

St. Francis Weekly "Kompositions"

ST. JOHN VIANNEY (1786-1859) August 4

St. John Vianney was born at Dardilly, near Lyons, France, on May 3, 1786, a few years before the French Revolution. After shepherding cattle on his family farm, he decided to study for the priesthood. He was drafted into the army, but deserted in 1809. When amnesty was granted by Emperor Napoleon in March of 1810, he returned to Dardilly.

John was tonsured in 1811 and entered the seminary at Lyons in 1813. Despite his poor record at studies, he was finally ordained on August 12, 1815. He was assigned as a parish priest in 1817 to Ars-en-Dombes, a remote, sleepy town of 230 people. Undoubtedly, his bishop wished to place him where not too much would be expected of him. Little did he realize the miracles of grace that would occur there. In 1824, with the help of Catherine Lassagne and Benedicta Lardet, he opened a free school for girls. This school laid the foundation for the establishment of La Providence, a shelter for orphans and deserted children, in 1827.

Through the prayer, penance and simple, tireless preaching of their parish priest, the people of Ars experienced a great spiritual awakening. News of this holy priest spread to the surrounding areas and soon men and women from all over Europe began to flock to the tiny village for confession and advice. More than three hundred visitors a day approached him. During winter, he would spend up to twelve hours a day in the confessional, and up to sixteen hours a day during the summer. The few words he spoke to each was enough; they heard from him what they needed to hear. For 42 years the Cure' of Ars labored in his out of the way parish until he died on August 4, 1859.

His prayer: When we pray our small hearts are stretched beyond themselves to reach lovingly to God. Through prayer we see what heaven will be. Prayer is honey making everything sweet; like the sun it melts the cold snow of sorrow away. —*St. John Vianney*

LISTEN! TRY IT WITH THE LORD

Those summer sports, golfing, tennis, swimming, or even rocking away in a favorite chair on the front porch - these pastimes are among the great joys of summer. But most of us know from experience that sports demand more of us than "fun." Professional and academic coaches nearly all agree: Success depends on some "inspiration" but in large measure requires much personal "perspiration."

Our relationship with the Lord draws on the same tried and true combination of "inspiration" and "perspiration." The Lord will start the process with a little inspiration - perhaps wonderful insights or challenging thoughts that suddenly spring to mind. But we know that the Lord also expects us to take His message out of storage in our memory. We need to move "inspiration" effectively into the context of our work and our daily lives. And that will always demand perspiration - that human effort usually defined as "work."

Active listening is one of those great gifts that blesses our lives with spiritual as well as personal enrichment. In relating to other people, including our family members, the importance of active listening is essential. Use patience, experts advice, as well as good to draw out the other person. Try to hear what that person is saying, not what you want to hear. The reward will be getting to know the other person better and on a much deeper level. Active listening does that. With God, active listening as a regular practice can also lead to a deeper experience in our relationship with the Lord. Just wanting that deeper relationship with God is the inspiration. The work of it, the perspiration, involves discipline and patience on our part, a work that begins with silence. Quiet. And we all know how hard that is for us today. We begin in silence. Opening our heart and will to the presence of God. We listen! The next step is also challenging what athletes call "follow through." We must think wisely and honestly as we examine the events in our daily lives.

Summer is a good time to do a little spiritual stock-taking. Pencil the Lord in on your schedule. Call it a 10 minute daily spiritual retreat. And make it a "no excuses" time for you and the Lord. Make it a time for active listening.

Why not try it this year? Make time, give it a try and you may find "things slow down" to summer pace, right in that "active listening" corner you created for yourself and God!

MARK THE DATES!

Saturday, August 25, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Garage / Yard Sale at Anne Klein's house
522 Benito Street, East Meadow NY
Start bringing in stuff to Church!
Ask how you can help in any way!

Saturday, October 6, 1 p.m.

Blessing of the Animals. Bring your pets.

Sunday, October 14, 3 p.m.

St. Francis Fall Fund-raiser Dinner
All are welcome. Ask how you can help.

Sunday, October 21, 9 a.m.

Thomas & Lorraine Kompa's 25th Anniversary
Renewal of Marriage Vows

Sunday, December 2, 3 p.m.

St. Nicholas Fund-raiser Dinner
All are welcome. Ask how you can help.

