ST. FRANCIS DE SALES’S “EMBLEMATIC HABIT OF MIND”

In the history of Christian spirituality, St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) is renowned for “his brilliant use of metaphor,” much as St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-82) and St. John of the Cross (1542-91) are known for their “vivid poetic style,” as one scholar has recently commented. This observation serves to underscore that Francis “neither lived nor wrote in a vacuum” (ibid.), and that his present-day readers may find it helpful to recall that the profuse imagery and metaphors that are ubiquitous in his writings and sermons are reflective of the broader religious, literary, and cultural context to which our saint belonged. Francis’s lifetime coincided with the Renaissance and Baroque, with the early modern Catholic reform and the period immediately after the Council of Trent (1545-63), and also with the *aetas emblematica*, “emblematic age.” Over the past calendar year, there have been an exhibition, new books, and scholarly conferences that elucidate this facet of Francis’s historical context and its relevance for appreciating and understanding his ministry as a writer and preacher.

In 2006, the exhibition, “*Emblemata Sacra*: Emblem Books from the Maurits Sabbe Library, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven,” initially mounted in Leuven (Belgium) in January 2005 in conjunction with an international symposium on illustrated religious literature and rhetoric, traveled to the United States. Offering a survey of the Catholic use of the emblem from the 16th through the 18th centuries, this exhibit, featuring nearly seventy emblem books from the world’s premier theological library’s rich collection of *preciosa* and Jesuitica, was first shown at the Francis A. Drexel Library, Saint Joseph’s University, Philadelphia, from March to December 2006. It then traveled to a second venue, the William D. Walsh Library, Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y., where it remains on view through 30 June 2007. A full-color catalogue, authored by what has been described as a “high-powered team” of emblem scholars “if ever there was one,” accompanies the exhibit.

Coinciding with the opening of the “*Emblemata Sacra*” exhibit in Philadelphia, Adrien Gambart’s Emblem Book: The Life of St. Francis de Sales in Symbols was published. This volume is comprised of three components. First, there is the late Elisabeth Stopp’s study of Gambart’s *La vie symbolique du bienheureux François de Sales* (The Life of Blessed Francis de Sales in Symbols), published in 1664 in preparation for the saint’s canonization (1665). Dr. Stopp’s study of Gambart’s *La vie symbolique du bienheureux François de Sales* (The Life of Blessed Francis de Sales in Symbols), published in 1664 in preparation for the saint’s canonization (1665). Dr. Stopp’s study of Gambart’s book was prepared for publication and edited by Dr. Terence O’Reilly of University College Cork (Ireland) from the text of a series of illustrated lectures on Gambart’s book that she delivered to the community of the Waldron Visitation in Sussex, England, and later to various Visitation communities in the United States in 1985. Second, updating Dr. Stopp’s study is an essay entitled, “The Contexts of Adrien Gambart’s Emblem Book: Literary, Cultural, Biographical, and Christological,” by Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé, an expert in emblem literature from the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium). Third, a facsimile of Gambart’s extraordinary work is provided, thus making it...
readily available for the first time since 1664. The facsimile reproduces the copy of Gambart in the research library of De Sales Resources & Ministries, Stella Niagara, N.Y.

Fast forward to October 2006, when two international scholarly conferences focusing on religious imagery in early modern Catholicism and the Salesian tradition were held. First, there was the 2nd Lovis Corinth Colloquium, “Ut pictura meditatio: The Meditative Image in Northern European Art, 1500-1700,” 12-14 October, at Emory University, Atlanta, Ga., in which scholars from Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, the United States, and Wales participated. A week later, 18-22 October, the Salesian Scholars Seminar took place at De Sales Resources & Ministries. The latter’s theme, inspired by the publication of Adrien Gambart’s Emblem Book, was “Images and Symbols in the Salesian Tradition,” and included a daylong seminar by Dr. Guiderdoni-Brulsé on Francis de Sales and the emblematic tradition. (For further information about, as well as a complete list of the papers presented at, the Salesian Seminar, see “Salesian Studies Worldwide,” p. 12, below.)

Here our aim is to share, with the wider Salesian family, some salient insights that these recent programs and publications bring to bear on Francis’s ministry of the spoken and written word. We begin by considering, first, what an emblem is and, then, the development of Catholic emblematic literature prior to and during Francis’s lifetime. Next, Francis’s contacts with the emblematic tradition are enumerated. And, finally, the presence of emblems and emblematic images in events of Francis’s life and his post-mortem emblematic exaltation are discussed. Throughout, points of convergence between the emblematic tradition/mentality and Francis’s writings are identified.

What Is an Emblem? How Does It Work?

Today we distinguish between image and text, but in the 16th and 17th centuries this distinction was not as clear as it is for us, as the boundaries between image and text were porous. A bimedial genre that employs both image and text, the emblem is a prime example of this porousness. An emblem combines three elements: (1) an engraving (pictura), (2) a title or motto, and (3) a subscriptio in the form of a short epigram, biblical quotation, simple rhymed couplet, or longer passage in prose. For the viewer, the emblem presents an enigmatic image that can be deciphered only by discovering the link between it and the apparently unrelated motto, much the same way that happens with a modern-day political cartoon. At the heart of the emblem is a metaphor or trope. Let’s look at an example.

François Berthod was a 17th-century Observant Franciscan friar, who is the author of Emblesmes sacres, tiren de l’Escriture Saincte et des pères . . . (Sacred Emblems Taken from Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church; Paris, 1665). The images of Berthod’s emblem book are deemed as being among the most striking in the emblematic tradition because they attempt to represent literally the Biblical quotation that accompanies each emblem.4 Many of Berthod’s images have a modern, surrealistic quality that is achieved both by their being emotionally heightened, as well as by displacing the quotidian into unexpected contexts.

Consider, for instance, Berthod’s Emblem L (Figure 1), which illustrates Song of Songs 4:9 (Vulgaristi cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum, “Thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes” [Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate]). Suspended in mid-air above a desert-like landscape, a disembodied eye enveloped in clouds shoots an arrow that pierces a flaming heart held by a hand reaching out from a cloud. Berthod’s brief prose commentary succinctly explicates this image and its Scriptural motto: This eye from which comes an arrow that pierces a heart represents the eye of Jesus Christ, who beholds a Soul that He loves, and simultaneously wounds and enflames it with His love” (p. 375).

