



Seelos *and* Sanctity

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE
PAID AT NEW ORLEANS, LA.

REV. JOHN J. VAUGHN, C.S.S.R.
VICE-POSTULATOR

JOSIE BECKER
EDITOR

Published monthly at the Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70130.

In conformity with the decree of Pope Urban VIII all statements contained herein are unreservedly submitted to the judgement of the Holy See and the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

Published with Ecclesiastical Approbation.

Staff Artist John Moley.

Printed by Forms Control Co., Inc.

WHY ?

by Father Vaughn

We hardly ever receive letters criticizing our work at the Seelos Center. About once or twice a year, however, one comes in. It does make us wonder if perhaps others feel the same way but do not bother to write. In case anyone else has similar doubts, we are here reproducing a letter we received recently, together with the reply I wrote to the young lady in question.

Dear Father Vaughn,

Why? Every month we receive literature about Father Seelos and I always have the same reaction-why? Not why is our name on the mailing list, but why all this time and money for his canonization. There's no doubt of his "heroic sanctity" and if he should become a Saint it seems that this would happen anyway, without pushing and what almost seems commercialization.

Do you ever have the feeling that this money might feed some hungry kids somewhere? I do and it bothers me. So please remove our name from mailing list. At least that will be a couple of cents save.

By the way - good luck. Still feel though, that he could become a Saint without the propaganda, if the Lord wants it that way.

Sincerely,
MABEL

Dear Mabel:

Thank you very kindly for your nice letter concerning the development of the cause of Father Seelos. I always admire someone who speaks their mind.

Your objection is quite understandable and, in fact, it is something that bothered me greatly when I began developing this cause. However, as time has elapsed, and as developments have taken place, I feel quite differently about it.

First of all, let me say that the purpose of a cause for canonization is not to render any honor to the deceased person as a goal in itself. The Servant of God is in heaven and can receive no greater

intrinsic honor than he is receiving now. However, our purpose is to encourage an imitation of his life in those who are still living. He is to be presented to the world as a model of Christian living and we Christians are to be encouraged to imitate his life.

Therefore, the purpose of the "propaganda" (I prefer not to use this word) is to make his life better known and to encourage an imitation of his life on the part of others.

Centuries ago, the reputation of holy people was passed around by word-of-mouth. Today the word-of-mouth communication is to a great extent limited. We are conditioned to obtaining facts and information by means of the printed word and other mass media of communication. In making the life of the Servant of God more widely known, we must adapt ourselves to the standard means of communication of our day. We find that Christ Himself used the communication media of His day in order to spread His message. If Christ were living today, I am sure that He would use mass media very effectively.

Besides this, my experience has been that Almighty God, for His own reasons, bestows His Graces in some way as a "reward" for the development of the devotion. Before we began telling people about Father Seelos, very few people prayed to him because few knew about him. When people finally heard of his sanctity, innumerable reports of rather striking favors granted as a result of prayer to the Servant of God came to our attention. It certainly seems to me that, if God were displeased with the "propaganda", He certainly would not have granted such a multitude of answers to prayers.

I quite agree that we need to develop programs to feed the hungry kids of the world, but feeding bodies should not be the exclusive goals of our activity. I like to think that in some way our work is being used as God's instrument for feeding souls.

As you requested, I have removed your name from our mailing list. However, I do hope that this letter might serve to clarify some ideas.

Very Sincerely,
JOHN J. VAUGHN, C. SS. R.

We would be very interested in hearing comments from our readers on the above letters.

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 . .



....cure of my husband, whom we had been told had cancer of the spleen and that he would live only six months. He had been ill for quite some months and could barely swallow food. After prayer to Father Seelos, he suddenly began to eat and felt wonderful. X-rays showed the cancer had disappeared.

....for the recovery of my friend. I am eight years old and have been praying to Father Seelos for her.

....a favor which was granted when I prayed for a friend whose heart had stopped beating for several minutes under an operation. Minutes passed before the doctors could revive her. A second time she stopped breathing and they had little hope for her; then they opened her throat and used a respirator. Again she responded. I prayed she would live and not suffer any brain damage. My prayer was answered.

....for helping me see. I am 60 years old and half blind. I was not able to see a distance of six feet, but now I see the cross on top of St. John's Church. The red streaks in my eyes are just about gone.

