

24 January

Saint FRANCIS DE SALES

Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Titular and Patron of the Salesian Family

Feast

When celebrated with the rank of solemnity (because titular of a church or public oratory duly dedicated or blessed) there are three readings and the Credo is said.

Born in Savoy in 1567, Francis studied philosophy and theology at Paris and took his doctorate in civil and ecclesiastical law at Padua. After priestly ordination he offered himself to his bishop for the work of bringing back to the Catholic faith the Calvinists of the Chablais. As Bishop of Geneva, but with residence at Annecy, he preached a great deal and implemented the reforms of the Council of Trent. Of a noble and discerning spirit and learned in the humanities, he was a great spiritual director; he opened the paths of asceticism to all (*Introduction to the Devout Life*), and showed that the essence of the spiritual life lay in the love of God (*Treatise on the Love of God*). He understood the importance of the press; as a man of action he set up at Thonon an Academy which brought together the keenest intellects for the deeper study of science and the professional training of the young. With Saint Jane de Chantal he founded and directed the *Order of the Visitation*. He died at Lyons on 28 December 1622, but his feast is kept on this day which is the anniversary of the transferring of his remains to Annecy on 24 January 1623.

He was canonized in 1665, proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1877, and officially named patron of Catholic journalists and writers in 1923. Don Bosco drew his inspiration from the apostolate, the loving kindness and the humanism of Saint Francis de Sales; he chose him as the patron of the Salesian Society.

The liturgical text is a hymn of praise and blessing to the God of infinite goodness (*I Coll.*), because he has raised up in the Church St Francis de Sales to enlighten the devotion of Christian people and smooth out for all the way of sanctification (*Pref.*)

The texts exalt him: — as the saint of the gentle heart (*Offert.*) modelled on the Father's own heart and filled with the spirit of gentleness and kindness (*Pref.*); — as the sure master of the spiritual life who continues to instruct by his writings, word and example (*Pref.*); — as the man rich in wisdom that comes from on high (*Ent. Ant.; I reading*); — as the zealous and friendly shepherd (*II Coll.*) who is prudent and faithful (*Sol. Blessing*), and who becomes everything to everyone in pastoral charity (*I Coll.*), who leads sinners to do penance and strives to restore the unity of believers in a bond of charity and peace (*Pref.*).

From the assembly's participation in the holy Eucharist, the supreme confirmation of the love of the Son (*Offert.*), there arises the obligation to manifest God's love in their lives and in the service of their neighbour (*I Coll.*), to work diligently in the mission to the young (*II Coll.*), to seek in every circumstance of life to teach kindness, patience and active charity (*cf. After Comm. and Sol. Bless.*) so as to imbue with the Christian spirit the various ecclesial, social, political, economic and cultural structures, and render them more humane.

The Lord filled him with the spirit of understanding to pour forth words of wisdom.

Nations will declare his wise judgement and the congregation will proclaim his praise.

OPENING PRAYER

Father,

you gave Francis de Sales the spirit of compassion to befriend all men on the way to salvation.

By his example, lead us to show your gentle love in the service of our fellow men.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

(alternative, for the religious community:)

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.

1st Reading: James 3,13-18 Gospel: Jn 10,11-16

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Lord,

by this offering

may the divine fire of your Holy Spirit, which burned in the gentle heart of Francis de Sales, inspire us with compassion and love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

A master of holiness

V. The Lord be with you. g. And also with you.

V. Lift up your hearts.
g. We lift them up to the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. g. It is right to give him thanks add praise.

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.
You raised up in the Church
Saint Francis de Sales,
a pastor after your own heart,
to enlighten the devotion of Christian people
by his writings, word and example,
and make smooth for all the way of sanctification.

Filled with the Holy Spirit of gentleness and kindness, he led sinners to do penance
and strove to restore the unity of believers in a bond of charity and peace.

Gathered in this festive assembly
to celebrate the wonders of your love,
we join our voices with the choirs of angels and saints to proclaim your glory:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosannah in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosannah in the highest.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf Jn 10, 14.15b

I am the good Shepherd:
I know my sheep and my sheep know me, says the Lord: for them
I lay down my life.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Merciful Father,
may the sacrament we have received
help us to imitate Francis de Sales in love and service; bring us
to share with him the glory of heaven.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Saint FRANCIS DE SALES (1)

Let us make our humble and confident prayer to God our Father, that through the intercession of Saint Francis de Sales the Word to which we have listened may bear abundant fruit.

i. Lord, sanctify your people.

1. For the bishops and pastors of the Church: that being animated by the Holy Spirit they may work with zeal, patience and pastoral charity to build up a Christian community that will be open also to those who are unbelievers and those who are indifferent or without hope, we pray to the Lord.

2. For a constructive dialogue between Christians of different denominations, that they may be enlightened by knowledge of each other's beliefs, and be ever more infused with esteem and trust in the sincere search for unity in Christ our Saviour, we pray to the Lord.

3. For journalists, writers and publishers: that in the practice of their profession they may be able to view daily events in the light of the Gospel, and place their culture at the service of overall human advancement, we pray to the Lord.

4. For the Salesian Family: that it may look to Saint Francis de Sales as its particular model, so as to apply his teachings in its members' everyday lives, we pray to the Lord.

5. For all here present: that in imitation of Saint Francis de Sales we may make good use of the talents we have received and work willingly for God's kingdom, we pray to the Lord.

6. Other intentions.

God our Father, you have revealed your kindness in the lives of the saints, your friends and servants; accept the prayers of this community, and open our hearts to receive your gifts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Saint FRANCIS DE SALES (2)

God has raised up perceptive and prudent persons, masters of wisdom, to guide his Church. Accepting with joy the teachings of Bishop Francis de Sales, we make our prayer to God our Father.

I. Guide us, Father on the way to salvation.

1. That the Lord may give to his Church pastors according to his own heart, docile to the Spirit and faithful dispensers of his Word and sacraments, we pray to the Lord.

2. That the members of the different Christian denominations may courageously seek the ways of reconciliation, so as to build up in unity the entire human family, we pray to the Lord.
3. That believers in Christ may daily live their faith in his Resurrection so as to spread throughout the world the wisdom of the Gospel, we pray to the Lord.
4. That in its service to poor and needy youth, the Salesian Family may live the teachings of Saint Francis de Sales, we pray to the Lord.
5. For all of us here present: that, animated by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we may learn to love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves, we pray to the Lord.
6. *Other intentions.*

God our Father, in Saint Francis de Sales you give us a living model of your kindness; grant that we who venerate him as our patron and teacher, may experience your loving providence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.