Berthod’s literal rendering of Song of Songs 4:9 visualizes the metaphor or trope of Christ as the divine archer or Cupid—the latter being an image adapted by the Church Fathers and the Christian Middle Ages from Ovid’s Metamorphoses that

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**Figure 2.** Anton II Wierix (1555/59-1604), The Transverberation of St. Teresa of Ávila and the Holy Family, ca. 1615, copper engraving. In her autobiography (begun in 1562 and completed in 1565), Teresa recounts a remarkable event that took place around 1560. She describes a vision she had of an angel at her left side, holding a large gold arrow with fire at its tip. The angel plunged the arrow into Teresa’s heart, causing intense pain but leaving her “all on fire with great love of God” (chap. 29). This episode came to be known as the “transverberation,” holding a large gold arrow with fire at its tip. The angel plunged the arrow into Teresa’s breast, and the Child Jesus prepares to launch His bow. This engraving served as the compositional model for several subsequent paintings of this subject, including an anonymous French painting of the second third of the 17th century in the style of Simon Vouet (1590-1649).
subsequently became commonplace in spiritual and emblematic literature, as well as in the sacred art of the late medieval period and early modern Catholic reform (Figure 2). This emblematic and iconographic motif occurs, for instance, in one of Francis's texts on the primary Salesian Biblical mystery of the Visitation. In his letter of 30 June 1610 to Mother de Chantal (1572-1641), as the newly founded Visitation community prepares to celebrate its patronal feast for the first time, Francis proffers a meditation on this mystery in which he images Jesus in Mary's womb as the heavenly Cupid who penetrates St. Joseph's heart with a ray—a variant on the arrow or dart: “St. Joseph, for his part, yearns only for the Savior, who, with hidden rays, touches his heart with a thousand extraordinary sentiments” (Letter 608, Oeuvres, 14:324).5

**The Development of the Catholic Emblematic Tradition**

The first emblem book appeared during the second quarter of the 16th century, when in 1531 the *Emblemata liber* (Book of Emblems) of Andrea Alciato (1492-1550), a lawyer from Milan, was published in Augsburg. Alciato's book was a collection of epigrams offering moral instruction drawn from classical and Christian sources, to which his publisher, Heinrich Steyner, added woodcuts symbolically illustrating each epigram. The iconographic sources for the emblems included medieval bestiaries, as well as Egyptian hieroglyphics, which had been popularized by Horapollo's *Hieroglyphics* (5th century) that as early as 1505 was available in both Greek and Latin versions. Alciato's book was enormously successful, and became the prototype of a new genre, the emblem.

The use of the emblem for religious purposes was not long in coming, with both Catholics and Protestants employing this genre. The first religious emblem book was *Emblemes ou devises chrestiennes* (Christian Emblems or Devies; Lyon, 1567), by Georgette de Montenay (1540-1607), a member of a small group of women writers of the French Renaissance and a Calvinist.6 The first Catholic emblem book was the *Humanae Salutis Monumenta* (Memorial of Human Salvation; Antwerp, 1581) by the Spanish Christian humanist and Biblical scholar Benito Arias Montano (1527-98).

The *Humanae Salutis Monumenta* is divided into two parts: the first consists of seventy engravings of Biblical events, with an ode interpreting the image on the facing page, while the second part presents a lengthy commentary and meditation on each Biblical illustration. Montano's book serves to highlight that religious emblem books or "sacred emblematics" were a product of the conjunction of the older, well-established tradition of Biblical illustration and hermeneutics with the more recent emblematic tradition.7 The literal visualisation of a trope or metaphor by the emblem's *pictura* was clearly grounded in the former tradition, rather than in surrealism. Emblematic images were as striking for early modern viewers as they are for us today.

Beginning in the last quarter of the 16th century, emblem books took on a broader role as tools for education, catechetics, propaganda, and apologetics in the conflict between Catholics and Protestants, as well as aids for methodical meditative prayer. While members of many religious orders authored emblem books, no order employed the emblem more in their ministries than did the Society of Jesus. This is hardly surprising since St. Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (first published in 1548) had a formative influence on the development of sacred emblematics. This impact is attributable to the primary that the Exercises accord to imaginative picture- or image-making, specifically the practice of the composition of place (n. 47), which is used for meditating on episodes from the Gospels, as well as on more abstract subjects (e.g., sin, virtue, etc.) not involving history but "similitudes" or "wisely contrived figures to signify some qualities of the thing . . . by analogy or likeness."8 Credited with the production of some 1,700 emblem books (500 first editions and 1,200 subsequent editions, issues, and translations), the Jesuits published more emblem books (in all the major European vernacular languages, as well as in Latin) than any other identifiable group of writers.9 The Jesuits used emblems in spiritual formation, catechetics, preaching, missionary work, and their educational enterprise. In this connection, it seems likely that Francis de Sales was first exposed to emblems during his student days at the Jesuit College de Clermont in Paris.

The design, composition, and submission for general criticism of emblems was an integral part of the educational curriculum of Jesuit colleges, specifically in the area of rhetoric, as part of the doctrine of tropes. As the distinguished emblem scholar Karel Porteman explains:

The Jesuits more than anyone else integrated the emblem in education, and used it not just as a favourite exercise, but as a pedagogical crowning-piece to recommend their education system to the outside world. . . . In the hands of the Jesuits the emblem was both an artistic-ingenious and a persuasive means of communication. It made the spiritual insistently tangible, visible and admirable for the complete human being, viz. for the eyes and the other senses, the intellectual capacities, the heart, the emotions and the affects. In this respect the emblem was part of the high technology of . . . Jesuit eloquenitia. It influences the public in a very powerful way and it also demonstrates the ingenium of its designers. So the emblem just had to play a part in the education in the Jesuit colleges, an education that was completely directed to the acquisition of this eloquenitia.10

The ultimate goal of eloquenitia was not simply effective communication, but, above all, the acquisition of wisdom and understanding. Emblems emphasized the culture of Latinitas, literary creativity, the art of memory (ars memorativa), and training in the symbolic arts that aided students in developing imagination and skill in persuasion—all of which were considered prerequisites for eloquenitia. The primacy of emblems in Jesuit education is clear as early as the 1560s, when Father Ledesma, head of studies in the Collegio Romano, suggested that once a year, on a feast day, the best compositions of the pupils—orations, letters, visual poems, and emblems—be exhibited, together with those of the faculty. In fact, student emblem exhibitions (affixiones) quickly became a standard feature of Jesuit colleges.11
The privileged place of emblematics in Jesuit pedagogy was rooted in the time-honored belief that in the learning process the eye was the most important sense organ, and consequently that visual images, such as emblems, have a deeper and longer-lasting effect on the memory than words: “By encoding the subject matter in emblem books, it becomes easier to grasp and to commit to memory; by decoding the matter as a reader-viewer, it can be assimilated more easily and lastingly.” Thus, the emblem was intrinsically related to the art of memory, whose primary aim was not simply retention, but creative composition, which put the mind “in play,” provoked new thought, and resulted in “making” new things. This process entailed crafting striking images, namely, emotionally heightened images (bloody, violent, monstrous, titillating, awe-inspiring, pathetic), or putting everyday images into unexpected contexts. When viewed through the prism of the emblematic tradition, Francis's imagery and metaphors take on a new immediacy and vibrancy.

**Francis and the Emblematic Tradition**

Francis has been described as having an “emblematic habit of mind, without which [his] writing is unthinkable.” Even though Francis never authored an emblem book (he was, however, the subject of one—Gambart's *La vie symbolique du bienheureux François de Sales*), there is ample data in Francis's biography and writings to demonstrate that there are close ties between the saint and the emblem tradition.

In her classic study of Francis's student days in Paris, Dr. Stopp notes that the Marian sodality to which Francis belonged had the double function of being a devotional confraternity and a literary academy. Significantly, one of this group's activities during its weekly meetings as an academy was “[e]nigmas, inscriptions and symbolical devices,’ that is, emblems were composed and lettered or designed and submitted for general criticism” (ibid.).

