



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Cathedral to Host Saint John Vianney Relic Pilgrimage

(HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA) – The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown is honored to welcome the Saint John Vianney Relic Pilgrimage to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on January 31, 2019. The pilgrimage is part of a national tour sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

The incorrupt heart of Saint John Vianney, patron saint of priests, will be present for veneration at the Cathedral from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Masses will be celebrated at 6:45 a.m., 8:00 a.m., Noon, and 5:30 p.m. Bishop Mark L. Bartchak will be the celebrant and homilist of the Noon and 5:30 p.m. Masses. Priests will be available to hear confessions beginning at 6:00 a.m. and continuing throughout the day until shortly before the start of the 5:30 p.m. Liturgy.

The Vatican has granted Bishop Bartchak's request that all who make the pilgrimage to the Cathedral on January 31 receive a plenary indulgence, which removes the temporal punishment for sins.

Saint John Vianney grew up during the French Revolution – a time when the Catholic faith was under attack. As a seminarian, he struggled academically, but was ultimately ordained to the priesthood thanks to his devout prayer life. As a young priest, he was assigned to a small parish in Ars, France, which was considered a haven for bad behavior. He spent hours hearing confessions and quickly turned people away from sin and closer to God.

“Saint John Vianney is not only the patron saint of parish priests, he is patron saint of all priests,” stressed Bishop Bartchak. “He ministered during a tumultuous time in France where so many priests were imprisoned or defected. He was given the most lowly parish assignment in the diocese. Even though he was not blessed with an abundance of talents, his pastoral ministry as a leader, reformer, and confessor was extraordinary. What a day of blessing that this can be for our diocese which has been going through some tough times.”

Parish groups and Catholic school students from throughout the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown will visit the Cathedral for veneration of the relic and Mass. Religious communities and groups such as the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, and the Serra Club will also be present. Faithful from Altoona-Johnstown and neighboring dioceses are invited and encouraged to participate in this extraordinary opportunity in our Diocesan Church.