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24 January

Saint FRANCIS DE SALES

**Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Titular and Patron of the Society of St Francis de Sales**

Feast

When celebrated with the rank of Solemnity, the First Vespers are from the Common of Pastors or of Doctors of the Church; the texts (all or in part) can be taken from Vespers of the feast.

Francis was born in Savoy, France, on 21 August 1567. Ordained Bishop of Geneva in 1602, he dedicated all his apostolic activity to bringing back to the Catholic faith the people of the Chablais who had accepted the Protestant Reform. Through his many-sided activities he educated the Christian people and showed them that spirituality was attainable in every walk of life. He dedicated himself completely to his mission as a pastor, making himself simple with the simple, discussing theology with the Protestants, introducing to the "devout life" souls wanting to serve Christ, opening to them the secrets of the love of God, careful to put the spiritual life within the reach of the laity and making devotion pleasant and desirable. He made good use of the printed word and promoted work and culture, treating everyone with loving kindness and unpretentious wisdom.

He died at Lyons on 28 December 1622 and was canonised in 1665. Pius IX proclaimed him a Doctor of the Church in 1877.

Inspired by his "apostolic charity" and by his "evangelical kindness and patience", St John Bosco chose him as the model and protector of his own mission among the young. At the conclusion of the IV centenary of his birth, Paul VI gave him the title of *Doctor of divine love*.

INVITATORY

Ant. Come let us adore the supreme shepherd, Christ the Lord.

Or:

Ant. On the feast of St Francis de Sales,
let us praise Christ the Lord, the source of all wisdom.

Invitatory psalm as in the Ordinary.

Office of Readings

* HYMN

Iste Confessor

He, whose confession God of old accepted,
Whom through the ages all now hold in honour,
Gaining his glory this day came to enter
Heaven's high portal.

God-fearing, watchful, pure of mind and body,
Holy and humble, thus did all men find him;
While, through his members, to the life immortal
Mortal life called him.

Thus to the weary, from the life enshrined,
Potent in virtue, flowed humane compassion;
Sick and sore laden, howsoever burdened,
There they found healing.

So now in chorus, giving God the glory,
Raise we our anthem gladly to his honour,
That in fair kinship we may all be sharers
Here and hereafter.

Honour and glory, power and salvation,
Be in the highest unto him who reigneth
Changeless in heaven over earthly changes,
Triune, eternal.

Amen.

Or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority.

Antiphons, psalms and responsories from the Common of Pastors.

FIRST READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

4,1-7,11-18a,20-24

*Maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace*

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by

every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds, alienated from the life of God. You did not so learn Christ! - assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus. Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds; and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

RESPONSORY

Col 3,12.15.14

R/. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience. * And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

V/. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. .

R/. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

SECOND READING

From the *Treatise of the love of God* by St Francis de Sales

(Ed. R. Balboni, Milan 1989, V, 1, *passim*)

Love of God

Love, as we have said is no other thing than the movement and outflowing of the heart towards good by means of the complacency which we take in it; so that complacency is the great motive of love, as love is the great movement of complacency.

Now when we have brought our understanding to be very attentive to the greatness of the goods that are in this Divine object, it is impossible that our will should not be touched with complacency in this good, and then we use the liberty and power which we have over ourselves, provoking our own heart to redouble and strengthen its first complacency by acts of approbation and rejoicing.

He is the God of our heart by this complacency, since by it our heart embraces him and makes him its own: he is our inheritance, because by this act we enjoy the goods which are in God, and, as from an inheritance, we draw from it all pleasure and content; by means of this complacency we spiritually drink and eat the perfections of the Divinity, for we make them our own and draw them into our hearts.

O God! what joy shall we have in heaven, Theotimus, when we shall see the well-beloved of our hearts as an infinite sea, whose waters are perfection and goodness! Then as stags, long and sorely chased, putting their mouths to a clear and cool stream draw into themselves the coolness of its fair waters, so our hearts, after so many languors and desires meeting with the mighty and living spring of the Divinity, shall draw by their complacency all the perfections of the well-beloved, and shall have the perfect fruition of them by the joy which they shall take in them, replenishing themselves with his immortal delights; and in this way the dear spouse will enter into us as into his nuptial bed, to communicate his eternal joy unto our souls, according as he himself says, that if we keep the holy law of his love he will come and *dwell within us*. The love which the great Apostle St Paul bore to the life, death and passion of our divine Saviour was so great that it drew the very life, death, and passion of this divine Saviour into his loving servant's heart; whose will was filled with it by delectation, his memory by meditation, and his understanding by contemplation.

RESPONSORY

Eph 4,32-5,1; Mt 11,29

R/. And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

*** Be imitators of God, as beloved children**

V/. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart.

R/. Be imitators of God, as beloved children.

*** Or:**

SECOND READING

From the *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales

(Ed. R. Balboni, Milan 1989, I, 3)

Devotion must be practised in different ways

In the creation God commanded the plants to bring forth their fruits, each one after its kind. So does He command all Christians, who are the living plants of His Church, to bring forth the fruits of devotion, each according to his character and vocation.

Devotion must be exercised in different ways by the gentleman, the workman, the servant, the prince, the widow, the maid, and the married woman. Not only this, but the practice of devotion must be also adapted to the strength, the employment, and the duties of each one in particular.

I ask you, Philothea, is it fit that a bishop should lead the solitary life of a Carthusian? Or that married people should lay up no greater store of goods than the Capuchin? If a tradesman were to remain the whole day in church, like a member of a religious order, or were a religious continually exposed to encounter difficulties in the service of his neighbour as a bishop is, would not such devotion be ridiculous, unorganized, and insupportable? Nevertheless, this fault is very common.

