



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME IX, NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER, 1970

DEATH OF FATHER SEELOS

It was at 5:45 P.M. on October 4, 1867 that Father Francis Seelos, Redemptorist, breathed his last. Two hours later his mortal remains, robed in purple vestments, were laid out in St. Mary's Church. His biographer, Father Curley, tells us that hardly had the church bells tolled the sad message that Father Seelos had died, than hundreds of the faithful came to St. Mary's to pay their respects to a beloved fellow human being. And this, despite a hurricane that was threatening the city. Many, because of the violent storm, spent the whole night in church.

Father Seelos was only 48 years old when he died of yellow fever in New Orleans. He spent but one short year in that city. Yet today his memory is as fresh as if he died but yesterday, and the fame of his holy life continues to spread to the far corners of the world.

Father Elworthy

FATHER SEELOS ANNIVERSARY MASS

The annual Mass commemorating the anniversary of the death of Father Seelos will be at 10 A.M. on October 4 at St. Alphonsus Church. The Mass will be offered for the intentions placed before the tomb of Father Seelos and in petition that his cause will progress rapidly and before long he will be declared a saint of the church.

The Mass will be concelebrated and a short sermon preached about Father Seelos. St. Alphonsus choir will sing for the Mass.

We hope you will make every effort to attend the Mass. We have so much to be grateful for and yet so much to ask for from God. Why not ask Father Seelos to intercede for you. He has helped so many, and many so often.

There will be a table set up for the sale of the book, THE CHEERFUL ASCETIC and other literature will be available for you.

TOTAL GIVING OF SELF

BY FATHER GRANGELL



September, in the Redemptorist system of asceticism, is the month of MOR-TIFICATION. Imagine Father Seelos kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament with his confreres in a community act known as the particular examination of conscience! This exercise is at noon. The question for the particular examination in September is - How do I mortify myself for the love of God and to save souls?

When Pope Benedict XIV approved the Redemptorist Rule, he said he would canonize the man who kept it in its entirety - before that man died.

Father Seelos wished to be a true Redemptorist, so he tried to keep the Rule in its entirety. He did not have to plan a life of mortification or penance or self-denial. All those things were in the regular order of his religious day. The vow of Obedience demanded something of him every moment of the day. He had no choice as to the hour of the morning he was to rise from his bed. He heard the voice of God in the community bell, and in the spirit of generosity he gave God the first moments of the new day with punctuality - a holy joy - no matter how he felt. He heard the voice of God in that bell all day long, and no matter how much human nature rebelled from time to time, in the spirit of mortification he obeyed. 'My God, I love You! Your will be done' was his battle cry as he suffered inconveniences, annoyances, disappointments, insults, frustrations - so many acts of mortification.

His vow of poverty demanded that he be satisfied with what the community gave him at table and in the material appointments of his small room. Ascetical writers call the room of a religious a cell. It is devoid of all luxuries and superfluties and even comforts. If he complained or found fault he would have lacked the spirit of mortification.

He used to say that evil tongues hurt him more than a scourge. He suffered mental agony at every disloyal remark against the church, the Holy Father, his Redemptorist Congregation.

He prayed as St. John of the Cross prayed: Oh Lord, all I ask is to suffer and to be dispised for You.

When the children of Fatima asked the Blessed Mother what kind of penance would save the world, she told them: Let all, each in his state of life, accept all the crosses God sends into their lives. See God's will in everything. Suffer in Silence. Do not let others know you are suffering - keep smiling. Penitential people are satisfied and cheerful; selfish souls are always complaining, gloomy and sad. Nero, the Roman emperor, marvelled at the early Christians going to death singing.

Christ demands some kind of suffering from His followers. 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.'

The church leaves all the fasting and abstaining to the individual. It's take it or leave it, as much as you love and wish to imitate the crucified Redeemer. Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

SPECIAL LETTERS

Kent, Wash.

