On 27-28 July 2009, in Annecy, the De Sales Oblates officially commemorated the fourth centenary of the publication of the *Introduction to the Devout Life*. The celebration’s centerpiece was the symposium, “Encountering Anew the Familiar: The *Introduction to the Devout Life* at 400 Years,” which was organized and coordinated by Fr. Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, Chairman of the International Commission for Salesian Studies (ICSS). Each day included morning prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist, and wonderful meals prepared by Bro. Thierry Marcoz, OSFS, and his staff at the Lycée Saint-Michel. This program took place during the first two days of the annual meeting of the Major Superiors, which was organized and coordinated by Frs. Sebastian Leitner, OSFS, and Michel Tournade, OSFS, Provincial of the French Province.

The symposium was based on the concept that sometimes the *Introduction*’s contents seem so familiar, that it is perceived that there is nothing more or new to be discovered or known about this spiritual classic; however, by its very nature, a spiritual classic is inexhaustible. Guided by this principle, the symposium revisited several of the *Introduction*’s most familiar elements and themes so as to uncover an overlooked or neglected aspect, and perhaps even to yield some fresh insights.

In his welcome and opening remarks, Fr. Aldino Kiesel, OSFS, Superior General of the De Sales Oblates, emphasized the *Introduction*’s continuing timeliness and relevance:

This celebration of the 400 years of this spiritual classic invites us to rediscover the treasure concealed within it. Behind its words and language . . . is hidden a secure methodology that leads to the goal of all Christian life: lived holiness. Rediscovering this treasure and presenting it to Christians and all persons of good will: this is today’s challenge. . . . The immediate success of [the *Introduction*] testifies that the bishop of Geneva really responded to the needs of his day. The desire for devotion continues today, even 400 years later, since it is a necessity that time has not extinguished because it is a craving that comes deep from within the human heart.

Over the two days, five formal presentations by specialists in Salesian studies were complemented by an opportunity for questions from the audience, discussion groups, and a roundtable.
with the presenters. In addition to the Major Superiors and the Oblates who accompanied the Provincials and Regional Superiors, Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales from France and the United States, Oblate conferees from France and the Netherlands, and Salesian scholars from Ireland, the Netherlands, and the U.S. participated in the symposium.

On the morning of the first day of the symposium, Fr. General’s and Fr. Chorpenning’s words of welcome and introduction were followed by two presentations. First, Dr. Wendy M. Wright (Professor of Theology and John C. Kenefick Chair in the Humanities, Creighton University) reflected on the Introduction to the Humanities, Creighton University) explored an element of Francis’s teaching on spiritual formation, and Fr. Chorpenning considered the interrelationship between these two facets, i.e., spiritual formation as a process of image-making. Afterwards, there was small group discussion of the presentations, with a view to surfacing questions and topics for the roundtable with the presenters on the second day of the symposium. The day concluded with the celebration of the Votive Mass of St. Francis de Sales at the Basilica of St. Francis de Sales at the Visitation Monastery, followed by supper at Saint-Michel. Fr. Tournade was the principal celebrant of the Mass, and Fr. Konrad Esser, OSFS, Assistant Superior General, the homilist.

During the morning of the second day of the symposium, there were two presentations. Bro. Daniel P. Wisniewski, OSFS (Ph.D. Candidate, Bryn Mawr College, and Instructor, De Sales University) explored an element of Francis’s teachings on spiritual friendship in the Introduction to the Devout Life that has not received the attention it merits—that friendships rooted in God are eternal and continue in the next life. Fr. Tournade, the author of a critically acclaimed adaptation of the Introduction for young people, Une monde à aimer (1998), gave a lively PowerPoint presentation on what led him to undertake his adaptation, its purpose, methodology, etc.

In the afternoon, the small groups gathered to discuss the morning’s presentations and to prepare for the roundtable with the presenters that followed. The symposium concluded with the celebration of Mass, with Fr. Kiesel as presider and homilist, at the church of St. François de Sales in the heart of Annecy, followed by a memorable festive supper at Saint-Michel that culminated with baked Alaska flambé. En route to the church, symposium participants saw the residence of Antoine Favre (1557-1624), where the Académie Florimontane, founded by Favre and Francis in 1606, met, and the house of Madame de Chamoisy, the Philothea who occasioned the Introduction’s publication (Figures 1, 2). Prior to, during, and after the symposium, many participants also visited various Salesian sites in Annecy and its environs, including the cathedral and churches of Annecy, the fortress of Allinges in the Chablais, Thonon, the hermitage of Saint-Germain in Tailoires, Thorens and its chateau. And the weather could not have been better—sunny, pleasant, and comfortable.

Work is currently underway to publish a collected volume of revised, polished, and in some cases lengthier versions of the papers presented in Annecy. In addition to, and to complement, these papers, Dr. Viviane Mellinghoff-Bourgerie (Professor of Romance Languages, Ruhr-Universität, Bochum, Germany), author of the monumental bibliography on St. Francis de Sales (2007) in the Memini “Bibliographie des Écrivains Français” series, has graciously accepted the invitation to prepare a paper for this volume that focuses on the Introduction’s various editions as indicative of how this spiritual classic was received and interpreted throughout its publication history. This volume will stand as a permanent historical record of the Congregation’s observance, under the auspices of the Major Superiors and the ICSS, of the 400th anniversary of the publication of our patron’s most popular and best-selling book, Introduction to the Devout Life. It will also give the Annecy symposium a broader reach and life beyond the actual event by making widely available its content to the wider Salesian family, world of scholarship, and those engaged in disseminating the Salesian charism at the pastoral and popular levels (cf. Statute of the ICSS, I).
Levels of Meaning in Philothea and Her Guardian Angel

In the preface to his spiritual classic, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609), St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) explains:

My words are directed to “Philothea.” In fact, I want to present for the general benefit of many persons what I had written in the first place for only one. So I use a name which can be given to anyone who wants to lead a devout life. “Philothea” means “one who loves God” or “one who is in love with God.”

Consequently, the *Introduction* quickly became, and is still, known among many language groups (e.g., German, English, Basque, Croatian, Danish, Greek, Italian, Lithuanian, Magyar, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian, Swedish, Czech, and Ukrainian) simply as the *Philothea*. While scholars have identified the textual precedents and posterity of the euphonious symbolic name “Philothea,” her appearance in the visual arts is yet to be studied—a situation undoubtedly due to the paucity of images of this subject. Of no small interest in this connection is a remarkable painting by an unknown artist, presently in the Visitation Monastery in Solothurn (Switzerland): *Philothea and Her Guardian Angel* (Figure 3), which Franz von Sales Schmid includes in his recent collection of Salesian iconography. As we celebrate this year the fourth centenary of the *Introduction* or *Philothea’s* publication, as well as honor, in this issue of the *ICSS Newsletter* (see p. 16 below), the contribution of the late Fr. Jean Gayet, OSFS, to the study of Salesian iconography, it is more than appropriate to pause to reflect on this extraordinary painting.

Our way of proceeding will be, first, to consider the painting in light of the text in the *Introduction* that informs it. Next, the historical development of the cult of the Guardian Angels and their depiction in sacred art in early modern Catholicism will be examined with a view to further elucidating the painting’s iconography. Lastly, the painting’s multivalent nature will be discussed, and a concluding reflection will be offered as well.

The Painting and Its Salesian Textual Source

The center of attention in the Solothurn painting is the statuesque, expressive, and richly colored figure of the Angel, whose right foot rests on a large stone. Philothea, here depicted as a child in accord with the iconographic formula for representing the Guardian Angel (a point to which we return below), tightly holds onto the hand of her Guardian Angel, as small children do to a parent. They are posed in an arid, desert-like landscape. The painting is filled with movement: Philothea and the Angel are poised to move forward; their garments billow in an ascending movement; and, finally, while Philothea points ahead on the same level on which they are standing, the Guardian Angel, by contrast, points upward signaling that their path is to heaven, where Francis gestures so as to present Philothea to, as well as focus her gaze on, the Virgin Mary and Christ Child enthroned on the clouds.

This painting may be regarded as visualizing the “Ninth Meditation: Deliberate Choice of Heaven,” in the *Introduction*, Part 1, chapter 17:

Imagine that you are in the open country, alone with your Guardian Angel, like the young Tobias going to Rages (Tobit 5). He makes you see Heaven open above. . . . Your Guardian Angel urges you to [choose Heaven] with all his power, offering you on God’s behalf a thousand graces and a thousand helps to assist you in the ascent. . . . Look at the Saints who earnestly request you. . . . Be daring, our dear friend. Whoever examines well the path of devotion, by which we have come here, will see that we have reached these delights by means of delights immeasurably more enjoyable than those of the world. . . . Hold out your hand to your Guardian Angel that he may lead you there. . . . ” (Photo: courtesy Franz Sales Verlag, Eichstätt, Germany)

Figure 3. Philothea and Her Guardian Angel. Early 18th c. Oil on canvas. Solothurn (Switzerland), Visitation Monastery. This painting visualizes the Ninth Meditation in the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 1, chapter 17, “Deliberate Choice of Heaven”: “Imagine that you are in the open country, alone with your Guardian Angel, like the young Tobias going to Rages (Tobit 5). He makes you see Heaven open above. . . . Your Guardian Angel urges you to [choose Heaven] with all his power, offering you on God’s behalf a thousand graces and a thousand helps to assist you in the ascent. . . . Look at the Saints who earnestly request you. . . . Be daring, our dear friend. Whoever examines well the path of devotion, by which we have come here, will see that we have reached these delights by means of delights immeasurably more enjoyable than those of the world. . . . Hold out your hand to your Guardian Angel that he may lead you there. . . . ” (Photo: courtesy Franz Sales Verlag, Eichstätt, Germany)
Do not despise my Son's desires, nor my great concern for you, since with Him I long for your eternal salvation." Look at the Saints who earnestly request you... "Be daring, our dear friend. Whoever examines well the path of devotion, by which we have come here, will see that we have reached these delights by means of delights immeasurably more enjoyable than those of the world."

