



# FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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## ILLNESS - 1857

When Lent came in 1857, Father Seelos was in his 38th year. He still had ten years to live. Young as he seems to us now one hundred years later, he still received in that year his first intimation of mortality.

With its four mission churches St. Alphonsus parish was the hub of intense pastoral activity. Lent, of course, with its extra devotions only added to the already hectic life of the small band of Redemptorists in the rectory at St. Alphonsus.

On March 7 after hearing confessions in the afternoon, Father Seelos, chilled to the bone by the raw spring weather, became cold and stiff. To relieve his aching body he started to exercise his muscles vigorously, when suddenly a blood vessel burst in his throat and blood began to flow from his mouth. He continued to do his work on Saturday evening and even rose early Sunday morning to say his masses.

Since his condition had not improved, a doctor was called and he was finally forced to go to bed. For three days the blood continued to flow and it was feared he might die. Faced with this crisis in his life, Father Seelos resigned himself to God's will and was ready for whatever might come.

In this state he wrote a letter to his family in Fuessen, Bavaria, to tell them of his illness and to say goodbye. One can imagine what sharp feelings of sorrow this news brought to those he loved so dearly.

At the time Seelos was sick, one of his priest associates took to his bed and was often heard to say that he would gladly die if God would permit his rector to live. His prayer was granted. On March 19 Father Seelos ceased to spit blood. His confrere, Father Poirier, had passed away the day before.

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

Copies of the CHEERFUL ASCETIC, by Father Michael Curley, C.S.S.R. are available at the Father Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, La. 70130. \$4.95 per copy. This book is about the life of Father Seelos.

## PURITY

The Virtue for June is Purity. The Patron is St. James, the Younger, Apostle. The text is the same as last month (1 John 1/16) "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes and the price of life." The concupiscence of the flesh is sensuality. It's undue, illicit sexual desires. It's lust. Father Seelos made the vow of Chastity to deny himself all lawful sex pleasures, to give himself entirely to God. He edified everybody. He was called a Saint, an Angel.

He was very kind to his penitents who had trouble practicing the Virtue of Purity. One day a man came to him, frustrated, dejected, because he had committed a big sin of impurity. Father Seelos asked him if he were in the habit of doing these things. Oh, no! This was the first time and I am so sorry. Father Seelos asked him if he remembered how St. Peter committed a terrible sin when he denied Our Lord, how he wept bitterly in sorrow. Then Christ met Peter after the Resurrection, He did not scold him, He merely asked: "Peter, lovest thou Me?" Father Seelos said, the fact that you are so sorry is a proof you love God. Forget about the past. God loves you.

On the Missions, Father Seelos used to preach to the crowds: If your whole life has been a tissue of mortal sins, remember the Good Thief on the Cross. After a life of sin he asked Christ to remember him in Paradise. If you do that, you love God. You will do penance.

A young man asked Father Seelos for some advice to be pure. The Servant of God gave him three things to do: Avoid the occasions of sin, pray and receive Holy Communion often. Anything that leads to sin is an occasion - bad books and pictures (Father Seelos knew nothing about TV or movies or shows), excessive drinking, idleness, sex privileges, vulgar speech and many others. Prayer is necessary to get God's help to say "No" or "I don't do those things." Our warfare is against the devil who goes around like a roaring lion to devour souls (1 Peter 5/6) to say "Jesus, Mary, Joseph help me" routs him. If anybody neglects Holy Communion for a long time, he ceases to live the life of purity. Father Seelos asked a man who was living in open adultery how he could do so. He answered that his conscience did not bother him. Father Seelos said you certainly have an erroneous conscience because St. Paul says you are going to hell.

Listen. Do not err: neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate shall possess the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6/9).

Ask the Immaculate Mother of God to keep you pure and holy.

## SPECIAL LETTERS

New Orleans, La.

"I would like to tell you the wonderful help our Blessed Mother and Father Seelos gave me. On June 9, 1971 I had major surgery at Baptist Hospital. On the 10th I was blessed with Father Seelos crucifix. After several days I started a remarkable recovery. In two weeks I was home. On August 4 my husband was admitted to the hospital with a heart and kidney condition and was dangerously ill thirteen days. Once again Our Blessed Mother and Father Seelos interceded for me. . . . In September I went to the doctor for a checkup for my recent surgery with my foot and leg. It was so swollen I could hardly walk. I was sent immediately to the hospital. It's hard to believe I walked around with my foot and leg in that condition. I had acute Thrombophlebitis. The vascular surgeon said a blood clot to the heart could develop or the leg could remain oversized. Well again thank God, and thanks to our Blessed Mother and Father Seelos for their intercession. I am happy to say my recovery has been remarkable. It still hurts to walk, but I shall always be devoted to dear Father Seelos."

*E. B.*

New Orleans, La.

"Last year I had to have an operation and was very frightened. I prayed asking Father Seelos to intercede for me and I know he did. On the morning of my surgery I asked the Blessed Mother to take me to the operating room and to return me safely. I returned in good health to work two months later. Please, if there is space in your publication, I would appreciate if you would print this letter."

*W. P. B.*

Marrero, La.

"I have been having nerve problems since I was very young. When I was 27 years old I had a breast operation. This put a fear in me, the fear of dying. I had a fibros tumor, which wasn't serious, but this fear instilled in me. Ever since then I've had all kinds of aches and pains. This led to numerous hospital visits for tests, which every time turned out to be nerves. A few years ago I developed colitis and muscle spasms. This caused considerable pain and discomfort. I promised the Blessed Mother and Father Seelos a letter of publication if they would intercede for me, that if it be God's will this discomfort and pain leave me. It has been a few weeks now that the pain has subsided somewhat and I will pray asking the Blessed Mother and Father Seelos to continue to intercede for me that it leaves me all together, but if not, to please pray that I will have the strength to bear this pain and will offer it up for Christ's sufferings."

*P. O.*

New Orleans, La.

"In May 1972 I underwent surgery for suspected cancer and it proved to be just that. I have asked Father Seelos to pray for me and since May I have had two pap smears and both have proved negative. The cancer was frozen and I have not had to have an operation as yet. Please continue to pray for me. I am not a Catholic but believe in Father Seelos."

*A. B. S.*

*(Continued on next page)*

Norco, La.

"Recently I found out about Father Seelos and I have been asking his intercession ever since. I must write and say that he is great. I have written before reporting a favor I received. But I must write and report that more than once he has answered some of my very important prayers. I am grateful to him and have all the faith in the world in him. I will continue praying to him. He is wonderful and I will never forget all he has done for me."

L. R.

### SPECIAL NOTES

June is the month of the Sacred Heart. Prove your love for our Lord by going to daily Mass and daily Holy Communion. Make the Way of the Cross often. Say your Rosary.

St. Mary's Assumption Church is shortly to be a forest of scaffolding. That means we are fast approaching the reality of a dream! We still need a money miracle. Ask Father Seelos to help us.

Let us know of all favors received through prayers to Father Seelos.

Make Father Seelos known among your friends and parishioners. If you need pictures, mementoes, literature, write to the Father Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, La. 70130.

Read "MEET FATHER SEELOS."

For blessings with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos call the Center 525-2495 or call Miss Addie Buhler 895-6176. Arrangements will be made.

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