Besides being educated in the composition and design of emblems, Francis shared with contemporary emblem writers common sources, such as the Bible (especially the Song of Songs and the Psalms), natural history, and iconologies. For example, among the authorities that Francis cites in his *Défense de l’Estendart de la sainte Croix* (Defense of the Standard of the Holy Cross; 1600), a theological inquiry into the nature of pictorial representation in Christianity, is Giovanni Pierio Valeriano Bolzani’s *Hieroglyphica* (Basel, 1556), an erudite, encyclopedic, and enormously influential iconographical manual upon which emblem literature drew heavily (Oeuvres, 2:98).

No less importantly, Francis was familiar with contemporary developments in emblematic literature. For instance, in the preface to the *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616), Francis includes in his list of authors and books on the love of God “in our own age” the Jesuit Louis Richeome (1544-1625) and his important and innovative emblematic book *La peinture spirituelle: L’art d’aimer, aimer & louer Dieu en toutes ses oeuvres.* (Spiritual Painting: The Art of Admiring, Loving, and Praising God in All His Works; Lyon, 1611). Richeome’s book takes up earlier endeavors by Ignatius Loyola and his closest collaborator, Jerome Nadal (1507-80), to develop a theology of pictorial imagery and its role in the cultivation of the spiritual life. Francis has words of warm praise for Richeome and *La peinture spirituelle: “this author is so amiable both personally and in his splendid writings that he is undoubtedly even more so when he writes of love itself”* (Oeuvres, 4:6). In addition to Richeome, Francis was a close friend of another Jesuit emblem-book author, Étienne Binet (1569-1639), from their student days together at Clermont, and Francis’s spiritual and intellectual mentor, Antonio Possevino (1534-1611), added a long chapter on emblems to the 1603 Venetian edition of his monumental *Bibliotheca Selecta* (first published in Rome in 1593).

The very foundation of the emblematic mentality and tradition is discussed in Francis’s letter of 5 October 1604 on the ministry of preaching to André Frémyot (1573-1641), St. Jane de Chantal’s brother, who had recently become archbishop of Bourges. Explaining the aptness of using material from natural history in sermons, Francis appeals to the principle of universal symbolism—first articulated by St. Augustine (354-430) and later developed by St. Bonaventure (1221-74): “And what about natural history? An excellent thing, for the world, made by the word of God, reflects this word everywhere; every part of it sings the praise of its Maker. It is a book that is filled with God’s word, understands... This book is good for similitudes, for comparisons...” (Oeuvres, 12: 307).

Numerous parallels between particular passages in Francis’s writings and specific illustrations in emblem books of his day have been documented. For example, Dr. Guiderdoni-Brulsé, in a recent article on imagery and emblems in Francis’s spirituality, has juxtaposed illustrations of *picturae* from four different emblem books with passages from the *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609) that serve as commentary on these images. Here one example must suffice: Anton II Wierix’s *Christ Reposing in the Heart* (ca. 1586), and Francis’s instruction that Philothea may place herself in God’s presence by recalling that He is present in...
a particular way within her heart (Part 2, chap. 2) (Figure 3). (It is noteworthy that engravings comparable to Wierix's appear on the title-page of the editio princeps of the Treatise and of the 1652 folio edition of Francis's works.) With the exception of the engraving of the Pietà on its title-page, the editio princeps of the Introduction has no illustrations; however, parallels between its text and particular emblems serve to underscore the kinship (and competition?) that existed in Francis's lifetime between visual images and vivid imagistic language or description—a rhetorical technique in which our saint excelled and which was regarded by his contemporaries as the acme of homiletic virtuosity.

The Emblematic Exaltation of Francis de Sales

From the beginning of the 17th century onward, the emblem permeated virtually every facet of life: the theater; ecclesiastical, liturgical, and civic events; court life, etc. This is true in Francis's own life. During the Chablais mission, emblematic images were publicly displayed during the Forty Hours that Francis and his co-workers held in Thonon, 1-3 October 1598. On the occasion of Francis's installation as bishop of Geneva (14 December 1602) and of his funeral in Annecy (24 January 1623), the cathedral of St. Peter was adorned with emblems and emblematic compositions.

After Francis's death, his doctrine and apotheosis were regularly exalted by emblems both in print and as part of the festivities celebrating his beatification (1661) and canonization (1665). For example, the handsome folio edition of Francis's works published in Paris in 1652 includes an emblem in the form of a small tableau, drawn mainly from the saint's writings, at the beginning of each book and its constitutive parts. The purpose of these emblems, as the book's preface indicates, is twofold: to provide an idea of the content that follows, and to pique the reader-viewer's curiosity so that s/he strives to understand the image's meaning.

The church of the first monastery of the Visitation in Annecy (the present-day church of St. Francis de Sales), Francis's initial burial place, was decorated with emblems for the solemn ceremonies held there on 30 April 1662 to celebrate his beatification. (The celebration of his canonization in Annecy in 1666 was more subdued.) Even today two elegant polychrome sculptural emblems (cf. Emblems XXVII and XXXI in Gambart) may be seen on the retable of this church's main altar—a poignant reminder of Francis's close connection with the emblem tradition. Celebrations of Francis's canonization held outside Annecy also incorporated emblematic compositions, such as the parade of floats representing the saint's virtues, designed by the Jesuit Claude-François Ménestrier (1631-1705), that were part of the solemnities held in Grenoble on 26 May 1667. This is the second most important emblematic exaltation of Francis after Gambart's emblem book.

Gambart's Emblem Book

Throughout the early modern period, emblems were employed to exalt the saints because they were a concise and easy-to-remember way of presenting a saint's life and doctrine. Hence, collections of emblems devoted to the lives and virtues of the saints were often part of the promotional literature produced in the course of the canonization process. This is also the context for Gambart's emblem book, dedicated and addressed to the sisters of the Visitation Monastery of Faubourg Saint-Jacques in Paris, where Gambart (1600-68), a Vincentian priest, served as chaplain for over thirty years. Gambart's primary and extended readership would have been well prepared for his approach because "The kind of people who read St. Francis's books, or entered the Visitation and other reformed orders in the first half of the seventeenth century, would have certainly been familiar with religious emblem books and the habit of emblematic thinking."
Gambart’s emblems visualize many of Francis’s literary images (Figure 4), as well as draw on other popular sources of the emblematic tradition. The nature of Gambart’s book is meditative, rather than testimonial, such as St. Jane de Chantal’s memoir of Francis. Each emblem invites the reader-viewer to meditate on an episode from Francis’s biography or on one of his particular virtues, with a view to imitating the saint. To facilitate the imitative process, one emblem is provided for each of the fifty-two weeks of the year and is explained by a meditation, which is then followed by seven points for prayer and action, one for each day of the week. By means of the emblems, Gambart makes accessible, in a tangible and memorable way, the truly remarkable qualities of Francis’s life and the hallmarks of Salesian spirituality.

In his book’s dedicatory letter to the Visitandines, Gambart avers that to tell the story of Francis’s life in emblems is a way of presenting his biography that remains faithful to the saint himself, who constantly uses images as “veils” and “symbols” for the truths and virtues he teaches, and of paying homage to his emblematic way of thinking. Further, according to Gambart, Francis’s manner of teaching through images casts into relief his imitation of Christ (Figure 5), who, in His public life and ministry, modeled and licensed the use of images and similitudes for “under the names of the most familiar and common things, [He] revealed Himself, and His most sublime virtues, to humankind” (45).

