

## Salesian Corner



[St Francis De Sales has a great reputation as a writer, spiritual director, Bishop, and Doctor of the Church. The two great works of the saint, *Introduction to a Devout Life* and *The Treatise on the Love of God*, are acclaimed masterpieces of spirituality. The *Introduction to Devout Life* has assisted people of all walks of life in their spiritual life and progress. A group of parishioners has been studying the spirituality of St Francis De Sales here in our parish. From now on, the Bulletin will have the **Salesian Corner** every week to share the wisdom gleaned from their study of the *Introduction to Devout Life*. I am very grateful to the members for sharing the texts that inspired their journey. *Fr. Francis*]

### July 6, 2025:

**St Francis De Sales speaks:** "Philothea, love everyone with a great love of charity, but have friendship with those capable of communicating virtuous things to you. The more exquisite the virtue you put in your exchanges, the more perfect your friendship will be. If you share knowledge, your friendship is indeed very praiseworthy; more so if you communicate virtues, prudence, discretion, fortitude, and justice. If your mutual and reciprocal exchange is about charity, devotion, Christian perfection, precious indeed will your friendship be. It will be excellent because it comes from God, excellent because it tends to God, excellent because its bond is God, excellent because it will last eternally in God. How good it is to love on earth as one loves in Heaven and to learn to cherish one another in this world as we shall do eternally in the next!" *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 3, Chapter 19.

**Reflection:** It is lovely to think of doing God's Will "on earth as it is in heaven," as the "Our Father" prayer recommends. To love one another here on earth as we will in heaven.

**Action Plan:** A practical way to apply this is to write out or type into your phone reminders the following verse and read it three times a day for a week. Maybe before breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Here is the verse: "Fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable." (Philippians 4:8, Good News Version)

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### July 13, 2025

**St Francis De Sales speaks:** "Beware of attributing false crimes and sins to your neighbor.... Neither interpret bad his good work nor deny the good which you know to be in him." (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 3, Chapter 29.)

**Reflection:** Jesus heals a demoniac (Mt: 12:22-32), whereupon the Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, a gross blasphemy which proves the maxim: “No good deed goes unpunished”. Also, the Pharisees slander Jesus. St. Francis explains that, unlike other offenses, slander can be disastrous, ruining a man’s reputation, a reputation that is nearly impossible to restore.

**Action Plan:** *Do not be quick to judge your neighbor when he appears to be doing something sinful. Instead, look into your own heart to see if pride or envy is present. They can tempt you to interpret the situation in a way that makes your neighbor look bad. You may discover that it is you, and not him, who is in the wrong. (Read Matthew 12:22-32)*

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### **July 20, 2025**

“...Devotion...is a true love of God....It gives us the strength to do good...carefully, frequently and promptly,...even though...in no way commanded but rather only counseled or inspired.” (Introduction to the Devout Life, Part 1, Chapter 1.)

**Reflection:** St. Francis de Sales teaches that devotion to God is a love of Him that manifests itself in our willingness to frequently, promptly, and freely do good even though that good is not commanded. As a love for God in action, devotion is a turning of our heart to God and our will to do good. While it may take time and effort to become accustomed to such attitudes, we can change our hearts and wills to love God, do good, and thereby be devout.

**Action Plan:** Devotion is within our grasp if we desire it and take advantage of the sacraments and practices God has provided to help us in our efforts to grow spiritually. To increase your devotion to God, make one or more of the following a regular practice:

- Daily meditative prayer
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Sacramental Confession
- More frequent Mass attendance

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### **July 27, 2025**

**St Francis De Sales speaks:** “...Devotion in no way spoils anything if it be true, rather it makes everything perfect.... Devotion makes the care of the family peaceful, the love of husband and wife more sincere, the service of the ruler more loyal, and every sort of occupation more pleasant and more lovable.” (Introduction to the Devout Life, Part 1, Chapter 3.)

**Reflection:** Approaching the activities of one’s life with a love deepened by devotion makes those activities more lovable and easier. Devotion gives us the ability to see beyond ourselves, thereby freeing us to join with those around us and enjoy a fuller and richer

life. Devotion to God naturally leads to a love of neighbor. In turn, this leads to an openness to engage with others in a manner that is good for them and thereby enriches you.

