

## Year for Priests (June 2009 - June 2010)

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has inaugurated a "Year for Priests" to run from 19th June 2009 to the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in June 2010. The theme is "Faithfulness of Christ, faithfulness of priests". It marks the 150th anniversary of the death of the Curator of Ars, John Mary Vianney, who is the patron saint of parish priests.

In his explanatory letter the Holy Father expresses the hope that this year will deepen the commitment of priests to interior renewal. For Catholics generally the year offers an opportunity to reflect on the gift of priests and to acknowledge the courageous fidelity of men who serve the Church in this capacity. It is also timely to remember those who minister in circumstances of grave difficulty and experience persecution in preaching the Gospel.

Pope Benedict cites the example of St John Vianney in encouraging his brother priests to be men with love for God and for souls and to be spiritual guides for the world. He notes how the Holy Mass was at the apex of the life of the Curator of Ars and how much attention the saintly priest devoted to the Sacrament of Penance. Priests are asked to be animated by the Word of God and to be inspired by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. A fervent prayer life is central to dedicating oneself to Christ and His Church.

It is to be hoped that during this "Year of Priests" Catholics will grow in an appreciation of the priestly identity and the theology of the priesthood. In recognition of this special time of grace the Holy Father has made available indulgences for both priests and the lay faithful.

We should intensify prayers for priests throughout the world and also for seminarians and those discerning a call to the holy priesthood. During this year we are asked to remember especially the priests of the Parish of Drumcree both diocesan and religious. In the course of this year the Holy Father will declare John Vianney the patron saint of all priests.

You can find more information and resources on the "Year for Priests" by clicking on the links below:

[The Holy See](#)

[Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

[Annus Sacerdotalis \(Congregation for the Clergy\)](#)

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)

[Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors](#)

[Catholic Culture](#)

[WorldPriest.com](#)

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