

## St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622)

François de Sales spoke French but was a citizen of Savoy, an Alpine Duchy right where today's France, Italy and Switzerland meet. He was alive at the same time as William Shakespeare in England, and Galileo Galilei in Italy.

He was the Catholic Bishop of Geneva, but lived in Annecy (now France), a lake town in the Alps, since Geneva was involved in the religious conflicts of that time. He had been classically educated by the early Jesuits in Paris and Padua and achieved doctorates in both Church and Civil Law. But once he was ordained a priest, his fame and creative genius really blossomed.

As a young missionary he wrote and invented a pamphlet ministry (slid under people's doors) when people were afraid to talk to a priest in public. He greeted all his opponents respectfully as Brother and Sister, convinced that kindness was far more attractive than judgment or condemnation. His sense of attraction and gentleness showed up in everything he did, including his two published books and in thousands of personal letters.

His spirit spread through the centuries, promoted by St. Jane de Chantal and the Visitation Sisters they founded together, and his writings. He inspired a great number of people to live holy lives, and grandfathered numerous religious communities, who found his respectful and attractive gentleness as the most effective pastoral method for almost any ministry, whether evangelizing culture (Missionaries), reaching out to youth at risk (Salesians), living and spreading his spirituality (Oblates and Visitation Sisters), enabling lay holiness (Association, Secular Institute). We celebrate Francis de Sales as a Doctor of the Church, and Patron of Journalists, the Catholic Press, Catholic Educators, and the Hearing Impaired. Happy 400th!

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for all those interested in sharing Salesian Spirituality including the North American Salesian Network (NASN):

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For information and contact with all the groups, see the links available on [www.salesianspirituality.com](http://www.salesianspirituality.com)

**St. Francis de Sales has “Grandfathered” us all.**

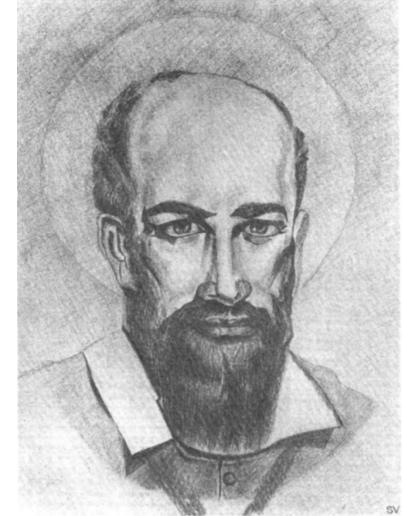


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*A to Z with  
St. Francis de Sales*

**3 quotes for each letter of the alphabet  
selected from his many writings**



**St. Francis de Sales  
(1567-1622)**

*Celebrating*  
**Four Hundred Years**

✠1567-1967 Birth

✠1609-2009 *Introduction to the Devout Life* Publication

✠1610-2010 Foundation of the Sisters of the Visitation of Holy Mary

✠1616-2016 *Treatise on the Love of God* Publication

✠1622-2022 Death

**A**sk for nothing and refuse nothing.  
We must fight back with **affection** and not with reason.  
Love is the **abbreviation** of all theology.

**B**e who you are and be that well, so that you may bring honor to the Master Craftsman whose handiwork you are.  
We may be excused for not always being **bright**, but we should not be excused for being not generous, not yielding and not considerate.  
**Blessed** are the hearts that can **bend**; they shall never be broken.

**C**A truth which is not **charitable** comes from a charity which is not true.  
Self love is **cunning**, pushing and insinuating itself into everything while making us believe it is not there at all.  
Let us do what we **can**, and then God will be satisfied.

**D**We must make our **devotion** attractive, not troublesome to others.  
To **desire** something for any reason other than for God is to desire less.  
Above all, do not be **discouraged**.

**E**We shall soon be in **eternity**, and then we shall see what a small matter is all the busyness of this world.  
The **end** of love is the union of the lover and the thing loved.  
On no account give way to sadness, the **enemy** of devotion.

**F**The more perfect the things you share with your **friends** are, the more perfect will the friendship be.  
The world holds us to be **fools**; let us hold it to be mad.  
We must not **fear** fear. Fear is a greater evil than the evil itself.

**G**Nothing is as strong as **gentleness**, and nothing as **gentle** as real strength.  
As we consider our sins in detail, let us consider God's **graces** in detail.  
God is **our God**, and the human heart his home.

