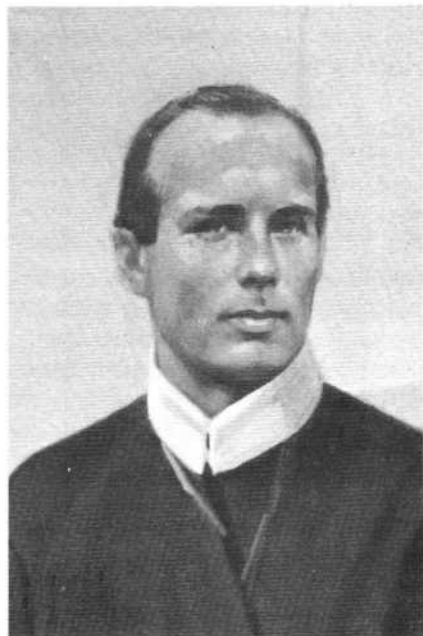




FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXVIII, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 1989



BLESSED CASPAR STANGASSINGER

On April 24, 1987, in St. Peter's Square in Rome, Pope John Paul II declared blessed the Redemptorist, Caspar Stangassinger. Blessed Caspar was born in a lovely part of the Bavarian Alps, in the little town of Berchtesgaden, not too far from Fussen where Father Seelos saw the light of day. As a young Redemptorist, Caspar had dreamt of becoming a missionary, but obedience called him to the very important work of his institute, the work of formation, educating young men to be future Redemptorists.

Father Stangassinger lived to be twenty-eight years old, only four of them as a priest. He had a gift for young people. He distinguished himself by his simple and joyous humanity, his deep-rooted faith in God and love for all, his fidelity to his daily duties, even in small matters. In his short life he performed no great heroic deeds, but he radiated Christ to all he knew. He died suddenly of peritonitis on September 26, 1899. Blessed Caspar, pray for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST

Hope stands between two extremes, presumption on the one hand, despair on the other. Presumption, rooted in pride, takes salvation for granted. Despair is complete surrender. Today we hear disturbing statistics about the high rate of suicide among our teenagers. What is it in our modern life that is driving youth to such action, so terrifying in its finality?

With all the education our youth are exposed to, has anyone talked to them of the virtue of hope? St. Alphonsus defines hope as the certain expectation of heaven. Heaven is certain on God's part, for it is based on the merits of Jesus Christ.

The Son of God became man, born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Even as a small child Jesus was hunted down by King Herod who sought to kill Him. For most of His life He lived in the town of Nazareth, a humble village on the fringe of the Holy Land, a frontier area crisscrossed by people of various origins and beliefs. He left no great imprint on the town. He was remembered as a young man, at times as the son of Joseph and Mary, at others, as the son of Mary, at still others, as the son of the carpenter, or as the carpenter himself. He was known as a Nazarene, and the conventional wisdom had it, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1/46).

Even after He began His public life, Jesus was very much subject to the whims of chance. His own townspeople, enraged at His words, were ready to throw Him over the brow of a hill. Citizens of another town refused Him entry in such a way that John and James were ready to call down thunder and lightning upon them. After their pigs ran into the lake and were drowned, the Gerasenes pleaded with Jesus to leave their place. He was constantly being reprimanded by so-called authorities for healing on the sabbath. While the crowds around Him joyfully followed Him and even greeted Him exultantly on Palm Sunday, there were always enemies who distorted His teaching, who gnashed their teeth at His rejoinders and plotted His death behind closed doors.

How easy it would have been for Jesus to have bypassed all these painful situations and even His death by crucifixion. In the commotion caused by His arrest in the garden, Jesus asked His apostles this question: "Do you not suppose I can call on My Father to provide at a moment's notice more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26/53). But He immediately added, "But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled which say it must happen this way?" (Matt. 26/54).

Jesus truly emptied Himself and gave Himself for us. On Him rests all our hope.

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

SPECIAL LETTERS

Lafayette, LA

Two weeks ago I prayed to Father Seelos to help me solve a problem at work. Father Seelos answered my prayer and I will be forever grateful to him. I promised I would write this letter.

Baton Rouge, LA

I have been praying to Father Seelos for over 25 years. He has answered so many prayers for me and my family. I was at St. Mary's about a month ago. I visited the church and the tomb. I left my requests at his grave. My prayers were answered. My son did get a job, one that he really enjoys. I told Father Seelos that I was giving him my son to guide him. He did. I am still praying for my son that he will be delivered from depression and drugs and bad company. I know he's doing everything for him.

New Orleans, LA

My brother-in-law has chronic emphysema and other major health problems. Three months ago he suffered a severe seizure. The emergency unit was called; my brother-in-law was blue and not breathing. He was placed in intensive care and put on the respirator. His condition did not improve and after a few days the doctor granted the family permission to visit all night. The doctor said he would most likely expire before the next day. Well, with a lot of prayers he made it through the night. The next day the doctor took him off the respirator and out of intensive care. There was no more they could do. His blood gases had reached the 97 level.

He was placed in a private room and we called the priest on duty at the hospital. He was baptized, received his first communion and the sacrament of the sick all in one day. He was blessed the next day with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos. From that time on he continued to improve. Although the doctor had said he was gravely ill and would never leave the hospital alive, he went home on Good Friday. Although he is living with oxygen, and will never be totally better, we are indeed grateful that he is alive and does not have any brain damage.

New Orleans, LA

Last month my son was to be interviewed for a job he desperately needed. On the morning of the interview, I went to church at the same time, so that I could be as near the Lord as possible. Little did I know that though I stayed in church for an hour, my son had been offered the job within the first 15 minutes of the interview. Father Seelos always helps us.

Mail, October, 1988:

Petitions: 874

Thanksgivings: 351

Others: 848

Total: 2073

Dial-a-message: 580

Volunteer hours: 712

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Published with Ecclesiastical Approbation.

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. "Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice," 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.
 - h. "Nothing Short of A Miracle," a book by Patricia Treece. In it there are two chapters about the cause of Father Seelos. Available at the Center. Price: \$7.95
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