

You can view a 360 degree panorama view of the Shrine, the incorrupt body of Saint John Vianney, and see features of the church by visiting the website of the Basilica of Ars: <https://www.arsnet.org/-Sanctuaire-.html>

A prayer written by St. John Vianney

I love You, O my God, and my only desire is to love You until the last breath of my life.

I love You, O my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die loving You, than live without loving You.

I love You, Lord and the only grace I ask is to love You eternally...

My God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love You,

I want my heart to repeat it to You as often as I draw breath

Quotes of the Saint:

Every Consecrated Host is made to burn Itself up with love in a human heart.

There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.

When we receive Holy Communion, we experience something extraordinary – a joy, a fragrance, a well-being that thrills the whole body and causes it to exalt.

For Reflection:

- What stood out to you about this parish priest?
- In learning about some of his sermons, what would your response be to hearing one of his challenging, zealous sermons?
- St. John Vianney would visit the sick and pray with them. How can you do the same, as an individual & with family? (considering the pandemic – a phone call or note card can be a blessing)
- What can we learn from the story of Father John Vianney?

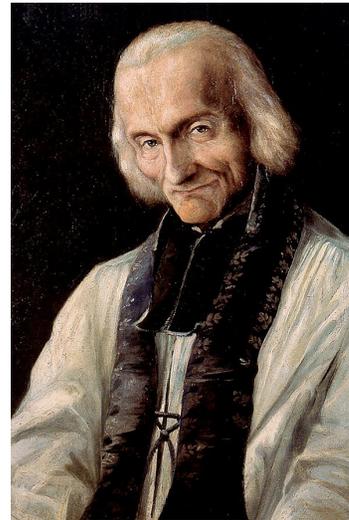
Saint John Vianney, pray for us!

Sources: Franciscan Media, Wikipedia, sjvroundrock.org, olrl.org/lives/vianney

Socials with the Saints – PILGRIM CENTER of HOPE

Guiding People to Christ

7680 Joe Newton, San Antonio, TX 78251 | 210-521-3377 | PilgrimCenterOfHope.org



St. John Vianney

Patron of Priests

Born: May 8, 1786

Died: August 4, 1859

Canonized: 1925 in Rome

Major Shrine: Basilica of Ars - Ars, France

Feast: August 4

“A man with vision overcomes obstacles and performs deeds that seem impossible. John Vianney was a man with vision: He wanted to help others and guide them to God. His vision included becoming a priest.”

He was born in small village near Lyons in France in May of 1786. His name was Jean Marie Vianney. We know him as John Vianney. When he was 13 years old, he made his first Holy Communion and prepared for his Confirmation shortly after. He already had a desire to become a priest at such a young age. His parents were Matthieu and Marie Vianney, a couple deeply in love with each other and devout in their faith. John was the fourth of six children. The family often helped the poor and housed St. Benedict Joseph Labre when he made his pilgrimage to Rome.

In 1790 when John was only four years old, the anticlerical Terror phase of the French Revolution forced priests to work in secrecy or face execution. This shook the Catholic world, and yet young John believed that priests were heroes. His faith and hope were deep at such a young age.

Later in 1802, the Catholic Church was reestablished in France and religious freedom with peace spread throughout the country.

His mother, Marie, was a woman of deep faith and highly respected. She taught John the way of the Christian faith at an early age. He would tell people about his mother by saying: *I owe a debt to my mother, virtues go easily from mothers into the hearts of their children, who willingly do what they see being done?* He was a good-natured boy, with blue eyes and brown hair. He had a lively disposition.

He had great difficulty in his studies for the priesthood. A fellow seminarian named Mathias was assigned to help him in his lessons. This Matthias had a nervous and excitable temperament. One day, Matthias' patience ran out and

he boxed John in the ears before the other students. Well, John was quite surprised by all this – do you know how he responded? He knelt down before Matthias who was of the same age – 12 years old. John humbly asked his forgiveness. Mathias did have a big heart. He suddenly was taken with grief; he began to cry and then threw his arms around John Marie who was still on his knees. This incident marked the beginning of a long-time friendship. Mathias became a missionary in the United States and eventually the Bishop of Dubuque in Iowa. He never forgot his friend, John.

At the age of 29, John was ordained a priest. He was appointed a parish priest of Ars. Ars is a very small village or hamlet with a population of a few hundred; it is around 250 miles from Paris. Curé is a French word meaning “one who cares for souls.” John Vianney is also called the Curé of Ars.

In his assignment as parish priest of Ars, John achieved something which many priests would like to have done, but which is scarcely granted to any. Not over night, but little by little, the tiny hamlet underwent a change. The people of Ars began to learn about this new priest which radiated from his remarkable personality.

What was it about Father John Vianney that attracted so many to him? He would give sermons that got right to the point while at the same time; leading the people to encounter God’s mercy. When he began his priestly duties, Fr. Vianney realized many were either ignorant or indifferent to religion as a result of the French Revolution. Many danced and drank on Sundays or worked in their fields.

In his early sermons, he spoke against the rampant vices of the village of Ars which were blasphemies, cursing, profanation of Sundays, immodest songs and conversations. *The tavern, he would say, is the devil’s own shop, the school where hell retails its dogmas, the market where souls are bartered, the place where families are broken up, where health is undermined, where quarrels are started and murders committed.*

Father John would never consider Ars converted until all of the 200 villagers were living up to the commandments of God, the precepts of the Church and the fulfillment of their duties in life. Was this asking too much in exchange for Heaven? Complete enforcement of the third commandment took eight long years. *You labor, but what you earn proves the ruin of your soul and your body.*

Undoubtedly though, the most heinous crime in the eyes of this saint, was the one that made him weep whenever he heard it or spoke against it; the taking of the most Holy Name of Jesus in vain. He used to say that it was an astounding miracle that people who did this were not struck dead on the spot. It pained him so much because of his love and reverence for Jesus Christ.

Father John Vianney’s desire was to have all in Ars gather on Sundays for worship. He would often say: *Private prayer is like straw scattered here and there: If you set it on fire, it makes a lot of little flames. But gather these straws into a bundle and light them, and you get a mighty fire, rising like a column into the sky; public prayer is like that.*

During the last ten years of his life, he spent from eleven to twelve hours a day in the confessional working to reconcile people with God. His advice was sought by bishops, priests, religious, young men and women in doubt as to their vocation, sinners, persons in all sorts of difficulties, and the sick. He slept only two hours each night; rising shortly after midnight, going to the church where he remained kneeling until it was time for him to say Mass.

He said that his sleep was frequently interrupted by the devil who assaulted him with deafening noises, insults, and physical attacks, and once even setting his bed on fire. However, the Blessed Virgin Mary protected Father John, and Satan is powerless over Mary, who conquers the devil through humility.

Many people witnessed these diabolical attacks, but Fr. John accepted them as a matter of course and often joked about them.

In 1855, when Father John was 69 years old, the number of pilgrims had reached twenty thousand a year.

He died on August 4, 1859 at the age of 73. In 1925, he was canonized as a saint. At that time, he was the only diocesan priest ever to be canonized, and so is called the patron saint of clergy throughout the world.

His body is incorrupt and can be seen in a glass case in the new Basilica of Ars. The old 12th century church where St. John Vianney preached is still there. His heart is enshrined in a nearby separate building known as the Shrine of the Curé’s Heart.