



STUDIES IN SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY

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Becoming the Instrument of Your Martyrdom: Reflections on the Life & Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales

presentation at the 15th annual Lenten Symposium on
The Christian Vocation: The Call to Martyrdom
at Sts. Cyril & Methodius Slovak Catholic Church in Detroit, MI
March 10, 2012

Preface

Thank you for the introduction and thank you for the invitation to take part in this most successful series of ongoing formation in the local Church in Detroit. I want to express my gratitude to, and commend in particular way, Barbara Middleton for organizing and coordinating this event which, over the years, has been a source of inspiration and strength for Catholics in their vocation to witness to Christ in the Church and society. I also want to express my gratitude for the opportunity in my preparation to re-read Saint Francis de Sales' writings and to rekindle my own devotion to this saint, whose message is particularly appropriate in our society, which, in many ways, is faced with the same challenges to which de Sales was exposed in his life.

Introduction

LIVE JESUS! This expression was often on the lips of St. Francis de Sales as well as seen in his writings. It was more than a mere maxim for his life. He uttered it as a prayer, even a spiritual

battle-cry in trying moments of his life. He himself gives us its full form at the end of his dedicatory prayer in the *Introduction to the Devout Life*: “LIVE JESUS! LIVE JESUS! Yes, Lord Jesus, live and reign in our hearts for ever and ever. Amen.” During his years in Padua, Italy, where he studied law “to please his father” and theology “to please himself,” Francis placed Jesus at the center of his life. At that time, his prayer-to-action was: “Live Jesus! ...in MY heart”. When he was finally ordained a priest, and later a bishop, his invocation was: “Live Jesus!...in the hearts of OTHERS!”¹ Since that time, “Live Jesus” has identified all members of the great de Sales family of clerical institutes, women’s congregations and lay associations, not to mention those devoted to the “Gentleman Saint,” as he has been called.²

St. Francis de Sales, in his *Introduction to a Devout Life*, spoke of the benefits of taking part in these public gatherings and prayers in the Church. He states:

It is always a work of love to join others and take part in their good works. And even though it may be possible to use equally profitable devotions by yourself in private – and perhaps you may like doing so best – nevertheless God is more glorified when we unite with our brethren and neighbors and join our offerings to theirs.³

We are gathered here first of all *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, “for the greater glory of God,” to render thanks to God for what he has done in sending his Son into our world to save us from our sins and reconcile humanity to himself. We also come together to witness as a community to our communion in the Church, to understand better our Christian calling and to be strengthened by our fellowship so that we can go forth, with greater resolve, to bear witness to Christ in the Church and the world.

Becoming the Instrument of your Martyrdom

The theme chosen for this symposium is *The Christian Vocation: The Call to Martyrdom*. In initially reflecting on the topic, I was reminded of the story of the hen and the pig. It seems that the hen wanted to do something special for the farmer, because he treated all the farm animals so well. After much thought, the hen said to the pig: “I know what we can do! Let’s give the farmer a good bacon and eggs breakfast!” The pig said somewhat hesitantly: “You know, I’ll have to give your proposal a lot of thought, because for you it is contribution, but for me it is a real commitment!” Indeed, this is the idea behind the title of this symposium—not simply a contribution, but a commitment to Jesus Christ, a commitment to him in his Church, a commitment to him living in you, commitment to him living in others. We may not be called upon to render the supreme sacrifice of shedding our blood for our faith, but in an extended

sense, we are all called, in virtue of our baptism, to give ourselves totally and unreserved to Christ in our everyday lives and to prefer nothing to him. According to de Sales, this too is a martyrdom, since it equally demands courage. We witness this in many incidents in his life as well as in the spirituality he recommended to others.

For those who might be unfamiliar with St. Francis de Sales, he was the Bishop of Geneva, in what is today Switzerland. But in his time, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Geneva was located in the duchy of Savoy, which was in French hands. Like us, he lived in the wake of an important ecumenical council, the Council of Trent, which had profound effects in the Church and society. In his time, the unity of the Church had become splintered into various Protestant sects and, with it, all of Europe, leading, in many instances, to ill-will and violence among the various parties involved. The city of Geneva, St. Francis' diocese, since it was the stronghold of John Calvin, a leading figure in the spread of Protestantism in France, was viewed as particularly evil. In fact, St. Francis was not even allowed to enter the city for fear of his life.

