

**Homily. Mass at St. John Berchmans Catholic School**  
**January 24, 2017. Tuesday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time**  
**Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church**

In the first reading today, Saint Paul says that when Jesus “came into the world, he said: (...) ‘Behold, I come to do your will.’” And Saint Paul goes on saying that, “By this ‘will’ (the will of God his Father), we have been consecrated through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once and for all.”

Before the time of Jesus, before people could go to Confession, Jewish priests offered the blood of bulls and goats to take away the sins of the people of Israel. However, as Saint Paul explains, those sacrifices, prescribed by the law, “were only a shadow” of the only sacrifice that would actually forgive our sins. Jesus, God the Son, did the will of his Father throughout his life, offering every moment as a sacrifice pleasing to him, until he finally poured his own blood and sacrificed his own life on the cross for our sins.

Today we also celebrate the Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales. He was a great student, a great teacher and a great bishop, a good model for everyone here. One of the things that he taught is that every Christian can do the will of God and become a saint, regardless of their age, their job, their position or circumstances. He was a very busy man and he taught by his example that we can pray at all times. We can offer our play time, our conversations, our work —if done with love and well— as a sacrifice that pleases God.

He encouraged dancing and jokes! And he believed the worst sin was to judge someone or to gossip about them.

We know first of all that to do God's will in our lives, we must follow the Ten Commandments. I will not ask anyone here if they know the Ten Commandments because I know that you are all good students and know them well, right?; except —of course— the little ones who have not yet received preparation for their First Communion. But as Saint Paul says, the Ten Commandments —the old law given to us through Moses— have “only a shadow of the good things to come.” All shadows disappear under the light of Jesus when he gives us those “good things”, as he shows us the fullness of the will of God. After being obedient to the will of his Father, Jesus commanded us, “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” (Jn 13:34) That is the will of Jesus, by which we become his “brother and sister and mother”, to be obedient and to love one another as he loves us.

We often hear in our society that the only duty of children and youth is to be good students. Saint Francis de Sales was a great student and he was also obedient to his parents and teachers. He knew, as any good Christian should know, that our only duty really is to love, like Jesus did. Obedience to your parents and your teachers is a safe way towards finding the light of God's will, his plan for you. In obedience to his father, Saint Francis de Sales was taking riding classes one day, when God made his will clear to him. He fell from his horse three times that day. Every time he fell, the sword came out of the case, and every time it came out, the sword and case fell

on the ground forming a Christian cross. When he noticed that, he heard God's voice in his heart calling him to follow Jesus as a priest.

The mission of St. John Berchmans School, to enable "the students to reach full awareness of their God given talents", certainly is a way to lead children to the light of the will of Christ. The students should be obedient to their teachers, as they lead them to the light of Jesus in their lives that way. Speaking to children one day, Pope Francis asked, "how does one make the world better? With hatred, can you do it with hate?" "No!", the children responded. "With love! With love," said Pope Francis. "Everyone together, like brothers and sisters, fighting beside one another out of love. (...) When the Apostle John, who was a great friend of Jesus—a very great friend— wanted to say who God is, do you know what he said? 'God is love'. Beautiful. (...) God is love. And we move towards the light to find the love of God. But is God's love within us, even in the dark moments? Is the love of God there, hidden away? Yes, always! The love of God never leaves us. It is always with us." Always! "When God's love goes forth, everything goes well."

May Our Lady of Guadalupe protect all of you and your families, and may she lead you all to her Son, the light of the world.