**Action Plan:** Pray that God will increase your devotion to Him and help you to see every activity in your life as a joyful part of that devotion.

## The Salesian Corner August 2025

### August 3, 2025

“It is an error, or rather a heresy, to try to exclude the devout life from the soldier’s regiment, the workmen’s shop, the court of rulers, or the home of the married.” [There are many sorts of devotion]...” suitable for leading to perfection those who live their lives in the world.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 1, Chapter 3.)

**Reflection:** According to St. Francis de Sales, anyone, in any walk of life, can lead a devout life. Loving God and having that love shape your relationship with those around you is open to all of us, not just priests and nuns.

**Action Plan:** Ask God to show you your spiritual gifts and how to apply them in your daily life.

### August 10, 2025

“We are men only through reason. Yet it is a rare thing to find men truly reasonable .... I shall now point out certain unfair and unreasonable attitudes to you. We accuse our neighbor for a little, and we excuse ourselves much .... We desire that justice be done in the house of another, and at home, we show mercy and indulgence to our own. We want our words to be taken in a good sense by others, and we are touchy and sensitive to what others say.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 3, Chapter 36.)

**Reflection:** Who of us doesn’t want to be thought of as reasonable and fair-minded? The reality is that we are sinners redeemed by the Blood of Jesus. We are being made holy; we are not yet as holy as we shall one day be! We often treat others in exactly the way we hope no one will treat us! And so, Jesus tells us: “All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.” (Mathew 7:12, Douay-Rheims Bible)

**Action Plan:** Pray daily for Jesus to be a part of your life, for the wisdom to see others as also loved by Him, and for the grace to treat them as you would want to be treated. Your

daily prayers to Jesus will help Him enter more deeply into your life and mold you to be more like Him.

### **August 17, 2025**

“If you wish to meditate on Our Lord on the cross, *imagine* you are on Mount Calvary *seeing* and *hearing* all that was done.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Second Part, Chapter 4.)

**Reflection:** God has blessed us with the gift of imagination. In this sacred space of our mind, we can transport ourselves to the most beautiful and healing scenes in time and space. We can journey back to the moments when Jesus, in His infinite love, sacrificed Himself for our sins.

**Action Plan:** Take a moment to read Mark 15:21-38. Whether you choose to close your eyes or keep them open, focus on a crucifix or a picture of Jesus. Imagine yourself at the scene of the crucifixion alongside Mother Mary. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel grateful for? Most importantly, what do you think God is asking of you at this moment?

### **August 24, 2025:**

“This miserable life is only a progressive journey to the happy life to come. Therefore, let us not be angry at all with one another on the way. Let us walk with our brothers gently, peacefully, and kindly.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 8.)

**Reflection:** We are traveling to a heavenly place, and the best way to prepare for the happy life of heaven is to follow God’s rules for happiness here, such as, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God for Christ sake has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

**Action Plan:** Write down the bible verse above. Carry this piece of God’s word in your pocket and read it three times a day until it is in your heart. When you are annoyed by anything, remember it and say it to yourself as a meditation and pray that God will give you a practical way to show kindness and a tenderhearted attitude. (Alternative: Take a picture of the above bible verse with your phone and read it three times a day on your photo app.)

### **August 31, 2025**

“If once our anger can gain the night and the sun sets over our anger, (which the Apostle forbids, Ephesians 4:26) it turns into hatred.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 8.)

**Reflection:** In his letter to the church at Ephesus, St. Paul wrote, “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.” (Ephesians 4:26). As a newlywed, my maid of honor gave me pillowcases she embroidered with three crosses. She said that they were to remind us to forgive each other before we go to sleep. Anger is like a thief that steals our joy, the health of our body, and our relationships. When we take a moment to look at the cross and pray before we go to sleep, we get the power and insight from the Holy Spirit to let go of anger and trust God.