Concluding Thoughts

Francis’s life and writings coincide with the most prolific and richest part of the emblematic age, particularly in sacred emblematics. Viewing Francis in this context opens an important window on his thought process, as well as points the way toward a fresh approach to his life and writings that is faithful to history, yet also resonates with the primacy of the visual image in today’s culture. What are some things that we can take away from the preceding overview of such a complex but fascinating topic? Among others, three points stand out.

First, it is a truism that “a picture is worth a thousand words,” and the more unusual and striking the image is, the more memorable it is. Modern readers are sometimes distracted by Francis’s prodigal use of imagery from natural history, but these images would have been no less strange to his 17th-century faithful to history, yet also resonates with the primacy of the Salesian spirituality.

Figure 5. Adrien Gambart, La vie symbolique du bienheureux François de Sales, évêque et prince de Genève, comprise sous le voile de 52 emblèmes, qui marquent le caractère de ses principales vertus, avec autant de méditations, ou réflexions pieuses, pour exciter les âmes ... (Paris: Aux frais de l’auteur pour l’usage des religieuses de la Visitation, & à la disposition de celles du Fauxbourg saint Jacques, 1664), Emblem I. Courtesy De Sales Resources & Ministries, Stella Niagara, N.Y. Gambert’s initial emblem references two episodes of Francis’s life when he comes into contact with the Shroud of Turin, thus, from the start, casting into relief the book’s primary theme of Francis’s perfect conformity to Christ, as well as keeping the focus concrete, rather than abstract. According to some of Francis’s biographers, when the Holy Shroud was brought to Annecy in 1666 and exposed for public veneration in the church of Notre Dame de Liesse, Madame de Boisy prayed that she would conceive a son and offered him in advance to God as she venerated the Shroud. Others hold that while pregnant with Francis and aware that her life as well as that of her infant was possibly in danger at childbirth, his mother venerated the Shroud in Chambray in 1657, offering the baby in her womb to God. In Emblem I, heavenly dew (terméd sudor in the motto because of the Shroud) descends upon Madame de Boisy’s offering: Primitias sudor aethereus beat, “Heavenly dew blesses first fruits.” Years later, in a letter to Mother de Chantal, Francis describes how, on the feast of the Holy Shroud, 4 May 1613, while as one of the bishops holding up the Shroud in Turin, for the veneration of the people and the Duke of Savoy, some drops of perspiration, due to the excessive heat, fell from his face onto the winding sheet, thus mingling with Our Lord’s sweat. Francis writes: “The Cardinal-Prince was angered because my sweat fell upon the Holy Shroud of my Savior. It occurred to me, however, to tell him that Our Lord was not so fastidious, and that He had poured out His sweat and blood that they mingle with ours and so gain for us eternal salvation. So may our sighs mingle with His that they may rise like a sweet fragrance up to the eternal Father” (Letter 971, Oeuvres, 16:178).

Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS
REFERENCES


5. Elsewhere, Francis uses the image of the ray of light to describe John the Baptist’s prenatal sanctification by Jesus (Œuvres, 9:384-85; Sermon for the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple, 21 November 1620).


8. The example of the German Jesuit Jeremias Drexel (1581-1638) is instructive. The most prolific and published writer in 17th-century Europe, Drexel wrote twelve emblem books, each of which was translated and reissued in numerous later editions. Between 1618 and 1642, 170,000 emblem books by Drexel were sold by his three publishers in Munich alone. This is an astounding figure since Munich at that time had only 22,000 inhabitants. See G. R. Dimler, SJ, The Jesuit Emblem: Bibliography of Secondary Literature with Select Commentary and Descriptions (Brooklyn: AMS Press, 2005), xii.


12. K. Porteman, “The Use of the Visual in Classical Jesuit Teaching and Education,” 183. In this connection, a 17th-century student emblem from the Brussels Jesuit college in Brussels argues Plus verbi res ipsa jacent, “The thing itself helps more than words,” thus emphasizing that “Illustrations represent the res, the things, that have a more direct and convincing effect than the verba, the words. What you see has more impact than what you hear, the epigram says. It is not any good to numb tired ears with a lot of words. The facts and the things are far more appealing than the words, student Jan van der Beken proclaims” (ibid., 187). Also see Porteman, “Introductory Study,” 41 and figure 21.


15. The Anneye edition also identifies Valeriano’s Hierogyphica as the source of a passage on the olive tree in Francis’s sermon plan of Advent 1616 on the second verse of Zechariah’s canticle, the Benedictus (Lk 1:69) (Œuvres, 8:226). Francis’s treatment of the cross as an emblematic image in the Defense of the Standard of the Holy Cross was explored by Patricia Siegel Finley in her paper presented at the October 2006 Salesian Scholars Seminar.

16. A thorough study of this work was presented by J. Loach, “An Apprenticeship in Seeing: Richeemo’s La peinture spirituelle,” at the 2nd Louis Corinthis Colloquium at Emory University, and to be published in the proceedings of this international conference (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).


20. M. Fumard, L’Âge de l’exquiscit (1898; Geneva: Droz, 2002), 678-79. The affinity between the visual and the verbal is summed up by Horace’s dictum, ut pictura poesis, “as is painting so is poetry.” This was a popular topic of discussion among the major literary and artistic figures of Francis’s day, including Possevino, who takes up the topic in his Traicato di Poesi et Pictura (Lyon, 1594), originally published as Bk. 17 of the Bibliotheca Selecta. Possevino sent Francis a copy of this book, in which, the saint testifies, he found “an image of Possevino” that is painted “with so much grace and exactitude” that “[il] est almost as present to me in this little book as he would be in reality” (Letter 49, to Antoine Favre, Œuvres, 11: 123).


New ICSS Member Appointed

Among the additions to the ICSS Statute, proposed by the ICSS at its April 2005 meeting in Rome and subsequently approved by the General Council, was the addition of a fourth member to represent the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking worlds. The General Council has recently appointed Fr. Valdir Formentini, OSFS, pastor of St. Charles Church in Monaco, to membership on the ICSS in this role. Our readers may be familiar with the impressive collection of images of St. Francis de Sales in art assembled by Fr. Formentini that is posted on the ICSS website (www.franz-von-sales.de), under “Pictures.” The ICSS extends a warm welcome to Fr. Formentini!

2006-2007 ICCS Grants

The General Council has approved, upon the recommendation of the ICSS, grants for 2006-2007 for the following projects: Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, executive director, De Sales Spirituality Center, Wilmington-Philadelphia Province, for the translation into Spanish of the complete collection of Sundays Salesian Cycle C and of a number of stand-alone Salesian publications; Bro. Daniel P. Wisniewski, OSFS, for a daylong seminar on “The Emblematic Tradition, Image-Making, and St. Francis de Sales,” by Dr. Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé, a specialist in the field of emblem literature from the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), as part of the Salesian Scholars Seminar, 18-22 October 2006, at De Sales Resources & Ministries, Stella Niagara, N.Y.; and to assist with the publication of the biography of Fr. Brission by Fr. Dirk Koster, OSFS, a member of the ICSS.

Web News

One of the main objectives of the ICSS is to help the provinces and regions of the De Sales Oblates establish their own websites. Through the tireless efforts and indispensable assistance of ICSS member, Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, four provinces and regions were able to set up their own websites: the Asian Mission (www.osfs-asia.net), the Italian Province (www.osfs-italia.net), the Namibian Region (Keetmanshoop) (www.osfs-namibia.net), and the French Province (including Benin) (www.osfs-france.net). All four websites contain an overview of the communities and apostolates of the De Sales Oblates, as well as news and photographs of all kinds. This major achievement should enable the De Sales Oblates to disseminate their Salesian spirit and charism to a much larger audience. The ICSS also helped to improve and re-launch the website of the German Province (www.osfs.de).

