

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## PATRON SAINT OF DIOCESAN PRIESTS...

*Just recently I received a call from a young man I know who had been studying for the priesthood. He is a fine man, very intelligent, graduating from an "Ivy League" college-Harvard University in fact! However, because of some rather bad experiences, he left the seminary about a year ago. So I was very happy when he called me the other day and told me that he had re-applied to another diocese and was going to study in their seminary. He said, "Father, all I want to be is a good priest!" God willing, that will come to pass.*

*Certainly, the church needs many good priests in this particular time. The scandals within the church have caused some very positive candidates for the priesthood to give up the whole idea. When I spoke to my friend I told him that in the endeavor to become a good priest the best thing to do is not to dwell on the bad behavior of some of the clergy. Rather why not instead focus on the good example of the saints of the church who truly did not have feet of clay and were authentic models of holiness and Christian perfection?*

*In that light, during this month of August on the fourth, we celebrate the feast day of a very holy priest by the name of Saint John Vianney. He is known also as the Cure of Ars. John Vianney, born in Dardilly, France in the year 1786, exhibited from his early years a deep piety and a strong desire to become a priest. However, John was not a brilliant intellect. He had very little formal schooling. When he got to the seminary, he just could not understand the courses there which were all in Latin.*

*However, another priest, Father Bailey, helped John and tutored him privately so that he could pass his exams. Despite his difficulties, he was ordained a priest in 1815. Shortly thereafter, Father Vianney was assigned to the rural village of Ars in southern France. On his way to the church, he got lost and met a farmer and asked for directions. Thanking the farmer, he said, "You have showed me to Ars, I will show you the way to heaven!"*

*That is what this good and humble servant of the Lord did for forty one years in that small parish. He showed the people in his parish who were rather indifferent the way to heaven. He prayed, he fasted constantly-his food each day was sometimes only a boiled potato. He didn't have to go on a diet like many of us well fed clergy!*

*John Vianney spent about eleven or twelve hours each day in the church hearing confessions. During the summer months, it may have been even more. Through that ministry and through his personal holiness, the whole parish was converted and thousands of people came to Ars to seek his pastoral advice and ministrations.*

*Father Vianney died on August 4, 1859 worn out by his labors on behalf of souls. On the Hundredth Anniversary of his death, Pope John XXIII wrote an encyclical letter about his life. The Pope wrote, "His Example points out the safest path to follow... His poverty, chastity and obedience stand forth in a brilliant light."*

*How much we need Saint John's example to shed light amidst all the scandals and corruption of the church and our world today. He is the Patron Saint of all Diocesan Priests. Let's say a prayer to this great saint today for all those in the priestly ministry and those preparing for it!*

*Sincerely in Christ,  
Father Jerome*