

# MORNING MEDITATION

Saint Francis de Sales

**God is steadfast love. “Can a mother forget her baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands” (Isaiah 49:15-16)**

## **Ephesians 3:2-12**

Jews regarded Gentiles as unclean, unholy and worthless in God's eyes. In this excerpt, the author of Ephesians describes the equal status of Jews and Gentiles in Christ as a "mystery" being revealed through him. The author says that Gentiles and Jews are

Co-heirs, members of the same body and sharers of the promises of God. This was the vision of the prophets, a vision of universal salvation, realized in the person of Jesus.

**Pray for a broader, clearer and cosmic vision of the freedom and salvation offered to us in and through Jesus.**

## **John 15:9-17**

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.....Abide in my love.....that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete.” The secret of the life of Jesus was his contact with the Father. Again, and again, he withdrew to quiet places to be alone with the father. He knew what it meant to “abide” in the Father’s Love. His disciples must do the same.

**To “abide” is: to be in close contact, to be in touch; to be intimate; to live an intense, personal relationship; to surrender in fidelity; to surrender in obedience.**

**Stay focused on developing a personal, intense, intimate relationship with the Lord. Stay close...stay connected...be in touch....Abide in the presence of the Lord, in silence and in solitude.....Speak to the Lord from the depth of your heart.....**

Love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12-17) It is a challenge to reach out to others in love - “not to withhold” our love from others. We are called to give what we have received as gifts from the Lord. Jesus calls us his friends, not slaves....it was his choice, not ours. Now it is up to us to respond. It is never sufficient to abstain from wrong-doing or sin or evil. We are called to be good and to do good - a good word and a good deed proclaim who we are. We have many opportunities to share God’s gift of Love and life.

**The standard of love is NOT an eye for an eye or love others as they love us or love others as we love ourselves...it is “Love one another as I have loved you”. The standard is to love as God loves us, as**

**Jesus loves us....it is joyful, unconditional, unconquerable, invincible, non-possessive, self-sacrificing, enduring, steadfast love! May your love transcend competition and control...May your love transcend ill feelings, jealousies, hatred, etc....May you reach out in selfless and generous service!**

## **Saint of the Day, January 24 - Saint Francis de Sales and 20 other saints are remembered this day.**

St. Francis De Sales was born on August 21, 1567 at Thonon, near Annecy in France. He graduated from the University of Padua with Doctorate in both civil law and ecclesiastical law. He was ordained a priest on December 18, 1593. He worked among the Calvinists, faced much opposition, including attempt on his life and converted the whole district of Chablais to the catholic faith.

He was ordained a bishop on December 8, 1602. He was a good shepherd, caring for all with a special love for the poor. He founded a contemplative religious order, "The Sisters of the Visitation" on June 6, 1610. This order was to accept as members the poor, the weak in health, the handicapped and the widows whom normally religious orders did not admit.

He wrote two books, Spiritual Classics: "The Introduction to Devout Life" and "A Treatise on The Love Of God". He died at the age of 55 on December 28, 1622. He was canonized a saint by Pope Alexander VII on April 19, 1665 and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX on November 16, 1877.

Francis De Sales is foremost among those who were consistently and visibly human in his relationship to God and people. His spirituality was so human that those without theological insights could understand and follow his spirituality. He was very human and gentle, optimistic and positive about life and the world, strong in character and compassionate in ministry and most of all he had a harmonious and peaceful spirit.

He encouraged people to find holiness in everyday matters, emphasizing the freedom each one has to choose to be good and to do good, to live noble and virtuous lives and reject what is bad and harmful. In whatever state of life men and women find themselves, they can discover the way to God, joyfully and without fear. God can be found anywhere, everywhere and by everyone. The hours we spend in our daily chores need not be spiritually empty or useless. It is in the daily chores that we live our life of faith.

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