Asia

China

Fr. John Harvey, OSFS, merits the distinction of being the first De Sales Oblate “missionary” to China. Last June, he shared with several groups in Hong Kong the good news of hope about Courage International for those with a same-sex attraction who wish to live chaste lives. The Sunday Examiner, the Catholic news weekly of the Hong Kong diocese, ran a feature story on its front page about Fr. Harvey and Courage, as well as about another presenter, Dr. Peter Redegeair, who accompanied him. They were invited by the chancellor of the diocese. In addition to Mexico and Slovakia, the indefatigable Fr. Harvey, at 88 years young, has now prepared the way for the founding of Courage in China as well.
**India**

The region has been in a celebratory mode over the past several months, with an anniversary of priestly ordination, a perpetual profession, and an ordination to priesthood. At its October De Sales Oblate Founders Day celebration, it feted the fortieth anniversary of priestly ordination of Fr. Alfred Smuda, OSFS. Fr. Smuda has served thirty-two years of his priesthood in mission territories (twenty-five in Brazil, and seven in India). Fr. Smuda has the distinction of being the former novice master of Fr. Aldino Kiesel, OSFS, recently elected Superior General of the De Sales Oblates, and is currently serving as superior in the newly established Oblate theologue in Mangalore. The ICSS extends warmest congratulations to Fr. Smuda for his dedicated labors in living and spreading the Salesian-Oblate charism.

About a week after Fr. Smuda’s celebration, John George Kadavumkandathil made his final profession as a De Sales Oblate. He is the twelfth Indian confrère to do so, and the Bliss community and many well-wishers celebrated with joy John’s commitment. Shortly after this memorable event, the tenth Indian confrère, Fr. Bala Swamy, was ordained a priest, another occasion of great joy for the De Sales Oblates in Asia and indeed throughout the world. Fr. Bala Swamy hails from Suriapat in Andhra Pradesh and will be ministering as assistant parish priest in the diocese of Vizhak. Photos of these very colorful celebrations may be viewed at http://www.osfs-asia.net/news.html.

Fr. Shaju Kanjiramparayil, OSFS, wrote an article for the magazine LICHT on the hostel that the Samapanaram community recently opened for boys. The article is entitled “Mit Freude gemeinsam lernen” (Learning Together with Joy) and was published in the April 2006 issue. It is available online at http://www.zeitschrift-licht.de/index.htm.

**Philippines**

As noted in an earlier issue of this Newsletter, the Indian Region has made a commitment to assist in establishing a De Sales Oblate foundation in the Philippines. Fr. Brulgy Abraham Vettukallamkuzhyil, OSFS, has generously made a three-year commitment to this important apostolate and will shortly join Fr. Josef Költringer, OSFS. Once a month, Fr. Költringer gives a day of recollection on a Salesian theme to the Visitation Sisters in the Philippines. The sisters now have two new candidates.

**South Korea**

Last May the Salesians of Don Bosco hosted a “Youth Music Festival” attended by 5,000 teens and young adults. Marking the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Salesians’ ministries among the young in Kwangju, the Music Festival included a concert and other activities.

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**Europe**

Zenit News Service reported the following: The Rector Major of the Salesians exhorted his religious to take up again “with courage our fine task of giving back to Europe its soul.” Fr. Pascual Chávez, SDB, delivered that message to a congress held at the Salesianum in Rome. The congress’s theme was “Europe—Mission Territory: The Challenges of Evangelization in Europe Today in Light of the Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Europa.” Referring to the continent’s loss of the sense of its Christian roots, Father Chávez commented: “As the Salesian congregation, we are well aware that those who suffer most from this loss are the young. They are the ones most exposed to the negative consequences of the dominant cultural model. But we are also convinced that those who can best reverse this trend are also the young.”

**Austria-South Germany**

From 8 to 11 June 2006, a Salesian lay group of the De Sales Oblates and the Oblate Sisters (Group Vienna) participated in Salesian retreats, at the Visitation Monastery of Zangberg, Bavaria (www.kloster-zangberg.de), led by Mrs. Hannelore Flach, a member of the team for Salesian retreats.

The Austrian-South German Province of the De Sales Oblates celebrated its centenary in 2006. At four grand events, held in Vienna (Austria), and in Eichstätt and Fockenfeld (Bavaria), the Province’s rich history was recounted. Detailed information about these events, as well as about the Province’s history and present status may be found at the website specially established for this centenary: www.eslebejesus.de. Two new Salesian songs, “Vivat Jesus” and “Tenui nec dimittam,” were composed for this jubilee by Christian Heiß, director of music for the Diocese of Eichstätt. These songs are available on the website www.franzvonsaleslexikon.de, under “Liturgy.”

On 14 October 2006, Markus Kraxberger, OSFS, was ordained a priest at Dachsberg, Upper Austria. The De Sales Oblates availed themselves of this opportunity to give this celebration a distinctively Salesian cast. Accordingly, Fr. Kraxberger contributed by choosing as his motto the following saying of St. Francis de Sales: “Freedom is the most precious part of the human being” (Sermon for the Feast of St. Augustine, 28 August 1620 [Oeuvres, 9:324-39]). A DVD about the ordination, including interviews with Fr. Kraxberger, Bishop Maximilian Aichern, OSFS, and Fr. Konrad Haußner, OSFS, provincial of the Austrian-South German Province was made by the video team of Dachsberg. It can be obtained for a donation from Fr. Kraxberger (kraxberger@osfs.at).

On 15 December 1931, Fr. Franz Reisinger, OSFS, founded the publishing house, Franz-Sales-Verlag. 2006 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of this institution for the dissemination and
promotion in the German language of St. Francis de Sales and Salesian spirituality. In addition to the bimonthly Salesian magazine LICHT, about 100 different Salesian books are presently available from Franz-Sales-Verlag, including the German edition of the works of St. Francis de Sales (12 volumes and CD-ROM), as well as the annual, Jahrbuch für salesianische Studien (Yearbook for Salesian Studies). In recent years, the dissemination of Salesian spirituality by means of new technologies has intensified, as the two websites, www.franzvonsaleslexikon.de and www.franz-sales-verlag.de, attest.

In Advent 2006, Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, a member of the ICSS, again published a Salesian online Advent calendar (www.salesadvent.de). In 2006, he also provided "Salesian responses" to twenty-four questions submitted via e-mail. Examples of these questions include "How can I pray?" and "Must I accept the Catholic hierarchy?", and "Is there a hell?" These answers are still online, and are the former Advent calendars.

Salesian days of recollection took place, 8-10 December 2006, at the training center of the Diocese of Passau (Bavaria) and were led by Fr. Benedikt Leitmayr, OSFS. In 2007, these days of recollection are scheduled for 7-9 December. To register (the number of participants is limited), contact Provinzialat OSFS, Ettingshausengasse 1, A-1190 Wien, tel. 01-302 66 97, e-mail: salesoblaten-austria@aon.at. Further information is available at www.osfs.at.


