

PARACLETE
GIANTS

The COMPLETE
Introduction to the

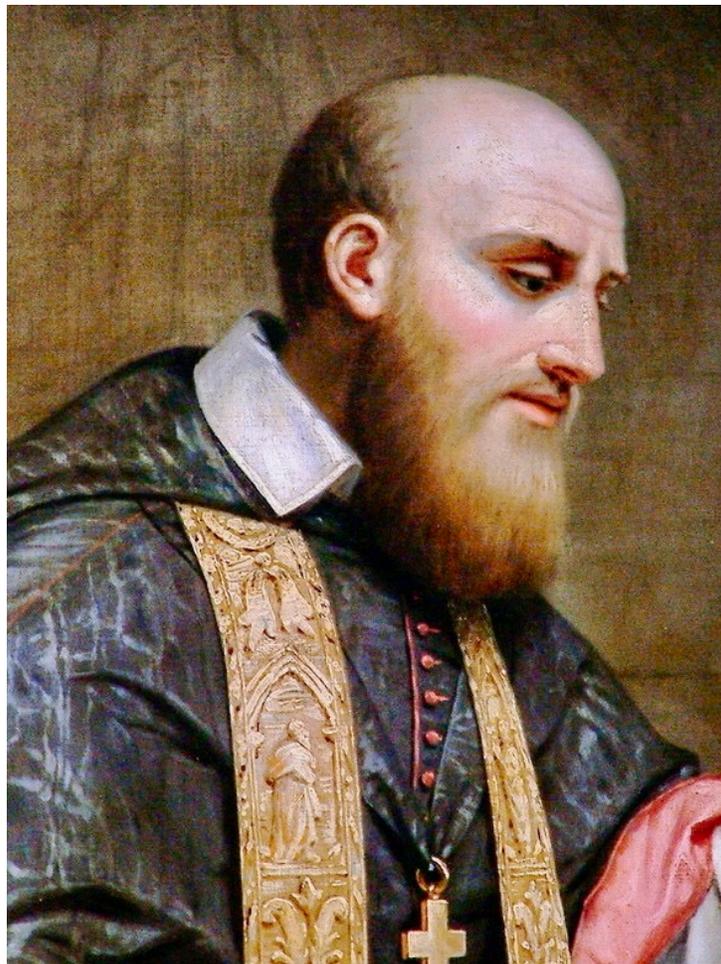
*Devout
Life*

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Translation and Commentary
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GANZ NOTES TO SHARE (IN PART)
TNS 18,3
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES (1567-1622)
17 MARCH 2026

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St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church

THE FEAST OF ST. PATRICK (389-461)

Microsoft CoPilot AI – The Celts emerged as Indo-European peoples originating in Central Europe, developing a distinct culture during the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. Their earliest identifiable archaeological culture is the Hallstatt culture (c. 1200–500 BCE), centered in what is now Austria, southern Germany, Switzerland, and surrounding regions.

Britannica – “**Wales**” – Famed for its strikingly rugged landscape, the small nation of Wales – which comprises six distinctive regions – was one of Celtic Europe’s most prominent political and cultural centres, and it retains aspects of culture that are markedly different from those of its English neighbours ... The medieval chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales) had topography, history, and current events alike in mind when he observed that **Wales is a “country very strongly defended by high mountains, deep valleys, extensive woods, rivers, and marshes; insomuch that from the time the Saxons took possession of the island the remnants of the Britons, retiring into these regions, could never be entirely subdued either by the English or by the Normans.”** ... Some coastal caves in Wales were occupied about 200,000 years ago, during the Paleolithic Period (Old Stone Age). Additional waves of settlers arrived from continental Europe and lowland Britain during the Neolithic Period (New Stone Age) and Bronze Age, **and iron-wielding Celtic peoples invaded after 2000 BCE.** The basic culture of these peoples survived the Roman occupation and was later strengthened and broadened by Celtic immigrations from other parts of Britain. **Their language, a Brythonic branch of Celtic speech, formed the basis of modern Welsh, while their heroic poetry, dating from the 6th century CE, became the basis of one of the oldest literary traditions of Europe.**

Ellsberg, Robert. *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time*. Kindle Edition at March 17th

