



# FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME X, NUMBER 12

DECEMBER, 1971

## OFF TO PITTSBURGH

The few months that Father Seelos spent as assistant pastor in St. James, Baltimore, served an introduction into the active ministry of a priest on the American missions. In late August of 1845 he was transferred to the Redemptorist community in Pittsburgh.

In 1845, four years before the famous gold rush, Pittsburgh was a metropolis of "the West." Over 100,000 people were living in its metropolitan area. Situated on the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers, it was rich in natural resources and the city itself was alive with iron foundries, glass works, and coal furnaces. It was indeed a city with a bright future, but already at that early date, it was suffering from what is known as common to most large cities today, "smog."

The Catholic diocese had at its head an Irish-born bishop, Thomas O'Connor and he was faced with the usual problems that rapid growth entailed. He had only 21 priests to help him take care of 45,000 Catholics. There were only three Catholic churches in the see city itself. Bigotry was prevalent and attacks on Catholics were not uncommon. Many were the opportunities for a young and zealous priest. Into this arena, then, stepped Father Francis Seelos in the fading days of summer, 1845.

*Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.*

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Copies of THE CHEERFUL ASCETIC, a book on the life of Father Seelos, by Father Michael Curley, C.S.S.R. are available at the Father Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street at \$4.95 per copy.

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The staff of the Father Seelos Center wishes each and every one of you, devotees of Father Seelos, a very merry, happy and above all a blessed and holy Christmas.

**VIRTUE FOR DECEMBER**  
**SELF-DENIAL AND LOVE OF THE CROSS**

BY FATHER GRANGELL



Patron: St. Matthias, Apostle

Text: If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, take up the cross and follow me. Matt. 16/24

Father Seelos directed many souls along the way of asceticism, personal holiness. His system was the 12 monthly virtues. One day one of his penitents asked him why there were two months, September and December, with the same virtue. Father Seelos explained away the difficulty very easily. September is Mortification and December is Self-denial and love of the Cross. They seem to be the same at first appearance, but they are the difference of "I will and "God wills." I choose my own mortification, denying myself some food or drink or pleasure - denying myself some pleasure or suffering some mental agony. I deny myself something according to a resolution I make, or a pious program I am following:

The mortification of September is a matter of "I will it." The virtue of December is to see God's will in everything and to suffer to the extent of actually loving the cross. That was the life of our Divine Savior. Read the Gospel. He was the suffering Messiah.

Nobody prays to have cancer. We pray against it. If one is so afflicted and says: "My God, Your will be done. You want this," he is pretty close to being a saint. Nobody wants to fail in anything, yet when he does and says: "My God, Your will be done," he is holy. Nobody wants family trouble, a sick child, a vicious tongue against him, anything hard or painful, and yet can say: "Your will be done," is more than practicing mortification. He is carrying a heavy cross. He is living the text: If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, take up the cross and follow me.

Father Seelos suffered much; yet he was the Cheerful Ascetic, always serene. He saw God's Will in everything.

Father Seelos spent Advent in a very holy way. He read St. Alphonsus' book on the Divine Infancy. He made the Christmas novena from the same book. He made Advent a penitential season. Besides seeing God's Will in everything, especially the hard things, he practiced some personal mortification.

Christmas, for Father Seelos, was a holy season. Imagine the acts of love and thanksgiving he made at the crib. Imagine the prayers of reparation and atonement he offered for his own sins and the sins of the world, especially the sins of indifference and ingratitude toward God.

How are you going to spend Advent and Christmas? Some people don't know anything at all about Advent; and for them Christmas is Santa Claus and gifts. Pray that you have the right spirit and be sure to practice the monthly virtue: Self-Denial and Love of the Cross.

**MAY YOUR CHRISTMAS BE MERRY WITH MARY, THE MOTHER OF THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.**

## SPECIAL LETTERS

New Orleans, La.

"....I want to thank the Brother, who was so kind to come and visit me after my operation and bless me with the crucifix of Father Seelos. I was so afraid of having a malignancy, and prayed very hard to Father Seelos. It is now six weeks since my operation and I am feeling fine. I am certain that it is through Father Seelos intercession that I did so well. Please keep remembering me in your prayers."

*Mrs. R. M. T.*

Jefferson Parish, La.

"...Father came to bless my mother, while in the hospital, with Father Seelos Crucifix. She was desperately ill and there was no hope for her recovery. After 52 days in the hospital she was discharged and is now home. Please pray for her total recovery. We praise God for His infinite mercy and thanks to Father Seelos for his powerful intercession before the throne of God."

*J. S.*

New Orleans, La.

"This is a letter of thanksgiving to Father Seelos for a special favor he granted. I asked Father Seelos' guidance in the purchasing of some property. I asked him to guide me in the right direction. Needless to say my prayers were answered and all went well for me. I know I can always depend on Father Seelos. Once again, thank you, Father Seelos."

*Mrs. J. W.*

New Orleans, La.

"My husband had flunked out of college and had to wait a semester before he could return. When he did go back the courses really seemed tough and we didn't think he would make a 2.0 average in order to stay in school. We prayed to Father Seelos to help and I promised I'd write if he did pass. He ended up with a 2.5 average, which was better than we had hoped for. I will continue praying to Father Seelos in hopes that he will continue to do well in school. We thank him very much."

*Mrs. M. J. M.*

Covington, La.

"I prayed to Father Seelos, the Blessed Mother, St. Jude and St. Joseph for a member of my family, who was in trouble and I would like to say that my prayers were answered. She was accepted at the school of her choice and is doing very well. Other problems are being resolved. Whenever I can I spread devotion to Father Seelos as I earnestly feel that my urgent prayers to him were answered. You may publish this letter."

*M. H. O.*

### SPECIAL NOTES

For blessings with the crucifix of Father Seelos, please call 525-2495 or 895-6176. Arrangements will be made for you.

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The books of St. Alphonsus may be gotten from Redemptorist Fathers, Liguori, Mo. 63057.

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Start an Advent bank of nickels and dimes and give the bank to Father Seelos as a Christmas gift for the restoration of his church, St. Mary's Assumption.

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The people, by themselves, make a public novena in honor of Father Seelos, every Wednesday in St. Alphonsus Church at 5:00 P.M., followed by Holy Mass at 5:30 P.M.

### A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM FATHER GRANGELL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU. I WANT TO GIVE YOU YOUR BEST GIFT. I PROMISE TO REMEMBER YOU AND YOUR DEAR ONES IN MY CHRISTMAS MASSES AND IN MY CHRISTMAS WEEK MASSES AND IN ALL MY MASSES IN THE NEW YEAR OF 1972. THANKS FOR ALL YOU ARE DOING FOR FATHER SEELOS! GOD LOVE YOU.

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A very wonderful Christmas gift for a doctor, a lawyer, a nurse, a teacher or anybody is THE CHEERFUL ASCETIC. They will treasure it.

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