



## St. Francis de Sales

Feast Day: January 24<sup>th</sup>

Today we celebrate St. Francis de Sales, who was born on August 21, 1567 in the province of Savoy, France. He is the patron saint of writers, journalists, authors and deafness. He grew up, as the eldest of six brothers, in a wealthy family. His parents, François de Sales de Boisy and Françoise de Sionnaz, belonged to old Savoyard aristocratic families. His father intended for Francis to be a lawyer in order to take his place as a senator. He received his doctorate at law school but decided to join the priesthood and eventually became the bishop of Geneva.

He was called, “Gentleman Saint,” because of his gentle spirit, and dedication to preaching through compassionate means. While working in the diocese of Geneva, he volunteered to evangelize Le Chablais, where the Genevans had imposed the Reformed Faith, by preaching constantly with zeal, kindness and holiness. He authored many publications (books, pamphlets, etc.), such as The Art of Loving God, Introduction to the Devout Life and Finding God’s Will for You. Many writings were addressed to lay people regarding the universal call of all Catholics to be saints. He was blessed in his ability to return Calvinists to the faith through his simple and clear explanation of Catholic doctrine.

Furthermore, he used sign language to convert the deaf and helped found the Order of the Visitation, with Jane de Chantal.

He had a stroke on December 27<sup>th</sup> during a journey, back to the diocese of Geneva. There he received the last sacraments and made his profession of faith, repeating constantly the words: "God's will be done! Jesus, my God and my all!" He died the next day, on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1622; he was 55 years old.

St. Francis de Sales life of service was made possible through his unwavering commitment to his faith in God's will. It's cliché, but it is difficult to stand up to one's family and friends. Francis de Sales not only went against his parent's wishes when he joined the priesthood, but he also fought the instinct and pressure to keep the status quo in the diocese of Geneva. He did all of this with a calm, gentle demeanor, especially during turbulent times of the Reformation.

The Oblates of St. Francis de Sales were founded 250 years after his death by Fr. Louis Brisson with the encouragement of Mother Marie de Sales Chappuis, Mother Superior of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary in Troyes, France. Through his witness and wisdom, his encouragement for the laity to understand the call to holiness, his mission among the deaf and his inspiration to simple "live Jesus," Francis de Sales is truly a missionary saint.

St. Francis de Sales, pray for us.