

Praying with Images from St. Francis de Sales: July



July 1:

But if the soul together with the body is a little world, then charity is the sun which makes all things beautiful, gives all things warmth, and makes all things live. (**Treat.** 2.22, 162)

July 2:

There is an infinite workman who has stamped on me this limitless desire to know and this appetite which cannot be satiated. For this reason I must strive towards him and reach out for him so as to unite and join myself to his goodness. I belong to it and I exist for it. Such is the congruity that we have with God. (**Treat.** 1.15, 93)

July 3:

We must never permit our minds to flutter curiously around God's judgments; if we do so, we will be like little butterflies and bum our wings and perish in that sacred flame. (**Treat.** 4. 8, 224)

July 4:

Wine properly purified and separated from the lees is easily kept from turning sour and thickening, while that which is on its lees is always in danger. As for ourselves, as long as we are in this world, our souls are on the lees and tartar of a thousand moods and miseries, and consequently they are easy to change and spoil in love. (**Treat.** 4. 1, 202)

July 5:

But his eternal charity does not often permit his justice to impose such chastisement, but rather arouses his compassion and stirs him to rescue us from our misery. He does this by sending out the favoring wind of his most holy inspirations. It comes into our hearts with a gentle force; it seizes them and moves them; it lifts up our thoughts and thrusts our affections into the air of God's love. (**Treat.** 2.9, 125)

July 6:

One of the best marks of the goodness of all inspirations and especially the extraordinary is peace and tranquility of heart in those who receive them, since the Holy Spirit is indeed violent but with a violence that is gentle, mild, and peaceful. He comes "like a violent wind" and like thunder from heaven, but he does not overthrow them nor does he trouble them. The fear seizing them at his sound is momentary and is immediately followed by a sweet assurance. (**Treat.** 8. 12, 88)

July 7:

But in his infinite clemency God could never be so unbending towards the work of his hands. He saw that we were clothed in "flesh, a wind" which is dissipated as it goes, "and does not rectum." (**Treat.** 1.18, 98)

July 8:

When the favorable wind of God's grace fills our soul's canvas, it is within our liberty to refuse consent and thereby impede the effect of that favoring wind. But when our spirit sails along and makes a prosperous voyage, it is not we who cause the wind of inspiration to come to us. We neither fill our sails with it nor do we give movement to the ship that is our heart. We merely receive that wind coming from heaven. We consent to its movement. We let the ship proceed before the wind without stopping it by the remora of our resistance. It is God's inspiration, then, which impresses on our free will that gentle, blessed influence whereby it not only causes the will to see the beauty of the good but also warms it, helps it, reinforces it, and moves it so gently that by its agency the will turns and glides freely towards the good. (**Treat.** 4. 6, 216-217)

July 9:

Just as the two little mites that the poor widow gave were highly esteemed among the treasures in the Temple—and in fact by addition of small amounts treasures increase and their value grows accordingly—so the least little good deed, even though done with some laxity and without exerting our powers of charity to the full, does not fail to please God and to have value before him. (**Treat.** 3. 2, 166-167)

July 10:

Therefore the man who possesses charity has his soul clothed with a fair wedding garment, which, like that of Joseph, is wrought over with all the various virtues. Moreover, it has a perfection which contains the virtue of all perfections and the perfection of all virtues. (**Treat.** 11. 8, 219)

July 11:

The indifferent heart is like a ball of wax in God's hands, ready to receive all the impressions of his eternal good pleasure. It is a heart without choice, equally ready for all things and having no other object for its will except the will of God. It does not place its love in the things God wills but in the will of God who wills them. (**Treat.** 9. 4, 106-107)

July 12:

To stamp a seal properly on wax, we must not only place it there but we must press it down hard enough. Thus too God desires that we be united to him by a union so strong and close that we should remain marked with his features. (**Treat.** 7. 2, 20)

July 13:

On every side we hear perpetual alleluias! There are voices that for loudness are compared to thunder, to trumpets, to the roar of the waves on a troubled sea, and voices, too, so incomparably sweet and soft that they are compared to the melody of the harp, delicately and delightfully struck by most skilful players' hands, and all these voices unite to utter the joyous Easter canticle, "Alleluia, praise God, amen, praise God!" (**Treat.** 5. 10, 258-259)

July 14:

How can a reasonable soul that has once tasted such great sweetness as that of heavenly love ever willingly swallow the bitter waters of offense? (**Treat.** 4. 1, 202)

July 15:

So the Apostles with matchless affection preached first to the Jews, although they knew that in the end they would be forced to leave them as unfruitful soil and to turn to the Gentiles. It is our part to plant and water carefully, but to give the increase belongs only to God. (**Treat.** 9. 6, 112)

July 16:

To sum up, charity is sacred water by which the garden of the Church is made fertile. (**Treat.** 8. 6, 71)

July 17:

