

Saint John Marie Vianney

1786 - 1859

PURGATORY

Saint John Marie Vianney often instructed his parishioners with examples drawn from the life of the Saints or with edifying stories. One day he told this anecdote: “My children, a good priest had the misfortune of losing a friend whom he loved fondly, therefore he prayed a great deal for the repose of his soul. One day, God made it known to him that his friend was in Purgatory and was suffering terribly. This holy priest thought that nothing better could be done than offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for his deceased loved one. At the moment of Consecration, he took the Host between his fingers and said: ‘Holy and eternal Father, let us have an exchange. You are keeping the soul of my friend that is in Purgatory and I am keeping the body of Your Son that is in my hands. Therefore, good and merciful Father, please liberate my friend and I shall offer You Your Son with all the merits of His Death and Passion.’ The offer was granted by God and at the

moment of the Elevation of the Host, the priest saw the soul of his friend rise up to Heaven. Saint John Marie Vianney added that ‘when we want to liberate from Purgatory a soul that is dear to us, let us do the same. We offer to God, through the Holy Sacrifice, His beloved Son with all the merits of His Death and His Passion; He will not be able to refuse us anything.’ ”

Saint John Marie Vianney, well known as the Curate of Ars, was born in Dardilly in 1786. From a peasant family and deprived of primary education, he succeeded in August 1815 to be ordained a priest. He devoted himself incessantly to evangelization, through the example of his goodness and charity. He spent his days devoted to celebrate Mass and to confess, without sparing himself. He died in 1859. Pope Pius XI would proclaim him Saint in 1925. He would be presented as model and patron of parish priests.

