



Novena to

ST. JOHN MARIE BAPTISTE VIANNEY

IN PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF THE SECONDARY PATRON OF THE DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM IN ALABAMA

■ DAY 1 | JULY 27

We have not deserved to pray — but God, in his goodness, has permitted us to speak with Him.

— St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars

St. John Marie Baptiste Vianney, you were born of a deeply religious mother; from her you received the Holy Faith; you learned to love God and to pray. At a young age, you were seen kneeling in front of the statue of Mary. Your soul was supernaturally carried towards the things on High. Despite the high cost, you answered your vocation! Against many obstacles and contradictions, you had to fight and suffer to become the perfect priest which you were. But your deep spirit of faith supported you in all these battles.

O most holy Saint John Vianney, you were a priest who was outstanding in pastoral zeal. May priests today be filled with that zeal, faithful to their calling, refreshed in their labors by the Holy

Spirit, supported by their fellow workers and appreciated by those whose lives they touch. Dear Curé of Ars, pray for us, but especially for all priests!

Holy Priest of Ars, I have confidence in your intercession. Pray for me during this novena, and especially for an increase in vocations to the priesthood for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

■ DAY 2 | JULY 28

When we pray with attention, with humility of mind and of heart, we quit the earth, we rise to Heaven, we penetrate the Bosom of God, we go and converse with the angels and the saints. —St. John Vianney

St. John Marie Baptiste Vianney, what confidence the people had in your prayers! You could not leave your old rectory or your humble church without being surrounded by imploring souls, who appealed to you as they would have appealed to Jesus Himself during His earthly life. And you, O good Saint, gave them hope by your words, which were full of love for God.

You, who had always counted entirely on the heart of God, obtain for me a deep filial trust in His Providence. As the hope of divine goods fills my heart, give me courage and help me to always obey the Commandments of God.

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■ DAY 3 | JULY 29

How good is the Good God! The angels sin and are cast into hell. Man sins, and God promises him a Deliverer. What have we done to deserve this favor?

—St. John Vianney

Saint John Marie Baptiste Vianney, you were so adamant against sin, yet so sympathetic and so ready to welcome the sinner. I come to you today as if you were still alive, as if I were kneeling at your feet and you could hear me. Bend towards me, listen to the repentant confidence for the weaknesses and miserable deeds of mine.

Priest of the Lord, inexhaustible Confessor, obtain for me the horror for sin. You wanted us first to avoid the occasion of sin. I want to take your advice and make the resolution to break bad habits and to avoid the dangerous occasions of sin. Help me today to examine my conscience.

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■ DAY 4 | JULY 30

It is a beautiful thought, my children, that we have a sacrament that heals the wounds of our souls!

—St. John Vianney

O Holy Priest of Ars, you knew how important was a good confession for the Christian life. It was to procure the happy fruits of millions of souls that you agreed to be in an uncomfortable confessional, which was like a prison, up to 15 to 16 hours on certain days.

I will try to develop the habit of frequent confession, to prepare properly each time and to have always regret for my sins, so that the grace of final perseverance but also the sanctification of my soul will be assured. Ask this grace for me.

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■ DAY 5 | JULY 31

When we have just received communion, if we were asked what are we taking away to our homes, we might answer, "I am taking away Heaven!" —St. John Vianney

O Holy Priest of Ars, whose only comfort in this world was the real presence of Jesus in the tabernacle, was it not your great joy to distribute the Eucharist to the pilgrims who visited you? You refused Communion to the souls who refused to reform but to souls of goodwill you opened wide the doors of the Eucharistic Feast.

You, who each day at Holy Mass received Holy Communion with great love, give me some of your fervor. With freedom from mortal sin, obtain for me a sincere desire to profit from receiving Holy Communion.

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■ DAY 6 | AUGUST 1

In Heaven, faith and hope will exist no more for the mist which obscures our reason will be dispelled ... But love; oh we shall be inebriated with it! We shall be drowned, lost in that ocean of divine love, annihilated in that immense charity of the Heart of Jesus! So that charity is a foretaste of Heaven.
—St. John Vianney

St. John Marie Baptiste Vianney, because of your love of God you showed great charity towards your neighbor. You could not preach on the love of God without burning tears of love. During your last years, it seemed as though you could not talk about anything else or live for anything else. Thus you sacrificed yourself to your neighbor by consoling, absolving, and sanctifying them to the limits of your strength.

Your charity inspires me to greater love of God, a love which is shown more by acts than by words. Help me to love my neighbor generously as Christ loves them.

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■ DAY 7 | AUGUST 2

See, my children, if we really wish to be saved, we must determine, once and for all, to labor in earnest for our salvation; our soul is like a garden in which the weeds are ever ready to choke the good plants and flowers that have been sown in it. —St. John Vianney

O Holy Priest of Ars, the infamous attacks of the devil which you had to suffer and the trials which disheartened you by fatigue would not make you give up the sublime task of converting souls. The devil came to you for many years to disturb your short rest, but you won because of mortification and prayers.

Powerful protector, you know the temptor's desire to harm my baptized and believing soul. He would have me sin, by rejecting the Holy Sacraments and the life of virtue. But good Saint of Ars, dispel from me the traces of the enemy.

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■ DAY 8 | AUGUST 3

Three things are wanted to preserve purity — the presence of God, prayer and the Sacraments. —St. John Vianney

O Holy Priest of Ars, a witness of your life made this magnificent praise of you:

"We would have taken him for an angel in a mortal body."

You so edified others: the modesty and the exquisite purity radiated from your body. With such charm and with such enthusiasm you preached to others about these beautiful virtues, which you said resembled the perfume of a vineyard in bloom.

Please, I beg you to join your entreaties to those of Mary Immaculate and Saint Philomena in order that I guard always, as God asks me, the purity of my heart. You, who have directed so many souls

towards the heights of virtue, defend me in temptations and obtain for me the strength to conquer them.

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■ DAY 9 | AUGUST 4

To love the good God with our whole heart is to prefer Him to everything ... to love nothing that is incompatible with the love of God. To love the good God with our whole mind is to think of Him often, and to make it our principal study to know Him well ... To love the good God with all our strength is to employ our possessions, our health, and our talents, in serving Him and glorifying Him. It is to refer all our actions to Him, as our last end. —St. John Vianney

O Holy Priest of Ars, your precious remains are contained in a magnificent reliquary, the donation from the priests of France. But this earthly glory is only a very pale image of the unspeakable glory which you are enjoying with God. During the time you were on earth, you used to repeat in your dejected hours, "one will rest in the other life." It is done, you are in eternal peace and eternal happiness.

I desire to follow you one day. Until then, I hear you saying to me:

"You should work and fight as long as you are in the world."

Teach me then to work for the salvation of my soul, to spread the good news and good example, and to do good towards those around me in order that I will receive the happiness of the Elect with you.

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