... Accept the graces which Our Lady and the Saints offer you. Promise them that you will make your way to them. Hold out your hand to your Guardian Angel that he may lead you there... (92-93).

This text makes it possible to describe the painting's theme more precisely as Philothea's election of heaven, with the guidance and assistance of her Guardian Angel. Hell and its torments are absent. The Virgin Mary and Christ are the focal point to which both the Guardian Angel and Francis draw Philothea's attention. The "Saints" are here represented by the single figure of Francis himself, now in heavenly glory, who urges Philothea to follow "the path of devotion" that leads to heaven, while at the same time making intercession for her with the Virgin and her divine Son.

The Cult of the Guardian Angels

As noted above, the portrayal of Philothea as a child conforms to the iconicographic formula for rendering the Guardian Angel in sacred art that took hold in the period after the Council of Trent (1545-63). This development was preceded by a long and venerable tradition of devotion to the Guardian Angels. Many Fathers of the Church "believed that not only individuals but also nations had guardian angels, as did cities and Christian communities." St. Ambrose (c. 339-97) urged the faithful to pray to the Guardian Angels, and St. Basil the Great (+378) taught that "each and every member of the faithful has a Guardian Angel to protect, guard and guide them through life."... St. Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153) was a great master and a prominent devotee of the Guardian Angels. For him, they were a proof "that heaven denies us nothing that assists us," and hence, "these celestial spirits have been placed at our sides to protect us, instruct us and to guide us." St. Frances of Rome (1384-1440) was well known for her extraordinary relationship with her Guardian Angel (its bodily figure was always visible to her)—a facet of her life referenced in the Treatise on the Love of God (1616), Book 12, chapter 5.

But, it was not until the early seventeenth century that the cult of the Guardian Angels entered the liturgical calendar. In a bull of 27 September 1608, Pope Paul V (reigned 1605-21) established a universal feast and office dedicated to the "Holy Guardian Angels." While some of the older religious orders had "lengthy and salient traditions of angel devotion as well as [exhibited] lively contemporary commitment," in the early modern era the Jesuits "constituted a vanguard... in the vigour and manner of their propagation" of the cult of the Guardian Angels through their example and devotional practices, writings, and preaching.

For the Jesuits, the cult of the Guardian Angels went back to their founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), who considers the nature of angelic influences in the sections of the Spiritual Exercises on the discernment of spirits. Ignatius's first companion, the Savoyard Bl. Peter Favre (1506-46) was renowned for his loving and familiar veneration of the Guardian Angels—an example that Francis warmly recommends to Philothea for imitation (Introduction, Part 2, chapter 16). Other early Jesuit saints, such as Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) and Aloysius Gonzaga (1568-91), also practiced and disseminated this devotion through their writings.

Francis's advocacy of the Guardian Angel devotion has been linked to his affinity with Ignatian spirituality and Molinism's optimistic anthropology whereby man's free will cooperates with God's grace.

Guardian angels are... not a metaphorical personification of God's providential care for the people He has made, but personal beings who act on behalf of God for our welfare...

Guardian angels can remove neither the free choice of human beings nor the consequences that follow from their wrong choices. But they are part of the chain of love that links God to His human creation. Loving God, the guardian angels love us, God's creation, and so they pray for our salvation. They intercede with God that we might know God as our supreme good, so favored with grace that we make the right choices even in times of pain and confusion.

In its own right, the Introduction makes a significant contribution to the popularization of devotion to the Guardian Angels. Not only does the Guardian Angel play a key role in Philothea's election and choice of Heaven and the devout life (Part 1, chapters 17-18), but is also part of her invocation for meditation (Part 2, chapter 3), morning and evening exercises (Part 2, chapters 10-11), and her annual retreat (Part 5, chapters 2, 4, 8, 15). As already mentioned, Francis exalts, in the Introduction, Part 2, chapter 16, the "great Peter Favre... the first priest, the first preacher, the first professor of theology of the holy Company of Jesus... the first companion of Blessed Ignatius, its founder" (141), as the paradigm for Philothea's relationship with the Guardian Angels. Francis enumerates the attributes of this relationship in these terms:

Enjoy the friendship of the Angels. Often be aware of their invisible presence in your life. Show a special love and respect for the Guardian Angel of the diocese where you are, the Guardian Angels of the persons with whom you live, and particularly for your own. Pray to them often, praise them constantly. Make use of their help and assistance in all your affairs, both spiritual and temporal, so they may work to realise your intentions (140).

The Guardian Angel in Early Modern Sacred Art

Francis's handling of the figure of the Guardian Angel in the Introduction, Part 1, chapter 17, attests to the formative influence of the Old Testament story of the archangel Raphael and Tobias in the Book of Tobit 5-12 on the understanding of the role of the Guardian Angel and the iconicographic formula for its portrayal in the visual arts. As we have already seen, in the Meditation on the
Deliberate Choice of Heaven (Introduction, Part 1, chapter 17), Francis instructs Philothea: "Imagine that you are in the open country, alone with your Guardian Angel, like the young Tobias going to Rages (Tobit 5)" (92). This identification of Philothea with Tobias and of her Guardian Angel with Raphael derives from the idea, which became commonplace in early modern Catholicism, that the "story of the archangel Raphael accompanying, protecting, and advising the young Tobias who was journeying on behalf of Tobit is a model of the notion of guardian angels."16 For example, in his Meditations on the Holy Angels and Particularly on the Guardian Angels (Rome, 1606), Aloysius Gonzaga sees Raphael as the prototype of the Guardian Angel:

consequently, Raphael as man's travelling companion, protector from danger, and spiritual guide, is also overlaid during the sixteenth century onward in his role as guardian angel. . . . It was natural for those painters who responded to the spread of the new devotion [to the Guardian Angels] to be inspired at first by Raphael and Tobias and gradually remove their iconographic definitions to adopt the new typology. In this case the angel points to the heavens while accompanying or tending to a child. . . .18

That the Guardian Angel accompanies a child is based on not only the figure of the young Tobias, but also the "little ones" of Matthew 18:10: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of My heavenly Father." Early modern Catholic culture was "as much visual as textual."19 There is abundant visual documentation that combines image and text to chronicle the assimilation of Raphael and Tobias with the Guardian Angel and its charge. For example, an engraving of 1608 by Hendrick Goudt (1585-1648), after Adam Elsheimer's painting of Tobias and Raphael, bears the inscription: "Like Tobias, as Raphael shows him the way, travels home through various vicissitudes, so, when you follow the Guardian Angel going before you, you will safely set foot in the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father."20 Of even greater interest is an emblem, by the Flemish engraver Theodor Galle (1571-1633), in the Veridicus christianus (The True Christian [Antwerp, 1601]) by the Belgian Jesuit Jan David (1543-1613), that synthesizes many points touched upon in the preceding discussion of the historical development of the cult and iconography of the Guardian Angels.21

Emblem 40, in the Veridicus christianus, a work intended to be both a meditation book and a catechism in images, is entitled, "The Threefold Office of the Guardian Angel" (Figure 4). The engraving combines illustration, enumeration, and annotation by assigning letters (A, B, C, etc.) to each constitutive scene that are keyed to the accompanying prose text. In the foreground, (A) the Guardian Angel stands in the orans posture, with (B) Christ in the background instructing His apostles that the "little ones" are protected (E) by their angels in heaven, who "always look upon the face of My heavenly Father" (Matthew 18:10). In the middle ground are scenes from the story of Tobit and his son Tobias: (D) Tobit burying the body of a fellow Israelite who had been murdered and his prayer of lamentation, (C) Raphael accompanying Tobias to Rages, and (F) Tobias, at Raphael's direction, catching and pulling onto shore the great fish that tried to swallow his foot before cutting it open and removing its gall, heart, and liver that have curative properties (the gall as eye ointment to cure Tobit's blindness, and the smoke from burning the heart and liver to deliver Sarah from the demon plaguing her).