"...My 3 year old daughter was born with an 'open spine' which caused her to have a fluid sack on her back. This was removed when she was four-months old. Days later, as the doctor had expected, she developed hydrocephalus (water head). A tube was placed in her head under the skin to drain the fluid to her heart and out of her body. At 9 months some correcting was needed. Three days before her monthly doctor's visit I started a novena of rosaries, with the understanding that if anything happened I would consider it to have come through Father Seelos interceding with God...The doctor checked the valve and it was not working as it always had in the past. Ordinarily this would have made her very ill. But she felt fine. The doctor would check it each month and he said he thought she didn't need it. One doctor wanted to leave it alone. The other said that with it she could later develop heart and lung trouble, but removal could stimulate it to start up again....While she has had the tube she has had to take special medicine to prevent meningitis. So if the tube could be removed this would be a welcome relief. Also periodically the tube would have to be replaced. We decided to have it removed. It has been several weeks now and she is fine. The doctor says that it is not likely to return. I know sometimes the condition corrects itself. But I feel that it was God's love for Father Seelos and us that did it. So I would like to thank Father Seelos for the correction of my daughter's head."

J. D.

Houma, La.

"...I have prayed to Father Seelos and have been granted many favors....I prayed to Father Seelos to intercede with God for us for the delivery of a normal healthy baby. We have been blessed with a beautiful eight pound baby. We will always be grateful and devoted to Father Seelos..."

M. T. B.

New Orleans, La.

"...I am writing to tell you about my son. I have written you about him before. He had a nervous breakdown five years ago. We took him to many psychiatrists and they all said he had to help himself. He has a compulsion for picking up everything he sees on the ground and touching everything he passes. He spent one year in a mental hospital but that didn't do any good. He has had 25 shock treatments, but that didn't help him. I prayed to Father Seelos for help. I asked him to pray to God if it be his will help him to find some doctor to help him. Well what seemed like a miracle has happened. He is doing fine and every day shows some improvement. He is picking up less and touching things less. He leaves the house and converses with people perfectly normally...I know Father Seelos has answered my prayers. I will always pray to him and tell everyone what he did for my son...Another son last week had a tumor removed from his leg. I prayed that it would not be malignant. Thank God it wasn't. So again Father Seelos helped me...Please print my letter so everyone can read it."

Mrs. J. W.

SPECIAL NOTES

Come at 5 P.M. on Wednesday to St. Alphonsus Church in New Orleans and say the prayers for the canonization of Father Seelos. Mass follows at 5:30 P.M. Whether you are one of three people present or three hundred people, say the prayers and bring others with you.

Looking a month ahead!!!! October is the month of the Holy Rosary. Plan to recite it in public in St. Alphonsus Church every day at 5:15 P.M.

Every Friday night Father Grangell visits the sick in local hospitals and blesses them with the Mission Crucifix of Father Seelos. If you have a relative or friend whom you would like blessed you may call 895-6176 and the name of the person you wish visited will be placed on Father Grangell's list.

Father Grangell is very enthusiastic and is anxious to visit as many sick as possible. If your sick are not hospitalized you may call and if possible a blessing may be arranged for them.

The Redemptorists are a missionary order - both home missionaries and foreign missionaries. If any boy or young man would like to become a Redemptorist missionary, we advise him to write to:

Rev. Vocational Director
Holy Redeemer College
Lacombe, La. 70445

St. Gerard Majella, C.S.S.R., was a Redemptorist brother. If any single man or widower wishes to be a brother, write to the same address.

Every good Catholic encourages boys and young men to accept a religious vocation. Are you a good Catholic?

Love our Mother of Perpetual Help! Make her weekly novena in St. Alphonsus Church. Every service is in connection with Holy Mass - 6, 7, 7:45 and 10:30 A.M. and 5:30 P.M.

Published monthly by the Redemptorists at the Father Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, 70130. Subscription \$1.00 per year.

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.

Rev. William Grangell, C.S.S.R., Vice-Postulator and Editor; Miss Josie Becker, Associate Editor; Mrs. James Bourg, and Rev. Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R., Executive Assistants.