Early in his priesthood, St. Francis volunteered, along with his cousin, to undertake a dangerous mission in the Chablais section of Savoy to try to win back those who had left the Church. Andrè Ravier, one of de Sales' biographers, described the situation he faced:

Everything conspired during this winter (1594-1595) to discourage Francis and Louis de Sales: the rigour of a season was particularly severe; the Protestant ministers, who had a great influence on the people, were relentless in their attacks against him. They hurled "a thousand jibes and mockeries" at him; they called him "hypocrite, idolater, false prophet"; they accused him of magic and sorcery; they "set up ambushes" for him. It was bandied about that the people had the right – even the duty, perhaps – to put him to death, since he was violating public order.⁴

In light of these circumstances, many of St. Francis de Sales' friends often attempted to dissuade him from continuing his mission in the Chablais, pointing out that he was risking his very life. But, he would insist that he was prepared to die for the faith. This greatness of spirit was not simply bravado on de Sales' part, but arose from a deep conviction as a priest and later as a bishop that, in imitation of his Savior, his work was to seek what was lost, even to freely and courageously laying down his life, if need be.

Lajeunie, another biographer, recounts the following incident at this difficult time in his mission. "One day while praying before the altar of Saint Anthony of Padua,⁵ he heard an inner voice tell him: 'You desire as I did to be a martyr; but you will not become one; *you yourself must become the instrument of your martyrdom*.'" "You yourself must become the

instrument of your martyrdom"... in other words, "no one is going to *take* your life, but you yourself will be called upon to *give* it, freely and wholeheartedly"! From then on Francis was determined, that if God was not going to grant him a martyr's crown, he would at least seek each day to give himself totally over to the service of Christ on behalf of the Church and miss no opportunity to prove his love of God and neighbor.

After having learned this valuable lesson, he would warn others: "No better martyrdom should be sought than sincere mortification of self, in other words putting God's will before our own". This became one of his principles of spiritual devotion, one of the secrets of his asceticism and his apostolate. Faced with the toughness of the impenetrable masses to convert, he resolved to resort to spiritual weaponry: "Prayer - Alms - Fasting; these are the three strands that make the rope too strong to be broken by the enemy."⁶

Jean-Marie Camus, another biographer, quotes the saint as saying: "St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius of Loyola, sighed for the grace of martyrdom and sought for it by all possible means; yet God would not crown them with it, contenting Himself with the offering of their will. To submit ourselves simply and cheerfully to the Will of God in the failure of work undertaken for God's glory is no small act of acceptance."⁷ But how do we come to know what is God's will in any given situation?

"Thy Will Be Done"

In one of his *Spiritual Conferences*, St. Francis de Sales gives the answer:

To begin with, we ought to know that the discernment for following God's will in all things without exception is contained in the Lord's Prayer in the words that we say every day: "Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In heaven there is no resistance to the Divine Will: everything is subject and obedient to it. ... The will of God can be understood in two ways: there is *the Signified Will of God* and *the Will of His Good Pleasure*.⁸

God's signified will includes the commandments of God and the Church; these are absolute, requiring obedience for salvation. Others, the counsels referred to in the Gospels (e.g., "Go sell all you have and give to the poor") are not absolute and can be chosen according to one's vocation. The saint teaches that there is no loss of charity or separation from God if a person does not have the courage to follow these counsels. Finally, the saint points out that God's signified will can also result from the many inspirations which he sends in an infinite number of ways. In an analogy, de Sales describes how God's inspiration works and what it does:

The sun's rays give light while giving warmth and warmth while giving light. Inspiration is a heavenly ray that brings into our hearts a warm light that makes us see the good to be done and fires us on to pursue it.....Preaching is the ordinary means of inspiration. However [in this case] people, whom the word does not help, are taught by tribulation, ... that is, those who hear God's threats against the wicked and do not correct themselves shall learn the truth by the consequences which follow, and shall become wise by feeling affliction.⁹

St. Francis de Sales then describes the second manner, the most common way, in which God's will is made known to us:

There is also the will of his good pleasure, which we ought to find in every event, that is, in everything that happens to us, be it sickness, death, affliction, consolation, things adverse and things prosperous; briefly put, in everything that is not foreseen. And we must always be ready to submit to this will of God in every circumstance, whether it be pleasant or unpleasant, in affliction or consolation, in death or life, and in everything that is not manifestly against the signified will of God, for that must always come first.¹⁰

The question now arises as to *how* we are to “become the instrument of our martyrdom”, in other words, how are we to sacrifice our will — what we want and desire — so that we might do God's will in all things?

