

## “THE PRIEST IS NOT A PRIEST FOR HIMSELF, HE IS A PRIEST FOR YOU”



### My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings of peace and joy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. This article helps us to reflect and to pray for the vocation to priesthood. **Jesus said: “The Harvest is rich but the laborers are few.”** Ask the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers.” Essential to the extension of the Kingdom and the salvation of souls is the Sacrament of Holy Orders, that we call the priesthood.

One of the greatest priests in the history of the Church, who spent close to forty years in the Parish of Ars, spending from thirteen to eighteen hours on a daily basis in the confessional, reconciling souls to God, commented on the indispensable presence of the priesthood. This was the Saint John Maria Vianney, known as the Cure of Ars (1786-1859) whose feast we celebrate on 4<sup>th</sup> of August. He is the patron of all priests.

He knew the extraordinary value of the priesthood: *“A good shepherd, a pastor after God’s heart, is the greatest treasure which the good Lord can grant to a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of divine mercy.”*

“One need not say much to pray well”, he explained to them, “We know that Jesus is there in the Tabernacle. Let us open our hearts to him, let us rejoice in his sacred presence. That is the best prayer”. And he would urge them: “Come to communion, my brothers and sisters, come to Jesus. Come to live from him in order to live with him... Of course you are not worthy of him, but you need him!” Explaining to his parishioners the importance of the Sacraments, he would say: “Without the Sacrament of Holy Orders, we would not have the Lord. Who put him there in that tabernacle? The priest.

Who welcomed your soul at the beginning of your life? The priest. Who feeds your soul and gives it strength for its journey? The priest. Who will prepare it to appear before God, bathing it one last time in the blood of Jesus Christ? The priest, always the priest. And if this soul should die as a result of mortal sin, who will raise it up, who will restore its calm and peace? Again, the priest... Only in heaven will he fully realize what he is.”

Those who attended the Masses he celebrated have said that “it was not possible to find a finer example of worship... He gazed upon the Host with immense love”. He was convinced that the fervour of a priest’s life depended entirely upon the Mass, “All good works, taken together, do not equal the sacrifice of the Mass since they are human works, while the Holy Mass is the work of God... The reason why a priest is lax is that he does not pay attention to the Mass! My God, how we ought to pity a priest who celebrates as if he were engaged in something routine!”

Let us welcome Jesus into our hearts every day and let us continue to pray for the vocation to priesthood.

May God Bless you. Fr.S.Vinner HGN.