



De Sales

SPIRITUALITY SERVICES

"practical paths to holiness"



"The Healing Wounds of Calvary"

Following Jesus' crucifixion, the apostles were afraid: as followers of Jesus, their fear and anxiety was, completely understandable and, for that matter, rather prudent. Despite being locked away, Jesus broke into their lives: not merely into the physical place in which they had taken refuge, but into the core of their hearts. He attempted to calm them, to heal them. He challenged them to be at peace by showing them his hands and his side, quite a strange way to dispel their anxiety and grief!

Notwithstanding the glory of the resurrection, Jesus still bore the legacy of pain, disappointment, rejection, humiliation, suffering and death on his body. But herein lay the promise and the hope that Jesus offers: pain, suffering and loss, notwithstanding the scars that they leave, need not be the last word for those who believe in the love of God. St. Francis de Sales wrote: "We

must often recall that our Lord has saved us by his suffering and endurance and that we must work out our salvation by sufferings and afflictions, enduring with all possible forbearance the injuries, denials and discomforts that we might meet." (IDL, Part III, Chapter 3)

All of us have experienced pain and suffering. All of us bear the wounds of failure, betrayal, deception, disappointment, and loss. Our hearts, our minds, our memories – our souls – have the scars to prove it.

Out of fear of being hurt further, we, like the apostles, lock ourselves away in some hidden emotional or spiritual refuge, living in fear of what other pain or disappointments life may bring in the future.

We have been wounded by life. We bear the scars of pain, rejection, misunderstanding and mishap. We may, indeed, be permanently affected by things both un-

fortunate and unfair, but these need not rob us of the power and promise of recovery, of renewal – of resurrection – unless we turn to despair, unless we allow ourselves to be defeated by the nails of negativity, by the lance of loss.

Francis de Sales offers to us the same advice he penned to St. Jane de Chantal in 1604: "Keep yourself constantly in God's presence. Avoid anxieties and worries, for nothing so impedes our progress toward perfection. Simply—and courageously—place your heart gently into Our Lord's wounds."

The scars of our humanity are a part of our past. The scars of our humanity are a part of our present. They need not, however, determine the course of our future. Unite your own wounds with the wounds of Jesus. Find in them a source of strength, a promise of peace, the hope for healing...and a path to glory.

