January 24th: Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Mt* 11:25-30): At that time Jesus said in reply, "...Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

St. Francis de Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church (1567-1622)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today we celebrate a great master of spirituality. His life straddled two centuries, the 16th and 17th, and he summed up in himself the best of the teachings and cultural achievements of the century drawing to a close, reconciling the heritage of humanism striving for the Absolute that is proper to mystical currents.

Francis followed the Lord's call and was ordained a priest on 18 December 1593. In 1602, he became Bishop of Geneva. He was an apostle, preacher, writer, man of action and of prayer dedicated to implanting the ideals of the Council of Trent; he was involved in controversial issues dialogue with the Protestants.

Yet above all St Francis de Sales was a director and he wrote one of the most widely read books of the modern age, "The Introduction to a Devout Life" (1607). Francis de Sales addressed an invitation that might well have seemed revolutionary at the time. It is the invitation to belong completely to God, while living to the full her presence in the world and the tasks proper to her state.

—Thus came into being the appeal to lay people and the care for the consecration of temporal things and for the sanctification of daily life on which the Second Vatican Council and the spirituality of our time were to insist.