The Martyrdom of Love

In 1610, St. Francis de Sales co-founded the Order of the Visitation¹¹ with his spiritual daughter, St. Jane de Chantal, who met Saint Francis de Sales when he preached at *Sainte Chapelle* in Dijon. She and Francis shared a deep spiritual friendship, like that of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, and St. John Bosco and St. Maria Domenica Mazzarello. Their religious order was intended for women who, because of poor health or age, could not enter other religious orders. When people criticized St. Jane for accepting an 88-year old woman, she famously said, "What do you want me to do? I am all for those who are weak."¹²

One day St. Jane de Chantal spoke to the Sisters about the idea of martyrdom. Her secretary records her words in her *Memoirs*:

“My dear daughters, many of our holy fathers in the faith, men who were pillars of the Church, did not die martyrs. Why do you think this was so?” Each one present offered an answer. Then, mother continued, “Well, I myself think it was because there is another martyrdom: the martyrdom of love. Here God keeps his servants and handmaids in this present life so that they may labor for him and he makes them martyrs and confessors at the same time. I know this is the sort of martyrdom the daughters of the Visitation will suffer, that is, those of them who are fortunate enough to set their hearts on it.” One sister asked what form this martyrdom took. The saint answered: “Give yourself fully to God, and you will find out! What happens is that love seeks out the most intimate and secret place of your soul, as with a sharp sword, and cuts you off even from your own self. I know of a soul whom love cut off from all that was dearest to her as if a tyrant’s sword severed spirit from body.” We realized that she was speaking about herself.¹³

What was this “martyrdom of love” endured by St. Jane de Chantal? Her biographer recounts that in her married life, two of her children and a dearly beloved sister died, and then, in the full tide of their prosperity, her husband’s life was ended by an accident, through the innocent hand of a friend, when a small group went hunting in the forest. For seven years, she endured her grief and the cruel importunities of those who urged her to marry again. Harassed almost to despair by their entreaties, she decided to enter the Convent, leaving her beloved home and children, so that she could live for God alone.¹⁴

Her secretary continues her description of the “martyrdom of love”:

When another sister asked how long the martyrdom would continue, the saint replied: “From the moment when we commit ourselves wholeheartedly to God until the moment we die. I am speaking, of course, of generous hearts who keep nothing back for themselves, but instead are faithful in love. Our Lord does not intend this martyrdom for feeble hearts and people who have little love and not much constancy; he simply lets them continue in mediocre fashion, so that they will not be lost to him; he never uses force on our free will.”

Finally, the saint was asked whether this martyrdom of love could be put on the same level as martyrdom of the body. She answered: “We should not worry about equality. However, I do think that the martyrdom of love cannot be relegated to a second place, for *love is as strong as death*. For the martyrs of love suffer infinitely more in remaining in this life so as to serve God, than if they died a thousand times over in testimony to their faith, love and fidelity.”¹⁵

The Transforming Power of Love

Like St. Paul, St. Francis de Sales thought little of any virtue, or anything in life, for that matter, unless it was animated by love. Even the faith which works miracles, the almsgiving which leads a someone selling everything to feed the poor, the spirit of martyrdom which impels a person to give his body to be burned, all, if without charity, are nothing (cf. *1 Cor*: 13: 1-3). So convinced was he in the power of love to transform all our actions into a holy sacrifice, he dares to say that even the most common, everyday act of self-denial, or more technically, every act of mortification, that is, where we die to self and live for God, has the potential of being more meritorious than being put to death as a martyr. Comparing love to light, he explains how this can be so:

