

## Reflection Wednesday Week 16 St John Vianney 2021

**St Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney, Curé of Ars (1786 - 1859)** was the son of a peasant farmer, and an unpromising candidate for the priesthood: he was eventually ordained because of his piety. In 1818 he became the parish priest of Ars-en-Dombes, an isolated village some distance from Lyon, and remained there for the rest of his life because his parishioners would not let him leave. He was a noted preacher and a celebrated confessor. Such was his fame, and his reputation for insight into his penitents' souls and their futures, that he spent up to eighteen hours a day in the confessional. Tens of thousands of people visited this obscure parish priest, turning Ars into a place of pilgrimage. The French State recognised his prominence by awarding him the medal of the Légion d'Honneur in 1848 which he sold and gave the money to the poor.

The Curé of Ars is another example of God using the least likely person to do great things. Although far from being an academic, his devotion to God and to prayer showed total loyalty and trust in his Saviour. In return Jesus showed his total trust in John Vianney by working in him to offer spiritual healing and revealing God's great love for his people. It is often those who are shunned or cast to one side who become the mouthpiece of God and instruments of the Holy Spirit bringing peace and harmony to people's lives.

- *When the heart is pure and simple it cannot help loving, because it has discovered the source of love which is God.*
- *It is always springtime in the heart that loves God.*
- *The Lord is more anxious to forgive our sins than a woman is to carry her baby out of a burning building.*
- *Prayer is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself.*

*Why did the golfer wear two pairs of pants? In case he got a hole in one.*

*If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you!*