



“FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN”

AUGUST 7, 2016

On August 4th we celebrated the feast of St John Vianney (1786-1859). This saint has a special place in my heart because it was on his feast day 23 years ago that I decided to join the seminary. I didn't know at the time that it was his feast day or that he was the patron of parish priests.

John Vianney was a simple man with giant faith. When he was assigned by his bishop to the tiny village church in Ars, France, with a total population of 230 people, he took on his mission with defiant zeal. He identified the major challenges of his small community, in particular, he noticed a general ignorance of the faith because of the French Revolution which had profoundly weakened the Church's influence in people's lives. He got to work preaching the Gospel and visiting his people. He was especially active in the confessional where people began to stream to him for the sacrament and for good advice. Together with two lay women he also founded a home for troubled girls.

In many ways, we are in a similar situation today in our City as St John Vianney was in Ars. There are so many people in our neighborhood who have very little understanding of our faith. Even the cultural attachments to Catholicism are in danger of being lost in the younger generations of many of our traditionally Catholic families.

Like John Vianney and his parishioners, there is no reason for us to give into despair. Instead, we need to increase our prayer and our outreach to those who have drifted away. I have witnessed many people coming back to our church. Many people are coming back to confession. But there is a lot more work to be done. Let's do it together!

Father Jonathan

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