Even though the light of the sun falls alike on the violet and the rose, it never makes the first as fair as the second, or the daisy as lovely as the lily. However, if the sun were to shine very brightly on the violet but because of mist very faintly on the rose, then it would undoubtedly make the violet fairer to look at than the rose. So, too, if with equal charity one man suffers death by martyrdom and another suffers hunger because of fasting, who does not see that the value of such fasting is not equal to that of martyrdom? ... One can suffer death and fire for God without love, as St. Paul indicates.... With greater reason, then, a man may suffer them with only a little love. Now I say, it may well be that a very small virtue has greater value in a soul where sacred love reigns with fervor than martyrdom itself in a soul where love is languid, feeble and full. Thus the minor virtues in Our Lady, St. John and other great saints were of more value before God than the loftiest virtues of many lesser saints...¹⁶

He explains himself more clearly, when speaking to his Sisters: “[T]here might be someone, who in suffering martyrdom for God with one ounce of love, would merit a great deal in that she could give nothing greater than her life. However, there might be another person, who would suffer only a little with two ounces of love. She would have much more merit because it is charity and love that give value to our works.”¹⁷

The Loving Union of Wills

Doing all for Love of Christ, then, is the key to *our becoming the instrument of our martyrdom*. In the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, he explains how to make a sacrifice of our life to Christ, especially in the little things in life, by using a marriage-analogy taken from the Cantic of Canticles, the love-song of the Old Testament:

The Sacred Spouse [Christ] in the Cantic of Canticles says that his Spouse has wounded his "heart with one of her eyes, and with one lock of her hair" (*Cant.* 4:9).¹⁸ Of all the exterior parts of the human body, none is more noble both in its construction and activity than the eye, and none of less account than the hair. Wherefore, the divine Spouse wishes us to understand that he is pleased to accept not only the great works of devout persons, but also their least and most trivial deeds; ... since by both alike we may win his Heart and Love. Prepare yourself, my child, to suffer many great afflictions for our Lord, even martyrdom itself. Resolve to surrender to him whatever is most dear to you whenever it shall please him to take it: father, mother, husband, wife, or child; even your eyes and your very life; for all these sacrifices you should prepare your heart. But as long as God's Providence does not send you afflictions so sensible or so great, and since he does not require your eyes, give him at least your hair. I mean, suffer patiently the petty annoyances, the trifling discomforts, the unimportant losses which come upon all of us daily; for by means of these little matters, lovingly and freely accepted, you will give him your whole heart, and win his. I mean the acts of daily forbearance, the headache, or toothache, or heavy cold; the tiresome peculiarities of husband or wife, the broken glass, the loss of a ring, a handkerchief, a glove; the sneer of a neighbor, ... and be sure that all of these sufferings, small as they are, if accepted lovingly, are most pleasing to God's Goodness.¹⁹

In his *Treatise on the Love of God*, St. Francis reiterates not to search for grand occasions for uniting our will to God's will:

Great deeds may not always come our way, but at all times we can do little deeds with perfection, that is, with great love. Consider the saint, I beg of you, who gives a glass of water in God's name to some poor thirsty traveler. It seems to be only a little thing, but the intention, the compassion, the love with which he enlivens his deed is so perfect that it converts this plain water into the water of life, yes, of eternal life. ... Certain it is, that in little, lowly exercises of devotion charity is not only practiced more frequently but for the most part more humbly as well, and consequently more usefully and holily.²⁰

In a letter to a young woman, he counsels: "the circumstances in which you are now will serve you as a little martyrdom, if you continue to join your labors to those of our Savior, Our Lady and the saints;"²¹ and finally: "Look up to heaven, and do not forfeit it for earth; look down into hell and do not cast yourself into it for the sake of fleeting things; look upon Jesus Christ

and do not renounce him for the world.”²² In this regard, St. Francis de Sales constantly insists that the dynamic of love between each person and Christ brings perfection to all that we do and benefit to the Church and society.

