

Reflection Tuesday week 3 St Francis de Sales 2023

St Francis de Sales (1567 - 1622) was born near Annecy, in Savoy, studied law, and was ordained a priest despite opposition from his father. He wanted to re-evangelize the people of his home district (the Chablais), who had become Calvinists. Always in danger from hostile Calvinists, he preached so effectively that within four years most of the people had returned to the Church. He was then appointed bishop of Geneva and spent the rest of his life reforming and reorganising the diocese, and caring for souls by preaching and spiritual guidance.

St Francis taught that all can develop a devout and spiritual life, whatever their position in society: holiness is not just reserved for monks and hermits. He wrote: *“religious devotion does not destroy: it perfects.”* He dedicated his spiritual counsel to making people more holy by making them more themselves. His preaching against Calvinism was driven by love rather than a desire to win. One Calvinist minister said *“if we honoured anyone as a saint, I know of no-one since the days of the Apostles more worthy of it than this man.”*

St Francis is the patron saint of writers and journalists.

Be inspired by his wisdom:

- *“The measure of love is to love without measure.”*
- *“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them— every day begin the task anew.*
- *“Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.”*
- *“Be who you are and be that well.”*
- *“The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering or give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.”*