

Praying with Images from St. Francis de Sales: June



June 1:

Joyous, beautiful, gracious, and pleasing is this dawn! Still it remains true that dawn is not the day; or if it is day, it is a day just beginning, a day being born; it is rather the infancy of a day than the day itself. Beyond doubt it is in like manner with those movements of love which precede the act of faith needed for our justification. (**Treat.** 2.13, 136)

June 2:

Just as the dawn of day may be termed day, so this first complacency of the heart in the thing loved can be called love because it is the first perception of love. But just as the day's true heart extends from the end of dawn up to sunset, so the true essence of love consists in the movement and effusion of the heart immediately following complacency and ending in union. (**Treat.** 1.7, 68)

June 3:

Hence our knowledge of his divine majesty drawn from creatures seems to be simply a sight of God's feet, whereas in comparison with it faith is sight of the very face of divine majesty. As yet we do not see his face in the clear day of glory, but as it were in the first dawn of day. (**Treat.** 3.9, 187)

June 4:

We see how the beautiful dawning day increases not at different intervals and by sudden spurts, but by a steady development and a continuous growth that are almost imperceptibly perceptible, so that we truly see it grow in brightness but so steadily that no one can detect any interruption, separation, or discontinuity in its increase. In like manner God's love increased from moment to moment in the virginal heart of our glorious Lady, but by gentle, peaceful, continuous increment, without any agitation, shock, or violence whatsoever. (**Treat.** 7. 14, 52)

June 5:

Here in the half-light of dawning day, we are afraid that instead of the spouse we may come upon some other object that may catch and deceive us. When we meet God in heaven where he feasts and reposes in the noonday of his glory, there will be no further way to be deceived. (**Treat.**, 4. 1, 203)

June 6:

Yes, Lord, your will be done, on earth where we have no pleasure without admixture of some pain, no roses without thorns, no day without a night to follow, no spring without a winter that went before, on earth, Lord, where consolations are rare and trials are countless. (**Treat.** 9. 1, 99)

June 7:

He poured himself completely into us and, so to speak, dissolved his grandeur so as to reduce it to the form and figure of our littleness. Because of this he is called "a fountain of living water," dew, and rain from heaven. (**Treat.** 10. 17, 191)

June 8:

Pearls take not only their birth but also nourishment from the dew, to effect which the mother pearls open their shells towards the sky as if begging for drops of water that the freshness of the air causes to drop down at daybreak. In the same way, since we have received faith, hope, and charity from heavenly goodness, we must always turn our hearts towards heaven and keep them turned towards it so as to beseech continuance and increase in those same virtues. (**Treat.** 3. 2, 166)

June 9:

Then, like men who have found a gold mine and continually dig deeper so as to find always more and more of the metal they desire so much, the intellect continues to bury itself deeper and deeper in consideration and admiration of its divine object. (**Treat.** 7. 4, 26)

June 10:

Young dogs at every turning leave the pack and change directions; wise old dogs never make any change but always follow the track they are on. Therefore, once we have found God's most holy will in our vocation, let each of us devoutly and lovingly abide by it and practice its proper exercises according to the order of discretion and with zeal for perfection. (**Treat.** 8. 11, 87)

June 11:

But he (God) is not content thus to proclaim publicly his extreme desire to be loved, so that every man can have part in his loving summons. He even goes from door to door, knocking and rapping, and protesting that "if any man opens his door he will enter into his house and sup with him." That is, he will give him proof of every kind of good will. (**Treat.** 2.8, 122)

June 12:

But we are like doves: seduced and beguiled by self-esteem, we turn back to ourselves and busy our minds too much with creatures, and often find ourselves seized by the claws of enemies who carry us off and devour us. (**Treat.**, 4. 3, 207)

June 13:

Nevertheless, behold great Job! He is like a king among the unfortunate of the earth; he is seated upon a dunghill, as upon a throne of misery; he is adorned with sores, ulcers, and rottenness as with royal robes suitable to the quality of his kingship. So great were his abjection and annihilation that if he had not spoken no one could know whether Job was a man reduced to a dunghill or the dunghill was a putrid mass in the form of man. But I say again, behold great Job as he cries out, "If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, why shall we not receive evil things as well?" O God, these are the words of a mighty love! (**Treat.** 9. 2, 101)

June 14:

There are two men represented in each of us, Theotimus, and consequently two lives. One is that of "the old man," which is an old life. It is like the eagle's life, for they say that when the eagle grows old it only drags its feathers along the ground and cannot take flight. The other is the life of "the new man." It also is a new life, like the eagle's, which being freed from the old feathers it cast down into the sea, takes on new ones and, grown young again, flies off in its new powers. (**Treat.** 7. 7, 34)

June 15:

To do little actions with great purity of intention and a strong will to please God is to do them excellently, and then they greatly sanctify us. Some people eat a great deal, and yet are always gaunt, thin, and weak, because they do not have good digestive powers. There are others who eat but little and yet are always vigorous and in good shape because they have a good stomach. So too there are some souls that do many good works but increase very little in charity, because they do them either coldly and carelessly or by natural instinct and inclination rather than by God's inspiration or heavenly fervor. On the contrary, there are others who do little work, but with a will and intention so holy that they make very great progress in charity. They have little talent, but they use it so faithfully that the Lord rewards them generously for it. (**Treat.** 12. 7, 269-270)

June 16:

As long as the poor widow had empty vessels, the oil that Eliseus had miraculously multiplied by prayer never stopped to flow. In the same measure as our heart expands itself, or to put it better, in the same measure that it permits itself to be enlarged and expanded and does not deny to God's mercy the room made by its consent, his mercy ever pours forth and increasingly spreads out its holy inspirations. They keep on increasing, and they cause us to increase more and more in sacred love. (**Treat.** 2.11, 130)