The “Martyrdom of Love” and the New Evangelization Today

In the process of canonization of the first American male saint, St. John Neumann, the Bishop of Philadelphia, something very significant occurred. For the first time in history, the definition of heroic virtue was not linked to any outstanding practice of one or more specific virtues in the candidate’s life. Instead, the decree of St. John Neumann stated: “...his heroic virtue consists in his faithful, continuous and constant fulfilling of his duties and tasks proper to his office.”²³ In other words, his saintly heroism was his wholehearted dedication to God’s will, his selfless gift of himself to God and to service of his neighbor for love of God, in the everyday occurrences he faced as a priest and bishop. Surely, St. Francis de Sales would have seized on this idea as a point of encouragement, insisting that, through the transforming love of *faithfully, continuously and constantly fulfilling the responsibilities related to our proper vocation*, we can achieve sainthood!

Presently, the Pope has called the Church to engage in a new evangelization. On 21 September 2010, the Holy Father even established a separate department in the Roman Curia dedicated to promoting a new evangelization, so that “the entire Church, allowing herself to be regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, may present herself to the contemporary world with renewed missionary zeal.”²⁴ The Holy Father believes that this *New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* is an urgent need in the Church, especially in places where the faith has grown cold and some Catholics are timid or shy in professing and practicing the faith. Among the many initiatives resulting from the call for a new evangelization, the Holy Father himself has called for a general meeting this October of bishops from around the world to discuss the issue and to make pastoral recommendations on how to make each member of the Church aware of his/her responsibility to bring the faith to bear in our Church and society.

The synodal document, presenting the topic for discussion by the bishops, immediately states that this undertaking, if truly lived, will be a martyrdom of sorts, in other words, requiring great courage inspired by love of God and neighbor: “The new evangelization is primarily a spiritual activity capable of recapturing in our times the courage and forcefulness of the first Christians and the first missionaries.”²⁵ It further states: “the new evangelization is a frame-of-mind, a courageous manner of acting and Christianity’s capacity to know how to read and interpret the new situations in human history which, in recent decades, have become the

places to proclaim and witness to the Gospel. Delineated and treated on various occasions, these sectors concern society, cultures, economics, civic life and religion.”²⁶

In his apostolic visit to Germany, Pope Benedict XVI re-emphasized that a new evangelization is not to be found in elaborate structures, strategies or big projects but rather in each member of the Church, from the greatest to the least, *faithfully, continuously and constantly fulfilling the everyday responsibilities of one's state in life.*²⁷ Equally he pointed out that our life as Christians is motivated by a loving, personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ:

As I stated in my first Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: ‘Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction’ (1). Likewise, at the root of all evangelization lies not a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has wished to give us, making us sharers in his own life.²⁸

At the same time, Pope Benedict XVI reminded the faithful that this manner of acting will inevitably put one on a collision course with certain cultural trends. We are to have the courage not only to speak boldly in the face of such contemporary issues in society but to act boldly. St. Francis de Sales insists: “All the martyrs died for divine love. Our confession of faith is not so much an act of the intellect and faith as an act of the will and love of God.”²⁹

The word “martyr” is derived from the Greek word which means “witness.” The concepts are really interchangeable. Though, strictly speaking, a martyr is someone who supremely bears witness to Christ through the shedding of his blood, the term, as we have seen from the life and writings of St. Francis de Sales, can be applied to lesser forms of witnessing, requiring in many cases an equal courage and boldness. In fact, as we have seen, in some cases, these lesser forms have the potential of being even more meritorious than shedding one’s blood, depending on the love of God with which they are performed! At the same time, this “martyrdom of love,” by courageously confessing the faith in both word and deed, will inevitably bear fruit.

In this regard, the words of Pope Paul VI, in his ground-breaking encyclical *Evangelii nuntiandi* on proclaiming the Gospel, ring true even today! He writes:

Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.' [...] It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus – the witness of

poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.³⁰

This year we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. At that time, the Church was calling the laity to assume their rightful place in the Church in terms and concepts which we have covered in this presentation:

The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; ... through Baptism ... they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself. They are consecrated for the royal priesthood and the holy people (cf. *1 Peter* 2:4-10) not only that they may offer spiritual sacrifices in everything they do but also that they may witness to Christ throughout the world The lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living union with Christ ...[which is] nourished by spiritual aids ... used by the laity in such a way that while correctly fulfilling their secular duties in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate union with Christ from their life but rather performing their work according to God's will they grow in that union. ... Neither family concerns nor other secular affairs should be irrelevant to their spiritual life.... Such a life requires a continual exercise of faith, hope, and charity. Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the Word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being' (*Acts* 17:28), seek his will in every event, see Christ in everyone whether he be a relative or a stranger, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal.³¹

St. Francis de Sales would insist that the strength and courage needed to *faithfully, continuously and constantly fulfill our everyday responsibilities as Christians*, and thus live the spirit of a new evangelization called for by the Holy Father, comes from our union with Christ through the sacraments, particularly the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.

