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SECOND CLASS POSTAGE
PAID AT NEW ORLEANS, LA.

VOL. VIII NO. 12 DECEMBER, 1968

SUBSCRIPTION \$1.00

FATHER SEELOS AND CHRISTMAS

by Father Grangell

Father Seelos was born in a Catholic country where Christmas is celebrated very religiously as the Birthday of Christ. Gifts are given either on the feast of Santa Claus (December 6) or on the feast of Epiphany (January 6), when the Kings bring their gifts to the King of Heaven and Earth. In Catholic countries the Birthday of our Lord is stressed, and to stress this emphatically, the scene of His Birth, and the many details of it, gleaned from the Gospels, are visualized in the erection of cribs. You can imagine Father Seelos as a tiny tot with his good Catholic mother, kneeling at the crib. For her the crib was a meditation book. It was indeed such for him.

Father Seelos, the holy, pious priest, saw in the crib the world's first Catholic Church. The Real Presence of Christ in a church makes it Catholic. The Real Presence of Christ, in a visible way, was seen on earth for the first time under the appearance of a little baby. Now, the Real Presence of God on earth in a visible way, is under the appearance of bread. The manger of wood and straw and swaddling clothes is the first Tabernacle. Now, Christ's Tabernacles all over the world are of gold, precious stones and the choicest product of the loom. Mary and Joseph had great Faith. They believed this little Babe, cold and crying in the stable, was God, just as we believe the Eucharistic Bread is God. Mary and Joseph must never have ceased looking at that Divine child. They must have denied themselves sleep to prolong their acts of love and adoration through the night. Unlike Mary and Joseph, we give little time to the God of our Altar. Father Seelos gave much time to the Blessed Sacrament. We know this because of his great Faith and because of his Redemptorist Rule, which asks this of its members. Maybe, we could make a resolution here and now, to love the Blessed Sacrament more devoutly in 1969 and until death. MAKE DAILY VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Father Seelos had a great devotion for the Divine Infancy. Everybody loves a Baby! How we should love the Baby of Bethlehem!

In the novitiate he was taught "unless you become as a little child you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 18/3). He studied the virtues of a Child: Simplicity, Humility, Generosity, Detachment, Purity and Dependence.

His Redemptorist Rule made him offer up all his good works on Tuesdays in honor of the Infant Jesus.

All during the season of Advent his Community Evening Meditation was on the Divine Infancy in preparation for Christmas. The book he used for his inspirations was St. Alphonsus' book on the Infancy of Christ. This book is still in print.

Every Friday in advent the community recited, as a part of morning prayer, "The footsteps of the Divine Infancy", a composition of St. Alphonsus.

The 25th of every month is "Little Christmas" in the Redemptorist houses all over the world! A crib is erected in the chapel and every Father and brother renews his holy vows of Poverty, Chastity, Obedience before it.

Father Seelos must have loved the office of Novice Master, because he could teach the young religious the virtues of the Babe of Christmas. The Little Flower of Jesus, Saint Theresa of the Infant Jesus, called it: "The Little Way of Perfection."

Pray at the Crib - at the Tabernacle, the living Crib today - that the world and Catholics in particular, learn to be humble and to pray and to obey.

A last thought: The Infant of Prague is in Czecho-Slovakia! Pray ! ! Merry Christmas to all. Pray for me. You will be remembered in my three Christmas Masses! Make it a MARY Christmas too.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

This is the night of all hope and joy. This is the night the prophets had foretold and ever echoed over the sin-ridden earth.

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and he will be called Emmanuel."

The great God and Saviour, begotten by the Eternal Father, is born one of us in the lovable sweetness of babyhood. This is God's gift to mankind.

Despair is only for those who do not believe. Mary and Joseph held a baby boy in their arms and knew Him to be the Saviour of the world. A God descends to us to free us from sin and to make us like Himself, acceptable to the Father. But He can do nothing for us unless we rearrange our lives according to His wishes, and look for a heaven beyond this world.

The whole world prays with Mary this night. The Eternal Light comes and there can be darkness nevermore. This new Light is given us by Mary in an ecstasy of love and gladness. Mary opens her eyes and beholds her child, her God. He calls to her, and she is instantly in attendance, in adoration and love.

As he turned to Mary and Joseph and the Shepherds, He now turns to us for sympathy and love. How can we resist Him?

Let us say with St. Alphonsus: "My loving God in the stable of Bethlehem, how can I ever love you as I should, and as you deserve? In my helplessness I turn to your Mother Mary and ask her to love you for me."

FROM ALL OF US AT THE CENTER TO ALL OF YOU, FRIENDS OF FATHER SEELOS, WE WISH YOU AND PRAY FOR YOU AND YOUR DEAR ONES,

A BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Father James Hennessy, C.SS.R.

NOTES FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE-POSTULATOR

...Father Grangell visited the Walters Remedial School, 210 Midway Drive, New Orleans, and blessed 72 children with Father Seelos Crucifix and gave to each a relic of Father Seelos.

...We ask a remembrance in your prayers for the happy repose of the souls of Peter Abadie, brother of Miss Pauline Abadie, and for Lawrence Ory, son-in-law of Mrs. William Crotty. Miss Abadie and Mrs. Crotty are two of our most zealous workers for the cause of Father Seelos.

...If you wish a member of your family or a friend who is hospitalized in the New Orleans area blessed by Father Grangell with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos, kindly call Miss Addie Buhler, 895-6176. These calls are made by Father Grangell on Friday nights. We regret that Father Grangell finds it is impossible to make these calls at any other time. While he has been very eager and happy to do so, it has become impossible for him, with his other duties, to do so.

...A happy birthday to Father Grangell, who will be 75 years young on December 30. May God bless him on his birthday and grant him many more.

...We hope in the next issue to be able to give you more details about the book which should be released shortly after the first of the year on the life of Father Seelos.

...If your Zip Code number on this letter is incorrect, kindly advise us in order that we may correct our records.

Thanks To Father Seelos For.....

...healing my husband's throat without surgery, which had seemed inevitable.
...the return to the Sacraments of someone close to me, who had been away for a very long time.

...the healing of my grandson's hand. He had had two fingers chopped off. They were sewed back on his hand and his hand is healing nicely.

...the recovery of money which we had invested in a small business enterprise, which had been misrepresented to my husband and me.

...the recovery of my daughter from mononucleosis and hepatitis. After one month she was able to return to school and to a normal life.

...saving me from a serious accident. The brakes of my car failed after a heavy downpour. I didn't know it until I was going downhill and attempted to stop. Along the way I prayed continually to Father Seelos. When I finally came to a stop I was grateful that I had not caused any damage to property or injury to people.

...helping my husband to stop drinking. Our home is more peaceful now. I continue to pray to Father Seelos that he will never return to this bad habit.

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 judgment of the Holy See and the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

Published with Ecclesiastical Approbation.
