

## The Village of Ars

There was lively talk in the village square.

“Have you seen the new curé?” asked one villager.\*

“I hear he’s called John Mary Vianney”, answered another.

“He looks pretty young to me.”

“Little Antoine Givre met him first”, one woman told them.

“He showed the curé the road to the village, and the curé said to him, ‘You’ve shown me the road to Ars; I’ll show you the road to heaven.’”

A man standing in the doorway of the coffee shop sneered, “Ha! The road to heaven! The curé’s going to have his work cut out for him!”

\* A “curé” is the word for a parish priest in France.

And Father Vianney was right! Soon the little church was too little. But then, the people of the village were not the only ones who went to church in Ars. People came from all over to attend Mass. For no one celebrated Mass like this good priest. His love for Jesus was so strong, it showed in everything he did. He made the Lord present and alive for everyone.

People would line up all the way down the street until late at night to make their confession to him. In the midst of the crowd, the Curé of Ars could spot those who needed him most. One day, he went out to find a woman who had not been able to get into the church.

“You, madam, you’re in a hurry”, he said. “Come quickly to make your confession.”

The woman was astonished. How could this priest whom she had never seen before know that she had sixteen children waiting for her at home? God had given Father Vianney the gift of seeing into people’s hearts. Miracles even happened in his presence.