

Newsletter  
November 16, 2009

# Armata Bianca

*The White Army*



**St. Jean-Marie Vianney** was born in Dardilly, France on May 8, 1786. He was one of six children and his parents were very pious Catholics who always helped the poor. Although he wanted very much to be a priest, he had a tough time learning Latin. He was finally ordained at the age of 30 and was appointed pastor of the parish of Ars, a French town of 230 people. He was known as the Curé (that's French for parish priest) of Ars.

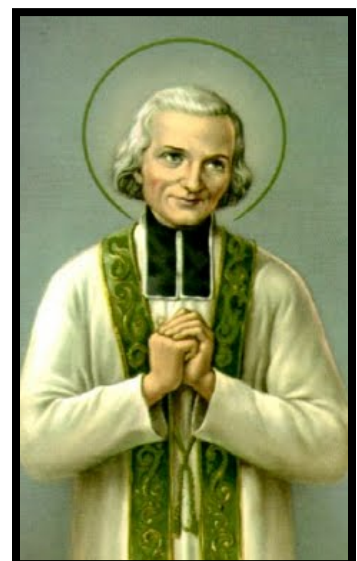
On Friday, June 19, 2009, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI declared a **“Year for Priests”**. The year will conclude in Rome with an international gathering of priests with the Holy Father from June 9-11, 2010. With the announcement of this Year for Priests, **the Pope has declared St. John Vianney the Universal Patron of Priests** on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of the Curé d'Ars. This means that we should **1.) Pray for priests and 2.) Pray for more vocations of priests**. It is the priest and only the priest who can actually bring Jesus to the world – through the Mass. The Sacrament of Holy Orders is when the Bishop ordains the young man to the priesthood. At that moment, the Holy Spirit comes

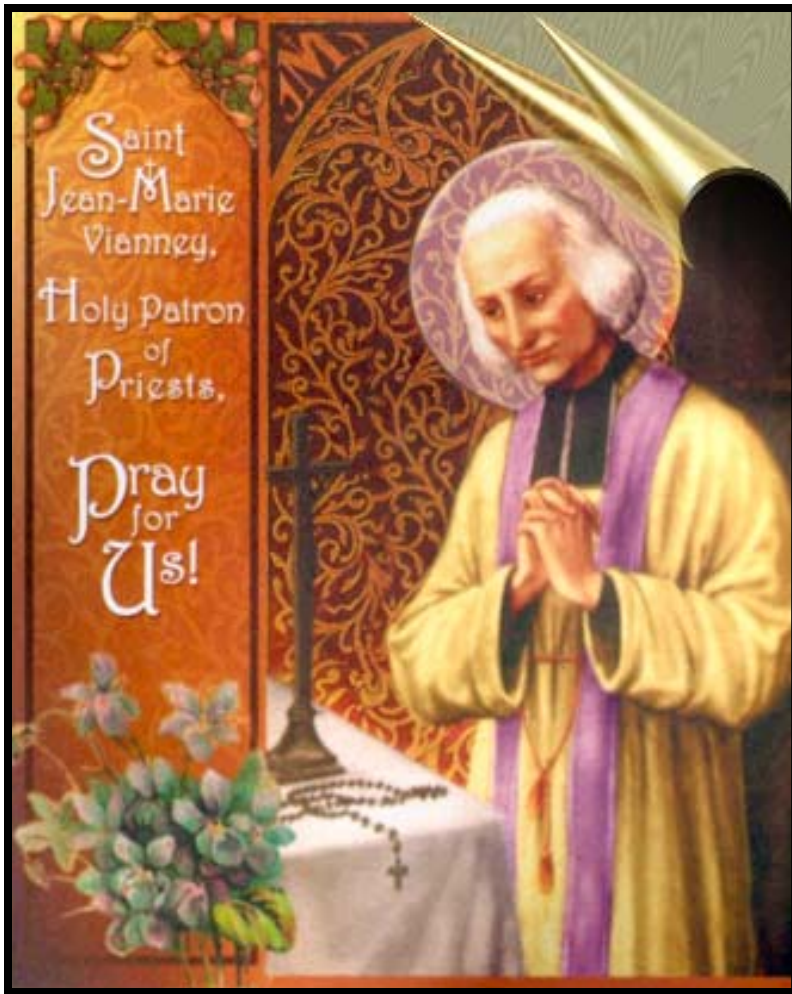
down and leaves a mark in that priest forever. Once a priest, always a priest. You always have a special marking in your soul if you are chosen to be a priest. St. Jean-Marie would often say “The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus”. **How did this very humble priest gain the distinguished title, “Patron of Parish Priests”? How did he gain wisdom equal to that of the Church Fathers? It was not through books in libraries, but on his knees, in prayer. He sought wisdom nowhere else but in Jesus Christ, in His death and in His cross. Let us pray to the Curé d' Ars, that he obtain for us holy priests!!**