Figure 4. Theodor Galle (1571-1633), The Threefold Office of the Guardian Angel, engraving (detail), in Jan David, Veridicus christianus (The True Christian [Antwerp, 1601]), which was intended to be both a meditation book and a catechism in images. Galle's engraving combines illustration, enumeration, and annotation by assigning letters (A, B, C, etc.) to each constitutive scene that are keyed to the accompanying prose text. In the foreground, (A) the Guardian Angel stands in the orans posture, with (B) Christ in the background instructing His apostles that the "little ones" are protected (E) by their angels in heaven, who "always look upon the face of My heavenly Father" (Matthew 18:10). In the middle ground are scenes from the story of Tobit and his son Tobias: (D) Tobit burying the body of a fellow Israelite who had been murdered and his prayer of lamentation, (C) Raphael accompanying Tobias to Rages, and (F) Tobias, at Raphael's direction, catching and pulling onto shore the great fish that tried to swallow his foot before cutting it open and removing its gall, heart, and liver that have curative properties.
A Multivalent Image

Thus far, we have uncovered several layers or levels of Philothea and Her Guardian Angel: its inspiration in the Ninth Meditation of the Introduction, Part 1, chapter 17; its testimony to the flourishing cult of the Guardian Angels in early modern Catholicism, this cult’s assimilation of the archetypal story and figures of Raphael and Tobias to elucidate the role of the Guardian Angel and its portrayal in sacred art, and the importance Francis accords this devotion in the Introduction; and how the figure of the young Tobias and Matthew 18:10 account for Philothea’s depiction as a child. There is yet another reference to Raphael and Tobias in the Introduction that allows yet another “reading” of Philothea and Her Guardian Angel.

In the Introduction, Part 1, chapter 4, “The Necessity of a Guide to Begin and to Make Progress in Devotion,” Francis begins by appealing to the story of Tobias: “When young Tobias was told to go to Rages, he said, ‘I do not know the way at all.’ His father replied, ‘Well, go and find someone to be your guide’ (Tobit 5:2, 4)” (64). The aptness of Francis’s choice of Tobias in this context is underscored by his inclusion, in the preceding chapter (“Devotion Is Suitable to Every Kind of Life-Situation and Occupation”), of Tobias and his wife Sarah in the list of examples from the Old Testament of those who lived devotion in the midst of the world. Later in chapter 4, Francis returns to Tobias and Raphael as models for the director/director relationship:

Since it is so very important for you, Philothea, that on this holy journey of devotion you travel with a good guide, pray very earnestly to God to give you one after His own heart, and do not doubt. Even if it is necessary to send an Angel from heaven, as He did for young Tobias, He will give you a guide who is good and faithful.

Always look upon this guide as an Angel, that is, once you find him do not consider him as an ordinary man. And do not put your trust in him or in his human knowledge but in God. God will give you grace, and speak to you through this man, putting in his heart and in his mouth whatever is needed for your happiness. So much so that you should listen to him as to an Angel come down from heaven to take you there . . . (66).

When “read” from the perspective of the Introduction, Part 1, chapters 4 and 17, Philothea and Her Guardian Angel becomes a multivalent image that has a literal and two allegorical meanings. On the literal level, the painting represents Philothea’s election of heaven, to which she is guided and led by her Guardian Angel, as described in the word-picture Francis presents in the Introduction, Part 1, chapter 17. The painting may also be viewed as an allegory of spiritual direction, of the relationship between Philothea and her spiritual director, “an Angel come down from heaven to take [her] there” (Part 1, chapter 4). And, finally, going a step further, the painting may be read as an allegory of the relationship between Philothea and Francis himself. For Francis’s own director who are the human face of the symbolic Philothea—Madame de Chantal, Madame de Chamoisy, etc.—Francis was indeed “a good guide,” “an Angel come down from heaven” to accompany them “on this holy journey of devotion” (Part 1, chapter 4). Now, from heaven, Francis, through his intercession and the Introduction, which since it was first published 400 years ago has never gone out of print, continues to lead and guide those who love God, or are in love with God, on “the way to Heaven” (Introduction, Part 1, chapter 17).

Concluding Reflection

The Old Testament story of Raphael and Tobias looms large in the Introduction, Part 1, whose focus is “the Guidance of a Person from the First Desire for the Devout Life . . . to a Total Commitment to Live It.” Francis appeals to this narrative, specifically the relationship between the young man and the archangel, as the prototype and model for Philothea being guided and assisted by her Guardian Angel to make a deliberate choice of Heaven and of the devout life, and, conversely, for her relationship with both her Guardian Angel and her spiritual director, whose purpose is to guide and assist her on her earthly pilgrimage to heaven. Thus, Francis grounds these key elements of his doctrine on the devout life in the authority of Sacred Scripture, while making Raphael and Tobias emblematic of them. Decades later, the iconic status of Raphael and Tobias in the Introduction, Part 1, would be visually reinforced in the elegant folio reference edition of Francis’s writings published in 1652 by the Second Visititation Monastery, in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, in Paris.

The title page of this edition of Francis’s oeuvres declares that here they are enriched with “emblems and symbolic figures” (Emblèmes & Figures Symboliques). That is, an emblem or symbolic tableau is found at the beginning of each of Francis’s books, as well as at the outset of each of its constitutive parts, e.g., in the case of the Introduction, the preface and each of its five parts. The purpose of these emblems and figures is twofold: (1) to offer Francis’s writings in an aesthetically pleasing, attractive format, and (2) to serve as a means of instruction (the classic duce utile). With regard to the latter, the edition’s preface avers that the emblems and figures present the content and purpose of each book and its constitutive parts in a compressed form made possible by symbolism, in order to awaken within the reader curiosity and “a holy longing” to discover their meaning by a serious and careful reading of the text. Finally, it is noted that most of the symbols and figures used derive from the imagery and comparisons that Francis himself employs in his writings.

Accordingly, the “emblem” that illustrates the Introduction, Part 1, is Raphael and Tobias (Figure 5). The episode from the Book of Tobit that it depicts is Raphael instructing Tobias, who has caught and pulled onto shore the great fish that tried to swallow his foot, to cut it open and remove its gall, heart, and liver. The choice of this narrative to represent symbolically the Introduction, Part 1, could not be more apt, as it reflects Francis’s own thought in the matter. And for his readers, it is an invitation to plumb the various layers of Salesian doctrine compressed in this image through careful reading and prayerful reflection (lectio divina); a memory aid (an image, whether visual or verbal, impresses itself more easily on the memory than do words) to retain and hold onto this teaching; and a privileged means to participate in Francis’s characteristic symbolic way of thinking that informs his writings at every turn.

Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS

3. See A. M. Pollin, “Philothea” as a Personage in Life and in Works before and after Calderón’s Filotea,” Romanic Review 79 (1988): 665-81; and H. Bordes, “Le nom ‘Philothée,’” La Lettre de RÉS, no. 12 (July 2006): 86-89. Among the precedents are various martyr saints named “Philothée” who appear in the menologies of the Eastern Churches (e.g., a Rumanian martyr [1060], a Bulgarian martyr who died before the Fourth Crusade [1202-04], and an Athenian neo-martyr [1522-80], who is the city’s patron saint), as well as many instances of the masculine form of the name, Philothius. Subsequent to the Introduction, there are various instances of the name, including the address of the book Het Mariëtsam van de Werelt (The Mask of the World [Antwerp, 1646]) by the Flemish Jesuit theologian, Adrian Potters (1605-74) who greatly admired Francis; the protagonist of the Peregrinatio de Philothea ad Santo Templo y Monte de la Cruz (Philothée’s Pilgrimage to the Sacred Temple and Mountain of the Cross [1657]), by the Mexican bishop, Juan de Palacios y Mendoza (1605-59), as well as of the poetic allegorical drama, La divina Filotea (1681) by the great Spanish baroque dramatist, Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-81); and the pseudonym adopted by D. Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, bishop of Puebla de los Ángeles in Mexico (1676-99), for his approbation and later critique of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-95), the premier woman writer of Mexican letters.

7. Von Henneberg argues that “the cult of the guardian angel and the canonization of Santa Francesca Romana developed together—and in the context of post-tridentine debates on theological grace” (467-68).


10. Von Henneberg argues that “the cult of the guardian angel and the canonization of Santa Francesca Romana developed together—and in the context of post-tridentine debates on theological grace” (467-68).

11. Ibid., 127-28.

14. Johnson, 204.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 196.

18. Von Henneberg argues that “the cult of the guardian angel and the canonization of Santa Francesca Romana developed together—and in the context of post-tridentine debates on theological grace” (467-68).

19. Johnson, 204.

22. This idea is fully developed by P. Legros, “Introduction à la vie dévote, I, 4 . . . ou le livre de Tobie comme modèle de direction spirituelle,” La Lettre de RES, no. 13 (August 2007): 39-45.

23. Von Henneberg argues that “the cult of the guardian angel and the canonization of Santa Francesca Romana developed together—and in the context of post-tridentine debates on theological grace” (467-68).


25. Ibid., 1-2. The same emblem also illustrates the Treatise, Book 3 (355-56).

2009-2010 ICSS Grant Awarded
At their meeting in Annecy, 27-31 July 2009, the Major Superiors of the De Sales Oblates approved a grant, unanimously recommended for funding by the ICSS, to Fr. John Graden, OSFS (De Sales Resource Center, Stella Niagara, N.Y.) to assist publication of the book, Friendship, Forgiveness, and the Founders of the Salesian Tradition: Essays on Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal by the late Sr. Marie-Patricia Burns, VHM, longtime archivist at the Visitation Monastery in Annecy, the “Sainte Source.” This volume makes available in English translation a selection of seven articles and essays (six originally written and published in French, and one, also written in French, found among the author’s papers after her death). It is the result of a collaborative effort by a team of Salesian scholars from the U.S. and France that included various branches of the Salesian family who worked on the translation and preparation of this volume: De Sales Oblates, Visitandines, and lay Salesian scholars. This project pertains to the innermost core or center of Salesian studies—basic research. It will, however, be useful not only to Salesian scholars, but also to those disseminating the results of basic research at the pastoral and popular levels (ICSS Statue, I).

