



# ICSS NEWSLETTER

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*The Treatise at 400 Years*

## The Culture of Encounter, the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, and the *Treatise on the Love of God*

In 2016, we celebrate two momentous events: the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (Figure 1), as well as the 400th anniversary of the publication of St. Francis de Sales's masterwork, *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616), which earned him the moniker, Doctor of Divine Love (Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> Although they may seem to be unrelated, these observances are closely linked, for both are rooted in and proceed from the same datum of divine Revelation, that God is love (1 John 4:8; cf. John 3:16) and that "the love of God . . . is ever ready to forgive."<sup>2</sup>

The fourth centenary of the *Treatise* invites us to reflect on this mystery of a loving and merciful God not in the abstract but in the concrete, specifically the life-experience and pastoral ministry of Francis de Sales (1567-1622), which clearly resonates with all that Pope Francis (Figure 3) envisions for this Year of Mercy. Francis de Sales is truly one of the most luminous "saints of mercy" in the Church's history.<sup>3</sup>

We often hear it said that "context matters." This is especially true as we enter into this fourth centenary year of the *Treatise*, as well as the Jubilee of Mercy. Both may be situated within the context of what Pope Francis calls the "culture of encounter," and when viewed in this way, these two events mutually illuminate one another.

**"[O]ur era is a *kairós* of mercy, an opportune time."**<sup>4</sup>

In his recent conversation with Pope Francis (published as the book, *The Name of God Is Mercy*), Vatican journalist Andrea Tornielli opens by asking the Pope about where the inspiration came for declaring a Year of Mercy. The Pope replies that "There was no particular or defining moment," but that his coming to see "the centrality of mercy" as "Jesus's most important message . . . slowly evolved over the years in my work as a priest."<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis then recalls his predecessors' contributions, which highlights the dynamic and organic relationship between his thought and theirs.



Figure 1. Logo for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The image and the motto together provide a fitting summary of what the Jubilee Year is all about. The motto *Merciful like the Father* (Luke 6:36) serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn, but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure (cf. Luke 6:37-38). The logo—the work of Jesuit Father Marko I. Rupnik—presents a small *summa theologiae* of the theme of mercy. In fact, it represents an image quite important to the early Church: that of the Son having taken upon His shoulders the lost soul demonstrating that it is the love of Christ that brings to completion the mystery of the Incarnation culminating in Redemption. One particular feature worthy of note is that while the Good Shepherd, in His great mercy, takes humanity upon Himself, His eyes are merged with those of man. Christ sees with the eyes of Adam, and Adam with the eyes of Christ. Every person discovers in Christ, the new Adam, one's own humanity and the future that lies ahead, contemplating the love of the Father. The scene is captured within an almond-shaped *mandorla*, which calls to mind the two natures of Christ, divine and human. The three concentric ovals, with colors progressively lighter as we move outward, suggest the movement of Christ who carries humanity out of the night of sin and death. Conversely, the depth of the darker color suggests the impenetrability of the love of the Father who forgives all.

I am ever more convinced of it, . . . our era is a *kairós* of mercy, an opportune time. When John XXIII solemnly opened the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council [1962-65], he said, “The Bride of Christ prefers to use the medicine of mercy rather than arm herself with the weapons of rigor.” In his meditation “Thoughts on Death,” . . . Paul VI revealed the essence of his spiritual life. . . . “My poverty—Pope Montini wrote—the mercy of God. That I may at least honor who you are, God of

infinite bounty, invoking, accepting, and celebrating your sweet mercy.” Saint John Paul II took the notion further with his encyclical *Dives in misericordia* [Rich in mercy], in which he affirmed that the Church lives an authentic life when it professes and proclaims mercy, the most amazing attribute of the Creator and Redeemer, and when it leads humanity to the font of mercy. In addition, he instituted the festivity of Holy Mercy [and] endorsed the figure of Saint Faustina Kowalska. . . . Pope Benedict XVI also spoke of this in his teachings: “Mercy is in reality the core of the Gospel message; it is the name of God Himself, the face with which He revealed Himself in the Old Testament and fully in Jesus Christ, incarnation of Creative and Redemptive Love.”<sup>6</sup>

Popes often use catchphrases to sum up a significant part of their thought. Pope Francis’s core signature phrase is the “culture of encounter,”<sup>7</sup> which is in a line of continuity with the thinking of his predecessors, as well as Vatican II. For instance, the notion of Christian faith as encounter with Jesus is memorably foregrounded by Pope Benedict XVI at the outset of his encyclical, *Deus caritas est: God is love*:

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. Saint John’s Gospel describes that event in these words: “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should . . . have eternal life” (3:16).<sup>8</sup>

The culture of encounter has also been linked to John Paul II’s philosophy of personalism, which regards each “person as an unrepeatable individual whose mystery is limitless, an *other* who points toward the Divine Other in a way that only he/[she] can.”<sup>9</sup> Another key factor is Pope Francis’s relationship to Vatican II.

Francis symbolises a new reception of the spirit of Vatican II. Unlike his predecessors who participated at the Council, Francis received the Council as a local pastor and member of a continental conference of bishops that has been very active in meeting the needs of the poor, social justice and exclusion, and rising evangelical Pentecostalism, rampant in the Latin American continent. Consequently, with specific reference to the question of dialogue and encounter, *Evangelii gaudium* is Francis’s profound updating and post-modern *aggiornamento* of *Gaudium et spes*.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 2. Title page of the first edition of the *Treatise on the Love of God*, published by the printer Pierre Rigaud in Lyon in 1616. Seven years earlier, Rigaud had published Francis de Sales’s most well-known, popular, and best-selling book, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609). The engraved illustration shows the Christ Child reposing in the human heart, recalling Song of Songs 5:2, “I slept, but my heart was awake.” It also evokes Francis’s instruction—in the *Introduction*, Part 2, chapter 2—that Philothea may place herself in God’s presence by recalling that He is present in a particular way within her heart. The *Treatise* met with immediate success, with the Lyon edition going through repeated printings. Translations into other languages followed: English (1630), Italian (1642 or possibly earlier), Latin (1643), Spanish and German (1661), and Polish (1751).



Figure 3. Pope Francis waving from his signature black Fiat during the papal parade in New York City on 25 September 2015. (Photo: courtesy Louis F. Rose, DDS, MD)

*Pope Francis projects the idea of a “culture of encounter” in his own personality, especially his seemingly endless zest for passing time with ordinary people. As Cardinal Joseph Zen, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, said in a recent interview, “[Pope Francis] is so true, he’s so direct, straightforward, sincere, and he really wants to be in contact with people, to meet people. He calls it ‘the culture of encounter.’”*

### ***The “culture of encounter” is synonymous with mercy.***

Pope Francis synthesizes these, and undoubtedly other, sources with his own experience, in his ecclesial-pastoral vision of a culture of encounter. As is well known, Pope Francis is not one for detailed expositions of philosophical principles. Rather, he communicates what he means by the culture of encounter in his characteristic direct, straightforward, and sincere style, as he did not long after his election.

[It] is important to be ready for encounter. For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others. We live in a culture of conflict, a culture of fragmentation, a culture in which I throw away what is of no use to me, a culture of waste. . . . [W]ith our faith we must create a “culture of encounter,” a culture of friendship, a culture in which we find brothers and sisters, in which we can also speak with those who think differently, as well as those who hold other beliefs, who do not have the same faith.<sup>11</sup>

The antonym of the culture of encounter is “what [Pope Francis] has aptly called the *throwaway culture*, where a human being who does not benefit us in some highly immediate and pragmatic way is removed from sight, presumably to become someone else’s problem to be solved.”<sup>12</sup> In the Pope’s view, the culture of encounter is also essential for reforming a church “which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. . . . concerned with being at the centre and . . . being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures.”<sup>13</sup>

The culture of encounter is of divine rather than human

origin, for it is brought into existence by God’s initiative, recalling 1 John 4:10: “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.” God is not only the source, but also the model for the culture of encounter, which is synonymous with mercy. As Pope Francis explains in *Misericordiae vultus: The Face of Mercy*, his letter proclaiming the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy:

Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. . . . Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness. . . . When faced with the gravity of sin, God responds with the fullness of mercy. Mercy will always be greater than any sin, and no one can place limits on the love of God who is ever ready to forgive.<sup>14</sup>

God meets us where we are. We may feel unworthy, unready, and unprepared for this encounter, but God sees us and wants us for who we are and where we are. Again, Pope Francis:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them. . . . whenever we take a step toward Jesus, we come to realize that He is already there, waiting for us with open arms. . . . God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking His mercy. . . . With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, He makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew.<sup>15</sup>

But the process does not, and cannot, stop there—it has to move forward and outward: “we are asked to be instruments of mercy . . . to be merciful like the Father.”<sup>16</sup> There must necessarily be a response of reciprocity to the mercy that is, and which is experienced in, the divine-human encounter.

Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father. . . . [W]e are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown us. . . . The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Pope Francis envisions the Year of Mercy ushering in a “revolution in tenderness” when people realize, “‘I’m wretched, but God loves me the way I am,’ then ‘I, too, have to love others the same way.’”<sup>18</sup> The culture of encounter follows “after the example of Christ, who welcomed all who came to Him and reached out to all, good and bad alike . . . [this] is a model that has to be rediscovered and given a place of primacy and pre-eminence.”<sup>19</sup>

### *The Salesian part of the equation*

While this exposition of the culture of encounter is far from exhaustive,<sup>20</sup> it serves to identify its divine-human dynamic that resonates with Francis de Sales’s thought in the *Treatise on the Love of God*. This dynamic is born of the “divine vulnerability to reaching out, an eager waiting in hope of a response,”<sup>21</sup> and comes to fruition when the human encounter with divine mercy, compassion, and tenderness brings to birth the same attributes in human relationships. Before turning our attention to this resonance, however, it is helpful to consider how the Salesian part of that equation came to be. It has been observed that “biography is theology,”<sup>22</sup> which is to say, life’s events and circumstances significantly shape our understanding of God. As already seen, this is true of Pope Francis. It is also true of Francis de Sales.

The *Treatise*, like Francis de Sales’s other writings, is the fruit of his life-experience.

Book One justifies his ardent love for his friends; Books Two and Four should be read against the background of his temptation to despair; Book Five (chapter 9) contains the secret of his missionary spirit; Books Six and Seven are insights into his state of prayer; the perfection of charity in Book Nine seems less remote when we remember that unwittingly the saint is providing a self-portrait; Book Ten shews us that his renowned meekness and gentleness sprang not from weakness or ignorance, but from humility and wisdom. The whole volume sums up his utter devotedness to the loving service of God and of his neighbour.<sup>23</sup>

Of these various biographical facets of the *Treatise*, that which preceded and was the foundation of all the others was Francis’s life-defining experience as a teenage student in Paris at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont. This experience had two key components: one was Francis’s profound spiritual crisis—the temptation to despair of his eternal salvation—precipitated by the religious turmoil in Paris, and the other, his immersion in the perspective, language, and imagery of the Old Testament Song of Songs. The “theology of Francis de Sales is only intelligible in the context of” this “single experience that lies at the basis of Francis’s life”; “his subsequent theology is both explanation and expansion” of it.<sup>24</sup> The primacy that Francis accords divine love and mercy in the Salesian spiritual vision is the fruit of this defining experience of his life.

### *God’s name is not He-who-damns but Jesus, He-who-saves.*

Francis’s biographers identify diverse sources for his spiritual crisis in Paris, including “the student’s overwork, a basic anxiety in his temperament, the influence of a passionate theological milieu”<sup>25</sup> in which predestination was the hot-button topic of the day. Recent scholarship, however, has critiqued previous explanations for ignoring the Parisian historical context in which Francis found himself.<sup>26</sup>

During Francis’s student days, Paris was caught up in what historians call the Wars of Religion, which involved not only Catholic on Huguenot violence, but also Catholic on Catholic violence. Within French Catholicism, there were militant Catholics who subscribed to an ethos of violence, religious anxiety, and rigorous penitential asceticism to assuage God’s anger and avert divine punishment of France. Then there were moderate Catholics who favored a peaceful approach to Protestantism more in keeping with the Gospel. Tensions reached new heights when Catholic militants resolved to eliminate both Protestants and moderate Catholics.<sup>27</sup>

Living, studying, and worshipping in the Latin Quarter, a citadel of militant Catholicism, Francis was immersed in militant Catholicism.<sup>28</sup> His journal entries from the period reveal that he internalized militant Catholicism’s notion of a vengeful, punishing God. Francis “began to fear God’s judgment as many Catholic authorities urged.”<sup>29</sup> The intractable divisions between militant and moderate Catholics, with their conflicting views of a wrathful and punitive God and of a loving and merciful God now played out within Francis. For six weeks, he battled a debilitating temptation: Francis believed that he was doomed to go to hell and had no hope of salvation. This cast him into a state of severe depression. As he later confided to Mother de Chantal, his “extreme mental anguish . . . was so violent that he could hardly eat or sleep, and [he became] thin and yellow as wax. . . .”<sup>30</sup>

Relief came when Francis found himself able to pray, “Whatever may happen, O Lord, . . . I will love You . . . at least in this life, if it is not given me to love You in eternal life.”<sup>31</sup> Definitive deliverance came when he recited St. Bernard of

Clairvaux's prayer to Our Lady, the *Memorare*. Francis later wrote that "he heard a voice within him testifying that the temptation had been to 'the glorification of my name, which is not He-who-damns [*damnificator*], but Jesus,"<sup>32</sup> He-who-saves. From that time on, "central to [Francis's] understanding of God was the universal, emphatic call of God to all human beings and in every form of human life to that charity which was friendship and salvation."<sup>33</sup> By his insistence on the universal salvific will of God (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4), Francis parted company with the prevailing theology of his time that embraced "the horror of a theology of predestination that would arbitrarily save some and equally arbitrarily damn others."<sup>34</sup>

### ***The Song of Songs: The Language and Imagery of the Salesian Discourse of God's Merciful Love***

The second of the two integral elements of the defining experience of Francis's life now comes to the fore, for it is here that the saint finds the necessary resources—vocabulary and imagery—to articulate the Salesian understanding of God as merciful love. In addition to studying humanities and philosophy at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont, Francis also attended the lectures on the Song of Songs of the erudite Benedictine Scripture scholar, Gilbert Génébrard (1537-97), who was professor of Hebrew at the Royal College at the University of Paris (Figure 4). Génébrard interpreted the Song of Songs as a dramatic love story, in which the poet sings of the "chaste love of the bride for her spouse, the daughter of Zion for the God of Israel, of the Church for Christ."<sup>35</sup>

As the poem unfolds, the bride and the spouse somehow become separated. They search longingly for one another. "The path of love is marked with difficulties, loneliness, and blind alleys."<sup>36</sup> When at last they find each other, they joyously embrace, exclaiming, "I have hold of you and I will never let you go!" (3:4). From this short biblical poem,

the impressionable teenager discovered the true nature of God's eternal, searching, and very personal love for each of us, even by name. . . . From Scripture he already knew that God is love (1 John 4:8). From the Song of Songs he now learned that love is essentially a relationship.<sup>37</sup>

For his part,

Francis absorbed [the] images [of the Song of Songs] without restraint, preserving them forever in his mind. During his life, Francis would quote from this book more often than any other book in the Bible. . . . God had touched him profoundly with the Song of Songs and Francis fell in love with Him. . . . No notes made by Francis on the subject at this time have been found. But for the rest of his life, images from the Song of Songs recurred whenever he wrote about love.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 4. Gilbert Génébrard (1537-97), engraving, 1877. The French Benedictine Scripture scholar and Orientalist obtained his doctorate in theology from the Collège de Navarre in Paris in 1562. A year later, he was appointed professor of Hebrew and Biblical exegesis at the Collège Royal at the Sorbonne. He quickly became renowned as one of the most learned professors at the university, and through his prolific and erudite exegetical publications, he became famous throughout Europe. His most distinguished student was St. Francis de Sales, who followed Génébrard's course on the Song of Songs and in later life regarded it an honor to have had Génébrard as his professor (*Treatise on the Love of God*, Book 11, chapter 11). In 1591, Génébrard was appointed archbishop of Aix by Pope Gregory XIII. His outspoken support for the Catholic League—which opposed Henry of Navarre, a Protestant—incurred official wrath after the latter's accession to the throne.

"Francis found both in the sacred text and in [Génébrard's] commentary, inspiration for his whole life, the theme for his masterpiece [the *Treatise*], and the first and the best source of his optimism."<sup>39</sup> While the whole of Scripture provides the backbone of the *Treatise*, the Psalms and the Song of Songs are most often quoted: of the 106 verses that make up the Song, sixty-three are quoted, some of them frequently so that they total 179 references, and there are 197 quotations from the Psalms.<sup>40</sup>

In fact, the *Treatise* has been described as a "running commentary" on the Song of Songs.<sup>41</sup> In his seminal study of Francis's interpretation of the Song, Anthony R. Ceresko, OSFS, compares and contrasts Francis's approach to the Song in his early work, *Mystical Exposition of the Canticle of Canticles* (1602-04), and in the *Treatise*: in the former, "Francis had attempted a more systematic, 'allegorical' reading of the Song as a narrative

of one's progress in prayer," while in the latter, "he makes use of the Song's poetry with great freedom. He had so taken possession of the text of the Song that its words and images mingle easily with his own."<sup>42</sup>

### ***The Divine-Human Dynamic of the Culture of Encounter and the Treatise***

Ulrich L. Lehner, professor of religious history and theology at Marquette University, has recently observed that Pope Francis embodies the best of what not only Francis of Assisi, one of the most popular saints in Christian history, and Francis Xavier, the famous Jesuit missionary, offer, but also Francis de Sales.<sup>43</sup> Lehner supports his view by identifying a half-dozen ideas that Pope Francis and Francis de Sales share in common: (1) reform is central; (2) simplicity trumps polemics; (3) leaders should be gentle; (4) marriage is a Christian vocation; (5) engagement with the media is useful; and (6) a sense of mission.