**Action Plan:** Put something near your bed to remind you to “Not let the sun go down on your anger.” (If you have small children, put something near their beds, too.) It can be a crucifix on the wall, a picture of Jesus or the Blessed Mother, or a hand-held cross or rosary. If you are annoyed or irritated with someone at bedtime, give it to Jesus and his Mother in prayer.

## Salesian Corner September 2025

### September 7, 2025

“Contrition and confession are so beautiful and of such fragrance that they remove the ugliness of sin and dispel its stench.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, First Part, Chapter 19).

**Reflection:** Christ gave us the sacraments to help us become like Him. When we sin, we have the sacrament of confession, where we receive absolution and grace to overcome our faults. It is healing to your soul and body.

**Action Plan:** Look at the bulletin or the sign in front of the church for the Confession times. Plan it and put it in your calendar, just like you would write down when you need to go to the doctor. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to confess, and think of whether you want to go face-to-face or through the door with the screen for anonymity. After Father gives you absolution, do the penance he gives you, and remember that Confession is beautiful to God.

### Sept 14, 2025:

“Prayer is opening our understanding to God’s brightness and light and exposing our will to the warmth of His love.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Second Part, Chapter 1.

**Reflection:** Whether you pray the rosary, a slow, meaningful Our Father, the Divine Office, or have a simple conversation with God in your home, on a walk, or during an Altar visit, God gives you His light and the warmth of His love. Prayer brings us God's blessings and hope in trials, and prayer is necessary!

**Action Plan: Please get a paper and pen and answer these:**

*What time or times of day do you usually pray? How do you pray? When is the best time to get some quiet time to pray? (when you are most alert and awake) What is your backup plan if that time doesn't work on a particular day? Do you want to pray with an open Bible, an app, a devotional book, a rosary, or by singing hymns? What brings you closest to God? After answering these questions, make a plan for daily prayer. You may not always follow the plan, but it will help you not be in a hurry and sleepy during your prayer time.*

### Sept 21, 2025

“For the fruits of anxiety ought to be very large to be equal to the benefits of holy tranquility.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 40).

**Reflection:** Now, I often reflect that in worry, regret, or resentment, I am trading that for the most precious blessing – serenity.

**Action Plan:** Ask God to grant you “the serenity to accept the things you cannot change and to change the things you can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

### Sept 28, 2025

“The quest for virtue and the love of it begins to make us virtuous. But the pursuit and love of honors begins to make us contemptible and blameworthy.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 4).

**Reflection:** When you have a relationship with Jesus, it becomes easier to think, feel, say, and do the right thing in every situation because He knows you, and you don't want to disappoint Him. When you don't have a relationship with Him, it's easy to get caught up in doing things for the wrong reasons, like having people admire you for your cleverness, wisdom, achievements, or whatever.

**Action Plan:** Cultivate a relationship with Jesus, and seek to be virtuous in all circumstances - and for the right reasons - because it's what your Best Friend, Jesus, wants for you.

## Salesian Corner October 2025

### October 5, 2025

“See the group of numerous married persons who live together with such gentleness and in mutual respect, which cannot exist without great charity. See how these devout people join the ... love of their earthly spouse with that of the heavenly Spouse.”

*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, First Part, Chapter 18.

**Reflection:** “Let marriage be held in honor among all.” Hebrews 13:4. How can we help people honor marriage in our society? By helping them see in our lives the beauty of people living together in gentleness, mutual respect, and great love, that is only possible when we draw close to our heavenly Spouse, as our first love. Married or single, we want all souls to see us as Christians living in great charity. The secret is to draw closer to our Heavenly Spouse, our first love.

**Action Plan:** The letters **ACTS** are a great reminder to have a daily plan to draw close in love to our heavenly Spouse. We should **Adore** God, **Confess** our Sins, **Thank** God in all things, and **Ask** our heavenly Father in **Supplication** for our daily needs. Starting and Ending our days doing this is our practical plan as Christians.

### Oct 12, 2025

“Your crucified King calls you by your own name, ‘Come my beloved one, come that I may crown you (Song of Songs 4:8).’ ” St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, First Part, Chapter 18.

