



Seelos *and* Sanctity

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FATHER SEELOS AND CHASTITY

BY FATHER GRANGELL

The June monthly virtue according to the Redemptorist Rule is Chastity. That means this virtue is the subject matter for the Fathers and Brothers in their meditations and Particular Examinations of Conscience during this month. St. Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorists, wishes his spiritual sons to be perfect imitators of Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Redeemer, in all His virtues. Father Seelos' ambition was to be a perfect model of Jesus Christ.

Father Seelos was 25 years old when he made the three vows of a religious-Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. He was old enough to know what he was doing. He was a settled mature man, and of his own free will, he chose to live the life of religious chastity.

We read in St. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 19, how the Scribes and Pharisees talked with our Lord about Matrimony. The Apostles listened to the words of Christ, and when His enemies left Him, they said to Christ: 'It is better then, not to marry!' His answer was: He that can take, let him take it. Father Seelos took Chastity in all its phases, vowed to live that kind of a life with all its denials, prohibitions, sacrifices and become a Saint.

In Genesis Ch. 2/18 God said it is not good for man to be alone! Father Seelos was never alone! He lived in the same house with the Blessed Sacrament, the Real Presence of God, and got all his strength to overcome temptation and to be strong and virtuous, talking things over with his God in the little Chapel any time - day or night.

He belonged to the people, and the people called him Father. His time was their time. He gave up the obligations and interests of a married man to a wife and children, to belong to everybody in the big family of Christ's Church. He was a PRIESTLY PRIEST! He was modest in his words and actions. His heart was that of an Angel.

He used to preach in season and out of season: "Avoid the occasion of sin" - watch your reading and your entertainment and your dress and your companionships and where you go.

He used to preach: If you want to be pure in your state of life, you must pray for heavenly help and you must deny yourself many things. Christ said: 'This kind of devil is driven out only by prayer and fasting.'

He used to preach: If you want to be pure in your state of life, you must receive Holy Communion very often. In Holy Communion we become one with Christ, his virtues become our virtues.

He used to beg and plead with parents: Keep your children close to the Blessed Sacrament. Don't say to them: Go to Holy Communion, but Come, let's all go to Holy Communion - father, mother and children. Parents and children gather at the table at home for the feed that nourishes the body - they should gather at the table in Church for the Food that nourishes the soul. Christ said of Holy Communion: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man you will die. If we stay away from Holy Communion, we will die, we will fall into mortal sin.

A pure soul loves the Blessed Virgin Mary, the immaculate Mother of God. Father Seelos used to preach: 'Say three Hail Mary's morning and night in honor of the purity of Mary and for the grace to be pure always.'

Hear Father Seelos speaking these words to you! HIS SANCTITY MUST BE YOUR SANCTITY.

We give you this article about a priest who followed in the footsteps of Father Seelos as it appeared in the Clarion Herald of April 10:

'LE BON PERE'

BY FATHER ELMO ROMAGOSA

The flame of the Easter candle burned brightly beside the coffin of Father Enos Babin. Its gleam bespoke the ever radiant sparkle in the eyes of the deceased Redemptorist, a sparkle which nothing less than death could dim.

The mourners who filed by the casket at New Orleans' St. Alphonsus Church on March 28 were varied in age, sex, race and economic background. Father Enos had preached missions in almost every church and mission chapel in south Louisiana. It was not unexpected that his mourners should represent a cross section of the hundreds of priests and of the thousands upon thousands of people whose lives had been brightened, whose hopes had been lifted, and the weight of whose sins had been eased through the priestly ministration of the still figure in the coffin.

My memories of Father Enos go back 22 years. I was a newly ordained priest serving in Cut Off and Galliano when Father Enos, and another Redemptorist whose name eludes me, preached a mission for our people. His ventures in French pulpit oratory were unforgettable. I was struggling at the time to give my sermons in French and made more than my share of errors. Listening to him gave me a great deal of courage.

"Le bon Pere," as the bayou people affectionately termed him, made no pretense at mastering the Gallic tongue. While his structure and vocabulary would hardly have classified him as the "Bossuet of the bayous," he did manage to communicate effectively with his listeners. He never hesitated to substitute an occasional English expression when the proper French phrase failed to come to mind. So great was his rapport with his congregation that at times when he fished for the right "Cajun construction," he would turn hopefully to the people and someone would volunteer just the right word.

The funeral Mass provided a summation of "Le bon Pere's" life. By nature a conservative, a member of the "old Church," he was really adaptable to the challenges of the post-Vatican II world. His funeral was partly "new Church" with the Mass concelebrated by 24 Redemptorist priests vested in Paschal white. But touches of the "old Church" were present too as the congregation sang "O Lord, I am not worthy," and five confreres opted to do the dismissal chant in Latin as well as in English.

Fittingly the homily was spoken by one who knew him best, his cousin, Father Al Babin, C.S.S.R. Father Al reminded those present that Father Enos had died as he lived, giving help to someone in need. The priestly hands of Father Enos, first consecrated with holy oil at ordination, were further sanctified by a lifetime of holy work. For Father Enos, no task was too lowly. Unpleasant jobs, for which there were few takers, would always find him a willing volunteer.

Father Al put it this way: "He loved God's People, all kinds of people. He opened his great big heart to the world and invited everyone to come in."

It was as much because of Father Enos' big heart as because he was a fellow priest that I went out of my way to join his world of friends in bidding him farewell.

Knowing him as I did, I was not surprised to see grown men come up to the coffin in tears and touch his hand. I was not shocked to see women stoop and kiss his forehead. Father Enos was the kind of priest everyone loved. And all of us are richer for having loved him.

...We are grateful to Father Ray Gaydos for taking over during the absence of Father Grangell during the month of May, in making the hospital calls and blessing the sick with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos. In fact Father Gaydos is always lending us a helping hand at the Seelos Center and we don't know what we would have done without him this last year.

...Again we would like to remind you if you wish someone at a local hospital blessed with Father Seelos' Crucifix, kindly call Miss Addie Buhler, 895-6176 by Thursday evening. Of course if you call on Friday we will try to see that Father Grangell visits your relative or friend, but sometimes it is impossible to get the message to him in time.

...Due to our publishing the article on Father Enos Babin in this issue, we have eliminated letters of thanks and other items of thanksgiving. We will resume publishing them next month.

...For those who were able to attend, we know the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Father Grangell will long be remembered. Father Grangell concelebrated Mass with three of his former classmates from the seminary. The church was crowded to the doors as was also the reception in the auditorium. May God grant Father Grangell many more years in His service.

...We continue to remember the petitions placed before the tomb of Father Seelos at the 5:30 P. M. Mass on Wednesday evenings. We would like to see the attendance at this Mass grow. If you live in New Orleans, why not try to attend, at least once a month.

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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.