Another example of common ground shared by Pope Francis and Francis de Sales is the theology of the culture of encounter. Of course, Francis de Sales does not use that term, but the divine-human dynamic expounded in the *Treatise* is substantially the same as what Pope Francis describes when speaking of the culture of encounter. For both the Pope and the Doctor of Divine Love, this dynamic is born of the "divine vulnerability to reaching out, an eager waiting in hope of a response,"<sup>44</sup> and comes to fruition when the human encounter with divine mercy, compassion, and tenderness brings to birth the same qualities in human relationships. Pope Francis's understanding of this dynamic has been presented above, and now we turn to Francis de Sales's presentation of it in the *Treatise*.

In the *Treatise*, Francis's understanding of God, forged in the crucible of the suffering of the crisis of Paris and frequently expressed in the language and imagery of the Song of Songs, is most fully articulated. The Salesian God is a relational God whose divine Heart is open, vulnerable, and seeks union with human nature. According to Francis, "love for [us] wounds the heart of God."<sup>45</sup> God is a "prisoner to [our] love."<sup>46</sup> To speak of God's desire for encounter with humankind, especially during this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis uses the image of "a loving God who's already knocking on [the] door"<sup>47</sup> of the human heart. So too does Francis de Sales in the *Treatise*.

See . . . how deeply God longs for our love. Not content, however, with a public proclamation of His intense desire to be loved . . . so that each soul may have the opportunity of sharing His loving invitation, He even goes knocking from door to door. . . . Picture the divine lover at the door: He does not knock once; He stands there knocking. He calls out. . . . Then He thrusts *His hand through the lattice* [Song 2:10; 5:4], to try whether it will open to Him. . . .

In other words, the divine Saviour overlooks nothing to prove that *His mercy reaches out to all that He has made* [Psalm 144:9], . . . that His love is infinite; and that He is *rich in mercy*, as St. Paul says [Ephesians 2:4]. Consequently, *it is His will that all [people] should be saved* [1 Timothy 2:4], that no one should be lost.<sup>48</sup>

Apropos of Jesus's parable of the ruthless servant in Matthew 18:23-35, Pope Francis avers: "This parable contains a profound teaching for all of us. Jesus affirms that mercy is not only an action of the Father. . . . [W]e are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us."<sup>49</sup> Likewise, for Francis de Sales divine mercy, compassion, and tenderness must be extended to the neighbor. He insists on this point in Books 6-9 of the *Treatise*, where he makes one of his most significant contributions to the Church's contemplative tradition by introducing the idea that love for God is expressed in two interconnected, indeed inseparable, ways: affective love and effective love.<sup>50</sup>

In Books 6-7, Francis writes about the experience of union with God in prayer and the sacraments, and in Books 8-9 about the overflow of that experience into our daily lives with others. Throughout the saint keeps before his readers the example of Jesus.

Union with God, mediated by prayer, is loving and personal. This is why the writer of the *Treatise* calls it, "affective love." In a bold image, he compares it to the beauty and wonder of human conception. In prayer, especially mental prayer, and in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, we conceive God's love within our hearts. Just as conception leads inexorably to the birth that follows, so the love that has been conceived within our hearts is to be brought forth into our daily lives with others. Affective love of God leads, then, to a concrete effective love of the neighbor (Book 6, chapter 1). . . .

Jesus Himself is the Christian's model for both of these experiences. . . . We read in Mark, for instance, that Jesus "went off to a lonely place in the desert; there He was absorbed in prayer" (1:35-38). Jesus leaves prayer in order to go into the nearby villages to preach the Gospel.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Francis de Sales: Model of the Culture of Encounter***

Francis de Sales himself models the divine-human reciprocal dynamic of the culture of encounter, the correlation and correspondence between affective love and effective love, love of God and love of neighbor. From those dark days in Paris, Francis de Sales learned two lessons that he never forgot and that shaped the rest of his life and ministry. First, he encountered God as not He-who-damns but Jesus, He-who-saves, experiencing divine mercy, compassion, and tenderness. This experience of

God could not be more different from the forbidding, punitive, and vindictive God of militant Catholicism and Calvinism.

Complementing the first lesson is the second that Francis took away from the crisis of Paris: to have compassion for the weakness and struggles of others.<sup>52</sup> Pope Francis declares: “The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love.”<sup>53</sup> Henceforth, Francis de Sales drew on his own anguished struggle, temptation to despair of his eternal salvation, and pain, together with his experience of God’s mercy and tenderness, to help others who faced similar challenges, to make present in their lives “merciful and compassionate love.” Among the many ways he did this is through his writings, such as the *Treatise*, thus reaching out across the ages, from the early seventeenth century down to our own day.

It has been reported that

The “culture of encounter” is such a defining idea for [Pope] Francis that saying somebody’s part of it is almost the highest praise he can bestow. In May [2013], for instance, the leaders of the Focolare movement joined Francis for his morning Mass, and afterwards one of them spoke to the pope, telling him that the prayers of all the *focolarini* are with him and that they’re committed to going out and building bridges with others. “That’s just what we need,” Francis replied, “the culture of encounter!”<sup>54</sup>

Certainly, this accolade should be accorded to Francis de Sales. In this 400th anniversary year of the *Treatise*, this spiritual classic and the inspiring and sustaining example of its author, the Doctor of Divine Love, illuminate by bringing into sharper focus the meaning of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and the culture of encounter. Concurrently, the Year of Mercy and the culture of encounter proffer a fresh approach to and perspective on the life of Francis de Sales and the *Treatise*.

Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS

## NOTES

- In 1609, the printer Pierre Rigaud in Lyon published Francis de Sales’s most well-known, popular, and best-selling book, *Introduction to the Devout Life*. Seven years later, the same publisher released Francis’s *Treatise on the Love of God*, which quickly came to be regarded as the saint’s masterwork, his most comprehensive and definitive book. Yet it was the *Treatise* to which Francis had first set his hand. Francis first mentions the book that would become the *Treatise* in a letter of 11 February 1607 to Madame de Chantal, telling her that he is beginning to write a biography of a little-known saint, Holy Charity, which would be at least twice as long as St. Teresa of Ávila’s *Life* (begun in 1562 and completed in 1565) (Annecy edition, 13:265). Francis probably began work on this project around Christmas 1606 (Vincent Kerns, MSFS, “Introduction,” to his translation of St. Francis de Sales, *The Love of God: A Treatise* [London: Burns & Oates/Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962], vii-xiv, esp. vii). In subsequent years, Francis reports on the progress or lack thereof with this project to various correspondents. For example, he records that his intention is to treat his subject practically rather than speculatively (Annecy edition, 14:126 [letter of c. 15 Feb. 1609, to Mgr. Pierre de Villars, archbishop of Vienne]), that he is trying “to inscribe on my heart what I succeed in putting down on paper” (Annecy edition, 14:247 [letter of 5 Feb. 1610 to Madame de Chantal]), and that he worked on the book in “odd quarters of an hour” which he salvaged from his over-filled days (Annecy edition, 16:137 [letter of 10 Jan. 1614 to Nicolas de Souffour, CO]). Francis’s co-founding, with Mother de Chantal, of the Visitation Order in 1610 “gave impetus and substance to his book” (Kerns, viii).
- Pope Francis, *Misericordiae vultus: The Face of Mercy*, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, 11 Apr. 2015, n. 3.
- Cf. Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *The Saints in Mercy*, Pastoral Resources for Living the Jubilee (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2015). While several saints with links to Francis de Sales are included here (Vincent de Paul and John Bosco), he is not.
- Pope Francis, *The Name of God Is Mercy: A Conversation with Andrea Tomielli*, trans. Oonagh Stransky (New York: Random House, 2016), 6.
- Pope Francis, *The Name of God Is Mercy*, 5.
- Pope Francis, *The Name of God Is Mercy*, 6-7.
- John L. Allen, Jr., “Francis and the ‘Culture of Encounter,’” *National Catholic Reporter Today* (20 Dec. 2013): <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/francis-and-culture-encounter> (accessed 5 Feb. 2016).
- Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est: God is love*, encyclical, 25 Dec. 2005 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana/San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), n. 1.
- Thomas J. Eggleston, “What Pope Francis Means by a Culture of Encounter,” *The Houston Catholic Worker* 34/3 (June-Aug. 2015): 1, 7-8, at 8.
- Agbow-Ebai Maurice Ashley, “Pope Francis and the Culture of Encounter: From *Gaudium et spes* to *Evangelii gaudium*” (13 Sept. 2014): <http://cameroon-concord.com/news/religion/item/673-pope-francis-and-the-culture-of-encounter> (accessed 5 Feb. 2016).
- Pope Francis, *Address to Ecclesial Movements*, Vigil of Pentecost, 18 May 2013, Saint Peter’s Square, The Vatican.
- Jeffrey McLeod, “Pope Francis and the Culture of Encounter,” *Catholic Stand: Living the Truth the Church Teaches* (6 May 2014): <http://www.catholicstand.com/pope-francis-culture-encounter/> (accessed 5 Feb. 2016).
- Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*, apostolic exhortation, 24 Nov. 2013 (New York: Image, 2014), n. 49.
- Pope Francis, *Misericordiae vultus: The Face of Mercy* nn. 2-3.
- Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*, n. 3.
- Pope Francis, *Homily for Holy Mass and Opening of the Holy Door, Basilica of St. John Lateran, Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*, 3rd Sunday of Advent, 13 Dec. 2015.
- Pope Francis, *Misericordiae vultus: The Face of Mercy*, nn. 9-10.
- Pope Francis, quoted in “A ‘Revolution in Tenderness,’” *America* (21-28 Dec. 2015): 10.
- Eggleston, 7.
- For a more ample discussion of the multi-faceted dimensions of the culture of encounter (Christological, evangelical, personalist, ecclesial, societal, global, economic, mystagogical), see Ashley (as in note 10 above) and Eggleston, 7-8.
- Eggleston, 7.
- James W. McClendon, *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today’s Theology* (1974; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002). Cf. Lewis S. Fiorelli, OSFS, *Inspired Common Sense: Seven Fundamental Themes of Salesian Spirituality* (Stella Niagara: De Sales Resource Center, 2012), 12.
- Kerns, xi.
- Michael J. Buckley, SJ, “Seventeenth-Century French Spirituality: Three Figures,” in *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, ed. Louis Dupré and Don E. Saliers (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 28-68, at 33-34.
- André Ravier, SJ, *Francis de Sales: Sage and Saint*, trans. Joseph D. Bowler, OSFS (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 33.
- See Thomas A. Donlan, “The Reform of Zeal: François de Sales and Militant Catholicism during the French Wars of Religion” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Arizona, 2011). This groundbreaking thesis offers a compelling new historical interpretation of Francis by situating him squarely in the context of the French Wars of Religion. Although Francis was a French-speaking Savoyard whose sovereign was the Duke of Savoy rather than the French king, nonetheless, Francis’s “active religious career unfolded entirely within the period of the French Wars of Religion (1562-1629)” (8). More specifically, Donlan argues, the fact that Francis “lived and studied in Paris for ten years (1578-1588), oversaw scores of parishes in

