



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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FATHER SEELOS' DEVOTION TO MARY

It goes without saying that Father Seelos, a faithful son of St. Alphonsus, was devoted to the Blessed Mother of God. No matter where he was, in the city or in the country, whenever he moved from one place to another, he was engaged in saying his Rosary. He inculcated this practice on his young seminarians. He preached often of devotion to her and he wholeheartedly supported her prerogatives. Back over a hundred years ago, long before it was declared a dogma of faith, he believed in the assumption of the Blessed Mother of God, body, and soul, into heaven. When a student of his once expressed doubt about this fact, he replied, "This is the common teaching of the Church. Do you have to wait until you are threatened with excommunication to believe it?"

How delighted Father Seelos would be today to see this statue of the Mother of Perpetual Help standing on the corner of Josephine and Constance Streets in New Orleans, next to St. Mary's Church, as a reminder to all passersby that here we honor Mary as the Mother of God.

The original of the Mother of Perpetual Help picture was given to the Redemptorists of Rome in 1866 by Pope Pius IX, with the injunction to make her known to the world. 1866 was the year Father Seelos came to New Orleans.

JESUS AND MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

When we read the Gospels and try to understand how Jesus lived and under what conditions, we come up with a summary like this: He was born in a cave where cattle were sheltered. In place of a cradle, He was laid in a manger. When He was presented in the temple according to the law, His parents gave the offering of the poor, two turtle doves. We do not know what kind of house He lived in in Nazareth. Joseph was a carpenter, and from him Jesus learned the trade. Before His public ministry, Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the desert, under the sun and the stars, eating and drinking whatever the land offered, without doubt. With His apostles He walked the length and breadth of Palestine and even neighboring countries. Once He rode on a donkey. He was thirsty and asked the Samaritan for a drink. Walking through the cornfields one Sabbath, He allowed the apostles to pluck some ears of corn, for they were hungry. On two occasions He multiplied bread and fish to feed thousands. But only on those occasions. He miraculously augmented the wine at the wedding feast of Cana. If someone invited Him to dine, He accepted the invitation. As He was crucified, His executioners cast lots to see who would take His clothing. The only possession He had, He left to the care of St. John, His Mother. A friend loaned Him a burial place. He needed it only for a few days. How detached could one be?

This is what Jesus taught us in regard to food and drink and clothing: "Do not lay up for yourselves an earthly treasure. Moths and rust corrode; thieves break in and steal. Make it your practice instead to store up heavenly treasure, which neither moths nor rust corrode nor thieves break in and steal. Remember where your treasure is, there your heart is also . . . No man can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other or be attentive to one and despise the other. *You cannot give yourself to God and money.* I warn you, then: do not worry about your livelihood, what you are to eat or drink or use for clothing. Is not life more than food? Is not the body more valuable than clothes?

"Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they? Which of you by worrying can add a moment to his life-span? As for clothes, why be concerned? Learn a lesson from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work; they do not spin. Yet I assure you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. If God can clothe in such splendor the grass of the field, which blooms today and is thrown on the fire tomorrow, will He not provide much more for you, O weak of faith. Stop worrying, then, over questions like, 'What are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear?' The unbelievers are always running after these things. *Your heavenly Father knows all that you need.* Seek first His kingship over you, His way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides" (Matt. 6, 19-33). (Emphasis added).

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

SPECIAL LETTERS

Culver City, CA

I write you full of gratitude to Father Francis Seelos. Early November on a routine check-up, the doctor discovered my one remaining kidney had a tumor in it. As you can imagine, the future looked dismal. I had lost the other kidney some six years before. My sister-in-law then introduced me to Father Seelos. Although I believe in my religion, I must admit I am not much of a praying person. I prayed to Father Seelos and promised him that, if I came out of this problem O. K., I would become his personal public relations officer.

I cannot put into words what happened after that. I would get so scared with different tests, different results. The kidney had the cancer confined within it, and thus no treatment was needed afterwards. On December 7, 1987 I lost my remaining kidney. I came through the operation with flying colors, thanks be to God and Father Seelos' prayers for me. I am now doing public relations work for him. Please God, let him become a saint. He is already that in my eyes.

I am now on dialysis three hours three times a week. I have adjusted to it. Father Seelos made it so easy for me to accept. I am on a bigger machine, and if I adapt well to it, maybe I can go to a still larger one, and thus cut down the hours I have to be on dialysis.

Father Seelos has made a believer out of me. I just wish I could shout the good news from the housetops. I shall continue to pray for his canonization.

Mail received in January, 1988

Petitions: 430. Thanksgivings: 169. Other: 620. Total: 1219.
Dial-a-message calls: 712.

MOTHER'S DAY

We wish all blessings to our mothers. We pray for all those who have preceded us in death.

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Rev. Joseph Buhler, C.S.S.R., Vice-Postulator; Rev. Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R., Director and Editor; Mrs. Angela Boudreaux and Mr. Cletus Stack, Executive Assistants.

SPECIAL NOTES

1. The Father Seelos Center offers the following:
 - a. "The Cheerful Ascetic," a biography. Price: \$10.00.
 - b. A TV documentary on Father Seelos (VHS only): \$45.00.
 - c. A daily spiritual message: dial (504) 586-1803.
 - d. Pamphlets, prayer-cards, mementos.
 - e. Blessings of the sick with the mission cross of Father Seelos. Call Miss Addie Buhler: 895-6176.
 - f. Pilgrimages to St. Mary's Church, the tomb and museum of Father Seelos. For further details and appointments, call the Center: (504) 525-2495.
 - g. Every Sunday morning in St. Mary's Church at 11 A. M., there is a prayer service for the canonization of Father Seelos. It is followed by the 11:30 parish Mass.

2. WE ASK YOUR COOPERATION!

Because of the rising costs in the production and mailing of this bulletin, FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY, it is imperative that we hear from you. The sole purpose of this publication has been and will be to acquaint the public with the life and virtues of Father Seelos and to encourage people to pray for his canonization. So, please let us know, as soon as possible, that it is your wish to continue receiving this bulletin. The subscription price per year is a modest \$2.00

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