundering bands were a constant threat, and there was no prospect of peace. Undoubtedly, this dire situation was the subject of anxious daily conversation among the residents of Domrémy and the surrounding area.

In the course of this war, the English had gradually brought large areas of France under their control. They allied themselves with the French Burgundians, so that the conquest of all of France—and thus its subjugation to the rule of the English king—became increasingly likely.

The French crown, which still held most of the territories in the south of the country under its rule, was weakened. Militarily, the French were inferior to the English, and several devastating defeats had caused the morale of the troops to plummet. Charles VII, the son of the mentally impaired King Charles VI and the immoral and unloved Queen Isabelle, had likely already largely lost hope. Furthermore, self-doubt gnawed at him regarding the legitimacy of his birth, which likely impaired his willpower to act decisively as king.

The closer Joan came to her seventeenth year, the clearer the mission conveyed to her by the saints became: She was to go to Charles VII at Chinon, his seat at the time, and tell him that she had come to his aid on behalf of the King of Heaven, would liberate Orléans, and would lead him to Reims for his coronation.

Here, the limits of purely human understanding of such an event are far exceeded. It becomes comprehensible only when one recognizes God’s action, believes, and sees that this girl from Domrémy became the chosen instrument of the Heavenly Father.

Joan of Arc and her mission are such a testimony to God's love and her wondrous response that one can approach this mystery only with great reverence and a listening heart. It is illuminated by the words of Jesus: "*What is impossible with men is possible with God*" (Lk 18:27), and reveals much to us about God Himself and how angels, saints, and in this case the Virgin of Orléans—as she would later be called—are woven into His plan of salvation.

How could a young peasant girl possibly carry out such a task—one that is impossible by human standards? It is unnecessary to list all the rational reasons that speak against such a mission. They are legion.

In this case, the only way to gain a deeper understanding of God's work with Saint Joan is through faith. All other attempts are ultimately doomed to fail because they try to classify a supernatural event using human standards. As can be seen from the vast literature on Joan of Arc, it has unfortunately not been uncommon for a distorted picture of her and the events to be presented, which did not do justice to either the glory of God or the honor of the Maid of Orléans, and sometimes even descended into absurdity.

As we now begin to look at Joan's departure from Domrémy to carry out her mission, we must keep in mind from the very start that she undertook nothing without instruction from her saints, without seeking their counsel.

She herself later testified during the interrogation in Rouen:

Question: *Do you call upon them (the saints), or do they come unbidden?*

Joan: *They often come without my calling them. But if they did not come soon, I would ask Our Lord to send them... whenever I needed them, they were there.*

Joan was now instructed to go first to Robert de Beaudricourt, a captain loyal to the king in Vaucouleurs. He was to provide her with people to accompany her to the king. She was able to convince her uncle Laxart, who lived near Vaucouleurs and with whom she had stayed for several weeks, to take her to the captain.

The captain, however, initially did not take what Joan confided in him seriously and wanted to send her back to her parents. A second attempt was also unsuccessful. Yet the people in the town began to trust her. There was also an old saying that a maiden from Lorraine would turn the tide of France's fate. When Joan then mentioned that a battle

had been lost by the French—the outcome of which she could not have known—and this was confirmed by messengers, the captain relented.

Joan was given a horse and a sword; the people provided her with clothes, and the captain provided her with an escort of six people.

Joan now faced a journey of several days through enemy-held territory to meet the king in Chinon.