Committee for the Salesian Education of Youth
The first meeting of the Committee for Salesian Education of Youth of the De Sales Oblates took place in Rome on 23-24 March 2009. Committee members are: Fr. Aldino Kiesel, OSFS (Superior General); Fr. William McCandless, OSFS (Wilmington-Philadelphia Province), Chairman; Fr. Bruno Lecoin, OSFS (French Province); Fr. Ferdinand Karer, OSFS (German-Speaking Province); Fr. Markus Kraxberger, OSFS (German-Speaking Province), who also serves as translator; and Fr. Shaju Kanjiramparayil Joseph, OSFS (India Mission; General Councilor), who is the liaison to the General Council.

The Committee drafted the following mission statement:

The Committee for the Salesian Education of Youth will facilitate greater cooperation between the De Sales Oblates and their lay colleagues with whom they minister to youth by working together to fulfill our Constitutions’ directives to build Christian relationships (Constitution 192), illuminate the knowledge of our students through the light of faith (Constitution 192), teach our students to love and respect the gift that God has given to each (Constitution 193), bring about mutual affection and respect (Constitution 193), build a better society (Constitution 194), witness to Christ and mold souls (Constitution 194), and possess the Salesian spirit of humility toward God and gentleness toward neighbour (Constitution 195), so as to achieve the final goal of Salesian Education—the eternal salvation of our students (Constitution 195).

The following action items were agreed upon by the Committee, with the concurrence of the General Council and Major Superiors at their annual meeting in Annecy, 27-31 July 2009:

- De Sales Oblate school administrators will meet in Annecy on 1-3 May 2010. Two people from each De Sales Oblate school will be invited to attend. Ideally, one participant from each school will be an Oblate, and the other, a lay person. This meeting will discuss ways of incorporating Salesian education in our schools and a Salesian formation program for lay teachers, as well as explore future exchange programs between schools that will include students and teachers. This meeting also aims to promote networking and collegiality among the participants.
- A Salesian youth pilgrimage to Annecy will be planned for 2011 that will be modelled after the successful pilgrimage that was held in summer 2008.
- A program guide will be prepared for Salesian formation of lay teachers working in De Sales Oblate schools.
- A website has been established (www.salesianeducation.org) and will be developed to host the De Sales Oblates educational mission, philosophy, and history. The site will also promote all schools staffed by the De Sales Oblates.
- An International Salesian Leadership Program for Youth will be developed that is modelled after the program that is offered at Camp De Sales in Michigan (USA).
- A collaborative relationship will be entered into with De Sales University in Center Valley, Pa. (USA).
The Committee for Salesian Education of Youth is optimistic about these new initiatives, which strive to develop relationships and thereby promote collaboration among De Sales Oblates around the world, with laity in their educational apostolates, and with staff and students of their schools.

**Africa**

**Benin**

This region of the French Province has launched a website: www.osfs-france.net/benin/. Among the various items posted on this site is the Benin Mission’s Pastoral Plan (in French). The plan’s first priority is to develop a formation program and ways to attract additional vocations. Since Benin is a very poor country, the opportunities to serve the poor and marginalized are numerous. The region is dependent on outside resources to maintain its buildings and programs, but plans to find ways to eventually become self-sufficient.

**South African Region**

The unification of two former Regions—Keetmanshoop (Namibia) and Keimoes (South Africa)—has facilitated the setting up of a new website: www.osfs-saregion.net. Although several sections are still under construction, it is now easier to access information about the work of the De Sales Oblates in this newly formed Region. For example, at Marienthal, Namibia, the De Sales Print Shop was established in 2007 to spread the Salesian charism. The parish of Immaculate Conception, also in Marienthal, provides a soup kitchen for orphans, street children, and adults with HIV/AIDS that feeds about 300 people. However, the parish is finding it difficult to maintain the soup kitchen for lack of sufficient funds. The website also provides photos of the various parishes and Oblate residences.

**Europe**

**France**

Planning for the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Visitatin Order has been in the works for the past four years, beginning with a small group and steadily increasing to include both diocesan and civic organizations. Activities and events (e.g., seminars, exhibitions, concerts and shows, especially for young people) are planned throughout 2010, commencing on 24 January 2010, the Solemnity of St. Francis de Sales, and ending on 12 December 2010. A number of prelates will participate in the various religious events, including Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, archbishop of Paris, and Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, archbishop of Lyon. A special Mass, at which the bishop of Annecy, Yves Boivineau, will preside, will be televised on 6 June 2010, the precise date of the foundation.

Noteworthy is the close collaboration between the Office for Pilgrimages of the Diocese of Annecy and the Tourism Office of Annecy. These two bureaus are planning one-, two- or three-day tours to Salesian sites and other places of interest in Haute Savoie. The Tourism Office will select the sites, while the Office for Pilgrimages will choose knowledgeable guides. The overriding purpose of these tours is to make the life, spirit, and teaching of St. Francis de Sales better known.

The theme for the 2008 Journées Salésiennes was “A l’écoute de la Parole de Dieu avec François de Sales” (Listening to the Word of God with Francis de Sales). The following articles were published in the August 2009 La Lettre de R.E.S. [= Recherches et Études Salésiennes]: Jean-Luc Leroux, OSFS, “La Bible et saint François de Sales” (The Bible and St. Francis de Sales); Philippe Legros, “Les saints ou l’Evangile chanté: saint Louis” (The Saints or the Gospel Sung: St. Louis); Geneviève-Agnès Poinsot, OSFS, “Rachi, la Bible hébraïque et saint François de Sales” (Rachi, the Hebrew Bible and St. Francis de Sales); Michel Tournade, OSFS, “La parole de Dieu, source de similitudes chez saint François de Sales” (The Word of God, Source of Similitudes in St. Francis de Sales); and Blandine Delahaye, “Le message de la fête de la Toussaint dans les sermons de François de Sales et dans l’École française de spiritualité” (The Message of the Feast of All Saints in the Sermons of Francis de Sales and in the French School of Spirituality).

**German-speaking Province**

The newly merged German-Speaking Province (Germany-Austria-Switzerland), established on 1 July 2009, now has a new website, which contains important information about the new Province: www.osfs.eu. It is also available at: www.osfs.at, www.osfs, and www.osfs.de. The first Provincial of this new Province is Fr. Thomas Vanek, OSFS. His Provincial Councilors are Bro. Markus Adelt, OSFS; Bro. Hans Leidenmüller, OSFS; Fr. Josef Lienhard, OSFS; and Fr. Johann Schurm, OSFS. To mark this merger, a celebration took place in Fockenfeld, Bavaria, on 21 August 2009. A new seal was also created for this new entity.

The Province held a number of different events and activities to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the publication of the Introduction to the Devout Life, known in the German-speaking world as “Philothea.” At the Salesianum Rosental in Eichstätt, Bavaria, the formation community (postulants, novices, and scholastics) designed a five-meter long “Philothea Banner,” which displays seven key quotations from this Salesian masterpiece. It may be viewed at: www.franz-sales-verlag.de/salesianum/images/philotheaband. This banner hangs at the entrance hall of the Salesianum and draws visitors’ attention to the fourth centenary of this spiritual classic.

The Salesians of Don Bosco organized a study conference on the Philothea, which took place in Munich on 10 January 2009. Fr. Thomas Günther, OSFS, spoke about the principal stages of the life of St. Francis de Sales, the patron of the Don Bosco Family, to about eighty participants. After each of Fr. Günther’s conferences, the participants shared their thoughts in different working groups. The topics were “Prayer of the Heart,” “Little Virtues,” and “Work.” One participant summed up the day in these terms: “The teaching of St. Francis de Sales, especially his Philothea, is more relevant than ever.”

On 25 January 2009, the De Sales Oblates of Salesianum Rosental in Eichstätt invited the auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Regensburg, Reinhard Pappenberger, to preside at a special Eucharistic celebration for the Solemnity of St Francis de Sales. In his homily, the bishop not only evinced that he was very knowledgeable of St. Francis de Sales and his Philothea, but also a great admirer, since he is an alumnus of the Academic High School of the De Sales Oblates at Fockenfeld, Bavaria. As a sign of his admiration for the saint, he had the letters “V. J.” (Vive Jésus!) engraved on his pectoral cross.

Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, a member and the webmaster of the ICSS, sent a press release to numerous media organizations (newsletters, radio, Internet), which contained interesting information about the Philothea. This resulted in various articles that were published in a number of newspapers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. One article, authored by Fr. Winklehner, was published by the German version of the Zenit News Agency. It can be viewed at: www.zenit.org/article-17058?1=german.
Several radio stations also reported on the *Philothea*. The Catholic radio station, “Radio Horeb” (www.radio-horeb.de), broadcast a one-hour talk by Fr. Winklehner on the topic “Francis de Sales—The Author of a Best Seller: 400 years of the *Philothea*.” Johannes Kaupp, an Austrian journalist, produced two thirty-minute broadcasts for the public Austrian Radio Station ORF (www.orf.at). His first production was entitled “Philothea: To Be a Christian in Everyday Life”; the second, “Philothea: The Practice of the Virtues.” For both productions, Fr. Alois Bachinger, OSFS, and Fr. Winklehner were interviewed. Finally, the Section for Faith and Religion of the radio station “Radio IN” (www.radio-in.de) broadcast a brief item entitled “A Best Seller for Christians: The *Philothea* of St. Francis de Sales.” This broadcast can be downloaded from the Internet under www.philothea.de (“Downloads”).

The University of Vienna (Austria) organized a roundtable discussion with the Austrian writer Josef Dirnbeck on 1 April 2009. Mr. Dirnbeck presented his new book, *Fromm und trotzdem normal. Die Franz von Sales Methode* (Devout and Yet Sane: The Method of St. Francis de Sales). In his book, the author cites a number of essential quotations from the *Philothea* and applies them to Christian life today. This book is available from Franz Sales Verlag, Eichstädt: www.franz-sales-verlag.de.

Fr. Thomas Mühlberger, OSFS, organized a weekend retreat on the *Philothea* for students of the Academic High School of the De Sales Oblates at Fockenfeld, Bavaria, in late April. To help the students understand and become familiar with the *Philothea*, he used Josef Dirnbeck’s book mentioned above.

The “Weggemeinschaft des hl. Franz von Sales” (Companions of St. Francis de Sales), a group of lay people, guided by Bro. Hans Leidenmüller, OSFS, who are interested in Salesian spirituality, came together for a *Philothea* workshop at Horn, Lower Austria, in May 2009. Fr. Winklehner was the guest speaker. After introducing the history, meaning, and content of the *Philothea*, he explained how the *Philothea* can be read alone for spiritual profit for oneself or together with a group. Several weeks later, in June, the group made a pilgrimage to Troyes, France, and visited the sites of the foundation of the Oblate Sisters and the De Sales Oblates.

In June 2009, Fr. Winklehner gave a presentation on the *Philothea* to the nuns of the Benedictine Monastery in Eichstätt. He also gave a talk titled “Francis de Sales: Mystic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus” to the Salesians of Don Bosco at Emsdorf, Bavaria (www.kloster-emsdorf.de).

On 3 April 2009, the Franz Sales Haus (St. Francis de Sales House) located in Essen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, celebrated the 125th anniversary of its foundation. This house is an institution for the mentally challenged. On the occasion of this jubilee, a book was published, containing detailed information about St. Francis de Sales, the patron of this institute. For further information, see www.franz-sales-haus.de.

The Salesian magazine of Switzerland, *Thaddäusbote* (Thaddäus Herald) dedicated its tenth annual issue to the 400th anniversary of the *Philothea* in 2009. Next year’s issue will be dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Visitation Order. The following articles are planned for this issue: “St. Francis de Sales, the Founder of a Religious Order”; “Mary and Elizabeth: Called to Encounter”; “Jane Frances de Chantal: the ‘Cornerstone’ of the Visitation”; “Martha and Mary: Called to Serve God and the People”; “The Visitation Order Today in Switzerland”; “The Spiritual Directory: Called to Live With God”; “The Motto of the Visitation: Called to Holiness”; “Margaret Mary Alacoque, Apostle of the Sacred Heart”; “The Seven Blessed Martyrs of Madrid”; “The Profession Cross: Called to Love.”

Accompanied Salesian Retreats took place at Salesianum Fockenfeld, Bavaria, 12-19 July 2009. The retreat theme was “Is It Possible to Walk This Way.” For information and registration for these retreats in 2010, contact Fr. Konrad Eßer, OSFS, Haus Overbach, 52428 Jülich-Barmen, Germany, phone 02461-930-152, fax: 02461-930-199, e-mail: P.Konrad.Esser@osfs.de.

Fr. Mühlberger and Bro. Markus Adelt, OSFS, led a pilgrimage of young people in the footsteps of St. Francis de Sales, 26 July-1 August, 2009. The itinerary started from the Lake of Geneva through the Chablais area, then to Annecy.

**SISTERS OF THE VISITATION**

The official international celebration of the fourth centenary of the foundation of the Visitation Order will take place at the Basilica of St. Francis de Sales, at the Visitation Monastery in Annecy, on the exact day of the 400th anniversary, 6 June 2010. Moreover, Pope Benedict XVI will issue an apostolic letter to mark this historic occasion. Beginning in 2010, a number of Visitation Sisters will live for at least three years in the contemplative monastery at the Vatican, which was established by the late Pope John Paul II.

There are currently about 120 sisters in eleven monasteries (seven monasteries in Germany, two in Austria and one in the Czech Republic and in Croatia) who belong to the German-Speaking Federation of the Visitation Sisters. The superiors of these monasteries met in the Visitation Monastery of Langberg, Bavaria. Present at this meeting were also Fr. Valentin Vigueria, SDB, the General Assistant of the Visitation, as well as Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, the Regional Assistant of the German-Speaking Federation. The meeting’s focus was preparation for celebration of the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Visitation Order. The following initiatives and observances are planned to mark the fourth centenary year: a day of adoration on 16 October 2009, the Feast of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque to inaugurate the 400th anniversary year; a special jubilee prayer that will be provided to all the Sisters of the federation; a press kit with important information on the history and spirituality of the Visitation that will be distributed to approximately 300 media organizations in Germany and Austria; a pilgrimage by the Sisters of the German-Speaking Federation to Annecy, 17-22 June 2010; a special website; a special exhibition documenting the history of the Order at the Visitation Monastery of Vienna (www.visitationerinnen.at); and the translation of a biography of St. Jane Frances de Chantal into Croatian that will be published in 2010. Moreover, each monastery plans to commemorate and celebrate this anniversary with different events and festivities in situ.

There is the possibility that the beatification of the Visitandine, Sr. Mary Margaret Bogner, will take place in 2010. Born in Melence, Hungary, in 1905, she entered the Visitation in the monastery of Thurmfeld, Austria, in 1927. A year later, a Visitation monastery was founded in Erd, near the Hungarian capital of Budapest, and Sr. Mary Margaret was among the first Visitation sisters to enter this monastery. She had serious health problems, and died at the age of twenty-eight on 13 May 1933. Because of her spiritual diary, in which her unique love for Jesus and his Sacred Heart is revealed, she is often compared with Thérèse of Lisieux and called the “Little Thérèse of Hungary.” This diary, as well as a short biography, have been published in the book *Folge mir! Das Leben von Maria Magarethe Bogner* (Follow Me! The Life of Mary Margaret Bogner), edited by Mária Puskely (Budakesszi: 2007).
The book is available in German and Hungarian; for further information, contact: vizitacio.budakeszi@gmail.com.

**Secular Institute of St. Francis de Sales**

Sr. Otrtile Kutenda, first member of the Secular Institute of St. Francis de Sales in Namibia, celebrated her Silver Jubilee in March 2009. She renewed her vows in the presence of the General Headmistress of the Institute, Angela Haucke, and Deacon Willem Konjore, the Namibian Minister for Youth and Culture. Sister Otrtile is actively involved in helping mothers and their children who are HIV positive.

In Brazil, Sr. Hedy Bergmann was honored with the Anna Terra Award for her outstanding work with the children of Brazil that she has carried on for decades. This award is given annually to women who stand out for their work to alleviate suffering and fight against injustice in society.

Sr. Heidi Weiß made her final vows in Vienna (Austria), on 16 May 2009. In his sermon, Fr. Johann Georg Herbertstein spoke about the nature of God’s love and how it can be lived and experienced in everyday life.

**Association of St. Francis de Sales**

In the first German issue of the Lien Salesien (Salesian Link) (1/2009), the newsletter of the Association of St. Francis de Sales, there is an article by the late Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens on “Francis de Sales and Vatican II,” and another by Père Morel on the topic “Prayer – Living in God’s Presence.” In the second issue (2/2009), Claudia Linker relates how she came to know the Association of St. Francis de Sales. She made her first profession as a member of the community on 13 June 2009.

**India Mission**

As noted in ICSS Newsletter, No. 23 ([March 2009]: 10), the De Sales Oblates of the India Mission have been entrusted with a new parish in Nidumukkala by the bishop of Guntur. The parish is located about 15 kms. from Guntur and has six mission outposts with about 600 families. Fr. Xavier Manchu, OSFS, has been appointed its first De Sales Oblate parish priest. This is an historic event for the India Mission since it represents the first parish ministry it has undertaken. In addition, the groundbreaking ceremony for a new theologic at Eluru in January 2009.

Fr. Sebastian Leitner, OSFS, former Delegate Superior of the India Mission, gave the annual retreat in Bangalore. His talks focused on the Introduction to the Devout Life to commemorate the 400th anniversary of this great spiritual classic.

The India Mission has made the decision to build a school. A committee, composed of Frs. Baiju, Vincent, and Regi, are investigating possible locations for the school. This committee will submit its recommendations to an Advisory Board, which, in turn, will study them and make a final decision.

