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THE FAITH OF FATHER SEELOS

by Father Grangell

We are all on tip toe of expectation awaiting the printed "Life of Father Seelos." It will be wonderful spiritual reading for the New Year and years to come. It will be an inspiration for all of us.

Month after month we write a short meditation on the sanctity of Father Seelos. He was a great Redemptorist Father, Parish Priest and Missionary. He became a saint by following in all its details, the Rule written by St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists. St. Alphonsus wanted his Priests and Brothers to be great imitators of Jesus Christ and to help them in their meditations, he gave them 12 virtues, one for every month of the year for special consideration. They are to search the Gospels and see how Christ practiced that particular virtue and then strive to do likewise.

The virtue for the month of January is Faith. Jesus Christ, our Blessed Redeemer, did not and could not have Faith. He did not have to accept upon the authority of another that of which He was Himself the enraptured virtue. When we exercise the virtue of Faith, we are believing all that He revealed to His Church. We profess our Faith when we say the simple Act of Faith and the Apostles Creed which we all know by heart from childhood days. Faith without works however, is dead. So we exercise our Faith by doing what the Church commands us to do, and we read the Gospels to see how Christ, our Redeemer, loved and praised and helped the people who believed in Him. We read the Lives of the Saints to get models and exemplars. Father Seelos is our model and exemplar. His Faith was extraordinary, yet imitable for all of us. We give you here a few guide lines from the life of Father Seelos to help you in the month of January for the greater appreciation of your Faith and the practice of it.

One day Father Seelos said to a man: Do you know that your life has already been written? It was written long before you were born. It's the Four Gospels! That's your life. When you were baptized you received Sanctifying Grace and that made you one with Christ. So read the Gospels and see yourself and live like Christ.

A lady called on Father Seelos for advice. He said to her: Why are you ever disturbed in mind, morose, sad, critical, dissatisfied, unhappy? Live by Faith. See God's Will in everything. Christ, Our Lord, was always serene, peaceful, happy. Father Seelos used to say: I wonder why painters of the Savior do not give us a smiling Christ!

One who had been treated unkindly said to Father Seelos: It's pretty tough to be falsely accused and unjustly condemned, to have your words and actions misinterpreted and sometimes by the members of your own family. Father Seelos answered: It was hard for Christ to have His words misinterpreted when on trial by the Jewish Church, and to be falsely

accused and unjustly condemned by Pontius Pilate. Talking about your family and friends going against you, read your gospels and see how everybody was against Our Lord, His Apostle Judas, and even St. Peter when he denied Him. All His Apostles abandoned Him. His Mother was loyal to the end, and that's the story of every mother today - God love our mothers!

We need Faith, Faith, Faith. We are insulted and humiliated. Herod made a fool of Christ. Remember? You say wicked, abusive tongues rip your reputation to shreds. How about the Scourging of Christ which tore His flesh to ribbons! Read the Life of Christ in the Gospels! It must be your life.

Some say "I am not wanted; others are preferred to me. I am sick and old and neglected." The mob preferred the criminal to Christ, the Son of God. Remember? Father Seelos said to someone who was having all kinds of trouble: Check your Faith: Do you want to give God 100% or 99% or 40% service? God wants your whole heart, your whole soul and all your strength!

Father Seelos advice to everybody was: Have Faith! See God's Will in everything. Everybody receives the theological virtues of Faith at Baptism. Not everybody has the Catholic Faith. It's a gift from God to some. Why to some? That's a mystery. We do not merit Faith. But everybody can ask God in fervent prayer for the grace to be a member of the Catholic Church.

We must exercise Faith. We must make the Act of Faith often. We must say the Apostles Creed often. How we should love the Church and our Holy Father and all our Ecclesiastical Superiors! Our Holy Father is Christ's mouth-piece on earth. How happy we should be as Catholics, because when the Holy Father speaks on matters of Faith, - what we are to believe - and on morals - what we are to do to enter the Kingdom of Heaven - he is infallible, he cannot make a mistake, he cannot mislead us or leave us in doubt.

Father Seelos was all afire with love of God when he said Holy Mass. He was at the Last Supper! He was on Calvary! His reverence was contagious. He preached eloquently on the Holy Mass. How do we assist at Holy Mass? The answer is: What kind of Faith do we have? We go to Holy Mass to pay our creature debts of adoration, petition, thanksgiving and atonement. We pray in Christ, with Christ, through Christ, and hence pay our creature debts in an infinite way. We go to Mass to give God something. Many people do not realize this and miss Mass. Many people do realize this and go to Holy Mass daily. They have Faith.

Holy Communion is God's best gift to us. Giving us Himself He cannot give us anything greater. When we receive Holy Communion we are completely lost in God as a drop of water is lost in the immensity of the sea! All that God is and has is ours! Tremendous! How often do we go to Holy Communion? The answer to this question is the answer to the other question: How much Faith do we have?

Father Seelos thanked God daily that he was a Religious. He lived in the same house with the Blessed Sacrament. He used to drop in the Chapel many times daily, if it were just to say: "My God, I love You." Father Seelos' advice to all of us is: Go to daily Mass, to daily holy Communion, visit the Blessed Sacrament often and pray all day long:

Father Seelos was never a robust, healthy man. He was sickly. He suffered much bodily pain. He offered all of it to God as penance and a-

tonement for his sins and the sins of the world. He never complained. He rarely spoke of his sufferings.

The fastest way to sainthood is by accepting sickness, pain, disease as the Will of God. Nobody is interested in the sick, the bed-ridden, the weak old people. So, we have to suffer in silence, tell nobody about our pains and aches, and offer up everything in the Spirit of Faith and love of God.

Father Seelos loved and venerated the Blessed Mother of God. He believed she was the greatest Woman of history, the first Lady of the world and he was in continuous contact with her. The overtone of his "My God I love You" was "Mary, I love you, too."

My friends, lovers of Father Seelos, say your daily rosary, our Lady's litany and make a weekly pilgrimage to the Shrine of our Mother of Perpetual Help for the Tuesday novena.

In this first month of the New Year, let us lay the solid foundation of all holiness on the rock of Faith. Make many resolutions to be a better believing and acting Catholic.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL! PRAY FOR ME! I PRAY FOR YOU DAILY.

NOTES FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE-POSTULATOR

January 11 is the birthday of Father Seelos. He was born in Fuessen, Germany on January 11, 1819. Why not wish him a HAPPY BIRTHDAY by attending Holy Mass and receiving Holy Communion in petition for his canonization? At the same time offer prayers for your own special intentions, the intentions of our Guild members and all those placed before the tomb of Father Seelos.

Beginning January 8 and each Wednesday thereafter we will offer the 5:30 P.M. Mass at St. Alphonsus Church for the petitions placed before the tomb of Father Seelos. We hope you will make a special effort to attend. Set this time aside to offer extra prayers for your own intentions, as well as those placed before the tomb of Father Seelos.

Father Grangell has been giving the sick whom he blesses a cloth memento of Father Seelos, which has had a border crocheted by one of several ladies who have volunteered to do this. We know the sick are most appreciative of this remembrance and we want to thank the ladies who work so diligently to keep Father supplied with these relics.

ALL OF US AT THE SEELOS CENTER WISH ALL OF YOU A HAPPY AND BLESSED NEW YEAR. MAY GOD, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER SEELOS, SHOWER HIS SPECIAL BLESSINGS ON YOU.

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