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Prelate's Pilgrimage to Ars

During the Year for Priests, Bishop Javier Echevarría made a pilgrimage to Ars and the tomb of Saint John Mary Vianney, patron for priests. With gallery of photos from the trip.

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On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of Saint John Mary Vianney, the Curé of Ars, Benedict XVI proclaimed a Year for Priests, which will conclude on June

19, with the motto, "The fidelity of Christ, the fidelity of the priest."

Following in the footsteps of the five pilgrimages he made with Saint Josemaría and Don Alvaro del Portillo, the Prelate traveled to Ars on March 5-7 to pray at the tomb of the patron for priests.

As soon as he arrived on Friday March 5, early in the afternoon, Bishop Echevarría went directly to the tomb of the saint, accompanied by Msgr. Fernando Ocariz, Vicar General of Opus Dei, and Msgr. Antoine de Rochebrune, Vicar of Opus Dei in France.

The Prelate lit three vigil lights in the chapel, entrusting to the saint his intentions for the Church and the people in Opus Dei. Afterwards, he went to Lyon to visit Cardinal Philippe Barbarin in the Cathedral of Saint John.

On his way to the Salvagny university residence in Lyon where he was to spend the night, he made a brief visit to the Church of Saint Bonaventure, where Saint Josemaría celebrated Mass whenever he passed through this city.

On Saturday, before returning to Ars, the Prelate met with faithful of the Prelature and their friends from Lyon, Grenoble and Clermont-Ferrand. He invited them to imitate the holy Curé of Ars' great love for the Eucharist and Confession, devotions he shared with Saint Josemaría.

The Founder of Opus Dei chose Saint John Mary Vianney as one of the intercessors of Opus Dei, that is, saints the faithful of the Prelature can go to for specific needs of the Work.

He also encouraged those present to be witnesses to Christ in their

surroundings, taking advantage of every opportunity in their work and family life to help the Church in its mission of evangelization.

While in Ars, he prayed for an extended period before the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar in the Chapel of Divine Providence.

He also visited the Curé of Ars' home and spent some moments speaking with a group of priests and seminarians from Cologne, who were visiting Ars with the Vicar General of the diocese and the Rector of the seminary.

On returning to Lyon, he stopped to pray the Salve in the Basilica of Notre Dame de Fourviere. On Sunday, in the Saint-Exupéry airport, just before departing, the Prelate said: "Despite our littleness and the difficulties we may face, if we remember that God is always at our side we will be able to win from him abundant fruit for the

Church and for this marvelous country."

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