- the kingdom of France as a bishop, and established the majority of the Visitation convents in France . . . justifies the characterization of him as a part of and a historical agent within *French Catholicism*" (42; author's emphasis). Donlan maintains that Salesian scholarship's failure to contextualize Francis as "operating within the matrix of *French Catholicism*" (ibid., author's emphasis) has led to neglect of his role as the architect of a divergent culture within the French Catholic world during the Wars of Religion. In short, while part of Francis's ministry as a priest and bishop focused on Protestantism, an even greater portion was dedicated to reforming the French Wars of Religion's militant Catholicism.
27. Donlan, 11, 45, 71-72.
  28. Donlan, 68, 78.
  29. Donlan, 74.
  30. *St. Francis de Sales: A Testimony* by St. Chantal, newly edited in translation with an introduction by Elisabeth Stopp (Hyattsville, MD: Institute of Salesian Studies, 1967), 44-45.
  31. Anney edition, 22:19-20.
  32. Bernard McGinn, *The Doctors of the Church: Thirty-Three Men and Women Who Shaped Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 161. Cf. Anney edition, 22:66.
  33. Buckley, 34-35.
  34. Buckley, 35.
  35. E.-J. Lajeunie, OP, *St. Francis de Sales: The Man, The Thinker, His Influence*, trans. Rory O'Sullivan, OSFS, 2 vols. (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 1986-87), 1:63.
  36. James M. Reese, OSFS, *The Book of Wisdom, Song of Songs*, Old Testament Message, Vol. 20 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 224.
  37. Fiorelli, 13-14.
  38. Dirk Koster, OSFS, *Francis de Sales* (Noorden: Bert Post, 2000), 26. Not surprisingly, the *Treatise* is permeated by the language and imagery of the Song of Songs: see, e.g., Lanfranco M. Fedrigotti, SDB, "St. Francis de Sales, 'Doctor of Divine Love and Evangelical Gentleness,'" *Theology Annual* 31 (2010): 121-82.
  39. Lajeunie, 1:63.
  40. John K. Ryan, "Translator's Introduction," to his translation of St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, 2 vols. (Garden City: Image Books, 1963), 1:22.
  41. Fedrigotti, 126. Cf. André Brix, OSFS, *St. Francis de Sales and the Canticle of Canticles*, trans. Thomas Dailey, OSFS (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 1989), 13.
  42. Anthony R. Ceresko, OSFS, "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs in St. Francis de Sales: How a Saint Learned 'the Lessons of Love,'" *Salesianum* 66 (2004): 31-50, at 44; reprinted in idem, *St. Francis de Sales and the Bible* (Bangalore: SFS Publications, 2005), 152-81.
  43. Ulrich L. Lehner, "A Fourth Francis," *First Things*, 1 Feb. 2015: [www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/a-fourth-francis](http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/a-fourth-francis) (accessed 5 Feb. 2016).
  44. Eggleston, 7.
  45. *Treatise*, Bk. 6, chap. 14 (Kerns translation, 257).
  46. *Treatise*, Bk. 3, chap. 6 (Kerns translation, 129).
  47. Pope Francis, quoted in "A 'Revolution in Tenderness,'" 10.
  48. *Treatise*, Bk. 2, chap. 8 (Kerns translation, 70-71).
  49. Pope Francis, *Misericordiae vultus: The Face of Mercy*, n. 9.
  50. Wendy M. Wright, *Francis de Sales: Introduction to the Devout Life and Treatise on the Love of God*, Crossroad Spiritual Legacy Series (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 142.
  51. Fiorelli, 29-30.
  52. Buckley, 36.
  53. Pope Francis, *Misericordiae vultus: The Face of Mercy*, n. 10.
  54. Allen (as in note 7 above).

"This Extraordinary Year is itself a gift of grace. To pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. It is He who seeks us! It is He who comes to encounter us! This will be a year in which we grow ever more convinced of God's mercy. . . . In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love, of tenderness. Let us set aside all fear and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things.

Today, here in Rome and in all the dioceses of the world, as we pass through the Holy Door, we also want to remember another door, which fifty years ago the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council opened to the world. This anniversary cannot be remembered only for the legacy of the Council's documents, which testify to a great advance in faith. Before all else, the Council was an encounter. A genuine encounter between the Church and the men and women of our time. An encounter marked by the power of the Spirit, who impelled the Church to emerge from the shoals which for years had kept her self-enclosed so as to set out once again, with enthusiasm, on her missionary journey. It was the resumption of a journey of encountering people where they live: in their cities and homes, in their workplaces. Wherever there are people, the Church is called to reach out to them and to bring the joy of the Gospel, and the mercy and forgiveness of God. After these decades, we again take up this missionary drive with the same power and enthusiasm. The Jubilee challenges us to this openness, and demands that we not neglect the spirit which emerged from Vatican II, the spirit of the Samaritan, as Blessed Paul VI expressed it at the conclusion of the Council. May our passing through the Holy Door today commit us to making our own the mercy of the Good Samaritan."

Pope Francis  
 Homily for Holy Mass and Opening of the Holy Door  
 St. Peter's Square, 8 December 2015  
 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary





# SALESIAN STUDIES WORLDWIDE

## OSFS International Website

The administrator of the De Sales Oblates International Website, Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, who is assisted by Hans Angleitner, reports that all of those responsible for updating the individual units of the De Sales Oblate Congregation's online directory and necrology are now authorized to make updates and changes online themselves to all data associated with the living and deceased members of their own unit. Those authorized to do so in addition to Fr. Winklehner are the following: Dutch Province: Dr. Judith de Raat; France/Bénin Province: Fr. Marcoz Thierry, OSFS; German-Speaking Province: Hans Leidenmühler, OSFS; Indian Mission: Fr. Mathew Mukkath, OSFS; Italian Province: Fr. Giovanni Cannone, OSFS; South American and Caribbean Province: Fr. Joel Erci Koch Tasso, OSFS; South African Region: Fr. Charles Goliath, OSFS; Toledo-Detroit Province: Kim Ertel; Wilmington-Philadelphia Province: Nancy Myron.

## 2015-2016 ICSS Grants

The General Council and the major superiors unanimously approved two grant applications recommended for funding by the International Commission for Salesian Studies (ICSS). The two projects are: Fr. John Graden, OSFS, US\$1,300., to assist the translation, publication, and marketing of Fr. Michel Tournade's adaptation of the *Introduction to the Devout Life*; and Bro. Michael McGrath, OSFS, \$10,000 to assist in the creation of a book of illuminated quotations from St. Francis de Sales with commentaries from De Sales Oblates of the North American Provinces.