Live + Jesus

The Sisters of the Visitation wear a replica of the bishop's cross of St. Francis de Sales. Etched in silver is a pierced heart in the center of the crossbeam, above are two superimposed crosses, symbolizing the union of the Lord's Cross and our daily cross. On the left side is engraved the letter "M" and on the right, an "A", meaning *Mons Amoris*, "The Mount of Love," that is, Calvary, where our Savior laid down his life for love of us. Under the heart,



in the lower bar of the Latin cross is a branch with leaves, signifying the little virtues, which, according to de Sales, grow at the foot of the Cross and are watered by the Blood of Christ. And for this reason, he advises all those who wish to die to self and live for love of Christ, to go daily and at many times during the day to Calvary. Of course, Calvary is the consecration of the Mass. Here not only do we see what is required in becoming an instrument of our martyrdom, but in receiving the Lord in Holy Communion we receive the strength and courage to accomplish it. The Lord's death and dying must be constantly before our eyes.

We find the saint's advice in the final chapter of the *Treatise on the Love of God*:

Mount Calvary is the mount of lovers. All love that takes not its beginning from Our Savior's Passion is frivolous and dangerous. Unhappy is death without the love of the Savior, unhappy is love without the Savior's death! Love and death are so mingled in the Passion of Our Savior that we cannot have the one in our heart without the other. Upon Calvary one cannot have life without love, nor love without the death of Our Redeemer. But, apart from there, all is either eternal death or eternal love: and all Christian wisdom consists in choosing rightly.

During this mortal life we must choose eternal love or eternal death, there is no middle choice. O eternal love, my soul desires and makes choice of you eternally! Ah! come, Holy Spirit and inflame our hearts with your love! To love or to die! To die and to love! To die to all other loves in order to live to Jesus' love, that we may not die eternally, but that, living in your eternal love, O Savior of our souls, we may eternally sing: *Vive Jésus!* I love Jesus! Live Jesus whom I love! I love Jesus, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen."³²

I shall close this presentation in the words, quoted by St. Francis de Sales at the conclusion of his *Treatise*, words with which S. Augustine ended an admirable sermon on love, made before an illustrious assembly much like this one.

May these things, my good people— ladies, gentlemen, young people and children— which by the grace and help of Love have been spoken to you in love, so take root in your heart that this love may find in you the fruit of good works and that you will hold back nothing in uniting your will to God's will, through "a martyrdom of love", in service to God, to Christ and his Church and to neighbor. Amen. So may it be! Blessed be God!³³

Live Jesus!

¹ Cf. *Indian Journal of Spirituality*, Vol 13, n. 2 (April-June 2005), p. 178.

² Cf. MARGARET TROUNCER, *The Gentleman Saint: St. Francis de Sales*, Catholic Book Club, 1963.

³ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Trans. John K. Ryan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1957), Part II, Chap. XV, p. 101.

⁴ ANDRE RAVIER, *Francis de Sales: Sage and Saint*, p. 67.

⁵ At fifteen, St. Anthony joined the Canons Regular of St Augustine and was transferred to the monastery at Coimbra. After his ecclesiastical studies, he was ordained a priest in 1219. In 1220, Don Pedro, the crown Prince of Portugal, bought to Coimbra the relics of the Franciscan Missionaries who had been martyred in Morocco, in north Africa. This had a tremendous effect on Anthony, who requested admission to the Franciscans. In 1221, he was accepted. Soon after, he set out for Morocco to preach the Gospel to the Moors. On the way to Morocco, however, he was forced to return to Europe because of ill-health. On his return home, a storm drove his ship to the shores of Italy, where he lived for the rest of his life.

⁶ E.J. LAJEUNIE, O.P., *Saint Francis de Sales: The Man, The Thinker, His Influence*, Trans. Rory O'Sullivan, O.S.F.S. (Vinayalaya, Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1987), Volume I, p. 197.