The De Sales Oblates of Salesianum Rosental in Eichstätt, Bavaria (www.salesianum-rosental.de), celebrated the Solemnity of St. Francis de Sales in 2007 with four different events. On Wednesday, 24 January, the liturgy of the Eucharist was celebrated in the chapel of the Catholic Center of the University of Eichstätt (www.khg-eichstaett.de). On 25 January, a colloquium on journalism was held to honor the patron of the German-speaking world after years of neglect of these traditions. Fr. Franz Wenigwieser, OFM, a staff member of the pastoral center for the hearing-impaired in Austria (www.gehoerlosenseelsorge.at), provided information to the individual diocesan offices of the hearing-impaired about their patron on the occasion of this year's celebration of the feast day of St. Francis de Sales. For this purpose, Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, provided Br. Franz with the necessary background material, which is also available on the Internet at www.franzvonsaleslexikon.de, keyword "hearing-impaired."

THE NETHERLANDS

Probably the first statue representing St. Jane Frances de Chantal and St. Francis de Sales together was created by the Dutch artist Dik Komier from Leiden in 2005. The bronze statue is 35 cm high and weighs about 4,000 grams. The two saints stand side by side. Francis de Sales is depicted holding a flaming heart and a book, and Jane de Chantal, with her hand on his arm as a sign of her approval. This statue is available from Fr. Dirk Koster OSFS, S. van Capelweg 62, NL-2431 AH Noorden, tel. (+31) 0 172-408379, fax: (+31) 0 172-408544, e-mail: d.koster@compaqnet.nl. The price is 65 Euros, plus shipping and handling.

FRANCE

As noted elsewhere in this issue of the ICSS Newsletter (p. 16 below), the recent death of Sr. Marie-Patricia Burns, VHM, archivist of the Annecy Visitation, is a great loss not only to her community, but also to Salesian scholars the world over. Dr. Hélène Bordes, a close personal friend of Mary Pat, paints a very warm, engaging, informative, and well-deserved tribute to Mary Pat in La Lettre de RES [= Recherches et Études Salésiennes], no.12: “Souvenirs de Soeur Marie-Patricia, Archiviste de la ‘Sainte Source’” (Remembrances of Sr. Mary Patricia, Archivist of the “Holy Source”). The same issue also includes a review-article by Dr. Bordes on Elisabeth Stopp's...
Fr. Jean Gayet, OSFS, has generously made available copies of his digitization of the twenty-six volumes of the Annecy edition of the *Oeuvres de saint François de Sales* to several Salesian scholars who requested them at the most recent Salesian Scholars Seminar, held in October 2006. He is now laboring over the much more difficult task of scanning the indexes of volume 27. The contribution that Fr. Gayet’s work has made and will make to scholarly research of St. Francis de Sales’s writings is incalculable.

The Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales have recently appointed Sr. Madeleine Thérèse, OSFS, to continue work on the cause of Fr. Brisson. Sr. Madeleine Thérèse is currently enrolled in the Vatican school for postulators.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians will open a center for Salesian spirituality and renewal in Thonon in 2007. Sr. Anne-Marie Baud, FMA, a native of Thonon who will serve as director of the center, is currently in Rome researching Salesian sources.

**ITALY**

The Italian Province of the De Sales Oblates mourns the death of Fr. Emilio Testa, OSFS. For many years, Fr. Testa served with great distinction as General Procurator of the Congregation, establishing strong ties with the various Vatican dicasteries with which he had to interface in his work on behalf of the congregation. As postulator of the cause of Fr. Brisson, he worked tirelessly with Fr. Roger Balducelli, OSFS, and Fr. Yvon Beaudoin, OMI, to promote this cause. He was also charged with the cause of the canonization of St. Léonie Frances de Sales Aviat, foundress of the Oblate Sisters. More recently, he worked as well on the reactivation of the cause of the beatification of Mother Mary de Sales Chappuis.

Thanks to the work of the Visitation sisters of Salò, Brescia, the ICSS Newsletter is now available in Italian. The first two Italian versions (nos. 17 and 18) are posted on the ICSS website at http://www.franz-von-sales.de/.


The Salesian influence has been present in a number of Vatican dicasteries, notably through the Salesians of Don Bosco. This influence should be all the more salient with the recent appointment of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, SDB, as Vatican Secretary of State by Pope Benedict XVI. Also noteworthy is that Fr. Pascual Chávez, Rector Major of the Salesians, was recently elected President of the Union of Superiors General.

Margaret Occhiena, the mother of Don Bosco, has recently been declared “Venerable.” At age fifty-eight, she left her little house in Colle and followed her son in his missionary apostolate among the poor and abandoned boys of Turin. There, for ten years, mother and son united their lives in the beginnings of the Salesian Work. She was Don Bosco’s first and principal cooperator. She contributed her maternal presence to the Preventive System. Thus she became the “co-founder” of the Salesian family (Zenit News).

**VISITATION SISTERS**

Fr. Valentín Viguera Franco, SDB, a renowned Spanish Salesian scholar, was appointed in 2006 as the new General Assistant of the Visitation Sisters. His publications include a Spanish translation of the *Meditations on the Church* (*Controversies*) (1985), a biography of St. Francis de Sales (1990), and a comparative study of the spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and St. John Bosco (1992). Fr. Viguera has also served as the confessor for the monastery of the Visitation Sisters in Seville. The task of the General Assistant is to promote the spiritual direction of Visitandines worldwide, encouragement for contemplative life, and the preservation of unity and of the true spirit of the Rule.

**DAUGHTERS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES**

The Daughters of St. Francis de Sales, Group Austria (www.franz-von-sales.org) undertook a pilgrimage, “In the Footsteps of St. Francis de Sales,” in September 2006. The...
pilgrimage’s highlight was the celebration of the Eucharist with the Visitation Sisters at Annecy, in the basilica, where both St. Jane de Chantal and St. Francis de Sales are buried and venerated by people from various parts of the globe. The group also visited Geneva where Francis met with Theodore de Bèze, the fortress at Allinges where Francis took refuge each night during his Chablais mission, and the castle of Sales, near the place where Francis was born. The group repeatedly felt Francis’s living spirit at these sites. Travelling to Mont Blanc, the group could better appreciate the many difficulties Francis experienced in making pastoral visitations to the people in these small mountain villages. The pilgrimage concluded at the hermitage of St. Germain, where Francis wished to retire.

The regional head of the Swiss Group of the Daughters, Helen Dora-Fehr, participated in the meeting of the French-speaking heads of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales. The meeting’s theme was “To Be Witnesses of Love,” which emphasized the Salesian challenge of what it means to be witnesses of love: loving others not only as ourselves, but as God loves them.

Two members of the Group Baden (Germany) will finish their two-year formation in February 2007. They will then become official members of the Daughters by making their consecrated promises.

Fr. Antony Kolencherry, MSFS, spiritual director of the Swiss Group of the Daughters, will give their retreat in March 2007 at the Visitation Monastery at Solothurn, Switzerland.