Patrick’s mission to Ireland and its successful outcome is justly celebrated. But it is often forgotten that Patrick’s first introduction to Ireland was involuntary. **At the age of sixteen he was kidnapped by Irish raiders, stolen from his home, a village somewhere along the western coast of Roman Britain [in Wales], and taken to Ireland as a slave.** Previously he had lived a relatively comfortable life as the son of a petty Roman official. This violent change in his life, as may well be supposed, was a shocking experience. He found himself sold to a local king who employed him in a variety of menial occupations, such as herding livestock on the desolate mountains of the north. As a slave, his life was not valued more highly than the beasts he tended. As he later wrote, “I was chastened exceedingly and humbled every day in hunger and

nakedness." At the same time, far from home and with little prospect of ever seeing his family again, he remembered who he was and where he came from. In particular, he clung fast to his faith as a Christian. Whereas previously he had been relatively indifferent in his faith, now he liked to spend his long days among the flocks reciting endlessly the prayers impressed on his memory since childhood. All the while he dreamed of escape. Eventually, after six years of captivity, an opportunity arose and he seized it. His flight involved a risky journey of two hundred miles to the sea, where he found a place on a boat sailing for the Continent. Thus, eventually, after many further adventures, he made his way back to his home village. The scene of his family reunion can scarcely be imagined. But the young man who had now returned from the dead was no longer the carefree adolescent of before. He bore the scars of a terrible ordeal, but also the zeal of a profound faith ... It was some years hence that this purpose became plain. **While living in Gaul**, where he had traveled to study for the priesthood, he had a series of dreams in which Irish voices, the voices of those who had stolen his youth, cried out to him, "We beseech thee to come and walk once more among us." At first his superiors resisted the idea of his return to Ireland, judging among other things that he lacked the learning and skills for such a dangerous mission. **But he overcame their objections, and so in 432, by this time a consecrated bishop, he returned to the island from which providence had once aided his escape.**

PRAYER - Two stanzas from the *Breastplate of St. Patrick* -

It has been dated to the early 8th cent. and was probably the 'Canticum Scotticum' mentioned in the 'Book of Armagh' (807). Though ancient, its ascription to Patrick is improbable. The hymn belongs to the genre *loricae* (*prayers for protection*). In it the author invokes the Trinity, angels, prophets, the powers of heaven and earth, and finally Christ himself to protect him against the dominion of evil.¹

I arise today, through
The strength of heaven,
The light of the sun,
The radiance of the moon,
The splendour of fire,
The speed of lightning,
The swiftness of wind,
The depth of the sea,

cent. century

¹ Campbell, Gordon. "[Breastplate of St Patrick.](#)" *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by Andrew Louth, Fourth Edition, vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 2022, p. 277.

The stability of the earth,
The firmness of rock.

I arise today, through
God's strength to pilot me,
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's host to save me
From snares of devils,
From temptation of vices,
From everyone who shall wish me ill,
afar and near.

MY DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION: TNS 18, 3 - St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) on 17 March 2026

Our Guest in this Part III of The Night School, Series 18, is one of the giants in the art of Spiritual Direction. He sought to heal the Church's obvious ills in an Age when it was tearing itself apart, from within.

Unlike those reformers who moved to attack vigorously the words and works of the Church's (internal) "enemies", St. Francis de Sales followed another Path. His way earned him the highest designation the Church can bestow on any person - being proclaimed a "Doctor of the Church" in 1877 (only 38 of them exist in the whole history of the Church).

St. Francis was convinced that the source of the Church's difficulties came from the "learned" Church (of which he was one), who having never fully understood the love of God, and as a result had never paid the price of becoming as loving as God is towards others, distorted the teaching of God, fomenting division and enmity within the Church.

The internal battles became about "taking sides", about despising one's intellectual enemies, and even becoming murderous when dealing with them. And these

distortions in the intellect quickly became calamity in the social dimensions of the Church.

St. Francis, who interestingly had to suffer a fierce temper for much of his life, is remembered for the kindness and gentleness that “breathes” through all he spoke and wrote. He was beloved and a source of unity and patience and forbearance - a credible, costly example of divine love, demonstrating what that looks like in a person and to what effects. He wrote: “True devotion does better still. It not only does no injury to one’s vocation [by which he means primarily the “lay” vocation], but on the contrary adorns and beautifies it.” And “In short, devotion is simply that spiritual agility and vivacity by which charity [divine love active in a cooperating human being] works in us or by aid of which we do good works quickly and lovingly.”

