

## **The message of the Holy Curé**

*The message of the Holy Curé of Ars for us today, summed up in a few points...*

### **Man of prayer**

Long moments spent before the tabernacle, true intimacy with God, total abandonment to his will, a transfigured gaze ... so many elements that struck those who met him and allowed people to perceive the depth of his prayer life and of his union with God. Not to speak of his great joy and his true friendship with God: "I love you, Oh my God, and my only desire is to love you until my life's last breath". A friendship that implies reciprocity, like two pieces of wax, J. M. Vianney explained, that, once fused together, can no longer be separated or identified; this is what happens to our soul with God when we pray...

### **The beating heart: celebrating and adoring the Eucharist**

"He is there!" exclaimed the Holy Curé looking at the tabernacle. Man of the Eucharist, celebrated and adored: "There is nothing greater than the Eucharist", he exclaimed. Perhaps what struck him the most was to realize that his God was there, present for us in the tabernacle: "He is waiting for us!". Coming to the realization of the real presence of God in the Blessed Sacrament was perhaps one of his greatest graces and one of his greatest joys. Giving God to men and men to God: the Eucharistic sacrifice soon became the heart of his days and of his pastoral ministry.

### **Obsessed with the salvation of men**

It is perhaps what best summarizes who the Holy Curé was during his 41 years in Ars. Obsessed with his own salvation and with that of others, especially of those who came to him or who were entrusted to him. As Pastor, God will "hold him accountable", he said. So that each person might appreciate the joy of knowing God and of loving him, of knowing that He loves us ... for this J. M. Vianney labored without rest.

### **Martyr of the confessional**

Beginning in 1830, thousands of people will come to Ars to confess with him, and more than 100,000 in the last year of his life ... As many as 17 hours per day, confined to his confessional in order to reconcile men with God and among them, the Curé of Ars is a true martyr of the confessional, underlined John Paul II. Conquered by God's love, enraptured before man's vocation, he considered the folly that existed in wanting to separate oneself from God. He wished that everyone might be free to relish in God's love.

### **At the heart of his parish, a man of authentic sociality**

"No one knows all that the Holy Curé did in terms of social works," relates one of his biographies. Seeing in each of his brothers the presence of the Lord, he did not rest in assisting them, helping them, alleviating their sufferings and their wounds, creating the conditions so that each one felt free and fulfilled. Orphanage, schools, caring for the poorest and the sick, tireless builder ... nothing escapes him. He accompanies families and strives to protect them from all that could destroy them (alcohol, violence, selfishness...). In his village, he tries to consider the person in all his dimensions (human, spiritual, social).

### **Patron of all the pastors of the universe**

Beatified in 1904, he will be declared the same year, on 12 April, patron of the priests of France by Saint Pius X. In 1929, four years after his canonization, Pope Pius XI will declare him "patron of all of the pastors of the universe". Pope John Paul II will confirm this recalling on three occasions that "the Curé of Ars remains for all countries a model without equal, both of the realization of the ministry as well as the holiness of the minister". "Oh, the priesthood is really something great!",

exclaimed Jean Marie Vianney, because it can give God to men and men to God; he is the witness of the Father's tenderness towards all and the author of salvation.

The Curé of Ars, a great brother in the priesthood, to whom every priest of the world can come to entrust his ministry or his priestly life.

**A universal call to holiness**

"I will show you the way of Heaven", he had responded to the pastor who showed him the road to Ars, that is, I will help you become a saint. "Where the saints pass, God passes with them!" he will later explain. In the end, he invited everyone to let themselves be made holy by God, to use every means to find this union with God, here below and for eternity.

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