

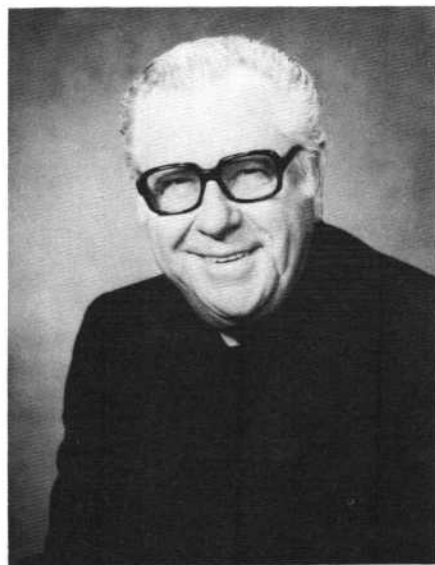


FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 9

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ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS — OCTOBER 6, 1985



On Sunday, October 6, at 11:30 A.M., the annual memorial Mass for Father Francis Xavier Seelos, C.S.S.R., will be celebrated in St. Mary of the Assumption Church, Josephine and Constance Streets, New Orleans. Most Reverend Philip M. Hannan, Archbishop of New Orleans, will be principal concelebrant. Father Norman Muckerman, C.S.S.R., will give the homily.

This Mass will mark the 118th anniversary of Father Seelos' death in New Orleans, October 4, 1867. After living here for only one year, Father Seelos, in ministering to the many victims of a yellow fever epidemic, himself became a victim. His burial took place in St. Mary's Church on the following day.

In his lifetime he had a reputation for holiness and cures were attributed to his intercession. In the intervening years his reputation has grown. At least 38,000 people from all the States of the Union receive this bulletin, FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY. Thousands of petitions and thankings are received each year at the Father Seelos Center.

Father Norman Muckerman, C.S.S.R. is the editor of the leading Catholic magazine, THE LIGUORIAN. After a missionary career in Brazil and several pastorates in the Archdiocese of Chicago and St. Louis, he has been involved in the Catholic press, and just recently retired from two terms as president of the Catholic Press Association.

On May 17, Father Muckerman was given the St. Francis De Sales award at the annual convention of the Catholic Press Association. The award, given annually for outstanding service to the Catholic press in North America, is named after the patron saint of the Catholic press.

This Mass will be videotaped for showing the following Sunday on Channel 32 WLAE-TV.

FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY – SEPTEMBER 1985

Virtue: MORTIFICATION

It seems that every virtue we have proposed for your consideration these last months has had a bad press. This merely reinforces the conviction we all have had that being a follower of Christ is not the easiest way to live. It was He who said "if you want to be My disciple, deny yourself and take up your cross" (Matt. 16/24). As matter of record, I remember having many times as a young man heard it said that the Catholic religion was indeed a tough one to live up to, but a most consoling one to die in.

We are not surprised, therefore, when we learn the derivation of the virtue mortification, that it comes from the Latin word, "MORS" which means death. Dying to oneself is a good explanation of what we do in practicing it.

Athletes, of course, are accustomed to a schedule of vigorous training in preparation for their tests in the field of competition. Nothing is too much for the athlete when he is 'going for the gold.' St. Paul used the term, 'the laurel wreath.'

In this life of tribulation and trial we have been taught to be aware of the enemies who surround us, who desire our fall, and want nothing more than to see us lose the contest. The crown we are pursuing is not an ephemeral one, but a heavenly one that is eternal.

In our early training as God's children we have been urged to give up some of the innocent pleasures of life, so that when we are tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil to commit sin, saying no to the temptation will be comparatively easy.

Our Saviour did not need the virtue of mortification. Being God made man, He was in perfect control of His being at all times. There was no rebellion of the senses or the flesh or the imagination or the intellect. His was complete mastery; He was, as St. Paul says, like us in all things save sin. Still in all, Jesus led a mortified life. He took each day with its burdens and heats. Many a time after a long day He would go off to a secluded place to spend the night in prayer. Sinless though He was, He underwent the pains and bleeding of His passion and death without complaint because by suffering so He would have the ultimate triumph over sin, death, and the devil.