Welcome to The Night School.

FUN FACTS

Francis died on 28 December 1622 (the year in which these five Saints were canonized in Rome: St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Philip Neri, and St. Isidore the Farmer).

He was Beatified by Pope Alexander VII on 8 January 1661 (only 39 years after his death).

He was Canonized by Pope Alexander VII on 8 April 1665 (only 42 years after his death).

Richard McBrien, *The Pocket Guide to the Popes*, page 245 -

235th Pope - ALEXANDER VII 1599-1667, pope April 7, 1655-May 22, 1667 - Born Fabio Chigi, Alexander VII served a vice-legate in Ferrara, bishop of Nardò, inquisitor and apostolic delegate in Malta, and, for thirteen years, papal nuncio in Cologne. He was named secretary of state by Innocent X and later made a cardinal and bishop of Imola. Cardinal Chigi was elected pope on April 7, 1655, after a conclave that lasted some eighty days and against the strong initial opposition of France. He took the name Alexander VII in honor of the great twelfth-century pope Alexander III (1159-81) and was crowned on April 18. ... **The most important achievement of Alexander VII’s pontificate was in the realm of the missions, not politics. He decreed on March 23, 1656, that the Jesuit missionaries in China be allowed to use Chinese rites and, over three**

years later, dispensed the native Chinese clergy from having to pray the **Divine Office in Latin**. ... Alexander VII commissioned the great sculptor and architect Bernini to enclose St. Peter's Square within two grand semicircular colonnades. He died on May 22, 1667, and was buried in St. Peter's in a tomb designed by Bernini himself.

He was the first native French writer to be proclaimed, in 1877, a Doctor of the Church.

QUOTES

Henri Nouwen (1932-1966) in the "Preface" - **Giving less hours to the dark violent forces of contemporary entertainment and more to writing letters in the spirit of Jesus is a true discipline of friendship.** During the quiet peaceful hours that we spend communicating God's love to others in our letters, we build a new community and bring light into the world. This is what Francis and Jane did in their time. This is what we still can do in ours. I have little doubt that the fruits will be plentiful.²

St. Francis de Sales - "In short, devotion is simply that **spiritual agility and vivacity** by which charity works in us or by aid of which we do good works quickly and lovingly."

² Nouwen, Henri J. M. "[Preface.](#)" *Francis de Sales, Jane de Chantal: Letters of Spiritual Direction*, edited by John Farina, translated by Péronne Marie Thibert, Paulist Press, 1988, p. 5.

MAP



The European Savoy is a peculiar territory. In the sixteenth century, its area straddled the western Alps and overlapped bits of what are now France, Switzerland, and Italy, and it included a Mediterranean port at Nice. Since the early fifteenth century it had been an independent duchy, a mini-nation, ruled by the Duke of Savoy, and because of its location—just across the bay from Calvin’s Geneva and between Catholic France and Italy—it was the scene of much religious disruption during the years following the Reformation. [de Sales, Francis. *The Complete Introduction to The Devout Life* (Paraclete Giants) (p. 25). Kindle Edition.]

FRANCIS AMONG THE JESUITS (1582-1588)

When Francis was fifteen (1582), his father arranged for him to enter the College of Navarre in the University of Paris (because that was the college that had traditionally been attended by the noble families of Savoy). But Francis begged off and, with his mother's intercession, **was allowed instead to enter the College of Clermont – because it was supervised by the Jesuits and famous for both piety and academics.** At the college, Francis did extremely well in the academic disciplines of philosophy and rhetoric (the latter clearly evident in the style and literary quality of his later writings). The study of theology and Scriptures was predictably his favorite, but in deference to his father (who still intended him for high social position) he took lessons in horsemanship, dancing, and fencing. **He remained at the college for six years.** [de Sales, Francis. *The Complete Introduction to The Devout Life* (Paraclete Giants) (p. 26). Kindle Edition.]

C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* – People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says, 'If you keep a lot of rules, I'll reward you, and if you don't, I'll do the other thing.' I do not think that is the best way of looking at it. I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. **And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself.** To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other.³

³ Lewis, C. S. [*A Year with C. S. Lewis: Daily Readings from His Classic Works*](#). Edited by Patricia S. Klein, 1st ed., HarperOne, 2003, p. 85.

WHAT IS A “HOLY” PERSON?

