

*“If I am to err, I would rather err on the side of too much goodness rather than too much severity.”*

## **St Francis de Sales Feast, 24<sup>th</sup> January**

### **Opening Prayer**

O God, who for the who for the salvation of souls willed that the Bishop Saint Francis de Sales become all things to all, graciously grant that, following his example, we may always display the gentleness of your charity in the service of our neighbour.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*(Collect, Proper of the Saint)*



### **Scripture Reflections Ephesians 3:8-12**

I, Paul, who am less than the least of all the saints, have been entrusted with this special grace, not only of proclaiming to the pagans the infinite treasure of Christ but also of explaining how the mystery is to be dispensed. Through all the ages, this has been kept hidden in God, the creator of everything. Why? So that the Sovereignities and Powers should learn only now, through the Church, how comprehensive God's wisdom really is, exactly according to the plan which he had had from all eternity in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is why we are bold enough to approach God in complete confidence, through our faith in him.

## **John 15:9-17** ©

Jesus said to his disciples:  
'As the Father has loved me,  
so I have loved you.  
Remain in my love.  
If you keep my commandments  
you will remain in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father's commandments  
and remain in his love.  
I have told you this  
so that my own joy may be in you  
and your joy be complete.  
This is my commandment:  
love one another, as I have loved you.  
A man can have no greater love  
than to lay down his life for his friends.  
You are my friends,  
if you do what I command you.  
I shall not call you servants any more,  
because a servant does not know  
his master's business;  
I call you friends,  
because I have made known to you  
everything I have learnt from my Father.  
You did not choose me:  
no, I chose you;  
and I commissioned you  
to go out and to bear fruit,  
fruit that will last;  
and then the Father will give you  
anything you ask him in my name.  
What I command you  
is to love one another.'

- Is there a word or phrase that stands out or remains with you after reading these passages?

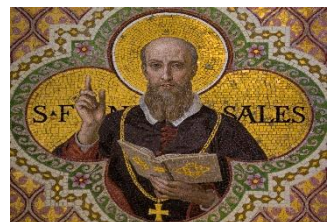
## **Biography**

*Born:* 21 August 1567 at Château de Thorens, Savoy (part of modern France)

*Died:* 28 December 1622 at Lyon, France

*Beatified:* 8 January 1662 by Pope Alexander VII

*Canonized:* 19 April 1665 by Pope Alexander VII



- Born in the castle of Château de Thorens to a well-placed Savoyard family, the eldest of twelve children.
- Parents: François de Boisy and Françoise de Sionnz.
- His parents intended that Francis become a lawyer, enter politics, and carry on the family line and power. He studied at La Roche and Annecy in France, taught by Jesuits. Attended the Collège de Clermont in Paris, France at age 12. In his early teens, Francis began to believe in pre-destination, and was so afraid that he was pre-emptorily condemned to Hell that he became ill and eventually was confined to bed. However, in January 1587 at the Church of Saint Stephen, he overcame the crisis, decided that whatever God had in store for him was for the best, and dedicated his life to God.
- Studied law and theology at the University of Padua, Italy, and earned a doctorate in both fields. He returned home, and found a position as Senate advocate. It was at this point that he received a message telling him to "Leave all and follow Me." He took this as a call to the priesthood, a move his family fiercely opposed, especially when he refused a marriage that had been arranged for him. However, he pursued a devoted prayer life, and his gentle ways won over the family.

### **Priest**

- In 1593 he was appointed provost of the diocese of Geneva, Switzerland, a stronghold of Calvinists. Preacher, writer and spiritual director in the district of Chablais. His simple, clear explanations of Catholic doctrine, and his gentle way with everyone, brought many back to the Roman Church. He even used sign language in order to bring the message to the deaf, leading to his patronage of deaf people.

### **Bishop of Geneva in 1602.**

- He travelled and evangelized throughout the Duchy of Savoy, working with children whenever he could. Friend of Saint Vincent de Paul. He turned down a wealthy French bishopric to continue working where God had placed him. With Saint Jeanne de Chantal he helped found the Order of the Visitation. A prolific correspondent, many of his letters have survived.

### **Doctor of the Church**

- The value of his writings led to his being declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Blessed Pius IX in 1877, and a patron of writers and journalists by Pope Pius XI in 1923. The Salesians of Don Bosco, the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales, and the Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales are named in his honour as is the Saint François Atoll in the Seychelles Islands.

## Significance for Catechists

For reflection: What does the life of St Francis say to us as catechists? What can we learn from him?

## Closing Prayer

Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;  
rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise,  
God, whose very own you are, will lead you safely through all things;  
and when you cannot stand it, God will carry you in His arms.  
Do not fear what may happen tomorrow; the same understanding Father who cares for you today will take care of you then and every day.  
He will either shield you from suffering or will give you unfailing strength to bear it.  
Be at peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.

*(St Francis de Sales)*

## 'Take Away' : Going Deeper

Prayer of St Francis de Sales,

<https://www.daily-prayers.org/angels-and-saints/prayers-of-saint-francis-de-sales/>

St Francis de Sales – A Biography <https://youtu.be/7qIueaQPu3c>

Saints for Kids: St Francis de Sales <https://youtu.be/wnUd0XTScEY>

Pope Francis on the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of St Francis (28<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2022)

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20221228-8-udienza-generale.html>

Pope Francis Apostolic Letter, Totum Amoris Est (Everything Pertains to Love', December 2022

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/20221228-totum-amoris-est.html#\\_ftn36](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/20221228-totum-amoris-est.html#_ftn36)

Collected writings translated :

[file:///C:/Users/AnnaDupelycz/Downloads/TheCatholicControversy\\_10087932.pdf](file:///C:/Users/AnnaDupelycz/Downloads/TheCatholicControversy_10087932.pdf)

*"Do everything calmly and peacefully. Do as much as you can as well as you can. Strive to see God in all things without exception, and consent to His will joyously. Do everything for God, uniting yourself to him in word and deed. Walk very simply with the Cross of the Lord and be at peace with yourself."*

~ Saint Francis de Sales

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## Acknowledgements

Illustration of St Francois de Sales: from 'Saints of Catechesis' exhibition, II International Catechetical Congress, September 2018, Rome.

Fr Lawrence Lew OP, Flickr, 2010, St Francis de Sales chapel of BI Pius IX, basilica of San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome

Biography notes: CatholicSaints.info