



# De Sales

## SPIRITUALITY SERVICES

"practical paths to holiness"



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### *"Win-win...a Life-giving Proposal"*

Stephen R. Covey in his national bestseller (Seven Habits of Highly Effective People) reminds us that: "Whether you are the president or the janitor, the moment you step from independence in interdependence in any capacity, you step into a leadership role and the habit of effective leadership is win/win."

The author suggests that this framework is not a technique but a way of life that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions.

For many in our contemporary culture this approach is an unrealistic philosophy to swallow. Most people tend to think in terms of the world divided into two groups: winners and losers, the haves and the have-nots. A recent slogan discovered on a bumper sticker brought this home loud and clear: "If you can't run with the big dogs, you'd better stay on the porch." As far back as Cain and Abel, it seems as if humankind has had to translate relationships in terms of the "accepted" and "rejected," i.e. winners and losers.

The spiritual journey is not

exempt from the struggle. One doesn't have to look any further than the occupants around the Passover table on the night that Jesus gave himself to his followers as the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. Before they were "rudely" interrupted by the Lord, the Apostles were arguing about who was the greatest.

Stephen Covey is right when he tells us that the win/lose approach to life is seriously flawed. In fact four centuries earlier another keenly perceptive gentleman counseled: "Be fair in all your actions; always put yourself in your neighbor's place and put your neighbor in yours. Then you will judge fairly. Imagine yourself the seller when buying and the buyer when selling, then you will live fairly."

The author of this sentiment, Saint Francis de Sales, reminds us in his spiritual approach to life that we must draw one another's attention to the fact that each of us is made in God's image and likeness and the measure of our love for God rests in the perfection of our love for our neighbor.

Some believe that everything outside of their self interest doesn't matter. The contrary is true. Anything less than striving for goals that benefit all is settling for second best-as best. In a world that is growing intensely interdependent, in an environment where we profess to be children of the same God, win/win is the only viable option.

Covey notes that in relationships (like marriage for instance) if both people aren't winning then both are losing. In the same vein, Francis de Sales cautions that an individual is never so dead as when he or she lives for self alone.

Paul John II has challenged us in his writings on solidarity to embrace an attitude that fosters a firm and enduring determination to commit oneself to the common good because we truly are responsible for one another. He challenges us in a real sense to a win/win approach to life and relationships. Jesus died in order that we might "win" all of us for Heaven. Let's do our level best to make that promise a reality and become true winners.