## 2016 Formator Workshop on the Treatise on the Love of God

Concurrent with the meeting of the major superiors in summer 2016, there will be a separate meeting of the formators of the Congregation on how to teach the *Treatise on the Love of God*, using a multi-media format. Both meetings will take place in Annecy, France, 18-23 July 2016. Two sessions during the week will be held in common with the major superiors: one to explain the goals of the workshop, and the other to conduct a sample learning module. Frs. Lewis Fiorelli, OSFS, Ken McKenna, OSFS, and Don Heet, OSFS, are preparing a series of videos on the *Treatise*, some of which will be used during the workshop. Translation of the video scripts into various languages has already begun. Over thirty members of non-Oblate Salesian institutes will also participate in this workshop.

## 3rd International Salesian Education Conference

The 3rd International Salesian Education Conference and Pilgrimage was held in Annecy, 8-13 July 2015. Fr. Timothy McIntire, OSFS, coordinated both the preparation and the event itself. Twenty-eight people participated, representing the following fifteen Oblate, Oblate-related, or Salesian apostolates: Bishop Ireton High School, Convent of the Visitation School, De Sales Academy, De Sales University, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, Gymnasium Dachsberg, Gymnasium Haus Overbach, St. Anna Private School, St. Bernard Troyes, St. Blaise Primary School, St. Don Bosco Primary School, St. Francis de Sales High School, Collège Saint Michel, St. John

Neumann parish, and Salesianum High School. The participants came from seven different countries: Austria, France, Germany, India, Namibia, South Africa, and the United States. During the Conference, Fr. Don Heet, OSFS, gave four presentations on the *Treatise on the Love of God*: “Reading the *Treatise*: The Challenge and the Rewards”; “What Does It Mean to Love God?”; “Living between the ‘Two Wills’ of God”; and “Prayer: Meditation and Contemplation.”

## **AFRICA**

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### **BÉNIN**

The 7th annual Salesian Marathon was a great success with more than 1,500 athletes participating. It was truly an ecumenical event with participants from all of the religious, ethnic, and language groups in the area. The event linked nicely with the observance of 70 years of evangelization of Borghou.

Fr. David Abossinou, OSFS, is doing pastoral work in a parish of the Lyon archdiocese administered by the Salesians of Don Bosco. In particular, he works with four Salesians in the EPHATA movement, which is a group of young students and professionals, ages 18-30. He is most impressed by the desire of these young people to deepen their relationship with God in the Salesian spirit.

### **IVORY COAST**

The pioneer community of eight Oblates is establishing itself in a country in which the Oblates are not known. They are currently lodging with the Marianist Brothers, but have recently acquired around 2.5 acres of land for a future house of formation. It is located about a mile from the Institute of Theology of the Society of Jesus (ITSJ) in Abidjan. The ITSJ seems to best serve the goals of our formation program, i.e., by integrating theological, missionary, and pastoral studies. The cornerstone was laid by Fr. Bruno Lecoin, OSFS, Provincial of the French Province, on 21 December 2014. Actual construction began in February 2015. Once they have their own house, the community plans to participate in gatherings of various kinds, and offer their services for spiritual accompaniment, accompanied retreats, and celebrations of the Eucharist as far as their means permit, thereby helping to spread the Salesian-Oblate spirit and charism.

### **TANZANIA**

In June 2015, De Sales University began to offer the B.A. degree at Lumen Christi Institute, a higher education seminary in Arusha, founded by the Fransalians. The formal agreement was signed by Fr. Bernard O'Connor, OSFS, President of De Sales University, and Fr. Johnson Kallidukkil, MSFS, Provincial of the East Africa Province and Delegate of the Superior General of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. The Fransalians have plans for this institute to become a seminary for all the dioceses in Africa and eventually a full-fledged university.

## **Asia**

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### **INDIA**

The General Council of the De Sales Oblates has approved a number of proposals that emerged from the February 2015 general meeting of the members of the India Mission: (1) new parishes in other states can be established as long as they are not overly financially dependent on the Congregation; (2) a Spirituality Center in Thaddeus-dham, Switzerland, can be tried *ad experimentum* for one year; (3) permission was granted to establish an English middle school on the Nidumukkala campus to aid the poor children of that region; (4) clear policies are to be set up for those who are sent for higher studies; and (5) formation houses will provide opportunities for students in formation to study the local language of the place where the house is located. In addition, the General Council approved a master plan for the Samarpanaram property.

To prepare for the transition from a mission to a region in 2017, a committee consisting of four members: Fathers Thambi J. Mekala, OSFS (Chair), Vincent Kumar, OSFS, Baiju Puthussery, OSFS, and Bijesh T. Koonakiyil, OSFS, will have the task of drawing up the foundational documents. These will include Regional Statutes, Policies, a Pastoral Plan, a Formation Plan (for both initial and ongoing formation), and a Financial Plan.

On 22 November 2015, the India Mission celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the presence of the De Sales Oblates in India. The Most Rev. Jay a Rao Polimera, D.D., Bishop of Eluru, Andhra Pradesh, presided over the special Eucharistic liturgy, with the participation of Fr. Aldino Kessel, OSFS, Superior General, and a host of priests, religious, family members, friends, and well-wishers.

## **Europe**

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### **FRANCE**

In September 2013, Bro. Luc Ametodou, OSFS, founded a group of *Amis de Saint Francois de Sales* (ASFS) (Friends of St. Francis de Sales) for the purpose of living and spreading the saint's teaching. The ASFS meets monthly to reflect on a text of the saint chosen by Bro. Luc.

Presentations at the 2014 *Journées Salésiennes* held in Troyes, 18-22 August 2014, centered on the theme, *L'accompagnement spirituel salesien* (Salesian Spiritual Accompaniment). These are published in the *Annales Salésiennes*, nouvelle série, no 11, 1<sup>er</sup> semestre (2015): Marcel Veyrat, “Les fondements de l'accompagnement spirituel salésien aujourd'hui” (The Basic Principles of Salesian Spiritual Accompaniment Today); Diane Tuffier, “Direction spirituelle du saint François de Sales à partir de quelques lettres” (The Spiritual Direction of St. Francis de Sales as Seen in Several Letters); and Sr. Marie-Christophe

Zuanon, VHM, “Retraites salésiennes accompagnées: Origine et fondements” (The Origins and Fundamentals of Salesian Accompanied Retreats), which gives due credit to Fr. William Gallagher, OSFS, for reviving and enriching the practice of Salesian accompanied retreats. This issue also includes an excerpt from Fr. Jean-Luc Leroux’s conference: “François de Sales et Pierre Favre: Deux saints savoyards” (Francis de Sales and Peter Faber: Two Savoyard Saints), which was presented at the Conference on St. Peter Faber, 29 November 2014, and which considers St. Francis de Sales’s relationships with the Jesuits in his diocese. The proceedings of this conference will be published by L’Académie salésienne in the *Actes du Colloque Pierre Favre*.

The *Annales Salésiennes*, nouvelle série, no 12, 2<sup>ème</sup> semestre (2015), features presentations from the *Journées Salésiennes* held in Annecy, 17-21 August 2015, which focused on the theme, *L’accompagnement spirituel salesien aujourd’hui* (Salesian Spiritual Accompaniment Today), as well as from the *Journées Salésiennes du Bénin*, 24-28 August 2015, whose topic was “Saint François de Sales. Vie consacrée et Famille” (St. Francis de Sales. Consecrated Life and Family). It includes the following: Philippe Legros, “L’accompagnement spirituel salésien aujourd’hui” (Salesian Spiritual Accompaniment Today); Sr. Véronique Giard, SDV, “Sœurs Salésiennes de la Visitation: Accompagnement salésien chez les Salésiennes” (Salesian Sisters of the Visitation: Salesian Accompaniment among the Salesians); Julien Manery, “Regard sur la dévotion et objectifs de l’Introduction à la vie dévote” (A Look at Devotion and the Objectives of the *Introduction to the Devout Life*); Dominique Salin, SJ, “François de Sales et la tradition mystique. ‘Presque’: le poids d’un adverbe” (Francis de Sales and the Mystical Tradition. “Almost”: The Weight of an Adverb); Maurice Riguet, OSFS, “Comment et quand François de Sales parle de la vie consacrée” (How and When Francis de Sales Speaks of the Consecrated Life); and Romain Abolu, PSFS, “L’importance de l’accompagnement des familles selon saint François de Sales” (The Importance of Accompanying Families according to St. Francis de Sales). This issue also has informational updates about the International University Colloquium on Don Bosco’s Pedagogical Insights, held in Lyon, 14-16 October 2015; the 50th anniversary of the creation of the first five provinces of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales; and the inauguration of the new spiritual center of the Sisters of the Cross in Annecy. It also includes a memoir of Mother Marie-Hélène Reinle (1942-2015) of the Annecy Visitation.

#### GERMAN-SPEAKING PROVINCE (GERMANY-AUSTRIA-SWITZERLAND)

2015 saw the passing of three De Sales Oblates of the German-Speaking Province who made significant contributions to the dissemination of Salesian spirituality in the German-speaking world. Fr. Anton Zottl, OSFS (1933-2015), who died on 27 February, was professor of pastoral theology at the Catholic

University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Bavaria, for many years. He was the author of two books that explored the theology of the *Treatise on the Love of God: Die Leidenschaft einer Liebe* (The Passion of Love) (Eichstätt: Franz-Sales-Verlag, 1983), and *Menschwerden durch Gottesliebe* (To Become a Human Being by God’s Love) (Eichstätt: Franz-Sales-Verlag, 1986).

