



# ST. JEAN VIANNEY RELIC PILGRIMAGE

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HOLDING NATIONWIDE TOUR OF CURÉ OF ARS HEART

The Shrine of Ars, France, has entrusted to the Knights of Columbus the major relic of Saint Jean Vianney's incorrupt heart for a national tour in the U.S., from November 2018 through early June 2019.

The Knights of Columbus welcomes this special opportunity to offer for veneration a major relic of the patron of parish priests, whose holiness and integrity is a model for clergy and laity alike.

### **Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception**

**We will have the opportunity to venerate the relic on Sunday, December 9, 2018 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm and again Monday December 10 through Wednesday December 12 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.**



### **Biography**

#### **Early Life and Struggles**

Born in a small village in France in 1786, Jean Vianney and his family suffered through the dark years of the French Revolution, when the faith was attacked, churches were destroyed, and bishops, priests and religious martyred. So dangerous were the times that young Jean had to receive his first Holy Communion in secret from a faithful priest. Yet hardship only increased Jean's desire to serve Jesus and his people.

After the Reign of Terror ended in France, and following the Napoleonic wars, young Jean entered the seminary, where he met with more obstacles. He found studies difficult, struggling especially with Latin, and was about to be dismissed from the seminary when an official of his diocese interceded. Knowing the young man to be earnest and prayerful, the vicar general asked the seminary rector some simple questions: "Is he pious? Has he a devotion to Our Lady? Does he know how to say his rosary?" The rector admitted that Jean was "a model of piety." The vicar general said that he should continue his studies and "the grace of God will do the rest." At Jean Vianney's ordination in 1815, the vicar general said, "The Church wants not only learned priests but, even more, holy ones."

## **The Curé of Ars**

Father Vianney was assigned to the small farming community of Ars, whose parish consisted of 260 people. Walking along the road, towing a few possessions in a cart, he thanked a local boy who pointed him the way, saying, "You have shown me the way to Ars; I will show you the way to heaven." The political turbulence, anti-clericalism and religious skepticism of the age had taken their toll on the village, and the practice of the faith was poor. Father Vianney undertook a life of heroic penance and prayer to draw his people away from sin and closer to God. Known for his wise spiritual counsels and the gift of reading hearts, he soon became a "prisoner" of the confessional, hearing confessions for up to eighteen hours a day, as people came from across Europe and beyond to see him. He also exercised great charity, building an orphanage for homeless children and receiving beggars with an open heart and hand.

Due to his success in bringing souls to Christ, he became a target of the devil, who confronted the priest on various occasions. Undeterred, Father Vianney did not fall for the devil's tricks and dismissed strange events by saying, "It's just the devil."

Jean Vianney died on August. 4, 1859, at the age of 73. Nearly 1,000 people attended his funeral, including the bishop and priests of the diocese. On October. 3, 1873, Pope Pius IX proclaimed him Venerable, and on January. 8, 1905, Pope Pius X beatified him. Saint Jean Vianney was canonized by Pope Pius XI on May 31, 1925. In 1929, the Holy Father declared him patron of parish priests. His feast day is August 4.