



Practical Paths To Holiness

BY THE OBLATES OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

WHAT IS SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY?

Salesian Spirituality is a vision for living the Gospel as learned, lived, and shared by St. Francis de Sales (1567 – 1622) and St. Jane de Chantal (1572 – 1641). Its first disciples were the Sisters of the Visitation of Holy Mary, a community of contemplative women established by these two saints in 1610. Their vision continues today, lived by people of all walks, states, and stages of life. One cannot hope to adequately plumb the depths of this spirituality in a brief pamphlet. What follows are some of the more salient features of Salesian Spirituality.

- All creation has been made for Christ, with Christ, and through Christ.
- God is love, and all creation is an overflowing of that love.
- All creation should be treated with respect and care.
- Jesus is the model for all fully human living.
- You possess divine dignity and are thus worthy of profound respect.
- God has testified that you are good and worthy of divine love and mercy.
- Despite your weakness and sinfulness, God loves you so much that God sent His only Son to become human.
- You are called to be holy, that is, to union with God.
- Pursuing a holy life is called “devotion,” that is, doing what is both commanded and counseled by God promptly, actively, and diligently.
- The pursuit of holiness must be practical. It must transform your attitudes, attributes and actions.
- Acknowledge your sins and failures, learn from them, but do not dwell on them.
- God gives you talents and abilities, gifts that should be discovered, developed, and used for the good of others.
- Relationships are essential to living a fully human, that is, a holy life.
- Each moment of each day comes from the hand of a loving God and is graced for your salvation.
The only time you have is each present moment. Don’t dwell in the past or the future.
- Living each moment to the fullest with an eye to loving God must lead you to show compassion for others.
- The challenge of each moment is discerning God’s Will, that is, the particular, unique way that God may be calling you to love God, yourself, and others. God’s Will is frequently communicated through the events, circumstances, and relationships in which you find yourself.
- God seldom requires you to perform great or extraordinary feats.
God always challenges you to perform everyday actions with extraordinary attention and enthusiasm.
- The “little virtues” of patience, humility, gentleness, simplicity, honesty, and hospitality are powerful means for growing in holiness.
- All prayer and meditation must lead to action.
- The motivation with which you perform some action may be far more powerful than the action itself.
- Freedom is one of the most precious and powerful gifts that God gives you. You are to use that freedom to grow in conformity to God’s Will.
- Intellectual learning, prayerful reflection, social interaction, work, play and all things creative should be valued as graced by God and viewed as a means for growing into a fully human person.
- Each new day is a new beginning, a new opportunity for growing in holiness.
- Let your passion be disciplined. Let your discipline be passionate.
- Keep things in perspective. Develop a sense of humor.

May this spirituality help you to become a happy, healthy, and holy person.

May it enable you to “Live Jesus” every day.

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. Do you believe that you are good?
2. What does “being holy” look or feel like to you?
3. Are there any dimensions of Salesian Spirituality as outlined in this brochure that you find particularly nourishing or attractive?
4. What aspects of Salesian Spirituality as outlined in this brochure do you find most challenging or confrontational?
5. How might God be calling you to “live Jesus” at this stage of your life?

FURTHER READING:

Power, Joseph, OSFS: *Finding God Where You Are: Selected Spiritual Writings*. New York: New City Press. 1993.

Wright, Wendy: *Introduction to the Devout Life and Treatise on the Love of God*. New York: Crossroad. 1997.