**H****umility** perfects us in regard to God, and gentleness in regard to our neighbor.  
Well! my poor **heart**, here we are fallen into the ditch we so firmly resolved to avoid; ah! Let us rise and leave it forever.  
Courage! Henceforth, let us be more on our guard, God will help us, we shall do well enough!  
Take good care of your **health**, that it may serve you to serve God.

**I**t is not by the multiplication of things we do that we will attain perfection, but by the purity of **intention** with which we do them.  
We in this life are walking as it were on **ice**.  
We must suffer our **imperfection** in order to have perfection.

**J**Live **Jesus!** Vive **Jesu!** (V + J) **Jesus** who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Live **joyously** amongst your holy occupations.  
We never escape the rigor of his **justice** except by his justifying mercy.

**K**One **kind** word wins more willing service than a hundred harsh orders or stern reproofs.  
In the creation God commanded the plants to bring forth their fruits each one after its own **kind**.  
Do not analyze what other people are doing, or speculate what will become of them, but look upon them simply, generously, with **kindness** and affection.

**L**Do all by **love** and nothing by force.  
We must help one another as much as we can, and **leave** the rest to God.  
The **love** of God is without peer, because the goodness of God is a peerless goodness.

**M**Our misery is the very occasion and opportunity for God's **mercy**.  
Our **misery** is far less than God's mercy.  
He who loves **most** will be most loved.

**N**Bearing with the imperfections of our **neighbors** and family members is one of the chief ways we have of loving them.  
It is to those who have the most **need** of us that we ought to show our love more especially.  
We can never love our **neighbor** too much.

**O**The **opportunity** for doing great things does not come often, but at every moment we can do little ones with great love.  
The Holy Spirit cries everywhere that our ruin is from **ourselves**.  
We are more troublesome to **ourselves** than anyone else is to us.

**P**Make sickness itself a **prayer**. Desire to be cured that you may serve God, but don't refuse to continue to be sick if that is his will for you right now.  
It is sad to see a **precious** liquor lose its worth through the presence of a little dirt, and an exquisite wine by the admixture of water.  
The world is only **peopled** to people heaven.

**Q**All your suffering, either in **quality** or quantity is not comparable to His.  
**Q**Do not **require** more perfection from others than yourself.  
Love **equalizes** lovers.

**R**It is **reason** that makes us human; yet it is rare to find us reasonable.  
If sin abounds in malice to ruin us, grace superabounds to **restore** us.  
We must not marvel that each herb and flower in a garden **requires** its own kind of special care.

**S**There is nothing **small** in the service of God.  
The world is a great **stage** where God displays his many wonders.  
We carry **self** with us everywhere, and frailty is deeply imbedded in our soul.

**T**Do not look forward to what may happen **tomorrow**; the same Everlasting Father who cares for you today will take of you tomorrow and everyday. Either God will shield you from suffering, or will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.  
All the **temptations** of hell cannot stain a soul which does not love them.  
We are rarely in this mortal life without many **temptations**.

**U**Let us not limit our patience to certain afflictions, but extend it **universally** to all those which God may permit to happen.  
By the Incarnation human nature remains forever joined in personal **unity** with the divinity.  
As we become more and more capable of union with God, we shall **unite** ourselves to one another more and more closely.

**V**Our **victory** does not lie in not feeling temptations, but in not consenting to them.  
One can catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with 100 barrels of **vinegar**.  
Love **virtue** rather than fear sin.

**W**The **well-being** of a home depends on parents' words, but far more on their behavior.  
Never look at what the **world** offers without considering what it hides.  
All the world together is not **worth** one human soul.

**X**Strive to see God in all things without **exception**, and consent to God's will with absolute submission.  
We accuse our neighbor of every little thing and **excuse** our selves in important things.  
Praise, honor and glory are not given to people for a mere virtue, but for an **excellence** in virtue.

**Y**Have patience with everyone, but especially with **yourself**.  
Two or three **years** soon pass and eternity remains.  
**You** can only give God what you have.

**Z**We have no bond but the bond of love, which is the bond of perfection; for love is as strong as death and the **zeal** of love, as firm as hell.

Since **zeal** is ardent, vehement love, it requires prudent direction; otherwise it would exceed the bounds of moderation and discretion.  
Once anger or audacity is aroused and cannot be kept within the bounds of reason, it carries the heart into disorder so that **zeal** is thus practiced indiscreetly and inordinately, thus making it bad and worthy of blame.