**Is there virtue in controlling your tongue?**

If you ever wondered what might be a good way of keeping our thoughts from becoming verbal assaults on another person, place or thing we might want to turn to St. Francis De Sales. In has masterful work [***Introduction the Devout*** ***Life***](http://www.philothea.de/devout-english.html)St. Francis teaches the importance of practicing virtue especially with our temptation to speak about anything. The key to his method revolved around leading the person to the virtues most suited to him. When curbing our temptation to speak exercising the virtue of charity serves as an effective deterrent if the intent of our initial communication is not charitable. The virtue of charity simply put is derived from Christ Himself. The fact that Christ died for our sinful humanity reflects a genuine love that speaks louder than words.

**The Mastery of the Our Tongue**

The reality of the human condition is that our voices tend to speak louder than our souls. Just read any print or online media and you’ll clearly see examples of humanity’s need to express themselves at time mercilessly about anything or anyone. A good priest friend of mine once told me; “you don’t have to say a thing they already know where you stand!” What he was reminding me was that the best teaching moments are those where nothing is said because the physical presence and posture of the person speaks for itself. In other words, our genuine Christian witness does not need to always involve words. St. Francis De Sales reminds us that all of us have the virtue of silence meaning we have the ability to control our tongue; the problem is we simply choose not to.

There is a value in [silence](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgNj2Sf_mgo) where if practiced faithfully presents a unique opportunity to foster an [intimacy with Christ that is beyond words.](http://www.amazon.com/Silence-Shusaku-Endo/dp/0800871863)  It’s not about my voiced opinion but instead it’s the one on one encounter with someone who simply needs a servant of the Gospel who is striving to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48).

Mastering our tongue believe it or not is possible and an actual practice in true freedom. Keep in mind that as long as freedom has not bound itself definitively to its ultimate good which is God, there is the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and thus growing in perfection of failing and sinning ([CCC 1732](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm)). Hence our tongue can be our greatest asset of evangelization or our greatest curse. St. Francis De Sales reminds us that our ultimate goal is spiritual maturity which means having the ability to listen first, speak second.

***“Beware then of useless murmuring and keep your tongue from slander; because no secret word is without result and a lying mouth destroys the soul.***

***Wis 1:11***