

# WHO IS

## JOAN OF ARC

**"I am not afraid. I was born to do this."  
– Joan of Arc**

Joan d'Arc – The Maid, as she was known then – was born in the village of Domrémy around 1412. The France she was born into was a loose alliance of "duchies" under the rule of a single king – except the dauphin (the heir to the throne) had not been formally crowned due to the Hundred Years War with Burgundy and England. Rogue soldiers raided villages, murdered innocents on the streets and left the people to starve to death by the thousands. Even the politically powerful Church was disastrously split with three men claiming the papacy.

As He is in the habit of doing, **God chose an unlikely servant in a little town on the outskirts of nowhere to save the people from this chaos.** One afternoon He sent voices and a brilliant light to speak to a preteen girl with no education, political position, money or resources. Joan later revealed that the voices told her at first to simply stay faithful to God and attend church often. But as she grew older, the voices told her she had a calling on her life – to see the weak, ineffectual dauphin, Charles VII, rise to his destiny as the officially crowned king of France. She left home in 1428 without telling anyone of her voices or the calling that lay before her.

Unfortunately, Sir Robert de Baudicourt, the military captain in nearby Vaucouleurs, merely laughed at her and sent her home. A few months later, however, the entire region was attacked by the Burgundians. By that winter, Orléans – the last major city opposing England/Burgundy – was under siege. If it fell, Charles VII – and by extension the entire nation of

France – had little chance at survival. Joan walked back to Vaucouleurs, determined to gain de Baudicourt's recommendation and an escort to Charles VII's court. This time, she succeeded.

Several miracles followed: she gained access to the dauphin, spoke to him in private, and convinced him God wanted him to step up and lead his people to victory. She was given armor, a militia and the sword of martyred St. Catherine, a weapon thought lost for centuries but easily found with the guidance of her voices. **Joan's banner declared her purpose and the sum of her life: "On Behalf of the King of Heaven."**

Joan d'Arc's unwavering confidence carried her in victory to end the siege of Orléans, crowning Charles as king and uniting the French people as a nation. Her fatal claim, however, was that these were all done in obedience to God's voice. The Church of the day did not believe that individuals could hear from God, particularly illiterate peasant teenage girls leading victorious armies against their allies. **Joan was sparking more than a national revolution; she was changing the way the masses viewed their faith.** If what Joan said was true, then Christians could have a relationship with God and be guided by His Spirit. They were no longer dependent upon the era's power-hungry Church.

Determining she must be a witch to have accomplished these political and military successes, the Church was more than eager to accept the English's offer to have her imprisoned and tried for heresy. At only 19 years old, after a year of relentless interrogation, she was burned at the stake. It took 25 years for her to

be cleared of all charges. Joan d'Arc was canonized as a saint in 1920.

Christine de Pisan, a writer and an acquaintance of Joan's, compared her to Esther, Judith and Deborah, saying, "She was destined to accomplish her mission. **Whatever she does, she always has her eyes fixed on God; nowhere does her devotion ever falter.**"

This is not to say she was perfect. She fell to stubbornness, over-confidence and impatience, as any devoted, passionate teen with a mission is prone to do. But throughout her improbable life and tragic death, she only sought God's glory, never her own. Though her earthly mission was to crown an earthly king and contribute to the survival of an earthly nation, her heavenly mission is what truly lasts until this day to inspire every Christian. We remember Joan of Arc as a servant, warrior and daughter wholly surrendered to her Heavenly King.



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