R.E- The vocation of the priest.

* Some people’s vocation is to marriage or the single life or to the religious life. Some people’s vocation is to become a priest. A priest chooses to follow Jesus in the service of others in the Church. This is his response to God’s call to a life lived with love for God’s people. The apostles were called by Jesus to follow him and, in response, they left everything to be with him. This is also true of every Christian and is especially true of the call to be a priest.
* When a man feels that God is calling him to be a priest, he will need to pray about this and to seek advice from the Vocation’s Director of his diocese. The Vocation’s Director is an experienced priest who helps men discern (recognise) what God’s call is for them. He will assess the man to see if he is serious about the choice and suitable for taking on such a responsibility.
* If the man still feels that God is calling him, he will need to apply and to be accepted by the bishop of the diocese. If he is accepted, then he will begin many years of training in a seminary. During this time, he will have the opportunity to pray, learn more about his Faith, how to celebrate the Sacraments, communicate the Good News and have experience of living and serving in the parish community. At the end of the training, diocesan priests make promises of celibacy and obedience to their bishop. They do not make a vow of poverty, but they do try to live simply so they can be of service to God’s people ‘The priest is God’s messenger to His people. He wants to lead them to God.’ (Benedict XVI)

Saint John Vianney

* Saint John Mary Vianney, was born in France in 1786. He was a farm labourer. He was someone who really loved God and was kind to everyone. He did not have much education. He very much wanted to follow Jesus Christ as a priest. He failed his first exam for entrance into the seminary, but managed to get in when he tried again. He found the studies quite difficult, but he was a holy person and he tried very hard. Eventually, he was ordained and sent to the parish of Ars, in a village in France. His bishop thought he would be alright in that quiet parish.
* The people in the parish loved him. He was a simple, holy person who was very close to God. He had a special gift of being able to help people who were worried or troubled. The parishioners loved going to Confession to him because he was so kind and gentle, and helped them to know God better and they were assured of God’s love for them. He spent many hours listening to people’s confessions and giving them absolution. When John Mary Vianney preached at Mass the people listened carefully. It was in a simple language, full of pictures and stories from everyday life and country scenes, but full of faith and love of God.
* He realised that it was important for children to come to know and love God. He taught the children how to pray. He said, ‘to pray and to love is the greatest happiness there is.’
* His teaching was so popular that adults wanted to hear his teaching too.
* Saint John Mary Vianney, usually called the Curé d’ Ars, was made a saint in 1925, because he was a man who witnessed to God’s love by his life. He is the patron saint of priests.

Activity

* Research more about Saint John Vianney.

 **How did his faith shape his life?**