 Reading time: 4 min.

St Francis de Sales was considered a founder of a new school of spirituality, named after him: Salesian spirituality. By following this spirituality, many men and women have arrived at holiness. Getting to know it is a duty for those connected to this school of spirituality, especially for those religious groups of men and women who are in some way part of the great Salesian family.

The word spirituality means a doctrine of spiritual life, that is, one that deals with the principles of Christian perfection and the means to achieve it.
Speaking of Salesian spirituality Fr Eugenio Ceria wrote:
“Fundamentally, there is but one doctrine of spiritual life, the one contained in the pages of the gospel; however, developments and implementations can and do vary. The three evangelical counsels, for example, which are at the basis of religious life, although they always remain the same in substance, nevertheless take on different forms in practice, according to the diversity of the particular goals desired by the founders, in accordance with the needs and tendencies of the times. All the Saints and all the schools of holiness that have flourished and do flourish in the Church are substantially inspired by the gospel; but how many accidental differences between them! Thus we have the spirituality of St Benedict, of St Francis of Assisi, of St Dominic, of St Ignatius, and the consequent Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Ignatian spirituality, each with its own unmistakable character, and yet all equally suited to lead souls to perfection.
Some Saints, such as St John Bosco, did not systematically set out their own doctrine of spiritual life in writing, but created institutions in which they embodied it and from the study of which it can be brought to light; other Saints, on the contrary, not only gave rise to institutions professing a form of spiritual life that corresponded to their views, directing souls on the path to perfection according to the norms and methods they preferred, but also deliberately formulated the theories that formed the basis of their spiritual activity. One of the latter is St Francis de Sales, master of the asceticism that is known as Salesian.”

Salesian spirituality has produced its fruits in many people who have attained holiness, and was confirmed by the canonisation of St Francis de Sales in 1665 (less than 50 years after his death) and his proclamation as a Doctor of the Church in 1877.

Thanks to God and to his life experience, St Francis de Sales also leaves a written legacy in which the informative principles of Salesian spirituality are identified, mainly in the Introduction to the Devout Life, the Treatise on the Love of God, the Spiritual Confrerences and the collection of his Correspondence. In the Introduction, he writes for people who tread the ordinary paths of holiness, in the Treatise and Conferences he writes for those who wish to progress in the ways of contemplation, and in the Correspondence he writes for both cases.

There have been various efforts to present his entire French work in a complete edition. Mention may be made of Béthune Editeur's 4-volume version from 1836, Migne's 9-volume version from 1861 to 1864, Berche et Tralin's 10-volume version from 1898, Luis Vives''12-volume version from 1899, and lastly the Monastère d'Annecy's 27-volume version from 1892 to 1964, which is the most complete and reliable.

Fortunately, this latest version by the Monastère d'Annecy is in digital format, and we want to present it to all those who can read it in French.

No.	Vol.	Title	Topic	pp.	Pub.
I		The Catholic Controversy	Defence of the authority of the Church; The Rules of Faith, The Rules of Faith are observed in the Catholic Church	420	1892
II		Defending the Standard of the Holy Cross	On the honour and virtue of the true Cross; On the honour and virtue of the image of the Cross; On the honour and virtue of the sign of the Cross; On the quality of the honour due to the Cross; On the manner of honouring the Cross	432	1892

III		Introduction to the Devout Life (Philothea)	The counsels and exercises required to lead the soul from its first desire for the devout life to a full resolution to embrace it; various counsels for the elevation of the soul to God through prayer and the sacraments; several counsels concerning the exercise of the virtues; the counsels necessary against the more ordinary temptations; exercises and counsels to renew the soul and confirm it in devotion.	574	1893
IV	1	Treatise on the Love of God (Theotimus)	Six books: Containing a preparation for the whole treatise; History of the generation and celestial birth of divine love; Progress and perfection of love; Decadence and ruin of charity; Of the two principal exercises of holy love, which are accomplished through complacency and benevolence; Exercises of holy love in prayer.	362	1894

V	2	Treatise on the Love of God (Theotimus)	Seventh books: Of the soul’s union with its God, which is perfected in prayer; Of the love of conformity by which we unite our will to God’s, which is given to us by his commandments, counsels and inspirations; Of the love of submission by which our will is united to God’s good pleasure; Of the commandment to love God above all things; Of the sovereign authority which sacred love has over all the virtues, actions and perfections of the soul; Contains some counsels for the soul’s progress in holy love.	512	1894
VI		The True Spiritual Conferences (21)	21 talks	480	1895
VII	1	Sermons (autograph), I	1593-1602 – 65 sermons	492	1896
VIII	2	Sermons (autograph), II	1603-1622 – 95 sermons	448	1897
IX	3	Sermons (collection), I	1613-1620 – 42 sermons	492	1897
X	4	Sermons (collection), II	1594-1622 – 30 sermons	480	1898
XI	1	Letters, I	>1593-1598 – 120 letters	486	1900
XII	2	Letters, II	1599-1604 – 150 letters	524	1902

XIII	3	Letters, III	1605-1608 – 173 letters	464	1904
XIV	4	Letters, IV	1608-1610 – 210 letters	480	1906
XV	5	Letters, V	1611-1613 – 219 letters	470	1908
XVI	6	Letters, VI	1613-1615 – 263 letters	484	1910
XVII	7	Letters, VII	1615-1617 – 172 letters	480	1911
XVIII	8	Letters, VIII	1617-1619 – 233 letters	500	1912
XIX	9	Letters, IX	1619-1620 – 203 letters	496	1914
XX	10	Letters, X	1621-1622 – 221 letters	484	1918
XXI	11	Letters, XI	Undated letters – 136 letters + 5 letters in volume 26	352	1923
XXII	1	Opuscules, I	First series: Studies and private life and Second series: Apostolate – 48 pamphlets	400	1925
XXIII	2	Opuscules, II	Third series. Controversy and Fourth series. Episcopal Administration – 35 pamphlets	448	1928
XXIV	3	Opuscules, III	Fourth series. Episcopal Administration and Fifth series: Foundations and reforms – 141 pamphlets	568	1929
XXV	4	Opuscules, IV	Fifth series: Foundations and reforms – 20 pamphlets	568	1931
XXVI	5	Opuscules, V	Sixth series: Asceticism and Mysticism – 69 pamphlets	506	1932

XXVII		Analytical table	Doctrinal index; Index of names; Index of places; Scriptural index	316	1964

The detailed index of all Complete Works can be found **HERE**.

The version of the volumes in PDF format can be found **HERE**.

A concordance of the Complete Works in French can also be found **HERE**.

We wish you a fruitful reading.