No, Philothea, true devotion does no harm whatever, but rather gives perfection to all things. But when it goes contrary to our lawful vocation, then without doubt it is false.

The bee extracts honey from flowers without injuring them, and leaves them as whole and fresh as she found them. True devotion does still better. It not only does no injury to any vocation or employment, but on the contrary it adorns and beautifies it. So also every vocation becomes more agreeable when united with devotion. The care of the family is rendered more peaceable, the love of the husband and wife more sincere, the service of the prince more faithful, and every type of employment more pleasant and agreeable.

It is an error, or rather a heresy, to try to banish the devout life from the regiment of soldiers, the shop of the mechanic, the court of princes, or the home of married folk. It is true, Philothea, that a purely contemplative, monastic, and religious devotion cannot be exercised in such ways of life. But besides these three kinds of devotion, there are several others adapted to bring to perfection those who live in the secular state.

Wheresoever we are, we can and should aspire to a perfect life.

RESPONSORY

Rm 12,2; Eph 4,23-24

R/. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, *** that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

V/. Be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature,

R/. that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Te Deum

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

* HYMN

For gentle Francis, Lord,
Who strove for you to live,
Who fought for you, proclaimed your word,
Our grateful hymn receive.

For our dear Patron Saint,
Whose name we proudly bear,
We thank you, Lord, as you have deigned
To place us in his care.

He gazed upon your face,
your love his soul renewed;
He then proclaimed your saving grace
In words with power endued.

For this your name we bless,
And humbly pray that we
May follow him in holiness,
and so your face may see.
Amen.

(A.J.Lenti)

Or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority

1 ant. The Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week 1

2 ant. Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord!
Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord!

3 ant. The Lord bestowed on him the wisdom of the saints.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Cor 2,1.4-6a.7.9-10a

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age; but we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. It is written, "*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,*" (Is 6,43; Jer 3,16). But God has revealed it to us through the Spirit.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. Your Church, O God, * hymns the wisdom of the saints.

Your Church, O God, hymns the wisdom of the saints.

V/. The assembly proclaims their praises,

* hymns the wisdom of the saints.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Your Church, O God, hymns the wisdom of the saints

Ant. At the Ben. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars in heaven.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us give thanks to God our Father, the origin and model of all holiness, and with filial hearts let us say: *Increase in us your love, O Lord*

In St Francis de Sales you have given us a living image of Christ your Son, who is meek and humble of heart:

– grant that we too may be signs and bearers of your loving kindness.

You made St Francis a model of tireless apostolic work in the service of the Gospel:

– grant that we may receive with faith and proclaim with courage your words of life.

You enabled the holy Doctor to enjoy the beauty and goodness of your creation:

– lead us to discern the good things in the many circumstances of life.

You gave to our Patron an efficacious skill in discussions;

– grant that we too may be able to understand and welcome others.

You made him an outstanding exponent of the art of spiritual direction:

– help all of us to guide young people in the ways of holiness.

Our Father.

PRAYER

Great and merciful God, you have raised up in the Church Saint Francis de Sales as a zealous shepherd and gracious tutor: grant that we too may work diligently in our mission to the young with the same apostolic spirit. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Prayer during the day

An appropriate hymn. Antiphons and psalms from the occurring weekday.

Before Noon

SCRIPTURE READING

Col 3,16-17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

V/. The Lord made with him an everlasting covenant:

R/. and established him as a priest in the midst of his people

Midday

SCRIPTURE READING

Eph 5,1-2

Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

V/. In the generosity of his love:

R/. God filled him with wisdom.

Afternoon

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Ts 5,14-16

And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always.

V/. The Lord chose his servant:

R/. as the guide and teacher of his people.

Concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer

Evening Prayer II

When celebrated with the rank of Solemnity these are Second Vespers.

* HYMN *As at the office of Readings or Morning Prayer or another suitable hymn approved by ecclesiastical authority.*

1 ant I shall be the shepherd of my flock:
I shall seek out the lost, and bring back the strayed.

Psalms from the Common of Pastors and Doctors of the Church.

2 ant. Like a radiant sun, Francis shines in the house of the Lord,
alleluia.

3 ant. To me this grace was given: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Thess 2,6-8.11-12

We did not seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. As a true friend of your brethren, * pray for your people.

As a true friend of your brethren, pray for your people.

V/. You dedicated your life to others,

* pray for your people.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As a true friend of your brethren, pray for your people.

Ant. At the Magn. O bishop Francis, afire with charity,
God made you the father of many people;
lead us too to the pastures of eternal life,
alleluia.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray with tranquil confidence to God our Father, who has constituted in Christ the people of the new covenant, and let us say:

Sanctify your Church, O Lord.

In St Francis de Sales you have raised up a shepherd full of zeal and prudence:

– assist all bishops, priests and deacons in their pastoral ministry.

You kindled in the heart of St Francis, a burning zeal for the unity of the Church:

– grant that Christian communities may follow the path of ecumenical dialogue.

You gave to St Francis a mind open to humanistic ideals:

– help writers and publicists to be valid educators in people's culture.

You raised up our holy Patron as a founder and a master of the spiritual life replete with wisdom:

– bless the Visitation Sisters and all the members of the Salesian Family.

You received the holy bishop Francis into your glory:

– through his intercession be merciful to all the faithful departed.

Our Father.

PRAYER

Great and merciful God, you have raised up in the Church Saint Francis de Sales as a zealous shepherd and gracious tutor: grant that we too may work diligently in our mission to the young with the same apostolic spirit. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Night Prayer

As in the psalter for the day. When it is a solemnity Night Prayer of Sunday is said