



### ***THE FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES***

As we celebrate the feast of St Francis de Sales, it is important to remind ourselves of the words our founder said: “St Francis de Sales is the real founder of your congregation since the first days of the foundation of your institute. In giving you the gentle and delightful St Francis de Sales, doctor of the church, as father and patron, we recommended that you study his spirit and doctrine in his life and writings and to conform your religious life to it, through the example of virtue that shows most especially in him.” (Fr Braun 1878)

When we think of the letters of guidance of St Francis de Sales, we are really struck by how we can live out his spirituality in our world of noise and distraction. One of the ways that he encourages us to do this is by strengthening our relationships in community because it is one of the essential elements of religious life. St Francis de Sales said in his writings that love of God and love of neighbour is very important and one cannot exist without the other. The way we love God is the same way we should love our sisters; “Love God perfectly and hence you will love your sister perfectly”. To be servants of God means to be charitable, hospitable and gentle towards others (What is our relationship with our sisters in community; do we communicate and listen to each other?). We are invited to live his spirituality in our congregation, that is; to commit ourselves to prayer which in turn helps us to build and maintain our relationship with God. This can be achieved only if we learn to balance prayer and work appropriately and pay attention to great and small things alike.

Being in the spiritual year of the novitiate, friendships in community are very important. Our journey to God is not a private matter, we need each other to share

our lives and experiences as we journey. These shared friendships need to be sincere and genuinely loving relationships that enable us to grow in heart, mind and wisdom so that we become better lovers of God and each other. We were called by God to discover our truest selves which come to fruition through the realisation of our capacity to love. St Francis de Sales said: “Love, human and divine is the fundamental principle of life.” His life demonstrates to us that we come to God not in bypassing those persons that we love, but by precisely through them. We need community to complete this journey that God has put before us, therefore, sincerity, openness and willingness to share our lives generously is essential.

When we do this in community, we are encouraged as sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to go out and meet people, listen to them and if possible attend to their various needs. Francis de Sales, though a busy man, never failed to have time for restless souls until he gave them the satisfaction of esteemed love and tranquillity. We go out to encourage and empower people in our missions so that we too can win souls to the Sacred Heart. He had a strong belief that everyone who comes into our lives whether they make it bitter or sweet, is really a stepping stone to bringing the fullness of God’s plan.

We thank God for the gifts and virtues that God has given to each and every sister of in the congregation. We also thank God for the people who help us to grow as Christians and sisters who remind us to live simply as St Francis de Sales; “Nothing is as strong as gentleness”

“Be who you are and be that well.” These words of St. Frances encourage us to accept ourselves and to be open to the will of God.



*These are our authors – “work in progress”  
Can you name them?*

