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# Seasoning the Seasons™

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Saint Francis de Sales

## Saint Francis de Sales

Francis de Sales was born on August 21, 1567, the firstborn child of wealthy parents. His father was a senator from the province of Savoy in France, and it was his desire that Francis study law and follow in his footsteps. Francis attended the College of Clermont, a Jesuit-run institution at the University of Paris. Later, he studied at the University of Padua, where he earned doctorates in civil and canon law.

Although his father was initially opposed to the idea, Francis was ordained a priest on December 18, 1593. A few years later he went as a missionary to Chablais, a region around Lake Geneva and one of the eight states of Savoy. He worked for the conversion, or "re-conversion", of Chablais. This was at the time of the Reformation, and Francis wrote and published numerous catechetical pamphlets which provided clear information about the Catholic Church, refuting the positions of the Reformers. This collection of pamphlets was called "Controversies."

Francis de Sales was known as a caring priest and a gifted preacher and catechist. He became provost of Geneva, which was the center for the Calvinists. He desired to bring the Calvinists back to the Catholic Church. Eventually, Francis was ordained the bishop of Geneva.



St. Francis de Sales

A gifted and prolific writer, Francis de Sales wrote twenty-six books, including the spiritual classics, "Introduction to the Devout Life" and "Treatise on the Love of God." While many spiritual writings at the time were geared towards religious and the clergy, Francis wrote for those in all walks of life, including the laity. Francis preached over 4,000 sermons and was also an extremely gifted spiritual director and confessor. One of the many who sought him out as a spiritual director was (Saint) Jane Frances de Chantal. Together they founded the contemplative religious order, Visitation of Holy Mary, or the Visitation nuns, in 1610.

Francis de Sales died on December 28, 1622, and was canonized in 1665 by Pope Alexander VII. He was named a Doctor of the Church in 1877. We celebrate the feast day (Memorial) of Saint Francis de Sales on January 24. He is the patron of writers, journalists, and those who are deaf. A number of religious congregations have been founded under his patronage, including the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, the Salesians of Don Bosco, and the Sisters of St. Joseph.