Br. Benedict Schmitz, OSFS (1935-2015), who passed away on 19 June, worked for decades as a graphic designer in the youth movement KIM of the De Sales Oblates to promote vocations in Ingolstadt, Bavaria. During these years, he designed vestments, altars, stained-glass windows, and more than 150 greeting cards with different quotations, including many sayings from St. Francis de Sales. Some of his mosaics and paintings depict St. Francis de Sales and other Salesian blessed and saints.

Fr. Gottfried Prinz, OSFS (1924-2015), passed away on 29 August. For eight years, he was the editor-in-chief of the Salesian Magazine *Licht*, and for another eight years he was publishing director of the Franz Sales Verlag. From 1994 to 1996, he served as the director of the Salesian Institute and nine years as Secretary of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für salesianische Studien (Working Group for Salesian Studies). During his tenure in the latter position, he was mainly responsible for coordinating the important project of translating into German St. Jane Frances de Chantal’s *Correspondance* and of bringing it to a successful publication.

On 6-7 February 2015, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für salesianische Studien held its annual meeting at Salesianum Rosental, Eichstätt, Bavaria. This year’s topic was St. Francis de Sales’s *Treatise on the Love of God*, which was first published nearly 400 years ago on 29 June 1616. A special highlight was the event “12 x St. Francis de Sales” in the chapel of the Salesianum: 12 selected texts from the *Treatise* were presented accompanied by the music of Lucia (violin) and Martin Swientek (organ). At the end of this annual meeting, the group decided to change its name. In the future it will be known as the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Salesianische Spiritualität” (Working Group for Salesian Spirituality).

The Office of Media and Public Relations of the Diocese of Eichstätt, Bavaria, produced a video about the Salesianum Rosental and the De Sales Oblates on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life. The video with the title, “St. Francis de Sales was very close to God and very close to the people,” gives a summary of the essence of Salesian spirituality by Fr. Johannes Haas, OSFS. The video can be accessed at: [http://www.franz-sales-verlag.de/brisson2012/video/osfs\\_videoclip\\_haas.html](http://www.franz-sales-verlag.de/brisson2012/video/osfs_videoclip_haas.html). Anika Taiber, an employee of the diocesan office of Media and Public Relations, released a stop-motion video, which explains in an original and succinct manner who the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales are. This video can be viewed at: [http://www.franz-sales-verlag.de/brisson2012/video/osfs\\_videoclip.html](http://www.franz-sales-verlag.de/brisson2012/video/osfs_videoclip.html).

On 6-8 March 2015, information sessions for interested young men took place in Haus Overbach, Nordrhein-Westfalen. Under the topic "Lifestyle," participants learned about the De Sales Oblates. The meeting was organized and directed by Fr. Dominik Nguyen, OSFS.

Both in Austria and in Bavaria, the De Sales Oblates extended invitations to pilgrimages for vocations on the first two Saturdays in October 2015. At both pilgrimages, the main topic was the Year of Consecrated Life.

In the years 2016 and 2017 the Salesian magazine *Licht* will focus its articles on the *Treatise on the Love of God*. The topics for 2016 are the following: "To Love God: His Nature"; "To Love God: His Desire"; "To Love God: His Goal"; "To Love God: His Challenge"; "To Love God: His Power"; "To Love God: His Secret."

The *Thaddäusbote*, the magazine of the De Sales Oblates in Switzerland, will also focus on the *Treatise on the Love of God* in 2016. The following topics are planned: "Love Is Essential for People"; "God's Desire for People"; "Love Is at Risk"; "Union with God's Will"; "The Crown of Creation"; "Love Gives Value to My Actions and My Deeds."

#### SISTERS OF THE VISITATION

In 1615, the second monastery of the Visitation was founded in Lyon, France, by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal. On 28 December 1622, Francis de Sales died in this monastery, whose community is now located north of Venice, in the Visitation monastery of Treviso, Italy. During the French Revolution, the sisters from Lyon were expelled and fled via Italy, the Czech Republic, and Austria, and finally back to Italy. In their luggage, they had the treasured relic of the heart of St. Francis de Sales. This heart relic is incorrupt to this very day and is still revered in the chapel of the monastery. Beginning in January 2015, the community of Treviso held a series of festivities to celebrate its 400-year history: prayer vigils, holy hours, Eucharistic celebrations, lectures, and discussions. These programs were organized and directed by many friends of the community, the priests from the dioceses of the Italian province of Veneto, the Salesians of Don Bosco, several choirs who planned the liturgical celebrations, and various organizations such as the Association of the Deaf and the Association of the Italian Catholic Press. All these events illuminated the fascinating figure of St. Francis de Sales and his enduring relevance for today: a great spiritual master and director, a pastor in the mode of the heart of Christ, a wise preacher, a zealous and innovative missionary, and most especially a wonderful witness of God's love.

Léonie Françoise-Thérèse Martin was a Visitandine nun, a sister of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and the daughter of Zélie and Louis Martin, who are the first married couple to be canonized

together. On 2 July 2015, the cause of beatification for Léonie Martin was opened at the Visitation monastery of Caen, France, where she is buried. Her biography makes clear how close Salesian spirituality is to Carmelite spirituality, especially to that of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. More information can be found at the website: <http://leoniemartin.org>.

Ten Visitandine Sisters from Germany, Austria, and Croatia met at the Visitation monastery of St. Joseph in Zangberg, Bavaria, 23-25 October 2015, to reflect on the topic, "Live Your Vocation: The Year of Consecrated Life." Among other things, the participants discussed their personal vocation as Visitandines, and the importance of the Visitation in the past, present, and future. The group was accompanied by Sr. Lioba Zedulka, VHM, the Superior of the German Federation of the Visitation, and the Spiritual Assistant of the Federation, Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS.

#### SECULAR INSTITUTE OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

The General Assembly of the Secular Institute of St. Francis de Sales took place in Passau, Bavaria, 20-25 July 2015. Every four years the delegate sisters, associates, and spiritual assistants from all regions (Brazil, Germany, Namibia, Austria, USA) come together for this assembly. The topics discussed included: the current situation of the Institute, decisions on necessary changes to the statutes, and the election of General Leadership. Angela Hauke who headed the Institute for many years as General Superior, handed over her duties to Iria Urnau from Brazil. The new General Council is composed of the General Director Iria Urnau and the General Councilors Angela Hauke (Germany), Otilie Kutenda (Namibia), Margarida Hanauer (Brazil), Vreni Riedacher (Germany), and Monika Rauh (Germany). After the official part of the meeting, the international encounter followed, with additional members and guests. These days of prayer and discernment about the different regions of the Institute throughout the world were for all involved an experience of the Church as a worldwide community.

#### ASSOCIATION OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

The annual retreat of the Austrian Group of the Association of St. Francis de Sales took place in Kufstein, Austria, 3-7 June 2015. The theme of the retreat was "My Journey with St. Francis de Sales." The retreats were directed by Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS. Focusing on the *Spiritual Directory* that Francis de Sales wrote for the Visitation Sisters, Fr. Winklehner emphasized that Salesian life means living in the loving presence of God in everything we do.

#### ITALY

For the Year of Consecrated Life, the Visitation of Salò, together with other monasteries of the diocese, contacted all the parishes to invite them to visit their monasteries and familiarize

themselves with consecrated life as it is lived today—something not very well understood nowadays. In addition, on Sundays after Mass, the sisters meet with a group of very interested laypeople to present a course on the *Treatise of the Love of God*. Thanks to the Visitandines of Salò, especially Sr. Ornella Maria del Sacro Cuore, VHM, the *ICSS Newsletter* is translated into Italian.

#### THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlandish Oblates are still working on their statutes to transition to a community under the Generalate, as well as a last will and testament. Dr. Judith de Raat is working on a book based on her interviews with seventeen of the Dutch Oblates.

#### South American and Caribbean Province

The Province has recently accepted to staff two new parishes in Ecuador: Jesús de Consuelo Parish in the periphery of Portoviejo, which will be financially supported by the parish of El Niño Jesús in Manta. In the capital of Quito, the Province signed a contract with the Archbishop to take over the parish of San José del Condado. In Haiti, the Province is taking over a parish in Port-au-Prince among the very poor of the city. With the sixth Haitian Oblate in perpetual vows, it appears that sufficient personnel will be available for additional pastoral ministries.