⁷ JEAN-PIERRE CAMUS, *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, p. 303.

⁸ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Spiritual Conferences*, trans. William Ruhl, OSFS (Allentown, PA: 1997), pp. 123-4.

⁹ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. John K. Ryan, Vol. II, Bk. VII, Chap. 10 (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1975), pp. 81-82.

¹⁰ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Spiritual Conferences*, trans. William Ruhl, OSFS (Allentown, PA: 1997), pp. 123-4.

¹¹ The intent of the Order – as its name implies – was to “visit” the needy and provide care for them. Instead, the Order of the Visitation was established as a cloistered, contemplative community of nuns, because Francis acceded to the wishes of a bishop who claimed that religious communities of sisters were to be cloistered. In a way, this was in keeping with his spirituality of “martyrdom” in accepting whenever possible another’s will to his own. It is argued that de Sales’ dear friend, St. Vincent de Paul, founded the Order which he originally intended, namely, the Daughters of Charity, whose apostolate is to the sick and needy.

¹² E.J. LAJEUNIE, O.P., *Saint Francis de Sales: The Man, The Thinker, His Influence*, Trans. Rory O'Sullivan, O.S.F.S. (Vinayalaya, Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1987), Volume II, p. 294.

¹³ LITURGY OF THE HOURS, Office of Readings, *Memoirs of the Secretary of St. Jane Frances de Chantal*, Memorial of St. Jane de Chantal, 24 August.

¹⁴ Cf. E.J. LAJEUNIE, O.P., *Saint Francis de Sales: The Man, The Thinker, His Influence*, Trans. Rory O'Sullivan, O.S.F.S. (Vinayalaya, Bangalore, India: S.F.S. Publications, 1987), Volume II, p. 290.

¹⁵ LITURGY OF THE HOURS, Office of Readings, *Memoirs of the Secretary of St. Jane Frances de Chantal*, Memorial of St. Jane de Chantal, 24 August.

¹⁶ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. John K Ryan (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1975), Bk. XI, Chapter V, pp. 207, 208.

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- ¹⁷ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *The Spiritual Conferences*, trans. William Ruhl, OSFS (Allentown, PA: 1997), p. 276.
- ¹⁸ In the English version this passage stands as “one chain of her neck;” but in the Vulgate it is “*uno crine colli tui.*”
- ¹⁹ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Trans. John K. Ryan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1957), Part III, Chap. XXXV, pp. 207-209.
- ²⁰ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Treatise on the Love of God* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. 1974), Bk. XII, Chap. VI, pp. 268-269.
- ²¹ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, “Letter to a Young Lady,” *Letters to People in the World* (London: Burnes and Oates), p. 19.
- ²² SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Trans. John K. Ryan (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1957), Part V, Chap. XVIII, p. 287.
- ²³ POPE BENEDICT XV, wishing to establish what constitutes heroic virtue, declared that a person acted heroically in the *fideli, iugi et costanti proprii status munerum et officiorum perfunctione*; SACRED CONGREGATION FOR SACRED RITES, Decree on the Heroic Virtues of the Venerable Servant of God John Nepomucene Neumann, Bishop of Philadelphia and Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, p. 23: AAS 55 (1963) 350.
- ²⁴ POPE BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ubicumque et Semper*, 21 September 2010: AAS 102 (2010) 790.
- ²⁵ XIII ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith, Lineamenta*, 10.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ²⁷ Cf. POPE BENEDICT XVI, *Homily*, Apostolic Journey to Germany, Cathedral Square, Erfurt, 24 September 2011.
- ²⁸ POPE BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ubicumque et Semper*, 21 September 2010: AAS 102 (2010) 791..
- ²⁹ SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. John K. Ryan (Rockford, IL: Tan Book and Publishers, Inc. 1975), Bk. VII, Chap. X, p. 40-41.
- ³⁰ POPE PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 41; AAS 68 (1976) 31, 32.
- ³¹ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 3, 4.
- ³² SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES; *Treatise on the Love of God*, Trans. Rev. John K. Ryan (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1974), Bk. XIII, Chap. XIII, pp. 281-282.
- ³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
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