



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXIV, NUMBER 12

DECEMBER, 1985

CHRISTMAS



St. James Church - Baltimore, Maryland 1985

The day was Christmas. The year was 1844. The place was St. James Church in Baltimore. Here Father Seelos sang his first solemn Mass. He had been ordained by Archbishop Eccleston in St. James Church on December 22. On this joyful day no one of his family was present—they were all in far-off Bavaria. "I was able to spend it (Christmas day) in a most devout manner. I prayed for all of you," he was able to write later to his folks, "and I commended you to Him who is so close to me, whom I touched with my hands and received into my heart."

Our prayer for all of you, dear readers of this bulletin, is for a most joyful day in the Lord on the 1985th anniversary of His birth. Not all of you will be at home when this day arrives, but wherever you are, may the peace which is the promise of the Christ-child's coming to earth, be with you, and may it remain in your soul all through the year.

SELF-DENIAL AND LOVE OF THE CROSS

Self-denial and cross are not the most popular words in our vocabulary. They run counter to the psychology of today which preaches "me first" and "get all the gusto you can-you go around only once."

Yet our divine Savior challenged His followers if they were of a mind to follow Him. "Jesus then said to His disciples: 'If a man wishes to come after Me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and begin to follow in My footsteps.'" (Matt. 16/24).

Let us take a quick glance at the circumstances of Jesus' life. St. Paul wrote in Philippians, 1/6-8:

"Though He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at.
"Rather, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men.
"He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that He humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross."

Born in a stable, forced at a tender age to flee as a refugee into a strange country, one who lived in a rough border town with little reputation, Jesus withal went off into the desert to fast and pray in preparation for His public ministry.

Then for three years He wandered with His apostles, without a fixed abode, up and down the rough terrain of Galilee and Judia, accepting heat and cold, rain and sun, hunger and thirst. He suffered the dullness of His hearers, the pushing and pulling of the crowds, the ceaseless importunities of the sick, the unending demands on His time. Yet Jesus never held Himself aloof from people. He had compassion on them; He cured all who came to Him.

Beyond all this He was called upon to give His life on the cross. He accepted His death with patient resignation. He prayed in the garden: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by. Still, let it be as you would have it, not as I." (Matt. 26/39).

Besides the physical sufferings entailed in His passion, there were the psychic wounds. He was abandoned by His apostles. He was denied by His great and ultimately faithful friend. He was betrayed by one He had chosen. He was insulted by brutal soldiers, spat upon by a mob, He heard the crowd before Pilate prefer a criminal to Him.

What can wound the human heart more than anything else is ingratitude. Ingratitude comes from one we have befriended. When Jesus heard the mob yell for His blood, how many of them had been touched in some way by His generous deeds and had been the recipients of His favors?

Now, are we prepared to follow in His steps? We do get the picture, don't we?

SPECIAL LETTER

From Norwalk, Conn.

I was born with a deformity of the hip that caused progressive pain and disability. By the time I reached 50 years of age, I was unable to walk more than one block without severe discomfort. In April of 1979, I had several falls. Early in November the pain was so severe and mobility was very difficult. The doctor told me that I really needed Total Hip Surgery, however, he would not consider it until I was 60 years old or more.

Over the next few years, the pain was getting progressively worse. The exercises weren't too much help anymore, and I began to curtail my activities. I couldn't walk long distances, couldn't kneel. Walking on uneven terrain was out of the question. Finally, on July 2, 1984, my leg gave out—it was frozen. The doctor took an x-ray of my hip. He told me the time had come for Total Hip Replacement Surgery. I was diagnosed as having Congenital Hip Dysplasia with a 3-inch shortening. Since my doctor did not do this surgery, I was referred to one who did.

I started saying extra prayers to help me decide what I should do. The second opinion as to the need for surgery as soon as possible came from one of the pioneers of Total Hip Replacement Surgery. He and my surgeon have made a new cup for Total Hip Surgery.

My hospital admittance was set for August 14, 1984. All I was promised was 1½" in length. I was a little disappointed. As I was going through my prayers, I came across the Fr. Seelos prayer sent to me by my cousin. Quite seriously and with dedication I said the prayer several times each day, asking for more than 1½" in length and, if possible, total length. If I was given this great favor it would be his miracle to me and I would make him known. The day before my surgery, I told my surgeon that I believed God had sent him to me and that He would be in the operating room with us.

Surgery was August 16 – 6½ hours long. During the surgery when the hip was exposed, all the doctors were shocked at the horrible condition it was in. It was obvious that there was not enough bone mass to locate a new acetabulum cup. One of the doctors commented that if it worked, it would be a miracle. I was given 2½" in length. I walk only with the mere hint of a limp. My pain is gone and I have a new lease on life.

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Published with Ecclesiastical Approbation.

Rev. William Grangell, C.S.S.R. and Rev. Joseph Buhler, C.S.S.R., Vice-Postulators; Rev. Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R., Director and Editor; Miss Regina Beck and Warren Gautreau, Executive Assistants.

SPECIAL NOTES

1. Once again we call your attention to the Mass that is celebrated each Sunday afternoon at 4:00 P.M. for the canonization of Father Seelos, if that be God's will. Before the Mass, beginning at 3:30 P.M. there is exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. During this time we pray for all those who recommend themselves to the Center. We invite all the people in the area to come and join us.
 2. For many years the Redemptorists in mid-America have prepared for the feast of the Immaculate Conception with novenas in honor of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. Even if there is no novena going on near you, join in the preparations at home or privately in your parish church.
 3. December 4 is the feast of St. Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary to the Indies, the patron saint of Father Seelos. This saint and his heroic life were a source of inspiration for Father Seelos, who came to America to help the European immigrants of a century and a half ago.
 4. The feast day of St. Nicholas, the original Santa Claus, is commemorated on December 6.
 5. God willing, Father Grangell will celebrate his 92nd birthday on December 30. He is still with us although his mind is dwelling more in the past.
 6. For blessings of your sick with the mission Crucifix of Father Seelos, please call Miss Addie Buhler. 895-6176
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