....obtaining the necessary requirements from Rome in order that my daughter and her husband may be married in the Catholic Church. We are grateful for Father Seelos' intercession.

....for helping me improve my grades in school. I am a college student and was not doing too well.

....the recovery of my baby from open heart surgery. The moment I started praying to Father Seelos, I felt everything would be alright and my baby would be spared. She is now alive and healthy.

....my recovery from depression after the birth of my third child. This condition lasted nearly two years. Shortly before entering the hospital, I began praying to Father Seelos. After one week in the hospital I recovered.

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.

by Luana Jambois

In the still quiet of the Church in Cumberland, Maryland, Father Francis Xavier Seelos knelt in prayer. It was the time of the Civil War. Maryland was a neutral state; but even so, the priests and religious had been busy helping the wounded from both sides, who came into the city for help. Wearing Union Blue and Confederate Gray they came bringing war-broken bodies and bleeding spirits. Father Seelos had worked tirelessly with the others, changing dirty bandages, healing soiled and sorrowing souls. All around him was the stench and waste and ruin of war. That very day he had given Viaticum and anointed a boy he had taught in school. He had been moved to tears as the light of living left the young face; the boy's head dropped forward on his chest; the young hands suddenly let go their desperate grip on his.

"Father. Father Seelos, do you remember me?"

Yes. He had remembered the shining schoolboy face, so eager for knowledge, the brown eyes filled with love of living, the joyous ready laugh. Now in the church, remembering, he thought again of his Beloved Master. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He thought of the spoiled and dying youth of the country and wished he could hold back Death and the Devil with his own compassion. He rubbed his face, his shoulders drooping with weariness. But his prayers strengthened him. He straightened, his face smoothed. He left the church, his steps firm, elastic as ever.

Later, in the silence of his room, with the picture of the dying young man still fresh in his mind, he wrote the following meditation on the death of Christ:

"Jesus, Crucified Love, Author of Life! You die in a sea of sorrow to become the refuge and consolation of a poor sinner. With confidence I throw myself into Your Arms.

"Divine hands that arched the heavens and created me. Painfully wounded, bored and nailed Hands, you have conquered my enemy and chained the powers of hell... Holy Hands of my Redeemer, give love to my heart, light to my understanding, strength and power to my being.

"Jesus dies. The bright day clothes itself in dark night and mourns the death of the Creator. The rocks burst to complain of the hardness of the human heart. Dearest Jesus, let your Precious Blood flow over and wash me.

"Jesus, 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.' In the

sweat of Your Brow, you have completed Your day's work! Eternal thanks for this bitter labor! Through Your sufferings You have merited the grace to save me!.....

"Holy Cross. Altar upon which the Lamb was slaughtered. Only hope of the sinner. Second plank after the shipwreck of our innocence! Tree of Life, loaded with the noblest fruit, upon you hangs the Precious Pledge of our redemption! Bridge to Eternity, lead me to my Saviour! Unite me with all who have loved You and who have conquered under Your protection!"

During the season of Lent, Meditate on these words of Father Seelos. Speak to Christ with the child-like devotion he possessed. Let this Lent become a time of closer union with Christ.



Three weeks ago, I heard from the radio that two Franciscan Fathers were arrested for hiding a revolutionary Cuban in their monastery. I changed to short wave and tuned in Radio Havana Cuba and heard that "the people" were claiming that the priests must be shot at the public square.

When in Cuba the radio says "the people" want something, it means the communists are going to do so. One of the priests was my confessor since I was 17 years old (now I am 59). The other priest, a Cuban, was very young.

The next day I went to church and, praying to God with all my heart for them, I started to cry. The lady next to me asked what was the matter. I told her. She handed me a holy picture of Father Francis X. Seelos and a cloth memento and told me "If you ask Father Seelos they shall not be shot."

I asked him this way: "Please Father Seelos, send my confessor to Spain. (He is Spanish.) If he is sent to Spain, I'll know you are the one who made it possible."

Last night a friend of mine called by phone to Cuba and was informed that my confessor will be deported to Spain.

I consider this a miracle.

I do not know English, but I hope you can find out what this is all about.

Please thank for me that nice Father Seelos.