**Reflection:** We feel unworthy, but Jesus tells us, “Come to me.” He calls us by a new name. (Revelations 2:17) How sweet it will be when our risen Lord, with his nail-printed hands, embraces us and whispers in our ear a new name. Our victorious crucified King will give us crowns which we will cast at his feet. (Revelations 4:10)

**Action Plan:** This is one of those “no matter what safety plans,” like the fire safety plan, “Stop, Drop and Roll.” When we are in trouble and feel alienated from God by sin or just confused by the old accuser (the devil), the best safety plan is to “Come to Him. as His beloved one, who He loves enough to die for and rest in the court of our beloved King.”

## Oct 19, 2025

In the morning, St. Francis de Sales recommends: “Thank God and adore him with all your heart for doing you the favor of keeping you alive during the past night...Realize that the present day is given to you in order that during it you may win the coming day of eternity.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Second Part, Chapter 10.

**Reflection:** God wants us to start our day strong with adoration, thanksgiving, and a deliberate decision to use the day well for eternity.

**Action Plan:** Before leaving our room in the morning, let us try to take Francis De Sales's good advice to be full of thanksgiving and on a mission.

## Oct 26, 2025

“To face reproaches and criticisms is a great help to keep us firm in devotion in the beginning ... we escape the danger of vanity and pride.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 4, Chapter 1.

**Reflection:** Joseph was tested by false accusation and prison before he became a humble ruler and lifesaver to nations. Peter faced reproach and was afraid and denied Jesus, which gave him great humility as he began his ministry as the first Pope. Paul was reproached so much that it led to his arrest and travels to Rome, which gave him great power to mightily proclaim Christ. He was given great trials that he might not exalt himself as he became a famous missionary to the known world.

**Action Plan:** When I am hurt by criticism or reproaches, I need to press pause and look for the meaning of the experience. I need to ask the Holy Spirit to show me what he is trying to do. I can thank God that it helps me to avoid vanity and pride and may be the best preparation for doing something for God.

## Salesian Corner November 2025

### Nov 2, 2025

“As though you are holding your heart in your hands, offer it to God, together with all your good intentions. Implore him to take you in his care and to give you strength to serve him with dedication.” (Morning Offering, St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 2, Chapter 10.)

**Reflection:** The spirituality of St. Francis de Sales is sometimes called “Heart first” spirituality. As we make our good intentions, we give God our hearts and trust in his care.

**Action Plan:** As we wake each morning, start with the heart. Let us give our hearts to Jesus to guard and strengthen.

### Nov 9, 2025

“The mountain of Christian perfection is very lofty. You may say, ‘How shall I be able to ascend it?’ Have courage, Lover of God!!... Let us pray to God to give us wings like a dove so that we may be able to not only fly in this life but also to find rest in eternity.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 4, Chapter 2.)

**Reflection:** “Psalm 5:6-8: “Oh, that I had wings like a dove. I would fly away and be at rest ... I would wait for him who saves me.” I once said to a Christian friend that I wished that, just for once, I would get to be a round peg in a round hole in my challenging life, since I always felt like a round peg in a square hole. I felt the jobs God wanted me to do were too big for me. She said, “Well, then you wouldn't need grace at all, would you?”

**Action Plan:** When I see my life as a lofty mountain that I cannot ascend, I will take courage and ask for God's grace for “wings like a dove” to fly each day and wait on God, who saves me. And be at rest.

### November 16, 2025

“The practice of self-purification cannot and should not come to an end as long as we live. Therefore, let us not be disturbed by our imperfections because our perfection consists in fighting them. And we cannot fight them unless we see them, nor can we overcome them if we do not come across them. Our victory is not in not being aware of them but in not consenting to them. And to be bothered by them is not the same as consenting to them.” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part One, Chapter 5.)

**Reflection:** It has been said of General George Washington that he lost every battle and won the war. Likewise, St Francis suggests that our "spiritual war" consists in losing many battles and winning the war. Warning: If no battle presents itself to you, it could be that the enemy has already won the war due to your refusal to fight. To win the war of self-purification, you must engage the foe in battle throughout your entire life.