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**holy**” - **1. - Old English** - Kept or regarded as inviolate from ordinary use, and appropriated or set apart for religious use or observance; consecrated, dedicated, sacred. **2.a. - Old English** - As applied to deities, the development of meaning has probably been: held in religious regard or veneration, kept reverently sacred from human profanation or defilement; (hence) of a character that evokes human veneration and reverence; (and thus, in Christian use) free from all contamination of sin and evil, morally and spiritually perfect and unsullied, possessing the infinite moral perfection which Christianity attributes to the Divine character. **3.a. - Old English** - *Of persons: specially belonging to, commissioned by, or devoted to God (or so regarded):* e.g. angels, the Virgin Mary, prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints, popes, bishops. **4. *Conformed to the will of God, entirely devoted to God:*** in earlier times often connoting asceticism and strict religious observances; (now usually) morally and spiritually pure; free from sinful impulses or temptations; of godly character and life; sanctified, saintly; sinless.

Wright & Power (1988) - Undergirding all Christian spiritual traditions is the insistence that human beings, to be true to their deepest insights, must follow the way to God opened for them by **Jesus of Nazareth, in some way taking on the reality of the life he lived.**⁴ The essential pattern of that life has generally been understood to be one of self-emptying in order to be filled with God. It is this process of self-emptying and being filled — one’s dying and rising — that is known in traditional Catholic terminology as **the ascetic life and the mystical life**. The entire progress of the human endeavor is thus articulated with a language (both verbal and pictorial) fashioned from the paradigmatic life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The question “**How does Jesus live?**” could

⁴ This statement is especially true of pre-Reformation spirituality and, after the sixteenth century, the Catholic tradition. Mainline Protestant traditions, with differing anthropological assumptions and predominantly theocentric syntheses, **tend not to focus upon the activity or cooperation of the human person in “letting” Jesus live.** For some insight see Frank C. Senn, ed., *Protestant Spiritual Traditions* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1986). The eastern Christian teachings on *deification* as the central dynamic of the spiritual life also approach the issue of making Jesus live from a different perspective. On this see Louis Bouyer, *A History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol. 3, *Protestant and Orthodox Traditions* (N.Y.: Desclée Co., 1969).

therefore be asked of any Christian spirituality⁴

TEXTS BY ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Our selections taken from a selection of the writings of St. Francis de Sales – Francis de Sales. *Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales*. Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012.

A GENTLE WAY –

To live in a gentle way, it is important to respect ourselves, never growing **irritated with ourselves or our imperfections**. Although it is but reasonable that we should be displeased and grieved at our own faults, we need to guard against being bitter, angry, or fretful about them. Many people fall into the error of being angry because they have been angry, or impatient because they have given way to impatience; this keeps them in a chronic state of irritation, strengthens the impressions made, and prepares one for a fresh fall on the first occasion. **Moreover, all this anger and irritation against one's self fosters pride, springing as it does from self-love, which is disturbed and upset by its own imperfection.**

Gerard Manly Hopkins, SJ –

My own heart let me more have pity on; let
Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
Charitable; not live this tormented mind
With this tormented mind tormenting yet.⁵

What we need is a quiet, steady, firm displeasure at our own faults. A judge who speaks deliberately and calmly when he gives sentence will punish vice more effectively than speaking in an impetuous and passionate way, for in that case he would be punishing not so much the actual crimes before him, as his own

⁴ Wright, Wendy M., and Joseph F. Power. ["Introduction."](#) *Francis de Sales, Jane de Chantal: Letters of Spiritual Direction*, edited by John Farina, translated by Péronne Marie Thibert, Paulist Press, 1988, pp. 9–10.

⁵ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/90507/my-own-heart-let-me-more-have-pity-on>.

perceptions of them. **We can chasten ourselves far better by a quiet and steadfast repentance than by eager hasty efforts at penitence, prompted not so much by the weight of our faults, as by our own negative feelings and inclinations.**

Believe me, as a parent's tender, affectionate admonishment carries far more weight with his child than does anger and sternness, so, when we judge our own heart to be guilty, if we treat it gently, rather **in a spirit of pity** than anger, encouraging it to make amends, our repentance will be much deeper and more lasting than it would be if it were stirred up by vehemence and wrath.⁶

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at "**pity**" - **I.1. - a1250** - The disposition to mercy or compassion; clemency, mercy, mildness, tenderness.