**South American Province**

The Province, ICSS, and Salesian family worldwide were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Fr. Laurentius van der Raadt, OSFS, on 10 April 2009, Good Friday, at eighty-one years of age. One of his many talents was his facility with languages, and Fr. Van der Raadt was indefatigable in his work of translating the writings of Fr. Louis Brisson, OSFS, founder of the De Sales Oblates and Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales, into Portuguese and Spanish—a project assisted by a multi-year ICSS grant. In fact, he was responsible for practically all the Salesian works that are available in these languages for use in the formation of future generations of Oblates. Until his death, he also translated the ICSS Newsletter into Portuguese and Spanish.

Born in 1928 in the Netherlands, Fr. Van der Raadt made his first profession in 1949, and was ordained a priest in 1955. The following year, he was sent as a missionary to Brazil to the Oblate community in Dom Pedro, Rio Grande do Sul. Over the years, he also ministered in the Brazilian cities of Braga, Santa Barbara, and Palmeira das Missões, as well as in Montevideo (Uruguay) and Manta (Ecuador).

For many years, he also served as Director of Vocations, making long and difficult trips to more than a few isolated communities in order to make the work of the De Sales Oblates known and to encourage young Brazilians to join the congregation. In fact, many of the present Oblates from Brazil first came into contact with the congregation through the work of Fr. Van Der Raadt, including our Superior General, Fr. Aldino Kiesel, OSFS.

On the occasion of his Golden Jubilee of priestly ordination in 2005, Fr. Van der Raadt reflected on his vocation thusly: “Every vocation is a love story. I am convinced that every call, even if it be somewhat hidden, manifests itself during our childhood. As an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, I wish to say two simple words: admiration and thanksgiving. Admiration, because I do not know why I was called to this life which for me has been a grace-filled privilege. And thanksgiving, because I am aware that this call is not based on any personal merit of mine. Thus I am left with a hope—hope that God will reward me with the gift of His very Self.”

A great debt of gratitude is owed to Fr. Van der Raadt for his tireless missionary ministry, over more than five decades, in the service of disseminating the Salesian-Oblate charism to enrich and nourish the lives of so many. “Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Master” (Matthew 25:21, 23).

**United States**

**TOLEDO-DETROIT PROVINCE**

With an entirely new mode of delivery via live simulcast, the 27th Annual Joseph F. Power, OSFS, National Salesian Conference reached triple the number of participants (over 600) than in any previous year. Over two-thirds were first-time participants. The theme for this year marking the 400th anniversary of the publication of the Introduction to the Devout Life was “The Devoted Life: Happiness on the Journey.” Live presentations emanated from Salesianum High School in Wilmington, De., and were telecast to six other locations in two different time zones: Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, Washington, D.C.; Lourdes College, Sylvania, Oh.; Immaculate Conception Parish, Wilmington, N.C.; Our Lady of Light Catholic Community, Ft. Myers, Fl.; Convent of the Visitation School, Mendota Heights, Mn.; Visitation Academy, St. Louis, Mo. The technology worked very effectively, thanks to Bro. Harry Schneider, OSFS, Salesianum’s Assistant Technology Director, and his excellent staff of faculty and students.

The Conference opened with the topic “Choosing and Sustaining True Happiness,” delivered with wit, energy, some props, and song by Fr. John Graden, OSFS, Director of De Sales Resources & Ministries (DR&M), and Mary Sellars Molloy, an accomplished singer, songwriter, and storyteller. Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, Director of De Sales Spirituality Center (Wilmington-Philadelphia Province) presented a very creative talk with appropriate golf paraphernalia on “Par for the Course: Helps and Hazards in the Practice of Virtue.”
game of golf and practicing virtues, interspersed with appropriate quotations from the writings of St. Francis de Sales, was very effective. His straightforward approach in this presentation was praised by Fr. Alexander Pocetto, OSFS. The final talk, by Carol Swiger, on “The Rocky Road Home: Choices and Challenges, Trials, and Triumphs,” was a moving testimony on her discovery of Salesian spirituality. Among Ms. Swiger’s various associations with the Oblates is that she is the originator of the annual “Live Jesus” event held in Northern Virginia, which this year attracted over 500 people. After each talk, the participants at each location had the opportunity to discuss, in small groups of three or four, questions related to a specific talk. Plans are already underway for the 28th National Salesian Conference.

The Province continues to sponsor the annual Salesian Leadership Camp at Camp De Sales in the Irish Hills of Michigan. Over the years, this has proven to be one of the most popular and effective vehicles for promoting Salesian spirituality among the young. Youth leaders from De Sales Oblate and Visitandine schools, as well as parishes served by the De Sales Oblates, come to Camp De Sales for a live-in week of prayer, talks, recreation, and interaction—all of which are based on and designed to support Salesian spirituality. To help the young people carry back to their schools or parishes what they have learned and experienced, they meet with a representative of the school or parish to draw up an implementation plan.

In the Winter 2009 issue of Bondings (vol. 22, no. 1), Fr. Roland Calvert, OSFS, favorably reviews Jack Doogher’s booklet, Awakening to Now. Fr. Calvert highlights the effective way that the author shows how the faithful practice of the Direction of Intention makes one conscious of the value of the “now,” of the present moment. “Discernment in the Salesian Tradition,” a brief article by Fr. Ken McKenna, OSFS, appears in the Spring 2009 issue of Bondings (vol. 22, no. 2). Fr. McKenna notes that: “Discernment requires honesty about all [out] motivations for wanting this choice over that one, aware of the tricks of the exaggerated needs to control (get my way), to be esteemed (this will make me look good to my peers or family), and security (after this decision, I won’t have to trust God as much).”

WILMINGTON-PHILADELPHIA PROVINCE

Two Oblate seminarians, Michael Castrilli, OSFS, and Patrick Kennedy, OSFS, were presenters at the annual “Live Jesus” event at St. John Neumann parish in Reston, Va. The topic of Michael’s talk was “Gentle Strength: The Salesian Solution to Work-Life Balance,” while Patrick spoke on “Salesian Gratitude for a Eucharistic People.” Over 500 people participated in this greatly successful program.

The Salesian Center for Faith & Culture (SCF&C), De Sales University (DSU), Center Valley, Pa., continues to expand its events and activities. The fourth cohort of students of the Salesian Leadership Institute, under the aegis of the SCF&C and generously funded by the Ryan Family Foundation, was commissioned in April 2009. The Institute admitted twelve students who began the two-year program in September 2009. The SCF&C conducts the annual “Salesian Spirit” essay contest for which a medal from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications at the Vatican is awarded to the best student essay. This year’s winner was DSU senior, Matthew Kuhner. The title of his essay was “Communicating Love: Friendship in the Technological Age.” Margaret Wakelee garnered the “best of the rest” award for an essay entitled “Francis and Jane: Correspondence Founded on Spirituality.” The Center was a sponsor at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C.

Fr. Thomas Dailey, OSFS (SCF&C Director) makes frequent appearances on several TV and radio stations (including the “Catholic Channel” on Sirius/XM satellite radio), as well as writes articles in the local newspaper and presents talks on Salesian themes to numerous groups in eastern Pennsylvania and beyond. Two courses were offered by the Salesian Studies Online program, which enrolled a total of fifteen students, including one in England! Fr. Donald Heet, OSFS, completed his trilogy of courses on the Treatise on the Love of God, and Fr. Dailey taught a course on “Everyday Holiness: The Spiritual Directory of St. Francis de Sales.” A new partnership venture, the St. Francis de Sales Society, is being organized through the SCF&C under the patronage of our saintly lawyer and bishop. It will function as a professional association whose members engage in dialogue about the mutual interaction of faith and culture in the realm of law and public policy. A fourteen-member advisory board of lawyers, judges, and clerics has been meeting to plan the activities of the Society.

Under the leadership of Fr. Michael McCue, OSFS, De Sales Service Works (DSW), now located in downtown Camden, N.J., has expanded its outreach. As in the past, it houses live-in, yearlong volunteers and also provides Salesian Service Retreats for high school students, De Sales Oblate Associates, and a number of other interested individuals and parish groups. Fr. McCue spends a considerable amount of time developing good working relations with service agencies in Camden as places for DSW volunteers to work and/or to learn about the work done by each agency.

As Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, Director of the De Sales Spirituality Center (DSC), serves on the Board of the D&K, close cooperation and communication between these two centers has taken place to their mutual benefit. The DSC continues to increase the services it provides. Fr. Michael Donovan, OSFS, has completed the next installment of “Images in the Salesian Tradition”—Treatise on the Love of God—and begun to catalog the images in St. Francis de Sales, Selected Letters, trans. Elisabeth Stopp (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960). The Sundays Salesian, both in English and in Spanish, have been completed through July 2009. As an alternative method for using the De Sales Discussions series, DSC is providing Salesian Seminars. As the DSC website notes: “The De Sales Discussions series provides workbooks for reflection and discussion that accompany commercially published books that deal with some aspect of Salesian spirituality in particular or Christian spirituality in general.” A wealth of resources on Salesian Spirituality, including for the Year for Priests, can be found on the website: www4.desales.edu/SCFC/SalStudies.htm.