**Action Plan:** Go to Confession frequently.

## November 23, 2025

"[Be] sincerely sorry and be firmly determined to change your behavior. Indeed, it is an abuse to confess any kind of sin, mortal or venial, without wanting to be freed from it, since such is the very purpose for which Confession has been instituted." (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part Second, Chapter 19.)

**Reflection:** Repeatedly, St. Francis emphasizes the importance of *confessing* one's sins. Indeed, you must not only confess sins, but you must be *sincerely sorry* for your sins and endeavor to correct your behavior. This does not mean you will necessarily overcome your sin immediately. That is a lifetime struggle. It does mean, however, that your *intention* is to be set free of your sins.

**Action Plan:** Go to Confession frequently.

## Salesian Corner December 2025

### Nov 30, 2025, Advent week 1

"God does not deprive us of his Love; we deprive Him of our cooperation. God would never reject me if I had not first rejected His love." *Treatise on the Love of God*, by St. Francis de Sales, Book II, Chapter 10.

**Reflection:** The father in the story of the prodigal son was not depriving the son of his love, but the son was depriving the father of his cooperation when he left for a faraway country. When we see the response of the father to the return of the son, we can see how the love of the father was waiting for the son to come home so his dear son could receive his love. Repentance is just looking for ways that you are depriving God of your cooperation. It is looking for ways you are living in a faraway country instead of in the embrace of the father.

**Action Plan:** Every day, ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there is a way that you can cooperate better with God and live in His embrace. Live a life of daily repentance.

## Dec 8, 2025, Advent Week 2

“If anyone is sad, says St. James, let him pray (5:13). Prayer is a sovereign remedy, for it lifts up our mind to God, who is our only joy and consolation. But in praying, make use of longings and words, which tend to confidence and love of God, such as ‘O God of mercy, O God most good, My loving Savior, O God of my Heart, My Joy, My Hope, My dear Spouse, My Well-Beloved,’ and so on.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 4, Chapter 12.

**Reflection:** To feel sadness is not bad in itself. It proves you are human! To linger long in sadness might not be useful for you or those you love. How can we move out of sadness? “Prayer is a sovereign remedy,” says St. Francis de Sales. We can pray with confidence in God’s love and care for us.

**Action Plan:** When we’re sad about something that a friend or family member says or does, we often try to make up with them. We may humbly ask what we did, why they said or did a hurtful thing to us. We may humbly apologize because we want/need them back in our life. What kind of words do we use? Tender, loving, from-the-heart words and voice. How about using that in prayer with our ‘best, most true friend’ worldwide? Prayer is talking to God using our own heartfelt, sincere words. His limitless heart of mercy is waiting for you to come to him and tell him your sadness, your hurts, as well as your joys and gratitude. He passionately listens, hears, and always understands. Why? Because He deeply loves and misses you, values and desires our true love and deep friendship. He loves and cares about us more than anyone ever will, as He gave up His life on a cross so that he could redeem us and bring us to life with him in Heaven. All He asks is that we share our heart and soul with him many times throughout the day, every day! You will enjoy the peace, joy, good internal feelings, and even little miracles that likely happen at times.

## Dec 15. 2025 Advent Week 3

“Even if temptation to any sin should last all our life, it cannot make us displeasing to God as long as we do not take pleasure in it and do not yield to it. For in temptation, we are not active, but we bear it. And as long as we take no pleasure in it, we cannot be guilty .... Note well that there is a difference between feeling and consenting. We may still feel them even though they displease us.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 4, Chapter 3.

**Reflection:** St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 13:10: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will also make with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.” (Douay-Rheims Bible). St. Francis de Sales reminds us: “In temptation, we are not active, but we bear it.” God will provide ways to bear the assaults of even strong temptations to evil, and our refusal to yield is a way of showing God our devotion to Him.

**Action Plan:** When we walk with someone, both of us are going in the same direction so we become friends. Walk with Jesus daily. He yearns to walk with us, so accept his invitation as he offered so many times in the Bible. Some ways we can walk with Him:

1. Every time temptation comes, immediately talk to Him in prayer, in your own words, feelings from your own heart, because He is the best listener in all the world. Then listen to Him through the Holy Spirit and let Him lead you.
2. Say a quick, short, heartfelt prayer at the moment temptation comes. Example: “Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit, Blessed Mary, relieve me from this temptation.” Remember to thank them for their help.
3. Become a lifelong friend of Jesus by talking to Him often daily about your feelings, joys, and hurts. That’s what friends are for. Walking beside and alongside Jesus hand in hand is His request for each of us as shown by His indelible love for us dying on the cross.

