

Saint John Maria Vianney

1786-1858

The Saintly Cure d'Ars, Saint John Maria Vianney, in his activity as spiritual director and confessor, was informed by the Guardian Angels of the secrets concealed in the hearts of men.

One day a housemaid presented herself to his confessional, and she began to confide all of her sins, omitting, however, a fact which she did not have the courage to reveal. Then the Cure's Angel communicated to the Saint which sin was hidden by the woman and the Cure quickly asked: "But, what about this?" recounting it all back to her. The servant then repented and began to weep.

To the faithful, St. John Maria repeatedly urged them to stay in constant contact with their Guardian Angel. "When we walk the street, let us fix our gaze upon

St. John Maria Vianney was born to a peasant family on May 8, 1786 in Dardilly, France. He desired to become a priest, but he had to confront the opposition of his father. He enrolled in Napoleon's Army. Later he deserted because he refused to serve under the man who imprisoned Pope Pius VII. John's brother enrolled in his place to save him. Thanks to the efforts of Fr. Charles Balley (pastor of Ecully, near Lyon), who taught him Latin and launched him in his studies, Saint John Maria became an ordained priest in August of 1815. After the ordination,



Our Lord who is carrying His cross in front of us; on the Holy Virgin who watches us; on our Guardian Angel who is next to us. How beautiful it is this interior life!"

The Saint invites the faithful to have faith in the assistance of the Angels and often repeated these words: "Our Guardian Angel is always at our side, to lead us to good and defend us against the evil spirits who surround us nonstop, constantly trying to lure us into sin."

St. John Maria, in the course of his sermons to the people, exhorted: "It is necessary in the morning, upon awaking, to offer to God your own heart, your own soul, thoughts, words, actions, all of us, to serve only the Glory of God. Renew the promises of your baptism, thank your Guardian Angel, ask your Angel for protection, this good Angel who stayed by our side while we were sleeping." And also, when a person was not able to pray because he found himself in spiritual dryness, the Saint recommends: "If you are finding it impossible to pray, take refuge behind your good Angel, and ask him to pray in your place."

he was sent to serve as vicar to Fr. Balley, who subsequently died in 1817. It was then Saint John Maria was sent to the little town of Ars, where he found himself in a difficult situation. He felt unprepared because of the indifference of the population and wanted to flee from there. Gradually, many people from the surrounding villages came to him for confession. The confessional became his principle apostolic battlefield. He exhorted, encouraged, and advised the penitents and the fame of him being a man of God spread throughout the region. However, the Saint felt that he was still unprepared and unworthy before all the needs of the people and twice he attempted to flee, but each time he returned to the church, where a crowd was waiting for him. He spent his days in prayer, celebrating the Holy Mass, and catechizing the faithful. He died on the 4th of August 1859. His body was laid out and waked for 10 days. Pope Pius XI proclaimed him a Saint in 1925.