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

The Sisters of Maria Auxilatrix, a new congregation dedicated to serving poor and abandoned girls in India, was recently welcomed as part of the Salesian family by the Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco and his Council. The founder is Fr. M. C. Antony, SDB. The congregation numbers about 110 sisters who work in seven dioceses in India, and it is the twenty-seventh to join the Salesian family.
The Salesians have opened a new YouTube channel, ANSchannel, to provide information via videos on the life and works of this religious family: http://www.youtube.com/ANSchannel. This new Internet venture is directed by Fr. Donato Lacedonio, SDB, and has as its inaugural video the clip, “Siamo Salesiani” (We are Salesians), the anthem of those who participated in 27th annual Salesian Family Spirituality Days. A more recent video is the musical drama “Bosco, In the Name of God,” produced by some young people from the Salesian house in Salta, Argentina.

Pope Benedict XVI recently appointed Fr. Manlio Sodi, SDB, as president of the Pontifical Academy of Theology. The Academy, founded in 1718 and revived by John Paul II, has as its mission to promote the dialogue between faith and reason.

Publications

BOOKS


Yan d’Albert, Die 66 Tugenden der Sufis. Über Sanftmut, Vergebung, Achtssamkeit und Gottvertrauen (Sixty-six Virtues of the Sufis. About Gentleness, Forgiveness, Awareness, and Trust in God) (Stuttgart: Lüchow Verlag, 2009). The author (b. 1958, in Augsburg, Bavaria) is a Sufi, a mystic of Islam, a Neo-Derwisch, musician, and journalist. In this book, the author cites St. Francis de Sales on prayer/adoration, trust in God, ecstasy of action and enlightenment. Francis de Sales is also described as a model for the virtue of gentleness. Further information about the author can be found at www.yandalbert.de.

José Kumbhollick Augustine, MSFS, La unión con Dios en S. Juan de la Cruz y S. Francisco de Sales: Estudio comparativo de su propuesta doctrinal (Union with God in St. John of the Cross and St. Francis de Sales: A Comparative Study of Their Proposed Teaching) (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2002).

In Bildern sprechen. Aus den Schriften des hl. Franz von Sales (Talking with Images. From the Writings of St. Francis de Sales), ed. Oblates of St. Francis de Sales (Düdingen 2009). A booklet, with quotations from the Philothea and beautiful color photos. Another booklet is planned for 2010, on the Visitations Order to mark its 400th anniversary.


Reinhard Gesing, ed., „Mit der Liebe!“ Der „Rombrief“ Don Boscos und seine Bedeutung für die Pädagogik und Jugendpastoral heute ( “With Love”: The “Letter of Rome” by Don Bosco and Its Meaning for a Pedagogy and Youth Pastoral Ministry Today) (München: Don Bosco Verlag, 2009). Here the “Letter from Rome” is available in its entirety, while different authors reflect on its meaning for modern Salesian pedagogy and youth ministry.

Katharina Grabner-Hayden, Drei Leben (Three Lives), (Eichstätt: Franz von Sales Verlag, 2009). Three stories describe the destiny of a premature baby from the perspective of the child, the mother, and the attending physician. St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal play their role in the background.


Stefan Hauptmann (Ed.), Franz-von-Sales Kreuzweg (The Way of the Cross with St. Francis de Sales) (Buch am Erlbach: Bühl Druck, 2009). Each Station of the Cross is elucidated by an apt text of St. Francis de Sales.

Elsa Thompson Hofmeister, Extraordinary Ordinary Lives: Vocation Stories of Minnesota Visitation Sisters (Willow River, Mn.: James Monroe Publishing Co., 2009). A portrayal of fourteen women who heard and answered the call to religious life so as to demystify a way of life puzzling to many, and thus offering a rare look into the hearts and minds of these Visitationines. Available from DR&M.

Antony Kolencherry, MSFS, Wo die Blumen blühen. Mystische Dialoge 2 (Where the Flowers Bloom. Dialogue on Mysticism 2) (Eichstätt: Franz von Sales Verlag, 2009). St. Francis de Sales’s often quoted saying, “Bloom where you planted,” means that everyone is capable of developing his/her abilities, and making them bloom and flourish in God’s garden. The texts offered by Fr. Kolencherry are intended to assist in this endeavor.

Andreas Rode (Hg.), Das Jahreshbuch der Heiligen (Yearbook of the Saints) (Köln: Kösel Verlag, 2009). This book presents Léonie Aviat, Francis de Sales, and Jane de Chantal in a very favorable light, but unfortunately, Margaret Mary Alacoque is overlooked.


Pierre Stutz, Geborgen und frei. Mystik als Lebensstil (Secure and Free: Mysticism as a Lifestyle) (Köln: Kösel Verlag, 2008). The author cites St. Francis de Sales on the topic of “creative political awareness,” and also describes his friendship with St. Jane de Chantal.

The Visitation: A Monastic Way of Life (Singapore: Éditions du Signe, 2009). Published to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Visitation Order, this handsome and profusely illustrated book offers an overview of the Order's founders, its spirituality, daily life, and mission today, as well as the larger Salesian family, and the Visitations in the U.S. Available from DR&M. Also published in French, German, Italian, and Spanish versions.

Hildegard Waach, Margareta Maria Alacoque: Botin des Herzens (Margaret Mary Alacoque: Apostle of the Sacred Heart), 3rd revised ed. (Eichstätt: Franz Sales Verlag, 2009). Contains a new introductory essay, “Francis de Sales, Mystic of the Heart” by Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS.

Herbert Winklehner, Der Weg der kleinen Schritte. Salesianisches Tugend-ABC (The Way of Small Steps: A Salesian Alphabet of Virtues) (Eichstätt: Franz Sales Verlag, 2009). Over forty-five different virtues—from the theological virtues to the “little virtues”—are introduced and considered from a Salesian perspective.

**ARTICLES**


**BOOK REVIEWS**


**BOOK REVIEW**

**SALESIAN ICONOGRAPHY**

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published in 1666. Notable too is the painting of the Visitation in Fribourg (previously in the Bellecour monastery in Lyons): Mary and Elizabeth greet one another in the center, while St. Joseph holding his attribute of the flowering staff (emblematic of his divine election as the husband of Mary) stands to the left, Francis with his hands crossed on his breast stands to the right, and two Visitandines with hands folded in prayer kneel in the foreground. Schmid’s book, like Erich Hehberger’s earlier, and much shorter, book (2006) and the digital collections of Salesian iconography compiled by the late Fr. Jean Gayet, OSFS, and Fr. Valdir Formentini, OSFS (available on the ICSS website: www.franz-von-sales.de), makes an important contribution by making available a good sampling of the numerous extant Salesian works of art. Recently, these resources have been greatly expanded by the splendid catalogues of three groundbreaking and elegant exhibitions mounted by Gérard Picaud and his colleagues at the Musée de la Visitation in Moulins (France), and published by Somogy Éditions d’Art in Paris: one surveys five centuries of art in the Visitation (2007), another features works of art produced in connection with the canonizations of Francis, Jane, and Margaret Mary (2008), and the most recent is devoted to the art of embroidery in the Visitation (2009). While these catalogues provide scholarly essays and commentaries on individual art works, all these recent publications and digital collections point to the need for continuing in-depth study and analysis of the immense body of Salesian art and iconography. These print and digital materials undoubtedly proffer indispensable resources for this undertaking.

Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS
Book Review

Salesian Iconography

Sparen des Heiligen Franz von Sales, Ricordi di San Francesco di Sales, Traces de Saint François de Sales, Huellas de San Francisco de Sales. By Franz von Sales Schmid. (Eichstätt: Franz Sales Verlag, 2008). 370 pp. (Originally offered only by prepublication subscription [see ICSS Newsletter, No. 21, March 2008: 13], this book is still available at the basilica shop at the Visitation Monastery in Annecy [contact: Mère Superiéure, Monastère de la Visitation, 11 avenue de la Visitation, F-74000 Annecy, France].)

Published to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary (1610-2010), this handsome volume makes available an extensive corpus of visual images of St. Francis de Sales, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and the Biblical mystery of the Visitation. Most are works of art in Visitation monasteries in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, thus rendering accessible a vast repository of Salesian images that otherwise would not be so. Other images are from cathedrals, churches, and other sites in these countries, as well as from printed sources. The text, which identifies the subject of each art work illustrated, the artist (if known), and its location, is in four languages: German, Italian, French, and Spanish. The four major sections of the book are introduced by a chronology in the case of Francis, Jane, and Margaret Mary, and a short account of the history of the Visitation Order for the section on the mystery of the Visitation. The book is rounded off with a map indicating monasteries of the Visitations Order worldwide and a brief bibliography.