W.H. Auden ((1907-1973), "As I Walked Out One Evening", a stanza toward the end of this poem:

'O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbour
With your crooked heart.'

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS -

Our Lord, rebuking Martha, said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things" (Lk 10:41). If she had been simply diligent, she would not have been worried, but giving way to disquiet and anxiety, she grew hurried and troubled, and for that our Lord reproved her. The rivers which flow gently through our plains bear barges of rich merchandise, and the gracious rains which fall softly on the land fertilize it to bear the fruits of the earth. But if the rivers swell into torrents, they hinder commerce and devastate the country, and violent storms and tempests do the same. **No work done with impetuosity and excitement was ever well done; hence the old proverb, "Make haste slowly," is a good one.** The Son of Sirach said, "One may toil and struggle and drive, and fall short all the more" (Sir 11:11). We are always finished soon enough when we do our tasks well. **The bumble bee makes far more noise and clamor than the honeybee, but it makes only wax, not honey. In the same manner, those who**

⁶ Francis de Sales. [*Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales*](#). Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, pp. 1-2. From Part III, chapter 9.

are restless and eager, or full of noisy solicitude, never do much, nor do they do it well.⁷

...

In all your affairs rely on God's Providence, through which alone your plans can succeed. **Meanwhile, on your part, work on *in quiet cooperation with God*, and then rest satisfied that if you have entrusted your work entirely to God, you will always obtain that measure of success which is best for you, whether it seems so or not in your own judgment.**

Imitate a little child, who holds tight with one hand to his father's, while with the other gathers blackberries from the wayside hedge. Even so, while you gather and use this world's goods with one hand, always let the other be secure in your Heavenly Father's hand, **and look round from time to time to make sure that he is satisfied with what you are doing.**⁸

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP –

True discipleship hinders no one; on the contrary, it perfects everything; and that which runs counter to the rightful vocation of any person is, you may be sure, a mistaken devotion. Aristotle says that the bee sucks honey from flowers without damaging them, leaving them as whole and fresh as it found them. **True discipleship does better still, for it not only interferes with no vocation or duty, but it adorns and beautifies them all.** Throw precious stones into honey, and each will grow more brilliant according to its color; in the same way, everyone fulfills their own special calling better when done in a spirit of discipleship – **family duties are lighter, married love is deeper, service to our country more faithful, in short every kind of occupation becomes more acceptable and better performed where this loyal discipleship is the guide.**

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE), *Sermon on 1 John 4:4-12* –

8. This is what I insist upon: human actions can only be understood by their root in love. All kinds of actions might appear good without proceeding from the root of love. Remember, thorns also have flowers:

⁷ Francis de Sales. [Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales](#). Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, p. 10. From Part III, chapter 10.

⁸ Francis de Sales. [Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales](#). Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, p. 11. From Part III, chapter 10.

some actions seem truly savage but are done for the sake of discipline motivated by love. **Once and for all, I give you this one short command: love and do what you will.** If you hold your peace, hold your peace out of love. If you cry out, cry out in love. If you correct someone, correct them out of love. If you spare them, spare them out of love. Let the root of love be in you: nothing can spring from it but good.

11. If any of you should wish to act out of love, brothers, do not imagine it to be a self-abasing, passive and timid thing. And do not think that love can be preserved by a sort of gentleness – or rather **tame listlessness**. This is not how it is preserved. Do not imagine that you love your servant when you refrain from beating him, or that you love your son when you do not discipline him, or that you love your neighbor when you do not rebuke him. **This is not love, it is feebleness.** Love should be fervent to correct. **Take delight in good behavior, but amend what is bad. Love the person, but not the error in the person: God made the person, but the person alone made the error. Love what God made, not what the person made.** If you love one thing, you remove another. When you esteem one thing, you change another. But if you are severe, let it be out of love, for the sake of correction. This is why love was represented by the dove which descended upon the Lord. [Matt. 3:16] Why did the Holy Spirit, who pours love into us, take the form of a dove? The dove has no bitterness, yet she fights with beak and wings for her young; hers is a fierceness without bitterness. In the same way, when a father chastises his son he does so for discipline. As I said earlier, the kidnapper inveigles the child with bitter endearments, in order to sell him; a father, for the sake of correction, chastises without bitterness. ... Well, what father does not correct his son? What son does not respect his father's discipline? And yet he seems to be fierce with him. **It is the fierceness of love, a fierceness without bitterness, in the way of the dove, not of the raven.**

It is an error to seek to banish spirituality from the soldier's guardroom, the merchant's shop, the offices of government, or the family home. Of course, a purely contemplative devotion, such as is proper to the religious and monastic life, cannot be followed in these secular vocations, but there are various types of spirituality well suited to lead those whose calling is secular along the paths of perfection.⁹

⁹ Francis de Sales. [*Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales*](#). Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, pp. 14–15. From Part I, chapter 3.

