

## **Reflection Thursday Week 18 St Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney Cure of Ars 2022**

St Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney, Curé of Ars (1786 – 1859) was the son of a peasant farmer, and a slow and unpromising candidate for the priesthood: he was eventually ordained because of his devoutness.

In 1818 he became parish priest of Ars-en-Dombes, not far from Lyon, and remained there for the rest of his life. His parishioners would not let him leave. He was a noted preacher, and a celebrated confessor: he could spend up to eighteen hours a day in the confessional, so great was the demand. The tens of thousands of people who came to visit this obscure parish priest turned Ars into a place of pilgrimage

The French State recognised his eminence by awarding him the medal of the Légion d'Honneur in 1848, and he sold it and gave the money to the poor.

There is no doubt that the Cure d'Ars not only alerted people to their sins but brought them back to God. He was a pastoral man with a deep love of God and for the people he served. It was through prayer that he was to discover his true gift of opening people to the deep love God has for them. The mercy of God did the rest.