



Adrien Gambart's Emblem Book (1664): The Life of St. Francis de Sales in Symbols (English and French Edition)

Adrien Gambart, Elisabeth Stopp, Terence O'Reilly

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This volume includes the late Elisabeth Stopp's previously unpublished study of the emblem book of Adrien Gambart (1660-68), an introductory essay by Agnes Guiderdoni-Brusle that updates and supplements Stopp's work, and a facsimile of Gambart's emblem book. This remarkable book was inspired by the life and writings of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), and written for the Sisters of the Visitation monastery of Faubourg Saint-Jacques in Paris, where Gambart, a Vincentian priest, served as chaplain for over thirty years.

Gambart's emblems visualize many of the literary images that Francis employs in his writings, as well as draws on other popular sources of the emblematic tradition. By means of the emblems, Gambart seeks to identify in a tangible and memorable way for the reader the truly remarkable qualities of Francis's life and the exceptional elements of Salesian spirituality. Such a method, Gambart points out, is in keeping with Francis's own profuse use of images and symbols to communicate his spiritual doctrine as concretely and clearly as possible.

Each emblem invites the reader to reflect on an episode from Francis's biography or on one of his particular virtues. One emblem is provided for each of the fifty-two weeks of the year and is explained by an explanatory meditation, which is then followed by seven points for prayer and resolution, one for each day of the week. Gambart called these points *Fruits et pratiques* (Fruits and Practice), a summary, as it were, of what was to be learned from meditation on the emblematic picture.

Stopp's study offers an English translation of the key observations made by Gambart about each of the fifty-two emblems, while the facsimile makes available Gambart's original French text. Moreover, the facsimile is reproduced in color in order to convey the tonal richness of the original emblems.

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