

## St. Jean-Marie Vianney



**1786-1859**

**Feast Day:**  
August 4

Jean-Marie lived with his parents and five siblings in a French village. When Jean was very young, France was at war. The government outlawed Catholicism. Catholic priests were forced to hold Mass in secret. Jean and his family traveled for miles to farm houses where priests said Mass in rooms with windows covered to block the candlelight from being seen. Jean admired the priests who risked their lives to offer the Mass and hear Confessions.

When Jean was 16, the French Revolution ended. He began studying for the priesthood. But he was soon drafted into Napoleon's army. As he walked to the army base, he paused to pray. A Catholic saw him and offered to guide him to the base, but instead led Jean to a hidden village where many Catholics lived. Jean started a school for the children in the village. When French soldiers came looking for Jean, he hid inside stacks of old hay. Several months later, he was able to return to seminary. Jean was ordained at age 39 and assigned to the parish of Ars.

Fr. Jean worked hard in his parish. He tried to revive people's interest in the Faith, for the revolution had caused many people to feel suspicious or careless about being Catholic. Fr. Jean preached excellent homilies. He started a home for girls, and he heard the Confession of everyone who came to him. He sat in the confessional for up to 16 hours a day, every day, to listen, advise, and absolve the thousands of people who traveled miles to confess and receive his instruction. He heard Confessions every day until he died at age 73.

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