August 4th: Memorial of Saint John Vianney, Priest

Gospel text (*Mt* 9:35—10:1): Jesus went around all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and he cured every sickness and disease. When he saw the crowds he was moved with pity, for they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd (…).

St. John Mary Vianney, priest (1786-1859)

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(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today is the feast of Saint John Vianney, a pastor in accordance with the heart of God, who gave his life in humble and unselfish ministerial service for the salvation of his sheep. since his earthly youth he sought to conform himself to God's will, even in the humblest offices. He pondered on his desire to become a priest but it was far from easy for him to achieve it. Indeed, he arrived at priestly ordination (1815) only after many ordeals and misunderstandings, with the help of far-sighted priests who did not stop at considering his human limitations but looked beyond them and glimpsed the horizon of holiness that shone out in that truly unusual young man.

His existence was a living catechesis that acquired a very special effectiveness when people saw him celebrating Mass, pausing before the tabernacle in adoration or spending hour after hour in the confessional.

—The Holy Curé of Ars always expressed the highest esteem for the gift he had received. He would say: “Oh! How great is the Priesthood! It can be properly understood only in Heaven… if one were to understand it on this earth one would die, not of fright but of love!”.