



# FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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## FATHER SEELOS' LAST CHRISTMAS

Father Seelos spent one Christmas in New Orleans. It was his last on earth. After experiencing the cold winters of the north, he could write on Christmas Day, 1866, to a Redemptorist confrere: "Oh, what a blessed winter as that of New Orleans. I had no idea, though you often told me. And the southern plants! the Bananas — oh, wisdom of God, oh, beauty of that creative power, which brought into existence such a vegetation. Sometimes it happens to me as to the Queen of Saba — 'and she had no breath anymore' — for admiration."

— Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.



The statue of Madonna and Child stands at the side of St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans, and will so appear even at Christmas time.

## A CROSS, ANY KIND, KEEPS ONE CLOSE TO GOD

*(Monthly Conference of Father Grangell)*

Virtue for December: Self-denial and love of the Cross

Patron: St. Matthias, Apostle

Text: If any one wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. (Matthew 16/24)

One Christmas afternoon I dropped in the church to visit the crib. It was a dark afternoon. There was no light, except for the multiple vigil lights like so many twinkling stars in the Christmas heavens, telling God ceaselessly with their tongues of fire that they loved Him. As I approached the Crib I heard a human sob of grief. A young woman was kneeling at the manger-throne of the King of Heaven, talking with Him in the language of tears. I recognized her. She was very young, the mother of two small children, with a sick husband at home. I did not know what to say. To say: "Merry Christmas" was inappropriate. She relieved the situation, she said: "Merry Christmas, Father! Say a little prayer for my very sick husband. I think he is dying. Father, God has sent a heavy cross into my young life. I am not rebelling against His Holy Will, I accept it cheerfully. God has given me great Faith. This cross has kept me close to Him. It has made me prayerful. It has lead me to church on Christmas afternoon. The Crib inspires me. I see the three holiest people who ever lived in the world, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, accepting most willingly the heaviest cross ever given to man in all history."

What a beautiful sermon she preached to me! I have never forgotten it.

Everybody has a cross of some kind in his (her) life. Some rebel against their cross: Why does God treat me as He does! I don't deserve this. I go to church faithfully. Some people never go to church and they have all their hearts desire! (Never judge). Some give up their religion because they have to suffer something, they say God is cruel, unjust — I'm finished with Religion! (When troubles multiply that's the time to stay with God, to pray, to receive Sacraments).

A cross is anything that gives pain, physical or mental. What is yours?

A lady who is becoming blind by the day put this request at the tomb of Father Seelos: "That God will give me the necessary courage to carry my cross in His Divine Footsteps." That's Sanctity! That's the whole story of the virtue of SELF-DENIAL AND LOVE OF THE CROSS.

JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH HELP ME TO BE A SAINT.

## SPECIAL LETTERS

Winterville, Ohio

"In August of last year the radio station for which I was working was sold and I was one of the first to be terminated. During the following six months I tried in vain to get a job but without success. I attended daily Mass and began Novenas to various saints still unable to secure a position. I then came across a prayer of Father Seelos which I began and soon found myself substituting as a religion teacher at a Catholic High School. This in itself is unusual for diocesan policy calls for only priests and religious to teach religion, however, I did have some training in philosophy and theology. I firmly believe I would still be unemployed were it not for the intercession of Father Seelos for which I am most grateful."

C. C.

New Orleans, La.

"My husband was laid off from his job for six months. We were behind in all our bills and were about to lose our car and furniture. I began to pray to Father Seelos and after three days my sister was kind enough to give us the money to pay our bills."

D. M.

Bunkie, La.

"About six months ago my son became very ill. In a matter of hours he became paralyzed from the waist down. The doctors diagnosed it as a spinal infection. I was told about Father Seelos by a member of my family and began to say his prayer. Six months later my son was walking and running. Thank God and thanks also to Father Seelos for his intercession."

L. B. A.

Digby County, Nova Scotia

"About 25 years ago while on my way to work (I always suffered from migraine headaches) I met an elderly man who began to speak to me. During the conversation he asked if I were feeling bad and I told him I suffered from a migraine headache. He wore a soft hat and from the band on it removed a small piece of gold paper. It was a cloth memento and he told me to wear it always. I never met this man again. Today, thanks to God, Mary and Fr. Seelos, and of course my friend who introduced me to him, I am able to live normally and cope with my problem."

F. M. M.

Slidell, La.

"I suffered a severe loss of hearing and began to pray to Father Seelos. After a few days I regained my hearing. Thanks to Father Seelos for his intercession on my behalf."

W. R.

Robertsdale, La.

"My son was ill with a nervous problem. I prayed to Father Seelos knowing he would help my son who is now well and doing fine. In a short time he secured a job. I cannot thank Father Seelos enough for his great help."

F. G.

Father Elworthy and Father Grangell wish all our readers:  
"A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS"

We wish to give you and your families your best Christmas gift — something priceless, infinite in value — the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

We promise to remember you in our Christmas Masses and in our Masses during Christmas week and on New Year's Day, that God will bless you in 1978 with the best of health and much happiness at home and at work and with your friends. We will remember you daily at the Holy Sacrifice in the New Year.

Pray for us!

Thanks for all you have done and are doing to further the cause of canonization of Father Seelos.

A very good Christmas present for a friend or a family would be a book, the Life of Father Seelos entitled: THE CHEERFUL ASCETIC. Father Seelos was a very happy person.

This is a quotation from a letter to the Center: "My doctor gave me a prayer to say as a big help in my trouble. It was the prayer of Father Seelos on his picture card. He did not know that Father Seelos was one of my favorite saints to whom I pray daily."

For blessings with the Mission Crucifix of Father Seelos, please call Miss Addie Buhler, 895-6176, and she will arrange to have your sick relatives and friends in the hospitals blessed.

When you receive this we will be in the season of Advent, preparing for Christmas. Try to go to daily Mass and make a few sacrifices. This month's virtue is: "Self-denial and love of the Cross."

A young man made a weekend retreat at Manresa, La. He took with him 100 of everything different at the center — pictures, crocheted mementoes, copies of *Father Seelos and Sanctity* and our weekly novena prayers. God love him for his interest in the cause of Father Seelos.

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