June 17:

God was united to our human nature by grace, like a vine to an elm, to enable it in some way to participate in his fruit. (**Treat.** 7. 2, 20)

June 18:

Nevertheless, although the lady we spoke of does not leave the needle in her work after it is finished, yet as long as anything remains to be done to it, or if some other task calls her away, she leaves the needle sticking in the carnation, rose, or pansy she is embroidering so as to have ready at hand when she returns to her work. In like manner, Theotimus, as long as divine providence fashions the embroidery of virtues and the work of divine love in our souls, it always leaves servile or mercenary fear in them until charity is made perfect. (**Treat.** 11. 17, 244)

June 19:

For this reason, my dear reader, I will tell you that those who cut or engrave precious stones, and whose sight tires by being kept fixed steadily on the delicate lines of their work, like to keep a beautiful emerald in front of them. By looking at it from time to time they can refresh themselves by its green color and restore their weakened sight to its natural state. So too, amid the many problems that my office continually brings to me, I always have some little devotional works at hand that I look at when I can in order to gladden and relieve my mind. (**Treat.**, Preface, 44)

June 20:

The man who would correct others must first take care that anger does not deprive reason of that empire and domination over the soul which God has given to it, and that anger does not stir up rebellion, sedition, and confusion within ourselves. (**Treat.** 10. 16, 186)

June 21:

Therefore, as soon as the holy name of our Savior, the great bishop of our souls, is engraved by holy love on our hearts, we begin to bear delicious fruits unto eternal life. (**Treat.** 11. 6, 210)

June 22:

In like manner, among natural things the sun, the supreme object of our bodily eyes, does not present itself to our gaze without first sending down rays by which we may be able to see it. Hence we only see it by its light. Yet there is a difference between the rays the sun casts down upon our bodily eyes and that light in heaven which God will create in our minds. (**Treat.** 3.14, 197)

June 23:

“Often when I am asleep it seems that I speak to you, for by imagination the soul is wont to see in dreams what it thinks during the day. Thus while we do not see you with fleshly eyes, we still see you with the eyes of charity.” (Chrysostom) (**Treat.** 3.8, 184)

June 24:

When the falconer removes the hood from his bird and it sights its prey, it immediately launches itself upon the wing and if held back by the leash, it struggles with extreme ardor on the falconer's hand. So too when faith has drawn aside the veil of ignorance and has made us see our supreme good, which we still cannot possess because we are held back by the conditions of this mortal life. (**Treat.** 2.16, 143)

June 25:

Thus in addition to the thousand caresses that the prodigal son received from his father, he was established anew and in an even better way in all his privileges and in all the graces, favors, and dignities he had lost. (**Treat.** 11. 12, 231)

June 26:

Just as many men have lost courage during an actual attack, so also in the presence of danger and difficulty many men have lost their fears and have gained courage and resolution which otherwise they could never have had. So too many of God's servants have represented to themselves absent temptations and have been so frightened at them as almost to lose courage, but when they saw them present they conducted themselves with courage. (**Treat.**, 4. 11, 231)

June 27:

A mother is not satisfied with feeding her babe with her milk, which is her own substance, unless she herself gives her own flowerlike breasts to her child's mouth. This is so that it may not merely receive its mother's substance from a spoon or some other utensil, but from her own substance and in her own substance. Thus the mother's own substance serves both as vessel and as nourishment received by her beloved child. In like manner, God our Father is not content to make us receive his own substance into our mind, that is, to make us see his divinity. Out of the depths of his mercy he himself applies his substance to our minds, so that we no longer understand him by means of a representation or image but in his very substance and by his very substance. (**Treat.** 3.11, 191)

June 28:

If a man had spent a good while in the morning in the nearby woods listening to the pleasant warbling of a great number of finches, linnets, goldfinches, and other such little birds and then happened to hear a master nightingale that in perfect melody filled both air and ear with its wonderful voice, he would beyond doubt prefer that single woodland singer to the whole flock of others. So too when we have heard all the praises that so many creatures, each one rivaling the others, send up with one mind to their creator, and then we finally hear the praises rendered by the Savior, we find in them a certain infinity of merit, value, and sweetness which surpasses every hope and expectation of the heart. (**Treat.**, 5. 11, 262)

June 29:

Ah, by the heart of your own sweet Jesus, king of all hearts, whom your hearts adore, I beseech you through your all-powerful favor with the Holy Spirit to enliven my soul and the souls of all who read this book that we may sacrifice all our affections in a holocaust to his divine goodness, so as to live, die, and live again forever amid the flames of this heavenly fire which your Son, our Lord, so greatly desired to enkindle in our hearts that he ceased not to labor and to sigh for it "unto death, even to death upon a cross." (**Treat.**, Dedicatory Prayer, 35)

June 30:

The divine author and master of nature works with fire and lends his mighty hand to it so that it leaps upward, with water so that it flows downward to the sea, with earth so that it sinks lower and remains there when it finds its place. So too he has planted in man's heart a special natural inclination not only to love good in general but to love in particular and above all things his divine goodness, which is better and more lovable than all things. (**Treat.** 1.16, 93)

*Note: St. Francis de Sales wrote the **Treatise** to "Theotimus," a person who loved God.*

Reference:

Treat. – **Treatise on the Love of God** by St. Francis de Sales. 2 vols. (Vol. 1: Books 1-6; Vol. 2: Books 7-12) (trans.: John K. Ryan). Stella Niagara, NY: De Sales Resource Center, 2007.