



Seelos *and* Sanctity

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God Teaches You How To Love Him

Thousands and thousands of years ago Almighty God devised a plan to teach us how to love Him. He decided to write down this method, but He did not write it in pen and ink. He wrote it on the flesh of our own hearts. In other words He built this method of loving Him into our own human nature.

And what is this mechanism in our nature which teaches us how to love God? It is called MARRIED LOVE.

When God created marriage through the creation of the physical and psychological differences of men and women, He modeled their love for each other after His own love toward Christian souls. So if you wish to learn what your relationship toward God should be, you need merely study the relationship of men and women toward each other in marriage.

In human marriage man is the decision-maker and the protector. The woman feels the need for someone to assume the responsibility of making decisions for her, someone who will protect her from the many dangers she sees in the world about her. In divine "marriage" God gives the orders and we obediently submit. It is our Almighty Lover in heaven Who protects us from the thousands of dangers we see about us every day.

Just as a devoted wife finds her joy in serving her husband and making him happy so too the devout Christian soul finds its happiness in the service of God.

The happiest moments in the life of a devoted wife occur when she is lovingly speaking to her husband and hearing him speak to her. So too the devout Christian soul finds its happiest moments when speaking to the God Whom it loves.

In the marriage ceremony the following words are addressed to newlyweds: "Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Love makes sacrifice easy. Perfect love makes sacrifice a real joy." Devout souls who have by meditation developed a true spirit of love for God, really and truly find it a joy to be able to sacrifice their own goods, for the sake of the God they love.

These things come quite naturally to people who are in love with each other. Why is it then that we find

it so difficult to make these sacrifices as far as God is concerned?

THE REASON IS BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T THOUGHT ENOUGH ABOUT GOD. WE HAVE NEVER REALLY GOTTEN TO KNOW HIM.

Human beings do not "fall" into love, they grow into love. Love grows as a result of an ever greater awareness of the goodness in the person loved.

SO TOO, WE FAIL TO LOVE GOD SUFFICIENTLY BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ADEQUATELY AWARE OF HIS GOODNESS. THE REASON WHY WE DO NOT POSSESS THIS AWARENESS IS BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT THOUGHT ENOUGH ABOUT HOW GOOD HE REALLY IS.



If you wish really to love God you must learn more about Him. But your knowledge of God will not come chiefly from your catechism or your prayerbook. The chief method of getting to know God is to be found in reading the

BOOK that God wrote in which He tells us about Himself – the Holy Bible. The more we read the wonderful words of the sacred scriptures, the greater our awareness of the excellence of God becomes. The more aware we are of how wonderful He is, the deeper grows our love. The more we love Him, the easier it is to make sacrifices for His sake and the greater is our pleasure in speaking with Him through prayer. Thus we shall establish a relationship with God similar to that of a devoted married couple – a relationship in which sacrifice becomes a pleasure, in which sharing of experiences creates genuine joy, in which one lives constantly in the "presence" of the Loved One.

FATHER VAUGHN

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Father,

"I don't know how to start. I know I am a sinner, and I know my prayers are poorly said. By gambling I have let myself lose money I can't afford. I have just been praying a few days to Father Seelos and asking him to help me to get on my feet again. I really feel like my prayers are going to be answered. I feel a load lifted from my shoulders and I really feel he is helping me. I have a lot of other heartaches in my life. But I feel if I can get over gambling the others will come more easily. My prayers are said hoping he will be declared a Saint.



. . . helping me regain my health after a serious automobile accident. I had a broken neck, a broken shoulder and broken ribs. Within six weeks the neck was healed. The doctor declared that this was most unusual.

. . . my brother's recovery from a bleeding ulcer without surgery.

. . . the amicable settlement of family property. Things looked hopeless for a while, but one member of the family had a change of heart and the estate was settled.

. . . for the peaceful death of my brother-in-law. He had been ill for quite a long time. I asked Father Seelos to intercede for him to our dear Lord, if it be His holy will that things would improve. He passed on peacefully and without a struggle.

. . . the return of my son's sight. He had a very bad infection on the back of his eye and within a week he had lost his sight. After three months of continued prayer and treatment by an ophthalmologist, he is able to see again.

. . . "Peace of Mind" for which I am ardently praying. My home life is beginning to show signs of unity, which were about to be destroyed.

