



Beyond Compare: St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God

Francis Clooney

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Beyond Compare is a remarkable work that offers a commentary on spiritual learning for the twenty-first century rooted in two classic texts from the Hindu and Christian traditions: the *Essence of the Three Auspicious Mysteries* by Sri Vedanta Desika and *Treatise on the Love of God* by St. Francis de Sales.

In his commentary, Clooney achieves multiple goals—the book is a contribution to Christian spiritual theology, highlighting for today the beautiful insights into love by St. Francis de Sales (1567-1623), Doctor of the Church. At the same time it points out how even in our world of many religious paths, we can recover and deepen the ancient tradition of loving surrender into God's hands by opening ourselves to the wisdom of India and one of Hindu India's most famous traditions of loving God, explained to us by the south Indian Hindu theologian Sri Vedanta Desika (1268-1369). Clooney goes further, offering a comparative study of these classic works in which he self-consciously writes about the process of reading the two works and the impact this approach has on the reader. The good advice found through this deep engagement with these texts offers a deeper insight into how we can most fruitfully and spiritually think about religious pluralism in the 21st century, remaining open in heart and mind while loyal still to our own tradition.

Not merely a book *about* loving surrender to God, *Beyond Compare* offers us the opportunity to advance along that path ourselves, learning from the wisdom of St. Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika, meditating on their two paths together, deepening our own love and willingness to surrender in love to God.

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