

Saint Francis de Sales



Francis, the eldest of thirteen children, was born into a family of nobility and was born on August 21, 1567. His father sent him to study at the University of Paris. After six years, Francis was not only knowledgeable in many areas, he was a skilled swordsman, an expert horseman, and a superb dancer.

Because his father wanted him to become a lawyer, Francis next studied at the University of Padua. Francis's father expected his son to marry after he finished his studies. Francis, however, wanted to serve God as a priest. His father finally agreed to let him. Six months later Francis was ordained.

Francis and his cousin Louis, who was also a priest, volunteered to work in Chablais, where religious wars were taking place. They visited homes and preached. The work was so discouraging that after four months Louis left. Francis then tried another tactic. He wrote a weekly essay explaining the faith and passed out copies. This, coupled with his simple, powerful message, led most of the people he reached to accept the Catholic faith.

Francis was next made bishop of Geneva. As a bishop, he directed priests and others in the religious life and trained lay people to teach catechism classes. One person Francis guided was St. Jane Frances de Chantal. He helped her found the Visitation convent.

To reach more people, Francis wrote a book called *The Introduction to the Devout Life*. It shows that everyone can grow in holiness. One of Francis's mottoes was, "Do everything with love." St. Vincent de Paul, who knew Francis de Sales, said that Francis spoke and acted just the way he imagined Jesus would.

Francis had a quick temper when he was a boy, but by the time he had grown up he had such self-control that he was called 'the gentleman saint.' In his writings Francis tells people how he learned to control his anger. Every time he offended someone by his angry words or actions, Francis would do an act of penance. Soon he began to think before he spoke or acted.

Francis died on December 28, 1622 and was Canonized in 1665.

Francis is the Patron of journalists, editors, writers and the deaf

Saints Kit

Sister Mary Glavich,

Loyola University Press