VIRTUES THAT WE ALWAYS NEED -

Saint Paul tells us to “rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Rm 12:15); and “Love is patient, kind, liberal, prudent, indulgent” (cf. 1 Cor 13:4ff.). At the same time, there are virtues of universal account, which must not only be called into action occasionally, but ought to spread their influence over everything. We do not very often come across opportunities for exercising strength, magnanimity, or munificence. *However, gentleness, moderation, modesty, and humility are graces which ought to color everything we do.* Though there may be virtues of a more exalted type, these virtues mentioned are the most continually called for in daily life. **It is good, then, to have a ready stock in hand of these general virtues which we so frequently need to call upon.**¹⁰

VIRTUES TO PRACTICE -

Among those virtues which we are not obliged to practice by our own calling, **we should choose to practice the most excellent, rather than the most pretentious.** Comets look larger to us than the stars, but all the while comets are not nearly as important as the stars and only seem so large to us because they are nearer to us than stars and are made of a heavier material. So, there are certain virtues which touch us very sensibly and are very tangible, so to speak; therefore, ordinary people give them the preference. **Most people ordinarily value temporal almsgiving more than spiritual, and think more of fasting, exterior discipline, and bodily mortification than of meekness, cheerfulness, modesty, and other interior discipline; nevertheless, these are far better. Choose the best virtues, not the most highly esteemed; the most excellent, not the most visible; the truest, not the most conspicuous.** It is a good thing for everybody to select some special virtue at which to aim, not to neglect the others, but to keep as an ideal.¹¹

¹⁰ Francis de Sales. [Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales](#). Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, p. 18. From Part III, chapter 1.

¹¹ Francis de Sales. [Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales](#). Edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, pp. 27-28.

BIOGRAPHICAL

Splaine, Paulamarie. ["Foreword."](#) *Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales*, edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, pp. xiv – xvii.

Francis de Sales was born August 21, 1567, into a family of French nobility from the region of Savoy. His parents provided him with an excellent education in the classics at the University of Paris and sent him on for a doctorate in law in Padua, Italy. Francis's father dreamed of seeing his son in the Senate of Savoy one day, but Francis had other ideas.

Soon after his studies were completed, Francis was appointed "provost,"¹ or judicial vicar of the bishop, in his native Geneva-Annecy diocese. This appointment forced him to break the news to his father that he wanted to become a priest. Meanwhile the bishop was already sending off speedy letters to Rome asking permission for a quick ordination for this man who had been so well prepared for such a step.

After his ordination, Canon Francis de Sales was not content to sit in an office. He set out into the countryside, visiting the people, seeking to make friends and let them know he was available to help in any way he could.

Although Francis was young, intelligent, well prepared, and very enthusiastic, he still needed to learn to be tactful, a trait that soon became the hallmark of his life, writings, and relationships.

Bishop de Granier of Geneva received a request to send missionaries to Le Chablais, a section of Savoy situated between Annecy and Switzerland. Sixty years earlier Le Chablais had been taken over by militant Protestants who had imposed the Reformed Faith. **Many Catholic churches were destroyed, priests were expelled from the territory, religious were disbanded, and all forms of Catholic worship and practice were forbidden.** Francis de Sales's offer to take up this difficult work of reinvigorating Catholicism in the region was immediately accepted. Although the diocese had no funds to give Canon Francis and his cousin Canon Louis, who accompanied him on this dangerous mission, the two set out on September 14, 1594 to minister to the 60,000 people

¹ A **provost** is someone put in charge to represent an authority, as the provost of a university or a cathedral. **Since the bishop's official seat was in Annecy, Francis was appointed his representative in Geneva.** In order to discharge this duty, he needed to be ordained a priest.

