



REV. JAMES HENNESSY, C.S.S.R.
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REV. WILLIAM GRANGELL, C.S.S.R.
EDITOR

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JOSIE M. BECKER
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A PERFECT LOVER OF JESUS CHRIST

by Father Grangell

Father Seelos was a Perfect Lover of Jesus Christ. He lived the promises he made on the day of his religious Profession, the day he made his religious vows, the day he signed himself C.S.S.R. for the first time. (C. Congregationis, S.S. Sanctissimi, R. Redemptoris, "of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer"), that day he became a Redemptorist. He just finished his novitiate, a year of prayer and thought, a year to decide whether he would spend his whole life with God or return to the world. Surely, God loved him for the decision he made. He stayed with God.

See Frater Seelos in the novitiate chapel. He is on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament. The Holy Bible is open before him. With one hand on the Holy Book and the other raised aloft, he pronounced his vows. This is the formula:

Burning with desire to consecrate myself entirely to Thy Holy Love, I bind myself to serve Thee henceforward with all my strength by imitating the life of Thy Son, Our Divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, since this is the only way to please Thee, and also to labor for the salvation of the most abandoned souls, and after many days of thinking, meditating, and praying, now, in the presence of the Divine Majesty, and of the whole court of Heaven, I make the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, according to the Redemptorist way of living — and I make the vow and take an oath to persevere in this Congregation until death. So help me God, and these His Holy Gospels. (He kisses the Bible)

That was a big day for Father Seelos.

1. He consecrated his life to the love of God. When he received his religious habit the year previous, he accepted with it a small crucifix, which he was to carry with him daily. Embracing the image of his crucified Redeemer, he said: "May I die for the love of Thy love who wast so graciously pleased to die for the love of my love." Now making his religious Profession, he can say with St. Paul: "Who, what, shall separate me from the love of God?"

2. He bound himself to be a perfect image of Jesus Christ. Again with St. Paul, he can say: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

3. He will spend His life looking for abandoned souls.

4. By the vow of Poverty, he gave up all rights to proprietorship in things of monetary value. He will live by permissions from his Superior to give and take.

5. By the vow of Chastity, he promised God to be celibate until death. We read in St. Matthew, Chapter 19, how the Scribes and Pharisees asked Christ some questions about marriage. The disciples of Christ listened. One of them said to Christ: "It is better then, not to marry?" Christ answers: "He that can take, let him take it." Father Seelos, because he loved God, took the vow of Chastity with all its sacrifices.

6. Obedience! That's the hard vow, -- giving up one's will. St. Alphonsus, the Founder of the Order, wrote a small book entitled, THE TRUE REDEMP-TORIST. In that book in no uncertain or confused language, he tells Redemptorists: "One enters the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer to obey." That's it! One becomes a Redemptorist to give, to give, to give. St. Gerard Majella, C.S.S.R., A Re-demptorist Brother, had a little note tacked on his door: "Here, one does the will of God." St. Ignatius of Loyola expressed generosity very beautifully in a prayer addressed to God thusly:

OH GOD, TEACH ME TO BE GENEROUS,
TEACH ME TO SERVE YOU AS YOU DESERVE,
TO GIVE AND NOT TO COUNT THE COST,
TO FIGHT AND NOT TO HEED THE WOUNDS,
TO TOIL AND NOT TO SEEK FOR REST,
TO LABOR AND NOT ASK FOR ANY REWARD,
EXCEPT TO KNOW THAT I AM DOING YOUR
HOLY WILL.

7. With a vow and an oath, Father Seelos promised to persevere in the Congregation of Redemptorists until death. That's what you call total commitment to God!

Truthfully he could say: "Burning with the desire to consecrate myself entirely to Thy Holy Love, " because he was on fire with the love of God. Before he ever met a Redemptorist Father, he was familiar with the little book of St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, entitled: "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Mother of God for Every Day of the Month." In-cidentally, this little book has been translated into all the languages of the world today. Lovers of the Blessed Sacrament use it daily. In the opening prayer for every day, Young Seelos said to the Eucharistic God, with St. Alphonsus: "All that I ask and de-sire is Thy Holy Love." In the daily visit with the Blessed Mother he asked her, with St. Alphonsus: "Obtain for me a perfect love for Jesus Christ."

Daily he used St. Alphonsus' composition of the Way of the Cross. At every station he asked the Most Holy Redeemer: "Grant that I may love thee always and then do with me as Thou wilt." So, praying like this, day after day, he was definitely on fire with the love of God on the day of his re-ligious profession. That fire grew and developed and consumed him as he went down the years of life.

The theme prayer of his life was "My God I love You!"

He kept a small crucifix above the holy water font at the door of his room; and coming and going all day long, as he blessed himself, he would kiss the image of His Most Holy Redeemer saying with St. Francis of Assisi: "May I die for the love of Thy love who wast so graciously pleased to die for the love of my love."

He kept his mission Cross on his table always. It was his mirror, his library, his meditation book, his inspiration. He talked to it often, and the old refrain was: "My God I love You!" We use that same Crucifix today in blessing the sick.

He wore the little Crucifix he received on his investiture day close to his heart always. It was a constant reminder for him to whisper to His God that he loved Him.

Father Seelos' affective love was most effective, hence he was most charitable in thought, word and action toward all. In fact, his great zeal for souls was the cause of his early death. Greater love than this no man can have.

Like Father Seelos, let us be imitators of Jesus Christ, and let the breath of our souls be: "My God, I love You, -- and Mary, I love you too."



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 . . .

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FATHER VAUGHN LEAVES

by Josie Becker

You were informed by Father Vaughn in our June issue that he was leaving New Orleans for further studies and will no longer be Vice-Postulator of the cause of Father Seelos.

All of us at the Seelos Center miss him very much and wish him success in his new undertaking.

Father Vaughn has done a tremendous amount of work in spreading devotion to Father Seelos and gathering documents, etc. to be presented in Rome for consideration in the cause. He has laid the groundwork and with God's help we will continue this great program which he started nearly nine years ago.

In gratitude, when you read your prayer to Father Seelos, won't you please ask him to intercede in a special way for Father Vaughn. Ask that he be blessed with success in his studies to help people by the knowledge he gains. This is his prayer, too.

OUR NEW VICE-POSTULATOR AND NEW EDITOR

by Josie Becker

Father James Hennessy will replace Father Vaughn as Vice-Postulator of the cause of Father Seelos. Father Jim is a New Orleanian, raised in the "Irish Channel" and ordained a Redemptorist on June 24, 1958.

As Vice-Postulator Father Hennessy will be in charge of the Seelos Center and the office will be under his supervision.

Father William Grangell has assumed the post of Editor of Seelos & Sanctity. Father Grangell is well known throughout much of the south, has been a Redemptorist for over 50 years and some will call him "MR. REDEMPTORIST." We know you will find inspiration in the articles he will write.

We most heartily welcome both Fathers Hennessy and Grangell and know under their guidance we will continue to move forward with the cause of Father Seelos.

During the month of June there were no hospital calls made, due to our changeover. However, beginning in July Father Grangell will make weekly calls to the hospitals in the New Orleans area to bless the sick with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos. If you wish a relative or friend to be blessed with this crucifix, kindly call 895-6176.