

Did you know . . .

St. Francis de Sales: A Patient & Humble Man

Francis was born in France in 1567, the eldest of twelve children; his family was of great nobility. His spiritual formation and academics were formed by the Jesuits. After attending a theological discussion on predestination at the age of 13 at the University of Paris, Francis was convinced he was destined to Hell and became physically ill. A year later, his despair ended and he decided to dedicate his life to God.

In 1588, he transferred to the University of Padua. He graduated in 1592 with doctorates in both law and theology. His father had selected several positions for him, but Francis chose the vocation of priesthood.

In 1602, Francis became Bishop of Geneva. He wrote several pamphlets and two popular books, *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *A Treatise on the Love of God*, addressed to lay people to help them understand that they, too, are called to be saints.

On June 6, 1610, The Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary was founded in Annecy, France (then Savoy), by Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Jane de Chantal. The Order was founded, as St. Francis stated, “to give to God daughters of prayer, and souls so interior that they may be found worthy to serve His infinite Majesty and to adore Him in spirit and in truth.”

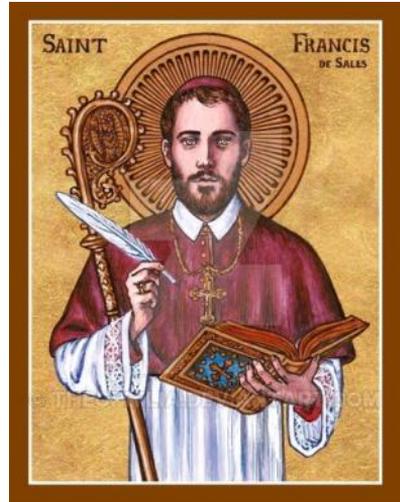
These women were to practice the virtues exemplified in Mary’s visit to Elizabeth: humility, piety and mutual charity. Visitation Sisters are cloistered, contemplative religious who are dedicated to a life of prayer and of living in community. Today, while some communities conduct schools, others live a strictly contemplative life.

Francis took seriously the words of Christ “Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart.” And, although he said of himself that he had a quick temper, he finally conquered it after 20 years, after which his meekness and sunny disposition won him the title of “Gentleman Saint.”

St. Francis says, “The person who possesses Christian meekness is affectionate and tender towards everyone; he is disposed to forgive and excuse the frailties of others; the goodness of his heart appears in a sweet affability that influences his words and actions, presents every object to his view in the most charitable and pleasing light.”

Francis died on December 28, 1622 after giving a nun his last word of advice: “humility.”

His Feast Day is January 24. He is the Patron Saint of journalists and writers.



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