### December 21, 2025, Advent Week

“Enjoy the friendship of the angels. Often be aware of their invisible presence in your life.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 2, Chapter 16.

**Reflection:** There are days when we feel alone, misunderstood, and disconnected from family and friends. That is a time to remember that we are never really alone. Angels are in our midst, whispering God’s truth to us and reminding us that people may let us down, but God never will. He loves us and wants us to know it.

**Action Plan:** Next time you feel distressed for any reason, ask your guardian angel for assistance. He will surely help you by bringing to mind a positive thought and/or plan of action to steer you out of any kind of trouble. God loves you and gave you a guardian angel to help and guide you.

## Dec 28, 2025

“Once you have given your consent to an inspiration, you must take great care to put it into practice and obtain its results; this is the height of true virtue. In fact, to give consent to an inspiration in your heart, without putting it into practice, is to plant a vine without desiring it to bear fruit.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, 2nd Part, Chapter 18.

**Reflection:** Sometimes good thoughts come easily into our minds, like a notion to contact a friend we haven’t talked to in a while, who we know would welcome a visit from us, or like a suggestion to finally begin some task or project that our spouse has been hoping we would soon complete. But then the thoughts just as easily vanish, and we go about our day pursuing more or less selfish activities.

**Action Plan:** Next time a good thought comes to mind, say a little prayer, asking God for the needed strength and power to actually carry it out in action without delay. It’s a good way to love God and our neighbor.

## January 4, 2026

“This miserable life is only a progressive journey to the happy life to come. Therefore, let us not be angry at all with one another on the way. Let us walk with our companions gently, peaceably, and kindly,” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 8.

**Reflection:** Realize that life is short. In no time will we meet our God, who has asked us not to become angry on the way.

**Action Plan:** Ask yourself this question: Is there an attitude that I am willing to give up that will help me to be more gentle, peaceful, or kind? *Pray* that God makes you willing to give up this attitude and *ask* Him to remove it.

## Jan 11, 2026

“Nothing calms down an angry elephant so quickly as the sight of a little lamb, and nothing breaks the force of a cannonball so easily as wool.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 8.

**Reflection:** Becoming people who are at peace even when people hurt us, or we disappoint ourselves, or life gives us something we did not want, seems impossible. It can seem as hard as stopping an angry elephant or a cannonball. Yet the secret that St. Francis

teaches us is that something small as a lamb or weak as wool is all that is needed. All we need to do is take baby steps and make small adjustments in our responses.

**Action Plan:** Next time someone hurts our feelings, we disappoint ourselves, or life gives us something we did not want, let's just try a small exercise. In our weakness, let's turn our will over to God. Pray to be willing to forgive and accept this, too, from the hand of our loving Father. Or if it is hard to be willing to forgive, then take a smaller step. Pray that you will be *willing* to be willing to forgive.

### Jan 18, 2026

“If once our anger can gain the night and the sun sets over our anger (which the Apostle forbids, Ephesians 4:26), it turns itself into hatred. There is hardly any means of getting rid of it. For it nourishes itself on a thousand false pretexts since no angry man ever thinks his anger is to be unjust. *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 8.

**Reflection:** My Maid of Honor gave us a set of pillowcases that she had embroidered with crosses and flowers and told us that they would remind us not to let the sun go down on our anger. Ephesians 4: 26: “Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and give the devil a foothold.” We may reasonably still require justice. It may be unwise to forget what the person did or trust the person, BUT here is the point: No matter what, we must forgive and let go of our anger, or we take a big risk of becoming hateful and giving the devil a foothold in our lives.

**Action Plan:** Before you sleep, pray and confess your sins to God, especially any anger you have, and ask God's mercy and forgiveness. Also, ask Him for the grace to release those feelings, recalling that you, too, are a sinner.