In terms of quantity, Francis comes in at over 200 images, followed by Jane (60), Margaret Mary (46), and the Visitation (34). The images illustrated include paintings, stained glass, sculpture, and engravings. It is not uncommon for a painting to serve as a source for an engraver, and, conversely, for an engraving to serve as the source of a painting. Schmid’s book offers some notable examples of the latter phenomenon. There are the four ceiling frescoes by Toussaint Largéot (c. 1636-96), in the side chapel dedicated to St. Francis de Sales in the chapel of the former Monastère de la Visitation Sainte-Marie-d’en-haut in Grenoble, now part of the Musée Dauphinois (17, 25, 26, 104), based on engravings of episodes from the saint’s life first published in Henri de Maupas du Tour’s biography of the saint (Paris, 1657): see G. Sabatier, “Du dessein au décor: Les peintures de la chapelle de Sainte-Marie-d’en-haut à Grenoble,” in Claude-François Méneuërier: Les jésuites et le monde des images (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2009), 289-320, esp. 299-300, 309, 318, Figure 41. An interesting twist on this story is that Largeot’s frescoes were done in 1662, and Maupas du Tour had been forced to withdraw from circulation the first edition of his biography because of his premature application of the titles “blessed” and “saint” to Francis, who was only beatified in 1661 and canonized four years later. After 1665, Maupas du Tour’s biography, to which was added an account of the ceremonies of Francis’s canonization, was republished several times.

Another fascinating example is found in the paintings (138, 163-65) based on Grégoire Huret’s engraving, The Crucifixion with St. Francis de Sales, St. Jane de Chantal, and Visitandine Nuns (1644), which was one in a suite of three engravings by Huret that illustrate Maupas du Tour’s 1644 biography of Mother de Chantal. One of these paintings is a 1975 adaptation of this engraving by Sr. Maria Agatina Maltese, VHM, of the Palermo Visitat, depicting the nuns as the Visitandine martyrs of Madrid, who were executed during the Spanish Civil War, 18 and 23 November 1936. For further information on Huret’s engravings, see C. Wilson, “Picturing the Way of Perfection: Grégoire Huret’s Engravings of St. Jane Frances de Chantal [1644] in Their Teresian Context,” in Human Encounter in the Salesian Tradition: Collected Essays Commemorating the 4th Centenary of the Initial Encounter of St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal [Rome: ICSS, 2007], 159-89; and ICSS Newsletter, No. 16 [July-August 2005]: 1-5.

Images of the three Salesian saints include portraits, scenes of episodes from their lives, and less familiar subjects, e.g., Francis with various other saints (George, the Archangel Michael, Jerome, Teresa of Ávila, Charles Borromeo, etc.); Francis and Jane with the Blessed Trinity, Sacred Heart of Jesus (sometimes with Margaret Mary), St. Augustine, etc.; Jane venerating the Child Christ with St. Joseph, and so on. Especially timely in this 400th anniversary year of the publication of the Introduction to the Devout Life (1609-2009) is the early 18th-century painting in the Visitat Monastery in Solothurn (Switzerland), Philothea and Her Guardian Angel (153), which is the subject of an interpretative essay in this issue of the ICSS Newsletter (see pp. 3-7 above). Undoubtedly, the most frequently represented episode from the lives of Francis and Jane is his presenting the rule of the Visitations to Jane and the first Visitandines. Well worth a look is the elegant cycle of paintings of Jane’s life (1860) by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld von Leipzig/Dresden (1794-1872), in the Kloster der Heimsuchung Mariä, Obernoring (Landshut).

Most of the images of the mystery of the Visitation in this book depict not only the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth, but also St. Joseph. (In one instance, St. Joseph is incorrectly identified as St. Augustine [326].) This, of course, conforms to Francis’s own vision of this Biblical mystery, as set forth in his letter of 30 June 1610 to Mother de Chantal (OEA, 14: 323-25), as well as the great veneration that Francis wished St. Joseph to be accorded in the Visitations Order, as has been documented by a host of studies.

No less interesting is that in some engravings and paintings of the Visitations, Francis, Jane, and/or Visitandines are also present. Perhaps the most refined engraving of this sort is that by Nicolas Aurox illustrating the title page of the 1666 edition of the Custom Book and Spiritual Directory: Mary and Elizabeth are flanked by the kneeling figures of Francis holding his attribute of the flaming heart on the left, and Jane with hands folded in prayer position to the right. Aurox’s engraving also appears in other books proper to the Visitations Order, such as the Ceremonial for Giving the Habit, also

(continued on page 14)
Fr. Jean Gayet, OSFS, who served for many years, with great distinction, as a member of the International Commission for Salesian Studies (ICSS), died on 5 September 2008, in Annecy, after a lengthy illness. As Fr. Michel Tournade, OSFS, Provincial of the French Province and longtime colleague of Fr. Gayet, emphasized in his homily at Fr. Gayet’s Mass of Christian Burial, he built his life, in accord with the Lord’s exhortation in Matthew 7:24, on a foundation of solid rock. This truth resonates for all who had the good fortune of knowing, working, and interacting with Fr. Gayet. A native of Annecy and very proud of his Savoyard heritage as was St. Francis de Sales, Fr. Gayet reflected in his life and conduct the rugged, challenging, and captivating landscape of the soaring peaks that surround the lake of Annecy and its environs, peaks that he as an expert skier often scaled up until the last year of his long and fruitful life.

As a young student at the Collège Saint-Michel in Annecy, Fr. Gayet was serious and energetic. As an Oblate seminarian at the University of Fribourg, he set himself to acquiring not only a solid theological formation, but also an ever deeper love and appreciation for the teachings of St. Francis de Sales. Fr. Gayet’s energetic and innovative talents came to the fore early in his priestly life. As a newly ordained priest assigned to the Oblate parish in Marseille, he was the driving force behind a number of pastoral initiatives catering to young people, including youth clubs, a swimming club, a library, and youth liturgies. He brought this same enthusiasm and dedication when he was subsequently assigned to the faculty of his alma mater, Saint-Michel, where he later served as the school’s principal for nineteen years. When Fr. Gayet completed his tenure, after having effectively dealt with a whole host of daunting challenges, the President of the Parents’ Club said to him: “You can be proud of what you have accomplished. . . Saint-Michel not only continues to thrive, but has also evolved in the best sense of the term. You have done this with serenity, intelligence, and courage.”

It is certainly no surprise that Fr. Gayet’s many talents were called upon by the diocese of Annecy, as well as by his Province and the Congregation. He served as Provincial of the French Province, and later as a member of the International Commission for Salesian Studies (ICSS). When the ICSS Newsletter was first launched in 1997, it was Fr. Gayet who generously agreed to translate it from English into French. Likewise, each year he translated various documents of the ICSS—its annual report, the grant applications it received, and its assessment of these applications—from English into French, for submission to the Superior General, his Council, and the Major Superiors. For a decade, Fr. Gayet did this work of translation promptly and willingly, until just a year before his death.

In his later years, when most people tend to reduce their commitments, Fr. Gayet increased his, specifically in the area of disseminating the Salesian-Oblate charism. During his “retirement,” he gave numerous retreats and talks to various groups, both lay and religious. The ICSS, with the help of the late Sr. Marie-Patricia Burns, VHM, archivist of the Visitation Monastery in Annecy, and Fr. Gayet, looked into the possibility of having all twenty-seven volumes of the Annecy edition of the Oeuvres de saint François de Sales professionally computerized, but found the cost of US$400,000 prohibitive. Fr. Gayet, on his own, undertook this monumental task, which he accomplished over several years. It is difficult to calculate the tremendous service that this digitized version has rendered to numerous Salesian scholars not only in France and the United States but also worldwide. Fr. Gayet was only too willing to provide scholars with his CD-ROM of this invaluable resource, for which the Salesian world owes him a great and enduring debt of gratitude.

Once bitten by the computer bug, Fr. Gayet also digitized a number of other texts related to Salesian spirituality. This undertaking was complemented by digitizing the numerous photos of portraits of St. Francis de Sales that he had personally taken over the years. So Fr. Gayet not only left us a great legacy of ready access to the writings of St. Francis de Sales, but also a pictorial history to complement them. In La Lettre de RES (= Recherches et d’Études Salésiennes), No. 15 (August 2009): 84-90, Dr. Hélène Bordes offers some pertinent reflections on this project in her article, “En parcourant l’iconographie de François de Sales rassemblée par le Père Gayet” (Going Through the Iconography of Francis de Sales Collected by Fr. Gayet). Moreover, Fr. Gayet accomplished all this work with very unsophisticated equipment. This reveals the measure of the man, and how much he loved and lived Salesian spirituality.

The ICSS, and indeed the whole Salesian family, make their own these words of appreciation with which Fr. Tournade concluded his homily: “In the name of the Congregation of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, we thank you, Fr. Gayet, for what you have been. . . We are grateful for the immense work in education that you accomplished through the years, for the high regard in which you were held by so many young people who found with you the heights for which you have given them a taste, whether on the snow-capped mountains or . . . in the service of their brothers and in working out their human vocation. Thank you for having been this mentor, motivated by the one thing necessary—the encounter with the One who knew how to seduce your youthful heart, Jesus, the Life who opens for each one the path to happiness.” Requiescat in pace.

(Editor’s Note: We thank Fr. Alexander T. Pocetto, OSFS, who served with Fr. Gayet on the ICSS, for preparing this memoir of our confrere and colleague. It is based on Fr. Gayet’s homily at the obsequies for Fr. Gayet that took place in the church of Saint-Maurice in Annecy on 10 September 2008 [published in La Lettre de RES, No. 15, August 2009, 91-94], as well as Fr. Pocetto’s own recollections.)