St. Jean-Marie's thought on the Priesthood: "O how great is a priest! The priest will not understand the greatness of his office until he is in Heaven...Go to confession to the Blessed Virgin, or to an Angel. Will they absolve you? No. Will they give you the Body and Blood of Our Lord? No. If I were to meet a priest and an Angel, I should salute the priest before I saluted the Angel. The latter is the friend of God; but the priest holds His place. St. Theresa kissed the ground where a priest had passed. When you see a priest, you should say, "There is he who made me a child of God, and opened Heaven to me by holy Baptism; he who purified me after I had sinned; who gives nourishment to my soul." At the sight of a church tower, you may say, "What is there in that place?" "The Body of Our Lord." "Why is He there?" "Because a priest has been there, and has said holy Mass." "The priest has the key to the Heavenly treasures; it is he who opens the door; he is the steward of the good God, the distributor of his wealth . . . the priest is not a priest for himself, he does not give himself absolution, he does not administer the Sacraments to himself . . . he is for you. After God, the priest is everything. Leave a parish 20 years without priests; they will worship beasts. When people wish to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest, because when there is no longer any priest there is no sacrifice, and where there is no longer any sacrifice, there is no religion." **"We must never lose sight of the fact that we are either Saints or outcasts, that we must live for Heaven or for Hell; there is no middle path in this. You either belong wholly to the world or wholly to God. If people would do for God what they do for the world, what a great number of Christians would go to Heaven."** St. John lived a very simple life. He ate one meal a day and slept only 2-3 hours each night. He was frequently interrupted by the devil, who assaulted him with deafening noises, insulting conversation and physical abuse. These diabolical visitations were occasionally witnessed with alarm by the men of the parish, but St. John accepted the attacks as a matter of course and often joked about them. The devil was heard to say, "If there were three such priests as you, my kingdom would be ruined." St. John had many spiritual gifts. He had the power of healing and the ability to read souls in confession. Miracles were performed throughout his life, obtaining money for his charities and food for his orphans; he also had supernatural knowledge of the past and future. He spent 13 to 17 hours a day in the cramped confessional and converted 80,000 or more hardened sinners. Later, pilgrims from all over, as many as 120,000 annually, came to see him, hear him preach and tell him their sins and he would heal their souls and sometimes even their bodies.

St. John died peacefully on August 4, 1859 at the age of 73. Forty-five years later, on June 17, 1904, his body was exhumed because of his impending beatification and was found incorrupt. When a Saint's body is incorrupt, it is a special sign from God to say that this was a servant who served me. He was beatified on January 8, 1905 in Rome, Italy by St. Pius X and then canonized in 1925 in Rome by Pope Pius XI.

When we pray for priests or for someone, God gives us grace too. It's important to pray more. Whenever you go by a Catholic Church it's a good idea to bless yourselves. When St. John would go by a Catholic Church he would say a short prayer: **"I love you Jesus, present in the most Holy Sacrament. I love you Jesus"**. We go to the Church to pray because that is where Jesus is. Wherever Jesus is, all of Heaven is there. It is a mystery. At Holy Mass, the moment the Priest says "This is my body which is given up for you", and the altar boy rings the bell and the Priest holds up the host - all of Heaven is at the altar. When you go up to Communion you can say to your Guardian Angel "Take me by the hand, Guardian Angel and Mother Mary take my other hand and bring me to Jesus". Sometimes little children can see Angels and evidence of Heaven during the Mass. The rest of us need to believe with eyes of faith. St. Jean-Marie Vianney had great faith.





## Prayer to Saint John Vianney for Parish Priests

Dear Saint John Vianney, your childhood dream was to be a Priest, to win souls for God. You endured years of toil and humiliation to attain the Priesthood. You became a Priest truly after God's own Heart, outstanding in humility and poverty; prayer and mortification. Totally devoted to the service of God's people. The Church has exalted you as model and patron saint of all Parish Priests, trusting that your example and prayers will help them to live up to the high dignity of their vocation to be faithful servants of God's people, to be perfect imitators of Christ the Savior Who came not to be served but to serve, to give His Life in ransom for many. Pray that God may give to His Church today many more priests after His own Heart. Pray for all the Priests under your patronage, that they may be worthy representatives of Christ

the Good Shepherd. May they wholeheartedly devote themselves to prayer and penance; be examples of humility and poverty; shining models of holiness; tireless and powerful preachers of the Word of God; zealous dispensers of God's Grace in the Sacraments. May their loving devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist and to Mary His Mother be the Twin Fountains of fruitfulness for their ministry. Amen

**Prayer is a surge of the heart.  
It is a simple look turned toward Heaven.  
It is a cry of recognition of love embracing both trial and joy.  
(St. Therese- the little flower)**



**“Families that pray together, stay together.”**