#### United States

##### SALESIAN SCHOLARS

Chaired by Dr. Wendy Wright, a session, sponsored by the International Salesian Scholars Seminar, was held on “St. Francis de Sales and the Scriptural Imagination,” at the 40th annual Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference (PMR) at Villanova University, 16-18 October 2015. The presenters and their topics were as follows: Dr. Suzanne Toczyski, “Women and the Bible and the Scriptural Imagination in St. Francis de Sales’s *Treatise on the Love of God*”; Fr. Joseph Chorpenning, OSFS, “The Joy of the Gospel: Hearing and Seeing the Mystery of the Visitation with St. Francis de Sales and Pope Francis”; Dr. Thomas Donlan, “Francis de Sales’s Reform of the Militant Catholic Imagination”; Fr. Alexander Pocetto, OSFS, “Sacred Scripture, Fear and Love in Francis de Sales’s *Treatise on the Love of God*”; Dr. Wendy Wright, “Francis de Sales and the Gospel of John.” A prior session on St. Francis de Sales was held twenty-five years ago, at the 1991 PMR Conference.

Fr. Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, ICSS member and Chair, was among thirty international scholars invited to participate in the 2015 Lovis Corinth Colloquium, sponsored by the Art History Department at Emory University, Atlanta, GA, 29-31 October 2015. The colloquium’s theme was “*Ut pictura amor* [Love is like a picture]: The Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1400-1700, and Fr. Chorpenning’s lecture considered “The Dynamics of Divine Love: Francis de Sales’s Picturing of the Biblical Mystery of the Visitation.”

#### VISITANDINES

The exhibit, “Pray to Love: The Annecy France Nun Series,” by Anne Goetze was on view at the Brooklyn Visitation Monastery in Bay Ridge, 13-20 May 2015. The artist is a niece of Sr. Margaret Mary Goetze, an American Visitandine who was incorporated into the Annecy community and who passed away last year. Earlier this year, the exhibit was shown at the Clarksville [TN] Museum and at The Arts Company in Nashville. It was also featured in *The Nashville Arts Magazine*: <http://nashvillearts.com/2015/01/30/anne-goetze-pray-to-love/>. Ms. Goetze was also invited to the Tyringham and Georgetown monasteries in the Fall 2015. She has a 10-minute video documentary that she hopes to add as she travels from place to place. It can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/119258956>.

#### NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES

The Toledo-Detroit Province (TD) and the Wilmington-Philadelphia Province (WP) of the De Sales Oblates continue to cooperate in a number of areas, especially in a joint formation program and in promoting vocations. One of the series of vocation videos produced is simply entitled, “St. Francis de Sales: A Biography.” The script was written by Fr. Timothy McIntire, OSFS, of the Wilmington-Philadelphia Province; the videographer was Sean Boyd, a graduate of De Sales University’s TV and Film program; and the voice over was done by Fr. Alexander Pocetto, OSFS, of De Sales University. The project was jointly financed by the two provinces. Permission was granted by Fr. Ken McKenna, OSFS, Provincial of the Toledo-Detroit Province, to a Salesian Chinese priest to translate the script into Cantonese. The English version of the video may be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qlueaQPu3c>.

De Sales Resources and Ministries (DSR&M) of the Toledo-Detroit Province has renamed its ministry “Embraced by God” because “it speaks clearly of a spirituality that will bring [people] closer to God.” In another cooperative area, the re-named site now carries the sacred art of Bro. Michael O’Neill McGrath, OSFS, of the Wilmington-Philadelphia Province. The Embraced by God website can be viewed at: [embracedbygod.org](http://embracedbygod.org).

#### WILMINGTON-PHILADELPHIA PROVINCE

Fr. Thomas Dailey, OSFS, has recently published what Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia characterizes as “a life-changing book for anyone who thought they were too busy to grow in holiness.” Published by Sophia Press, the book is entitled *Live Today Well: St. Francis de Sales’s Simple Approach to Holiness*. The book aims to guide “you through St. Francis de Sales’s spiritual plan, showing how you can balance time devoted to God with the time needed to complete your many tasks.” Fr. Dailey offered the keynote presentation during the retreat for the Salesian Lay Association of Men (SLAM). Fr. Timothy

McIntire, OSFS, serves as the SLAM coordinator for the meetings of the Lehigh Valley Chapter that are hosted by the Wills Hall Oblate Community.

Fr. Michael Murray, OSFS, Director of De Sales Spiritual Services, continues to post a variety of new and familiar homiletic resources on the Wilmington-Philadelphia Province's website for both Sundays and weekdays. These include *Homily Helps*, *Sundays Salesian*, and *Salesian Sunday Reflections*. The latter two are also available in Spanish. Several Oblate parishes publish these resources in their Sunday bulletins, thereby giving them an even wider distribution. Fr. Murray also contributed a number of reflections on consecrated life posted with the Provincial's weekly *Prayer Matters* e-mails.

For the Year of the Consecrated Life, the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at De Sales University sponsored a lecture by Sr. Rose McDermott, SSJ, Delegate for Religious of the Diocese of Trenton, on the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae caritatis*. Her talk included more than a few apt references to the *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

## Publications

### ENGLISH

#### Books

Thomas F. Dailey, OSFS, *Live Today Well: St. Francis de Sales's Simple Approach to Holiness* (Sophia Press, 2015). See above.

*Heart of Hearts: Writings on the Life and Spirit of St. Francis de Sales. A Collection of Essays by Joseph F. Power*, OSFS, ed. with an introduction by Daniel P. Wisniewski, OSFS (Stella Niagara, NY: De Sales Resource Center, 2015). This collection makes more easily accessible seven seminal essays by the late Fr. Power (four had been previously published and three appear here in print for the first time): "An Introduction to Salesian Spirituality"; "Images for a Busy Life"; "Between the One Will of God and the Other"; "Heart—Both Metaphorical and Symbol"; "Francis de Sales and the 'Passions'"; "Francis de Sales and Vatican Councils I & II"; and "Henry Benedict Mackey, OSB, Nineteenth-Century Interpreter of St. Francis de Sales." Publication of this book was assisted by an ICSS grant.

Michel Tournade, OSFS, *Falling in Love with God: A Personal Message to Today's Young People from St. Francis de Sales. An Adaptation of the Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. Jane Gowey (Stella Niagara: De Sales Resource Center, 2015). Publication of this book was assisted by an ICSS grant.

## Articles

Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, "Blending Christological Images: José Cayetano Padilla's *The Sacred Heart of Jesus as the Good Shepherd*," *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura*, Special Issue: Homenaje al Profesor Elías L. Rivers, 30/3 (2015): 117-35.

———, "François de Sales," in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, ed. Karla Pollmann et al., 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1687-89.

James F. Gaines, "Socio-Spiritual Suasion: François de Sales and the Bees," in *Relations & Relationships in Seventeenth-Century French Literature*, Actes du 36<sup>e</sup> congrès annuel de la North American Society for Seventeenth-Century French Literature, Portland State University, 6-8 mai 2004, ed. Jennifer R. Perlmutter, Biblio 17, vol. 166 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2006), 143-52.

Ulrich L. Lehner, "A Fourth Francis: Reform for a Self-Content Church," *First Things* (1 Feb. 2015): [www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/a-fourth-francis](http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2015/02/a-fourth-francis). While commentators have focused on Pope Francis's indebtedness to St. Francis of Assisi and St. Francis Xavier, they have overlooked St. Francis de Sales. Lehner, professor of religious history and theology at Marquette University, identifies five convictions shared by de Sales and Pope Francis: (1) reform is central; (2) simplicity trumps polemics; (3) leaders should be gentle; (4) marriage is a Christian vocation; (5) engagement with the media is useful; and (6) a sense of mission.

John D. Lyons, "In Love with an Idea," in *Relations & Relationships in Seventeenth-Century French Literature*, Actes du 36<sup>e</sup> congrès annuel de la North American Society for Seventeenth-Century French Literature, Portland State University, 6-8 mai 2004, ed. Jennifer R. Perlmutter, Biblio 17, vol. 166 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2006), 17-32. On the *Treatise on the Love of God*.

Terence O'Reilly, "The Mystical Theology of Saint Francis de Sales in the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*," in *Mysticism in the French Tradition: Eruptions from France*, ed. Louise Nelstrop and Bradley B. Onishi (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 207-20.

Suzanne Toczyski, "Blessed the Breasts at Which You Nursed': Mother-Child Intimacy in St. Francis de Sales's *Treatise on the Love of God*," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 15 (2015):191-213.

### FRENCH

Gilles Jeanguenin, *Humour et sainteté chez François de Sales* (Francis de Sales's Humor and Sanctity), with a preface by Michel Tournade, OSFS (Paris: Salvator, 2013).

———, *Les vertus dépoussiérées par saint François de Sales* (The Rejuvenating Virtues by St. Francis de Sales) (Paris: Éditions de l'Emmanuel, 2012).

Patrick-Marie Févotte et Claude-Marie Millet, *Tout par amour: vivre le quotidien avec saint François de Sales* (Everything for Love: Living Every Day with St. Francis de Sales) (Flavigny-sur-Ozerain [Côte-d'Or]: Traditions monastiques, 2013).

Max Huot de Longchamp, *La vie dévote au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle: anthologie salésienne pour l'honnête homme d'aujourd'hui* (The Devout Life in the 21st Century: A Salesian Anthology for Millennials) (Mers-sur-Indre: Paroisse et Famille, 2013).

