



## ***Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis de Sales***

### ***A Reading Discussion Guide***

**What does St. Francis de Sales mean by the term “devout life?”**

**The book is addressed to “Philothea” - meaning “one who loves God.” Discuss the impact of this idea, which he puts forth by using this allegorical name.**

**The book puts forth the case that one can lead a devout life by remaining in the world, living an ordinary life. Discuss how St. Francis de Sales develops this idea and what it means to “be holy in a secular world.”**

**St. Francis de Sales has arranged his book in a step-by-step format, in the form of a long letter. Why do you think he chose this format? Discuss how you have found it to be effective or not.**

**Discuss St. Francis' ideas for “cultivating a devout life.” What is involved in this? What is the relationship between “being devout” and “devotion?”**

**The soul should be raised to God – both through prayer and the Sacraments of the Church. What recommendations does St. Francis de Sales make in this regard?**

**Discuss St. Francis' ideas for “practicing the virtues.” How can or does this apply to your own everyday life?**

**The saint puts forth his “advice against temptations.” Discuss his ideas.**

***Introduction to the Devout Life* has remained continuously in print and read by Catholics for over 400 years. Why do you think this has been the case? In spite of its age, did you find the book accessible, easy to understand?**

**What obstacles might a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader of this book encounter? Discuss how the practice of Christian faith has changed over the centuries and how it has not.**

**What are the key concepts you have taken away from reading *Introduction to the Devout Life*?**

**How and why (or why not) would you recommend this book to others?**