United States

TOLEDO-DETROIT PROVINCE

On 18-22 October 2006, De Sales Resources & Ministries in Stella Niagara, N.Y., hosted the biennial meeting of the Salesian Scholars Seminar, whose theme this year was “Images and Symbols in the Salesian Tradition.” On the first full day of the Seminar, Dr. Agnès Guiderdoni-Bruslé, a specialist in the field of emblem literature from the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), conducted a seminar for the group on emblems as they relate to the life and times of St. Francis de Sales. During the subsequent two days, eight papers were presented following the past procedure of having someone other than the author give a précis of the paper and then opening it up for discussion by all the participants. The following papers were discussed:

- Dr. Patricia Siegel Finley, “La Croix, image emblématique d’après la Défense de l’Estendard de la sainte Croix de François de Sales”;
- Fr. Alexander T. Pocetto, OSFS, “The Image of Jacob’s Ladder in the Writings of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622)”;
- Sr. Mary Paula McCarthy, VHM, “Plenitude of Pliny: Images in the Introduction to the Devout Life”;
- Dr. Wendy M. Wright, “St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and the Conception of the Virgin Mary”;
- Dr. Jill R. Fehleison, “Appealing to the Senses: The Forty Hours Celebration in the Duchy of Chablais, 1597-1598”;
- Fr. Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, “Bouquet Making, Painting, and the Art of Memory in the Introduction to the Devout Life”;
- Fr. Joseph Boenzi, SDB, “Francis de Sales: Images for Youth Spirituality”;
- and Dr. Roberta Brown, “Five Navigational Images in the Works of St. Francis de Sales.”

Dr. Wright and Fr. Chorpenning organized and co-chaired the Seminar. Two auditors also participated in the Seminar: Dr. Kathy Brown, a pastoral theologian who teaches the course in Salesian spirituality at the Washington Theological Union, and Christian Krokus, a doctoral student in theology at Boston College who is currently doing research in Paris on Louis Massignon (d. 1962), a pioneer in Catholic-Muslim dialogue. The theme of the next meeting of the Salesian Scholars Seminar, scheduled for October 2008, is “Propagating the Salesian Spirit.”

Another successful Salesian conference, the Joseph F. Power, OSFS, 24th Annual Conference on the Spirituality of St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal, was held in August 2006 at the Hilton in Durham, N.C. The conference’s theme was “Dancing in the Darkness: A Spirituality of Hope in Any Age.” Shaun Lowery, OSFS, provides an overview of the conference in the Fall 2006 issue of Bondings, the newsletter of the province. In the same issue, Fr. Roland Calvert, OSFS, reviews St. Francis de Sales and the Bible (2005), by the late Fr. Anthony Ceresko, OSFS, noting that this collection of essays, “unites three passions of the author—scripture studies,...Salesian spirituality, and liberation theology.” Fr. Calvert rightly points out that these excellent essays urge readers on “to a more passionate effort to build the Lord’s kingdom of peace and justice in our time.” Another favorable review of this book appeared in the January-June 2006 issue of Estudios Josefinos, a journal published biannually by the Discalced Carmelite Friars in Valladolid, Spain.

Dr. Patricia Siegel Finley, a Daughter of St. Francis de Sales and chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at the State University of New York-Brockport, has generously offered her services to edit the papers of Fr. Joseph Power, OSFS. She will be assisted by Joanne Kinney, administrator of De Sales Recources & Ministries, in preparing these papers for publication.

WILMINGTON-PHILADELPHIA PROVINCE

The Province mourns the death of Fr. Richard J. Wojnicki, OSFS, director of De Sales Service Works (DSW), at age 52, “in the prime of life,” of renal cancer on 31 December 2006. Now in its fifth year of operation, DSW is a program sponsored by the Wilmington-Philadelphia Province of the De Sales Oblates that recruits young people to volunteer for at least a year to work with the disadvantaged and needy in Philadelphia. Fr. Wojnicki had
served as director of DSW since 2003, and during his tenure publication of a newsletter was initiated, a new website was launched (www.2desales.com.), and plans were underway to open a second volunteer house in Greensboro, N.C. Last year’s DSW volunteers served approximately 250 needy people in various settings. Since DSW’s inception in 2002, volunteers have come from eleven different states. To find out more about DSW, visit its website mentioned above.

On Founders Day, 12 October 2006, the Province celebrated with sincere gratitude the twelve years of service of Fr. Lewis S. Fiorelli, OSFS, as Superior General of the De Sales Oblates. A Eucharistic liturgy was held at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Vienna, Va., followed by a reception. The event was organized by a special committee chaired by Fr. John McGee, OSFS.

To celebrate Founders Day, the Salesianum Oblate Community in Wilmington, De., hosted a lecture by Dr. Elizabeth M. Nagel, chair and professor of Old Testament at St. Charles Seminary, Philadelphia, followed by a reception. Dr. Nagel compared the spiritual journeys of Abraham and Fr. Brisson, who both were called by the Lord to journey in faith from the familiar and comfortable to found new religious families. In addition to the Salesianum community, more than fifty diocesan clergy and religious men and women attended this event, which was organized by Fr. Michael C. Connolly, OSFS.

Christopher Dayett, a musician, parishioner of Immaculate Conception Church in Wilmington, N.C., and 2000 graduate of Salesianum School in Wilmington, De., has composed a Mass of the Present Moment inspired by our Salesian spirituality. In this composition, Chris’s intent is to blend the words and sounds of yesterday with those of tomorrow, creating and celebrating the present moment. It has received ecclesiastical approval and is currently being sung at Immaculate Conception. It will soon be available to the province. For more information, contact Fr. Barry Strong, OSFS, at brstrongosfs@aol.com.

The De Sales Spirituality Center continues to offer numerous programs—parish missions, retreats, days of recollection, etc., throughout the U.S. During the Lenten season, programs on Salesian spirituality will be presented at parishes in Virginia, Kentucky, Texas, and Pennsylvania, as well as at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. For more information about how the Center can assist you in making available these programs and other services, contact Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, executive director (mmurray@osfs.org).

Fr. Thomas B. Curran, OSFS, was recently inaugurated as the fourteenth president of Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Mo. Rockhurst is a Jesuit, Catholic institution and is governed by a board of trustees composed principally of lay people. Fr. Curran is the first non-Jesuit president of the institution.

The third annual day of Lenten reflection and renewal given by the De Sales Oblates at Bishop Ireton High School, Alexandria, Va., with the theme “Living Jesus in 2006,” attracted more than 300 people representing thirty-five parishes from both the Diocese of Arlington, Va., and the Archdiocese of Washington. Presenters were Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, and Susan Gardner, regional director of the De Sales Spirituality Center, who spoke on “St. Francis de Sales Goes to the Movies,” exploring the saint’s wisdom and maxims that appear in many modern films. Bro. Michael O’Neill McGrath, OSFS, nationally recognized Salesian artist, spoke on “If Today You Hear God’s Voice” and showed a number of his paintings depicting how the voice of God can be heard in ordinary events. Bro. Mickey was also the keynote speaker at the second Parish Ministries Conference of the Allentown Diocese, where he explored the relationship between art and faith. The conference had more than 300 participants.

At a luncheon attended by more than 700 people of different faiths, Fr. Daniel Gambet, OSFS, president emeritus of De Sales University, was presented the Lehigh Valley Community Service Award. This honor was bestowed on Fr. Gambet by Life Path, an organization that helps people with special needs such as autism, Down’s Syndrome, and cerebral palsy, in recognition of his many outstanding contributions to numerous community service organizations in the Lehigh Valley.