### Jan 25. 2026

“Faith is like a bright ray of sunlight. It enables us to see God in all things as well as all things in God.” (*Treatise on the Love of God*, by St. Francis de Sales.)

**REFLECTION:** What is true ‘faith,’ and how do we get it? What is the sunshine, the light? Today a brilliant golden, warm sun radiates onto our Earth. We can't help but smile, and feel a warm wonder in our hearts, no matter what may be happening in our life and around the world. The sky is a wondrous, bright cyan blue! The bare but ice-covered tree branches glisten from the sun's brilliant glow on them! On our winding street, rows of

homes brightly beam with white, platinum, and earth-beige, dotted with rectangles of color. The beaming depth of earthen-colored siding inserted with a brick marble rectangle of rich shades of beige, light gray, and tan accents... A cozy, warm, homey, peaceful picture displayed because of the sun's rays.

IF and WHEN we choose to have “Faith,” isn’t that who God the Father, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit (The Trinity) are to us, for us, and with us – God’s omnipresence, generosity, unwavering love, and mercy; our joy and peace here on earth and happiness with Him in eternity of Heaven. When will we and how can we choose to have “Faith,” the sunshine of our life, through thick and thin, through every facet of our life, from joyous to heart-wrenching pain or misery?

**ACTION:** Praying and meditating on Psalm 23 daily will allow you to encounter Jesus in a deeply personal way and develop a close heart-to-heart friendship with Him. The words tell you Jesus is there through every season, every emotion, every pain and joy of your daily life. A ‘heart’ relationship where you share everything all the time with Jesus as your ‘best friend,’ in your own words. Jesus knows all, but He desires and loves to hear YOU talk to Him. Type Psalm 23 and carry a copy in your pocket for a quick reminder that He is the sunshine, lovingly, patiently waiting for you to tell Him your innermost thoughts, feelings, needs, and joys, and thank Him for always being there as your best friend.

## February 1. 2026

“When we see ourselves agitated by anger, we must beg the help of God, following the example of the Apostles tossed about by the wind and the storm in the midst of the waters (Matthew 8: 24-26). For He will command our passions to be still, and there will be a great calm.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Third Part, Chapter 8.

**Reflection:** There are ways to stop the noisy, angry, or painful circles of thoughts in your mind. Pray and experiment to discover what calms you. Our God can calm the sea and our hearts.

**Action Plan:** Find a quiet place and time to calm yourself, and pray to our Heavenly Father to learn to respond in the Holy Spirit rather than react.

## February 8. 2026

“He will be like a treasure of wisdom to us in our difficulties, sorrows, and failures. He will serve as medicine to soothe and comfort our hearts in our spiritual illnesses.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, First Part, Chapter 4.

**Reflection:** St. Francis is talking here about having a spiritual guide or spiritual director. A wise person who can comfort us in our spiritual illnesses. This person may be a priest or deacon, a person who is trained as a Spiritual Director, or a wise Christian friend. We are all called to grow in wisdom and seek out fellowship with people who are like medicine to the soul.

## Feb 15, 2026 The week of Ash Wed

“It is better to learn to live without anger than to try to make a wise and moderate use of anger.” *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, Part 3, Chapter 8.

**Reflection:** Sometimes, the cross comes to us unexpectedly by way of an unkind word from someone close to us. It feels like an emotional slap, and we can easily be baited into snapping back in self-defense with a cruel remark of our own. All this does is make matters worse and risks damaging our relationship.

At times like these, try to remember to tamp down your anger and choose to forgive instead. You won’t regret it.

**Action Plan:** Memorize this Bible verse: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1).

## Feb 22. 2026 Lent Week 1

“Anger is quenched by a gentle word just as fire is quenched by water.” *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales, Book II, Chapter I.*

**Reflection:** It is human nature to “flare up” like a stoked fire when you believe you have been wronged. Instead of meeting fire with fire, a gentle word will lower the temperature, lead to a cooler conversation, and perhaps lead to meaningful communication.

**Action Plan:** Next time you feel the “fire” flaring up in you, try a gentle word to lower the temperature.