



3 June 2026
IN HONOR OF ST. JOAN OF ARC
“Joan fulfills her prophecy: Orléans is liberated”

From this moment on, the tide of the war turned in favor of the French crown. The decisive event had taken place: the Dauphin, Charles VII, had received Joan and had been convinced that she was sent by God, and the Church authorities had agreed as well. Thus God could carry out His plan.

Joan's arrival in Orléans was eagerly awaited not only by the besieged population but also strengthened the king's soldiers in particular. The presence of the Maid, with her unflinching confidence, gave the French army new strength and awakened them from hopelessness.

Joan herself carried no weapon and killed no one. Yet her courage and determination—being at the head of the army even in seemingly hopeless situations—continually lifted the soldiers' spirits. This happened even when military undertakings at first seemed unlikely to succeed but were ultimately brought to a successful conclusion.

Instead of a weapon, the Maid had a banner made, as her confessor Jean Pasquerel reported, who accompanied her at her request until her later capture in Compiègne. He recounts:

Joan had her banner made at the command of her heavenly counselors. It bore the image of the Savior, seated on the clouds of heaven in judgment, and an angel holding a lily blessed by God. She asked me to make a banner and to have the image of Our Lord on the Cross painted on it, which I did. When the banner was finished, Joan had the priests gather morning and evening. They sang antiphons and hymns. Only those soldiers who had confessed that same day were allowed to attend. When Joan set out from Blois toward Orléans, she had the priests assemble under this banner, and they marched at the head of the army. Thus gathered, we traveled through La Sologne, singing the Veni Creator Spiritus and other hymns.

Joan was not only deeply devout herself; she also wanted to encourage the army to practice their faith. They were to understand themselves as soldiers of God and entrust themselves entirely to Him. She forbade them to swear, and indeed this widespread vice ceased—at least in her presence. She encouraged the soldiers as well as their military leaders to go to confession. Holy Masses were celebrated. Joan did not hesitate to drive

women away from the troops if they were not married to the soldiers.

Joan was not important merely for strengthening the soldiers and raising morale. She also took responsibility for those who commanded the troops. She often intervened successfully when, in her view, the military leaders' deliberations took too long or did not align with what she had learned from her heavenly counsel.

One example is given by the Bastard of Orléans, Count of Dunois, who was charged with defending Orléans. He had incurred Joan's displeasure because he had not allowed her to march directly to where the English enemy was positioned, saying he had followed the advice of others. He reports:

Joan said literally: *"In God's name, the counsel of our Lord is safer and wiser than yours. You thought you could deceive me. You have deceived yourselves, for I bring you better help than any captain or city has ever received: the help of the King of Heaven. But this help does not come for my sake; it comes because God, at the prayer of Saint Louis and Saint Charlemagne, has taken pity on the city of Orléans and will not allow the enemies of the Lord to seize Orléans and His city."*

The duke continues, saying that what happened next was, for him, a sign from heaven: a change in the weather allowed the urgently needed provisions to be brought into Orléans.

At that moment, the wind—previously blowing against the supply boats and preventing them from sailing upriver—shifted and became favorable. Immediately the sails were raised, and I ordered the boats to be boarded. From that moment on, I placed great hope in the Maid, more than ever before. I urged her to cross the Loire and come to Orléans, where she was eagerly awaited... and Jeanne joined me, waving her white banner, which bore the image of the Savior holding a lily. La Hire crossed the Loire with us, and together we entered Orléans to the joy of the grateful population.

For all to see, Joan's prophecies were being fulfilled, confirming her divine mission. With every victory, her authority grew. She used this authority especially when commanders hesitated in their offensive efforts. After the first English fortifications were taken, the French troops succeeded in driving the English from all their positions around Orléans within a short time. On May 8, 1429, the siege of Orléans ended, and Joan's saving arrival was forever inscribed in the city's history.

What was seen by the French as divine intervention became a nightmare for the English.

They feared Joan so much that at times they refused to fight or abandoned their positions as soon as they became aware of her presence.

Joan had fulfilled her prophecy and given the sign she had proclaimed. Orléans was liberated, and the entire further course of the war was changed in favor of the French crown.