The Fraternity/Sons of St. Francis de Sales made their annual retreat, 3-5 November, 2006, at the Precious Blood Spiritual Center, Columbia, Pa., with Fr. Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, ICSS Chairman, as director. The retreat’s theme was “St. Joseph, the First Salesian Saint.”

The Salesian Leadership Institute at De Sales University, directed by Fr. Thomas Dailey, OSFS, director of the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture (SCFS), was featured in both the Catholic Standard & Times youth magazine of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and in Compass, the newsletter of the Catholic Leadership Institute. Frank Ryan, who has generously funded the program for a three-year period through the Ryan Family Foundation, attended the closing retreat for the first group of fourteen students and commented: “I have very high expectations for this program, and you have exceeded them. I wish that fifty years ago I could have participated in a program such as this. You are pioneers and you are the leaders of tomorrow. With fewer priests and religious sisters, lay leaders, such as you, will determine the future of the Church.” To learn more about the activities and programs of the SCFS, visit its website at http://www4.desales.edu/SCFC/news.htm.

During “Heritage Week” (21-25 January 2007), De Sales University celebrated the legacy of its patron by a series of events highlighting the facets of St. Francis de Sales’s life that
correspond with academic areas in which faith and culture continue to be engaged in today’s world: bishop of Geneva (21 Jan., Mass of St. Francis de Sales, with Fr. James P. Olson, director, Spiritual Year Program, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, as guest celebrant and homilist), Christian humanist (22 Jan., Baranzano Society on Bioethics Public Forum), lawyer and cathedral provost (23 Jan., lecture “The New Evangelization” by Dr. Patrick McKinley Brennan, professor and Scripta Chair in Catholic Legal Studies, Villanova University School of Law), patron of journalists (24 Jan., lecture “Finding Common Ground between Journalism and Religion” by Kenneth L. Woodward, longtime religion editor at Newsweek), and doctor of the Church (25 Jan., R. Wayne Kraft Memorial Lecture by Sr. Carol Jean Vale, SSJ, president, Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia).

**Fransalians**

The Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS), also known as the Fransalians, have an online “Thematic Easy Reference to Salesian Perspectives” on seventy-five different topics, such as abandonment, holy indifference, simplicity, etc., at http://www.fransalians.com/sfs-views/salesian-views.htm.

**Symposium on Salesian Spirituality and Education**

A symposium on Salesian spirituality as applied especially to the mission of evangelization and education of the young will be held 18-25 July 2007 at Don Bosco Hall and the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, Ca. The symposium’s theme is *Da mihi animas cetera tolle*, “Give me souls, take the rest,” which was St. John Bosco’s motto that he adopted from Jean-Pierre Camus’s *Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*. There will be a Francis de Sales component to launch the week. For further information, contact Fr. Joseph Boenzi, SDB, 1831 Arch Street, Berkeley, CA 94709-1309, tel. 510/204-0829, e-mail: joboNZ@aol.com.

**Online Resources**


Stefan Hauptmann, *Franz von Sales: Novene* (Munich, 2007). Nine days of spiritual preparation with Francis de Sales. This novena is also published online at www.franzvonsaleslexikon.de.


A brief biography of St. Jane de Chantal with footnotes, plus an act of abandonment and three ways of praying excerpted from Jane’s *Instructions* in French may be found at http://missel.free.fr/Sanctoral/12/12.htm.

**New Publications**

Enzo Bianco, *Francesco di Sales. Contro-storia di un mansueto* (Leuman [Turin]: Editrice Elle dici 2001). This work is described as the history of a man and a priest as the spokesman of Christian gentleness that runs counter to most histories based on violence.


**Online Resources**


Stefan Hauptmann, *Franz von Sales: Novene* (Munich, 2007). Nine days of spiritual preparation with Francis de Sales. This novena is also published online at www.franzvonsaleslexikon.de.


The publishing company of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Don Bosco Verlag, has produced a series of small folding maps in which different Salesian saints are introduced to children. In this series, one can readily find Don Bosco, Dominic Savio, Mary Mazzarello, Michael Rua, Laura Vicuna and, most recently, St. Francis de Sales.

In 2007, the Salesian magazine LICHT will focus on the topic, “Praying with St. Francis de Sales.” The six issues for 2007 will have the following themes: “Why Prayer?,” “When to Pray?,” “Where to Pray?,” “How to Pray?,” “What to Pray For?,” and “The Goal of Prayer.” The magazine LICHT is also published online at www.zeitschrift-licht.de. LICHT’s 100th anniversary edition contains an article, “Die salesienische Lehre verbreiten” (Disseminating the Salesian Charism), commemorating the 30th anniversary of the International Commission on Salesian Studies.

The Visitation Monastery of Tyringham, Ma., has revived the publication of its biannual newsletter, Living Spring. The August 2005 issue notes two CDs, entitled “Christmas at Mont Deux Coeurs,” which were recorded by the sisters and are available for purchase at www.nunsong.com.
Sr. Marie-Patricia Burns, VHM
1925 – 2005

The critical edition of Jane’s correspondence was followed in 2002 by Mary Pat’s definitive biography, undertaken at the invitation of the Académie Salésienne en Annecy, of another great Visitandine, Françoise-Madeleine de Chaugu, a brilliant intellectual and gifted writer of the 17th century, who courageously and steadfastly overcame the myriad difficulties and challenges involved in Francis de Sales’s canonization process. Mary Pat played a pivotal role in the organization of the important colloquium, “Visitation et Visitandines aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles,” held in Annecy in 1999 (the acta were published in 2001), as well as in mounting the rich exhibition that accompanied it. Over the years, she published numerous articles and essays on the founders of the Visitation, each one illuminating some key, but overlooked, aspect of her beloved Jane and Francis. For example, her paper “Jane de Chantal and Forgiveness” (1998) studied the saint’s heroic magnanimity in forgiveness on several occasions: toward her husband who had been unfaithful to her, to the man who accidentally killed her husband, and to the servant-mistress of her father-in-law who tyrannized Jane at Monthelon. Special mention should be made of Mary Pat’s article, “Visitandines,” in the prestigious Dictionnaire de spiritualité, vol. 16 (1994). (Work is underway by the Salesian Scholars Seminar to make a sampling of Mary Pat’s papers available in English translation in a collected volume.) It was hoped that, for the fourth centenary of the foundation of the Visitation Order in 2010, Mary Pat would write a biography of Jane de Chantal and a history of the Annecy community and the Order of the Visitation, but her death leaves that work for another scholar to take up.

Mary Pat’s youthful and energetic demeanor and spirit, which belied her chronological age, made an indelible impression upon all who knew and loved her. Salesian scholars worldwide relied on her incomparable knowledge of the origins of the Visitation and Salesian thought, as well as on her great eagerness and generous readiness to assist them in their research. The hallmark of Mary Pat’s approach to scholarship was an immersion in the primary sources of the Salesian tradition, together with an insistence on the indispensability of this method for attaining results that were as historically accurate as possible. She is deeply missed by her many friends and colleagues, and her death leaves a vacuum in the Salesian world. May Mary Pat’s ardent devotion to the Francis and Jane of history, unpretentious by her many friends and colleagues, and her death leaves a vacuum in the Salesian world. May Mary Pat’s ardent devotion to the Francis and Jane of history, unpretentious high standards, and generous collaborative spirit be a continuing source of encouragement and inspiration to present and future generations of Salesian scholars! Requiescat in pace.