

Saint Francis de Sales

- Feastday: January 24
- Patron Saint of: Catholic writers, the Catholic press, the deaf, journalists, adult education
- Birth: August 21, 1567
- Death: December 28, 1622
- Canonized: on April 19, 1665 by Pope Alexander VII



"Be patient with everyone, but above all with yourself ... do not be disheartened by your imperfections, but always rise up with fresh courage."



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St. Francis de Sales was born to a noble family near Geneva, Switzerland. From a very early age, he desired to serve God. He knew for years he had a vocation to the priesthood, but kept it from his family because his father wanted him to enter a career in law and politics.

In 1580, Francis received his doctorate in law, but he never lost his passion for God. One day while he was riding, Francis fell from his horse three times, and every time he fell, his sword and scabbard came to rest on the ground in the shape of the Christian cross. After much discussion and disagreement from his father, Francis was ordained to the priesthood. During the time of the Protestant Reformation, Francis lived close to Calvinist territory. He decided he should lead an expedition to bring the 60,000 Calvinists back to the Catholic Church. For three years, he tramped through the countryside, had doors slammed in his face, and rocks thrown at him. In the bitter winters, his feet froze so badly they bled as he tramped through the snow.

Francis' unusual patience kept him working. No one would listen to him, no one would even open their door. So, Francis found a way to get under the door. He wrote out little pamphlets to explain true Catholic doctrine and slipped them under the doors. The

parents wouldn't come to him, so Francis went to the children. When the parents saw how kind he was as he played with the children, they began to talk to him. By the time Francis returned home, it is believed he brought 40,000 people to the Catholic Church. In 1602, Francis was consecrated Bishop of Geneva. Francis was overworked and often ill because of his constant load of preaching, visiting, and instruction. He believed the first duty of a bishop was spiritual direction, which he provided mostly through thought letters, which attested to his remarkable patience. Francis insisted that every Christian was called to holiness and sanctity.