Gérard Monthel, *L'Écrit & l'image: Ordre de la Visitation Sainte-Marie 1610. Une histoire du livre & de l'iconographie* (Text and Image: Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary 1610. A History of the Book and Iconography) (Bourg-en-Besse: Éditions A. Bonavitacola, 2014). This monumental (618 pp.) and profusely illustrated (900 color images) reference work on Salesian/Visitandine iconography is an essential addition for any serious Salesian library. It is available directly from the publisher at: [www.editions.bonavitacola@wanadoo.fr](http://www.editions.bonavitacola@wanadoo.fr).

## GERMAN

### Books

*Die Gedenktage der salesianischen Heiligen und Seligen. Eine Handreichung zum internen Gebrauch* (The Memorials of the Salesian Saints and Blessed. A handout for internal use), ed. German-Speaking Province of the Congregation of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales (Germany – Austria – Switzerland) under the direction of Fr. Herbert Winklehner, OSFS, Vienna, 2015. This brochure includes the liturgical texts (prayers, readings, intercessions, prefaces) for the solemnities, feasts, and memorials of Sts. Léonie Frances de Sales Aviat, Francis de Sales, Jane Frances de Chantal, Margaret Mary Alacoque, Blessed Louis Brisson and the Blessed Martyrs of Madrid.

Jordan / Mayrhofer / Salzl / Stütz: *Pray With You(th). Mit Jugendlichen im Geist Don Boscos beten* (Praying with Young People in the Spirit of Don Bosco), ed. Provincialate of the Salesians of Don Bosco (Vienna: Don Bosco Media, 2015). Salesian Youth Spirituality is, above all, bright, cheerful and life-affirming. This Youth Prayer Book includes modern and traditional prayers. The chapter, entitled “To Do Everything with God,” is dedicated to St. Francis de Sales.

Ingrid Malzahn, *Gottes Traumbotschaften. Warum ich weiß, dass meine Mutter im Himmel lebt* (God's Messages in Dreams. Why Do I Know that My Mother Is Alive in Heaven) (Altenstadt: Edition christliche Mystik, 2015). This book is about dreams and whether God sends us messages for our lives through dreams. The author firmly believes that this is the case and supports her

conviction with examples from the Bible, Christian mystical tradition of Christianity, and lives of several Salesian saints (Francis de Sales, Margaret Mary Alacoque, John Bosco, and Dominic Savio).

Emmanuel Renault, *Der Einfluss von Teresa von Ávila auf Therese von Lisieux* (The Influence of Teresa of Ávila on Thérèse of Lisieux) (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2015). The influence of St. Francis de Sales is mentioned several times in Renault's study. In the Martin family, the Salesian spirit of the Visitation Sisters was very evident since Thérèse's aunt was a Visitandine, as was Thérèse's sister Léonie. Thérèse of Lisieux often expresses her appreciation for Francis de Sales, once writing “St. Teresa of Ávila and St. Francis de Sales are my favorite authors.” Summing up, the author writes somewhat soberly: “One can find more traces of the influence of St. Francis de Sales in Therese's writings, for Salesian spirituality was very much appreciated in the Martin family, but at the same time it remains inconspicuous. It was expressed practically in Thérèse's spirituality” (pp. 78-79). There is an unfortunate mistake in the German translation: the Visitation Sisters, founded by St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Francis de Chantal, are referenced inaccurately as the Monastery of the Incarnation several times (e.g., pp. 26-27, 78).

Marianne Schlosser, *Erhebung des Herzens. Theologie des Gebetes* (Lifting Up the Heart: The Theology of Prayer) (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 2015). Marianne Schlosser, professor of spiritual theology at the University of Vienna, Austria, provides a systematic overview of the theology of prayer. In an extensive appendix, she collects classic texts on prayer, including excerpts from the *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

### Article

Herbert Winklehner, “In den Herzen der Gläubigen verankert. Sales-Oblaten in der Pfarrgemeinde Zur Heiligen Familie“ (Rooted in the Hearts of the Faithful. The Work of the De Sales Oblates in the Parish of the Holy Family), in *Ein Kirchenbau der Moderne in der Barockstadt Eichstätt*. Festschrift zum 50-jährigen Jubiläum der Weihe der Kirche Zur Heiligen Familie in Eichstätt am 27 Mai 1965 (A Modern Church Building in the Midst of the Baroque City of Eichstätt. Festschrift on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Consecration of the Church of the Holy Family in Eichstätt, 27 May 1965), ed. Emanuel Brown on behalf of the parish of the Holy Family (Eichstatt, 2015).

## ITALIAN

### Book

Giuseppe M. Roggia, SDB, *San Francesco di Sales. Estasi dell'azione e della vita*, (St. Francis de Sales: The Ecstasy of Action and of Life) (Brescia: Editrice Morcelliana, 2014).

## DIRK KOSTER, OSFS (1931-2016)

Fr. Dirk Koster, OSFS, a member of the International Commission for Salesian Studies (ICSS) since 2004, entered eternal life on 27 January 2016. His Solemn Funeral Mass was celebrated in St. Martin's church in Noorden in the Netherlands, where Fr. Koster served as pastor since 1992, on 2 February 2016, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the anniversary of the death of Bl. Louis Brisson, founder of the De Sales Oblates. Internment followed in the parish cemetery. In announcing Fr. Koster's passing, Fr. Kees Jongeneelen, OSFS, Provincial of the Netherlands Province, voiced what so many felt at learning this sad news: "Sad, but grateful for all he did for our Dutch Province and for what he meant to so many people as pastor."

Born in Bovenkarspel on 12 October 1931, Fr. Koster entered the De Sales Oblates on 30 August 1951. He made his novitiate in Nijmegen and studied philosophy and theology in Beek en Donk. He was ordained to the priesthood on 13 March 1957.

As a teacher, Fr. Koster was revered by his students. Much of his priesthood was spent in parish ministry, beginning in 1970, when he was appointed pastor of the church of St. John the Baptist in Amsterdam. Under his creative and inspiring pastoral care, the parish flourished.

Fr. Koster twice served as Provincial at important moments in the history of the Netherlands Province. He was Provincial from 1971 to 1975, during the period of the implementation of the Second Vatican Council, and then again from 1988 to 1996.

In 1992, Fr. Koster was appointed pastor of St. Martin's parish in Noorden, where he came to be greatly beloved by his parishioners. In September 2015, he was diagnosed with lung



cancer. He bore his suffering patiently and with complete submission to God's will. He died peacefully, surrounded by his Oblate confreres, family, parishioners, and members of the lay Salesian family.

As a Salesian scholar, Fr. Koster is best known for his substantial and substantive, masterfully insightful biographies of St. Francis de Sales (2000) and of Louis Brisson (2008), which are now standard works of reference in the field of Salesian studies. Both were published in handsome, elegantly produced, and profusely illustrated editions by Bert Post in Noorden.

Fr. Koster undertook the Brisson biography because the then Superior General of the De Sales Oblates, Fr. Lewis S. Fiorelli, OSFS, asked him to write it for the occasion of the centenary of Fr. Brisson's death in 2008. Appropriately, *Louis Brisson* was formally presented as part of the international celebrations in Plancy and Troyes for the centenary of the death of Fr. Brisson, 2-5 February 2008. The impression that Fr. Koster made on those who heard him speak about or read what he had written about St. Francis de Sales, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and Bl. Louis Brisson is that of one friend speaking or writing about another friend.

In January 2016, Fr. Koster presented his last publication, a book of an autobiographical nature. His afterword serves as his testament: "We only live a short while. We think that we have a long life, but it's actually quite short. It is a true art to live shortly. It means that each moment is given to you, to be welcomed by you, to be taken in, to really live it. It is our task to try to be content with that, if you can, and I am trying myself to do so until my last moment. If we succeed, I believe all of us can be happy people, content with ourselves and others, content with God, and with everyone." *Requiescat in pace.*

The ICSS NEWSLETTER was founded in 1997 and is published biannually by the International Commission for Salesian Studies (ICSS) of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales (Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, Chairman; Valdir Formentini, OSFS; Dirk Koster, OSFS; Herbert Winklehner, OSFS). Its primary purpose is to disseminate on a global scale information dealing with Salesian Studies (St. Francis de Sales; St. Jane Frances de Chantal; Bl. Louis Brisson, founder of the De Sales Oblates and the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales; the Visitation of Holy Mary; Lay Institutes and other Religious who are members of the Salesian Family).

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### 2016 SALESIAN CALENDAR FOR THE DE SALES OBLATES

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|---------------|--|
| Sun., Jan. 24 | Solemnity of St. Francis de Sales,<br>Principal Patron of the Congregation                           |
| Tues., May 31 | Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary   |
| Fri., June 3  | Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus  |
| Fri., Aug. 12 | Feast of St. Jane Frances de Chantal,<br>Secondary Patron of the Congregation                        |
| Wed., Oct. 12 | Feast of Blessed Louis Brisson,<br>Founder of the Oblates and Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales |
| Sun., Oct. 16 | Feast of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque  |
| Mon., Nov. 21 | Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  |