A PRAYER TO FATHER SEELOS

For your own intentions, and all the petitions placed before the tomb of Father Seelos, let us pause and say —

O, MY GOD, I TRULY BELIEVE YOU ARE PRESENT WITH ME, I ADORE YOUR LIMITLESS PERFECTIONS. I THANK YOU FOR THE GRACES AND GIFTS YOU GAVE TO FATHER SEELOS, IF IT IS YOUR HOLY WILL, PLEASE LET HIM BE DECLARED A SAINT OF THE CHURCH SO THAT OTHERS MAY KNOW AND IMITATE HIS HOLY LIFE. THROUGH HIS PRAYERS PLEASE GIVE ME THIS FAVOR . .

N.B. These reports of "Thanksgiving" are from the statements of our correspondents. Official judgement of the favors granted can be given only by the proper church authorities.

To Carry the Mission Cross

by Luana Jambois

He stretched out his hand – out to the other hands. The fat hands, the thin ones, the dark, the fair, the freckled hands, the gnarled hands of the aged and the plump unlined hands of the young. They did not need to touch the hands. The love which flowed between them was so overpowering, so real, that even the candles flickering from the altar of the mission church seemed to hold them in the veiled Presence of their Beloved Lord Himself.

Father Francis Xavier Seelos was preaching a mission.



The snow piles in pale white cotton drifts outside the church. The breath of the people formed warm mists where they sat in stiff wooden pews in the poor unheated house of God. Father Seelos' trust was that in simple words he spoke to the people, Jesus would find His way to their hearts. When he stretched out his blackrobed arms, touched his mission Crucifix, God used him as His loving instrument.

Farther toward the back were how many? One sinner? Two? No. Many more. They hunched forward. This black-robed man seemed to look deep into their souls. He did not turn away at what he saw. The love and compassion and sorrow in those eyes touched their guilt where it lay heavy in their breasts. "Come to me, sinners. Let me help you. Jesus carried His Cross for you. He was the Sacrifice of love to the Father for you. Speak, good Jesus, to your Father for my salvation . . . You have hungered and thirsted after it . . . Till now I have satisfied that hunger by giving you gall. My Jesus, forgive me! Your Holy Mouth is closed and puts forth no sound. Yet it seems to say, 'Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of Heart.' You invite us. 'Come to Me all ye that labor and are burdened.' Open Heart of my Saviour, Refuge of sinners . . . In Your Goodness show me the way to salvation! Holy Cross, only Hope of the sinner, second plank after the shipwreck of our innocence! Lead me to my Saviour!" Father Seelos would open his arms, holding high the Mission Cross. "Come to me. I will be waiting for you."

They came. Moving feet against the chill of drafty floors, waiting hour after hour in long lines outside the confessional where he sat erect, seemingly tireless. The sins, the hopes, the hates, the loves, the sorrows, the despairs of his beloved sinners beat at him through the curtained drape. Never was he too tired to help "just one more, Lord." In mission work, the work of the confessional, Francis Seelos was a giant.

The Wearing of the Green



Sure, we know it is not St. Patrick's day, but we are really anxious to start "wearin' the green" around the Seelos Center. We are talking, of course, about our Green Stamp campaign to get 2,000 S & H Green stamp books in order to obtain a new addressing machine for this Newsletter. We figure it will probably take us a year or more to obtain the required amount. Eventually, however, we are confident that a sufficient number will be obtained in order to reach our goal.

We are also accepting other kinds of trading stamps if you do not have the S & H Green stamps. We plan on trying to work some kind of a trade whereby we can exchange other trading stamps for the S & H Green stamp books. Monetary contributions will also be accepted and used for this purpose.

Keep the Green Stamp books coming. We enjoy "wearin' the green."

HOSPITAL VISITS

If you wish Father Vaughn to visit any hospitalized person in the New Orleans area, please phone 895-6176.



The crucifix with which we bless the sick each week was used by Father Seelos when preaching missions and retreats. When each Redemptorist is ready to begin his priestly ministry, he is given a very beautiful crucifix. The cross is made of ebony wood and the Body of Christ of solid brass. This is something which the Redemptorist priest treasures during his life. It is used only when preaching missions and retreats. It is placed in his cincture, or belt, on the exterior of his habit, facing the people whom he is addressing.

The purpose of this crucifix is to emphasize to the people the importance of devotion to the passion of Christ and to present to them during the sermon the vivid representation of the love of God for man.