of Le Chablais, 100 of whom were faithful Catholics. Months of hardship prompted Canon Louis to return home, fearful that he would be unable to bear the rigors of the coming winter. **Francis continued on alone, and after seven months a lawyer named Poncet asked to be re-admitted to the Church. This was the beginning of the Church's rebirth: a costly victory that had been slow in coming.**

Despite great danger and several attempts on his life, Francis copied excerpts of his sermons and slipped them under doors. In time someone had them printed and made available as posters for display in public places. These tracts, which were more like scholarly essays, examined the problems that separated Calvinists and Catholics, and slowly bore fruit. Baron D'Avully joined Poncet in returning to the Catholic Faith in the spring of 1595. The conversions of such leading figures led to thousands of Calvinists reconciling with the Catholic Church. **By his preaching, his writing, and his affectionate personality, Francis prompted many to rethink their decision to leave the Church and embrace Protestantism. By 1598, through his untiring efforts, the majority of the people of the district had returned to the Catholic faith.**

When Bishop de Granier died, Francis was appointed Bishop of Geneva-Annecy, at age thirty-five. He brought to this new responsibility a wondrous array of talents, intellect, and virtue acquired in his many previous roles.¹²

¹² Splaine, Paulamarie. "[Foreword.](#)" *Courage in Chaos: Wisdom from Francis de Sales*, edited by Kathryn Hermes, Pauline Books & Media, 2012, pp. xiv – xvii.

As I Walked Out One Evening

[W. H. Auden](#) 1907 – 1973

As I walked out one evening,
Walking down Bristol Street,
The crowds upon the pavement
Were fields of harvest wheat.

And down by the brimming river
I heard a lover sing
Under an arch of the railway:
'Love has no ending.

'I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
Till China and Africa meet,
And the river jumps over the mountain
And the salmon sing in the street,

'I'll love you till the ocean
Is folded and hung up to dry
And the seven stars go squawking
Like geese about the sky.

'The years shall run like rabbits,
For in my arms I hold
The Flower of the Ages,
And the first love of the world.'

But all the clocks in the city
Began to whirr and chime:
'O let not Time deceive you,

You cannot conquer Time.

'In the burrows of the Nightmare
Where Justice naked is,
Time watches from the shadow
And coughs when you would kiss.

'In headaches and in worry
Vaguely life leaks away,
And Time will have his fancy
To-morrow or to-day.

'Into many a green valley
Drifts the appalling snow;
Time breaks the threaded dances
And the diver's brilliant bow.

'O plunge your hands in water,
Plunge them in up to the wrist;
Stare, stare in the basin
And wonder what you've missed.

'The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

'Where the beggars raffle the banknotes
And the Giant is enchanting to Jack,
And the Lily-white Boy is a Roarer,
And Jill goes down on her back.

'O look, look in the mirror,
O look in your distress:
Life remains a blessing
Although you cannot bless.

'O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbour
With your crooked heart.'

It was late, late in the evening,
The lovers they were gone;
The clocks had ceased their chiming,
And the deep river ran on.

ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE: PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the
invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the Threeness,
Through confession of the Oneness
of the Creator of creation.

I arise today
Through the strength of Christ's birth
with His baptism,
Through the strength of His crucifixion
with His burial,
Through the strength of His
resurrection with His ascension,
Through the strength of His descent for
the judgment of doom.

I arise today
Through the strength of the love of
cherubim,
In the obedience of angels,
In the service of archangels,
In the hope of resurrection to meet
with reward,
In the prayers of patriarchs,
In the predictions of prophets,
In the preaching of apostles,
In the faith of confessors,
In the innocence of holy virgins,
In the deeds of righteous men.

I arise today, through
The strength of heaven,
The light of the sun,
The radiance of the moon,
The splendour of fire,
The speed of lightning,
The swiftness of wind,
The depth of the sea,
The stability of the earth,
The firmness of rock.

I arise today, through
God's strength to pilot me,
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's host to save me
From snares of devils,
From temptation of vices,
From everyone who shall wish me ill,
afar and near.

I summon today
All these powers between me and those
evils,
Against every cruel and merciless
power
that may oppose my body and soul,
Against incantations of false prophets,
Against black laws of pagandom,
Against false laws of heretics,
Against craft of idolatry,
Against spells of witches and smiths
and wizards,
Against every knowledge that corrupts
man's body and soul;
Christ to shield me today
Against poison, against burning,
Against drowning, against wounding,
So that there may come to me an
abundance of reward.



Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who
thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who
speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.