Father Seelos was always convinced of the necessity of mortifying himself. It seems he often chose to sleep on the floor, but always with the permission of his director. He would forsake the legitimate pleasure of stretching out at night on a comfortable mattress and seeking the rest of one honestly fatigued by the labors of his ministry. Why he chose this form of mortifying himself he never explained. We perhaps have all had occasion to spend the night or even several sitting up without a chance to lie down. Perhaps on more than one occasion we actually have slept on the floor. We all know then what a relief it is to get to our bed again.

In our day there are many opportunities to give up something, as we say, for Lent or Advent, or for just any occasion. Television presents many opportunities—we can limit the times we watch, the kinds of programs we see. We can give up eating between meals, or limit the intake of food that excites our appetite. We can look to correcting the annoying habits that we may have, and try to become more pleasing to those who surround us at home, at work, at church, at play.

There is literally no end to the opportunities to die to oneself. It may sound difficult, but once practiced, mortification brings with it a sense of victory.

SPECIAL LETTER

Morgan City, La.

Dear Friends at the Seelos Center,

This is a long overdue letter of thanksgiving for a favor granted to me through Father Seelos's intercession. In August, 1984, my grandson, age 10, was hit in the eye with a BB gun. His father took him to an eye doctor here in Morgan City who had them put him in a dark room and keep him as quiet as possible for three days. They then brought him back to the doctor who said the eye had hemorrhaged and a blood clot had formed behind the eye. He then sent him to Hotel Dieu in New Orleans under the care of another doctor. He put him to bed and sedated him to keep him quiet, but this was very hard to do since he is a hyper-active child.

This was near the week-end and worked fine until I think it was Tuesday of the following week. The medication was no longer keeping him quiet and he was crying and moving around too much. Also, the doctor said, the eye was getting worse and he would have to perform surgery within a couple of days if there was no improvement. He did not guarantee the operation. My daughter called me crying and told me the bad news. She was so upset. I told her to calm down and I would call the Center and ask to have him blessed with the Father Seelos Crucifix and I would pray to Father Seelos and for her to do so, too.

Well, Miss Buhler was so sweet to me on the phone and she said they would pray for him at the Center. I later found out that right after I talked to her, the boy fell asleep and was quiet all afternoon and night.

The next day he was blessed with the crucifix and the following day there was a great improvement in his eye. That Saturday the doctor sent him home under the care of the doctor here. In about 6 weeks time there was such a great improvement the doctor said it was a miracle. He said that it should have taken that eye about a year to heal itself and it was already healed. He also said that we should be able to see where the BB's had hit the eye and we couldn't. It was all cleared up. You may print this if you wish.

New Orleans, La.

I am writing this in regard to my son who for 10 years could not walk but on one leg. After six years the doctor who took care of him said there was no more to do for him. Then he went to see a new doctor. After four more years, he said the same thing. My son is 51 years old. I did not stop praying that one day he would again walk on his two legs.

So he was sent to see a doctor at Tulane Medical Hospital. The doctor x-rayed my son and after that he said he did not see why something could not be done. He put him in the hospital and put in a new hip replacement. How he is doing fine with the help of God and Father Seelos and the doctor. I would like this to be made public because this is a miracle. His doctor even said so.

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In conformity with the decree of Pope Urban VIII all statements contained herein are unreservedly submitted to the judgment of the Holy See and the decision of the Sacred Congregation of the Causes of Saints.

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. Besides the annual memorial Mass of Father Seelos on the first Sunday of October, two Masses are offered each week in St. Mary's Church for the intentions of the Father Seelos Center. One of these Masses is offered each Wednesday at 12:10 P.M. The other is offered at 4 P.M. each Sunday afternoon. We pray for the canonization of Father Seelos if it be God's will, and we pray for all those who recommend themselves to his intercession, whether they are at the Mass or far away.

Preceding the Sunday afternoon Mass, precisely at 3:30 P.M., there is exposition and benediction of the Most Blessed sacrament, with time for meditation and private prayer for one's own intentions, and for the intention of the Center. After benediction, there is time to venerate the mission crucifix that Father Seelos used in his lifetime.

2. School is in session once again, and our young people are trooping back to the halls of learning. They are dreaming of and planning their future. As they scan the field for opportunities, we urge parents and educators to present the needs of the Church in a most positive light. The priesthood and religious life are lives of service to others. They mean a life of unselfish dedication. Our young people are idealistic. Appeal to that idealism.

Please remember Josie Becker in your prayers. She died June 20, 1985. May she rest in peace.

For blessings of your sick with the mission Crucifix of Father Seelos, please call Miss Addie Buhler. 895-6176
