

Frances de Sales

Born: 1567

Died: 1622

Feast Day:

24 January 2022



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**DERRY DIOCESAN
CATECHETICAL
CENTRE**

Francis de Sales was born into the noble Sales family of the Duchy of Savoy, France. He was baptized Francis Bonaventura after his godparents. His father wanted him, the first of his six sons, to attend the best schools in preparation for a career as a magistrate. He, therefore, enjoyed a privileged education in the nearby town of La Roche-Sur-Foron, and at the age of eight at the Capuchin college in Annecy.

In 1578, Francis went to the Collège de Clermont, then a Jesuit institution, to study rhetoric and humanities. As a nobleman, he was accompanied by his servant and by a priest tutor, Abbé Déage.

To please his father, he took lessons in the gentlemanly pursuits of riding, dancing, and fencing. De Sales is described as intelligent and handsome, tall and well built with blue-grey eyes, somewhat reserved and quiet, and a welcome guest in the homes of the nobility among whom his father had connections.

In January 1587, he visited the old parish of Saint-Étienne-des-Grès, Paris, where he prayed the "Memorare" before a famed statue of Our Lady of Good Deliverance, a Black Madonna. He consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary and decided to dedicate his life to God with a vow of chastity.

Francis was ordained and elected provost of the Diocese of Geneva. At 35, he became bishop of Geneva. While administering his diocese he continued to preach, hear confessions, and catechize the children. His gentle character was a great asset in winning souls.

He wrote many pamphlets and carried on a vast correspondence as well as two books, the Introduction to the Devout Life and A Treatise on the Love of God

For his writings, he has been named patron of the Catholic Press. His writings are addressed to lay people. He wanted to make them understand that they too are called to be saints.

He also collaborated with another saint, Jane Frances de Chantal, in the work of establishing the Sisters of the Visitation.

Pope Pius IX conferred on him the rare title of Doctor of the Church.

St. Francis de Sales is the patron saint of deaf individuals. He is also the patron of journalists and writers because of his many written religious works. Because of these publications, he is depicted with a book in the left hand and a quill pen in the right.

