



Essential Evangelization

The Curious Case of the Cure`

He was born, May 8th 1786 in the French town of Dardilly. He grew up during the French Revolution and Napoleon's reign, where Catholic practices had to be held in secret and behind closed doors. He looked upon the priests that celebrated Mass as heroes, and in 1815, was ordained a priest himself. He was deemed from an early age to be of only average intelligence, and three years after his ordination, a perplexed church hierarchy, in a quandary of what to do with him, sent him to Ars, a remote French hamlet. Today, John Vianney is venerated by the Catholic Church as a priest for all priests, and even as the Patron Saint of Priests! His parish pastoral work soon brought about a radical spiritual transformation of the entire Ars region. His simple teachings and reputation as a confessor and healer of souls grew rapidly and eventually gained international recognition. He began to hear confessions of people from all over the world, many days for sixteen hours a day, and at the peak of his ministry, he would hear 20,000 confessions a year! Tradition has it that even the darkest of sinners were converted at the mere word from this "Cure` of Ars."

His life was one of extreme hard work, sacrifice, unwavering patience, and even at times was besieged by the devil himself. This great mystic however always retained a childlike simplicity, a love for his flock, and a strong affinity for the heart of Christ. His saintly life included daily sacrifices, perseverance in the sacraments, a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a little known saint, Saint Philomena.

St. John Vianney's life was also characterized by works of charity, and miracles. He miraculously obtained money for his charities and food for his orphans; he reportedly had a supernatural knowledge of the past and future; and could even heal the sick, especially children. He died August 4, 1859, and was canonized on May 31, 1925. His feast day is this Wednesday. Today, St. John Vianney's body lays miraculously incorruptible above the altar of the Basilica in Ars. His spirit also lives on eternally as one great Catholic hero!

*This is one of a series of articles
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