If I like only pure water, what does it matter to me whether it is served in a goblet of gold or in one of glass, since in either case I drink only the water? In fact, I will prefer it in the glass, since the glass has the same color as the water, which I can thus see much better. What does it matter whether God's will is offered to me in tribulation or in consolation? In each of them I neither desire nor seek anything except the divine will, which is better seen because no other beauty is present there but that of God's most holy, eternal good pleasure. (**Treat.** 9. 4, 105-106)

July 18:

The reason is that in effect a soul that is so closely and firmly knit to God that it cannot be easily drawn away from him is actually no longer in itself but in God. It is like a crucified body, which no longer belongs to itself but to the cross, or like ivy clinging to the wall, which no longer belongs to itself but to the wall. (**Treat.** 7. 3, 23)

July 19:

Ah, dost thou not know that thou art on the road and that the road is not made for sitting but for walking? It is so made for walking that to walk on is called going one's way, and when God speaks to one of his greatest friends, he says, "Walk before me and be perfect." (**Treat.** 3. 1, 164)

July 20:

Jonah was greatly at fault in being downcast because God, as he thought, did not fulfill his prophecy for Nineveh. Jonah did God's will in proclaiming the destruction of Nineveh, but he mingled his own interests and will with those of God. Hence when he saw that God did not fulfill his prediction in the strict sense of the words used in announcing it, Jonah was offended and murmured with indignation. If the good pleasure of the divine will had been the sole motive of his actions, he would have been just as content in seeing it accomplished in the remission of the penalty Nineveh had merited as in seeing it satisfied by punishment of the fault Nineveh had committed. We desire that what we undertake or manage shall succeed, but it is unreasonable that God should do everything after our liking. If God wills that Nineveh be threatened but not destroyed, since the threat is sufficient to correct it, why should Jonah complain? (**Treat.** 9. 6, 111-112)

July 21:

For the most part we plant vines because of their fruit; hence the fruit is the first thing desired and aimed at, although leaves and buds precede it as actual products. Thus too the mighty Savior was first in God's intention and in that eternal plan which divine providence formed for the production of creatures. With a view to this desired fruit the vine that is the universe was planted and the succession of many generations was established. Like leaves or blossoms they proceed as forerunners and preparatives proper for the production of that grape which the sacred spouse so highly praises in the Canticle, the juice whereof "cheers God and men." (**Treat.** 2.5, 114)

July 22:

But after we have planted and watered, we must realize that it is for God to give the increaser to the trees that are our good inclinations and habits. For this reason we must wait to obtain the fruits of our desires and labors from his divine providence. (**Treat.** 9. 7, 113)

July 23:

On this commandment, on this sacred tree, all counsels, exhortations, inspirations, and all other commandments hang as its flowers, and as its fruit, eternal life. (**Treat.** 10. 1, 141)

July 24:

Thus, like a little grain of mustard seed, our works are in no way comparable in greatness to the tree of glory they produce. Still they have the vigor and virtue to produce it because they proceed from the Holy Spirit. By a wondrous infusion of his grace into our hearts he makes our works become his and yet at the same time lets them remain our own, since we are members of a head of which he is the Spirit and since we are grafted on a tree of which he is the divine sap. (**Treat.** 11. 6, 211-212)

July 25:

God displays in a marvelous manner the incomprehensible riches of his power in the vast array of things that we see in nature, but he causes the infinite treasures of his goodness to show forth in an even more magnificent way *in* the unparalleled variety of goods that we recognize in grace." (**Treat.** 2.6, 116)

July 26:

Sometimes it happens that we forsake the good in order to seek the better, and while we leave the one we do not find the other. Possession of a little treasure actually found is worth more than expectation of a greater one we must still go out to seek. (**Treat.** 8. 11, 86)

July 27:

A traveler who fears that he has lost the right road walks on in doubt. As he goes, he looks at the countryside now here, now there, and worries and wonders at the end of almost every field whether he has not gone astray. The man who is sure of his route goes along cheerfully, confidently, and quickly. In like manner, love wishing to go forward according to God's will amid consolations always goes in fear. It is afraid of making a wrong turn, and instead of loving God's good pleasure it loves only the particular pleasure found in the consolation. But if love takes its path straight through God's will amid affliction, it walks on with assurance. (**Treat.** 9. 2, 102)

July 28:

As for tone, charity always keeps it steady, sweet, and pleasing, whereas this human love always pitches it too high in earthly things or too low in heavenly things. . (**Treat.**, 4. 9, 227)

July 29:

The laborer will never be blamed for not having a fine harvest, unless he did not carefully till and sow his fields. (**Treat.** 9. 7, 113-114)

July 30:

I think I hear that apostolic mouth crying like thunder into our hearts' ears, "Christians, it follows that in dying for us Jesus Christ has desired us." (**Treat.** 7. 8, 35)

July 31:

Thus God raises up the throne of his power on the stage of our infirmity, making use of the weak things to confound the strong. (**Treat.** Preface, 40)

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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.