

The Sisters of St. Thomas Aquinas

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Angelica - Winter 2013-2014

The Sisters of St. Thomas Aquinas

The Sisters of St. Thomas Aquinas wish all of our readers a blessed and joyous Christmas season.



Our community in Arizona

May God, who is never outdone in generosity, reward your prayers and support over the past years with many graces.



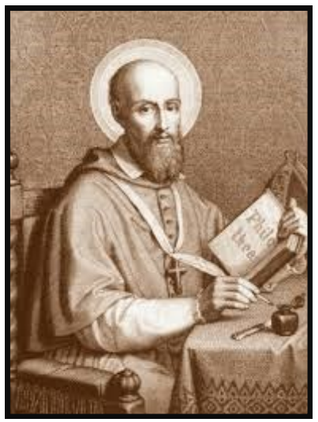
Our community in Florida

A New Year

During these first days of the year, we look upon the past twelve months, taking note of the failures into which we have fallen and of the spiritual progress which we have made. Hopes and aspirations for the new year unconsciously take shape in our soul; our spiritual life seeks rejuvenation. Let us not make light of these inspirations. Let us, on the contrary, derive benefit from them by forming good resolutions. In this salutary practice, our souls will again set foot upon the way of salvation with renewed vigor and turn the year into a most profitable one.

Before we begin forming these resolutions, we should withdraw from any outside distractions and seek the assistance of grace. A prayer to the Holy Ghost is most suitable.

Withdrawn from all occupations, let us now begin to seriously reflect upon the condition of our soul, striving to look upon it in the light of Faith, as God sees it. We cannot hope to form a fruitful resolution, if we do not seek to examine ourselves in this supernatural way.



St Francis de Sales, author of the Introduction to the Devout Life

Now, under the eyes of Our Creator, let us search for our soul's greatest obstacle in the way of salvation. St. Francis de Sales says in his *Introduction to the Devout Life* that we, "at least once a year must take it [the heart] apart and examine every piece in detail, that is, every affection and passion, in order to repair whatever defects there may be." Our souls are like gardens; without the daily tilling and weeding of the soil, the flowers of virtues will never have a chance to grow. Doubtless, we will find many weeds of vice within; however, we must search until we find the root of all evil, our predominate fault.

After we have found this predominating vice, our next step is to choose a virtue to practice which will most effectively overcome it. Every vice has a contrary virtue. "Compare the virtues and their contrary vices," says St. Francis de Sales. "How sweet is patience when compared with revenge! Meekness, compared with anger and vexation! Humility, compared with arrogance and ambition! Liberality, compared with avarice! Charity, compared with envy! Sobriety, compared with dissipation!"

It now only remains for us to put these resolutions into practice. Let us not fear any difficulty in this matter. As we progress in our resolutions, so will we begin to advance in our peace and happiness of soul. St. Francis de Sales says: "Virtues have the wonderful quality of delighting our soul with incomparable sweetness and fragrance after we have practiced them, whereas vices leave the soul infinitely weary and distraught. Courage, then! Why do we not strive to gain such delights?"

We know that God has reserved a certain number of years for each one of us; that during this allotted time, He gives us all that we need for the working out of our salvation. One day, these years will draw to a close; our time on earth will be at its end. We will be on our deathbed, drawing life's last breaths. Our minds will be fixed upon one dreaded thought: How will my life be looked upon by God? How will my pension of time be judged by my Creator?

The year 2014 could very well be our last. Therefore, let us try to use this time well which God mercifully gives us. How happy will we be to come to the end of another year if we spend each and every day faithful to our resolutions. What changes will we witness in ourselves! "My Philothea, says St. Francis de Sales, …look up to heaven, and do not forfeit it for earth. … Look upon Jesus Christ, and do not renounce Him for all the world."



The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated with great solemnity in the Southwest. This year the shrine erected in her honor in our chapel in Phoenix was adorned with over 200 fresh roses.