



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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SEPTEMBER, 1992



ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS - OCTOBER 4

The annual memorial Mass for Father Francis Xavier Seelos, C.S.S.R., will be celebrated on Sunday, October 4 in St. Mary's Assumption Church at 11:30 A.M. St. Mary's Church is on the corner of Josephine and Constance Streets in the Irish Channel of New Orleans. Father Joseph Steffes, C.S.S.R., pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Crowley, Louisiana, will be the principal concelebrant and homilist at the Mass.

Father Seelos is a candidate for sainthood. His cause is being pursued in Rome. He was born in Bavaria and came to America to join the Redemptorists in 1843. He was ordained the next year and in 1866 came to New Orleans to minister to the German congregation of St. Mary's. On October 4 of the following year he died in a yellow fever epidemic. He is revered as a very holy man. His tomb in St. Mary's Church has been visited by people from all over the world. This year marks the 125th anniversary of his death.

MORTIFICATION

The object of our lives on earth is to attain eternal happiness, to be united with God forever. To be on the way to this goal we must observe God's commandments: love God, love your neighbor. Jesus told us that if we love God, then God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us. "Anyone who loves Me will be true to My word, and My Father will love him; We will come to him and make our dwelling place with him" (John, 14/23). Thus St. Paul can say that we are the temple of God.

The grace of God, a sharing in His own divine life, remains in us as long as we are free of mortal sin. Only one thing can separate us from the love of God, and that is, mortal sin. To impress this reality on us, Jesus made use of analogy of the vine and the branches. He is the vine, we are the branches. As long as the branch is attached to the vine, it can produce good fruit; cut off from the vine, the branch can only wither and die. It cannot produce fruit of any kind. "Apart from Me, you can do nothing," says the Master. Sin separates us from God. Jesus goes on to say, "A man who does not live in Me is like a withered, rejected branch, picked up to be thrown in the fire and burnt" (John, 15/1-6).

It follows, then, that union with God is the most important business of our life. No worldly success or pleasure or amount of money can satisfy the longing of the human heart to be one with God. To help maintain this union, we need the virtue of mortification. Mortification is a little bit of dying to one's self.

Mortification is eating a little less at mealtime, not eating a dessert, putting up with heat or bearing the cold, not listening to idle gossip, refraining from making a sharp retort, being extra kind towards one who is not easy to get along with, letting someone else go ahead of you, helping someone to carry groceries, taking someone to church, and so on.

Mortification will involve a little pain. The vine grower prunes the vine and the branches. He keeps the earth beneath clean of any untoward growth, cuts off the dead branches, he throws the withered leaves into the fire. A little pain seems so trifling in the light of eternity.

Jesus makes this point when He told us, "I solemnly assure you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. The man who loves his life loses it, while the man who hates his life in this world preserves it to life eternal" (John, 12/14-25).

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

SPECIAL NOTES

1. The Father Seelos Center offers the following:
 - a. "The Cheerful Ascetic," a biography of Father Seelos. Price: \$10.00.
 - b. "Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice," a TV documentary of the life of Father Seelos. VHS Cassette only: \$45.00.
 - c. "Nothing Short of A Miracle," a book on the healing power of the saints, written by Patricia Treece. In it there are two chapters on Father Seelos. Price: \$8.95 plus postage.
 - d. Pamphlets, prayer-cards, mementos.
 - e. A daily spiritual message: dial (504) 586-1803
 - f. Blessings of the sick with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos. Call: Mrs. Yvonne Sevin, 888-1250, Mrs. Gerry Heigle, 482-4404, or Mr. Jack Pitkin, 524-6591.
 - g. Pilgrimages to St. Mary's Church, the tomb and museum of Father Seelos. For further details and appointments, call the Center: (504) 525-2495.
 - h. The 11:30 A.M. SUNDAY PARISH MASS IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH IS FOR THE INTENTIONS OF THE FATHER SEELOS CENTER. Veneration of the mission crucifix of Father Seelos after the Mass.
2. A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY BULLETIN IS THREE DOLLARS PER YEAR. Please let us know you want to continue receiving this bulletin. Please use the form below for changes of address, corrections, duplications and renewals. Return the lower portion of this page to us. Include your old address.

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SPECIAL LETTERS

New Orleans, LA

I wish to thank Father Seelos for answering my prayers. A year and a half ago I was having terrible pains in my hips and legs. My leg locked with the pain so that I could hardly walk. I had never before prayed to Father Seelos, but all that night I kept seeing him. He came to me and I started to pray to him, and through his intercession, my hips and legs are free of pain. I pray every day that Father Seelos will be canonized. I have so much faith in Father Seelos and I ask my friends and relatives to pray to him in their need.

Munroe Falls, OH

I was recently facing many demands. I was going through a rough time in school. One of my instructors was making my life very much harder. He was hard to understand; he was rude and cruel. I prayed for the intercession of Father Seelos. He helped me get through all that I was doing with fewer problems than many others were facing at that time. I appreciate his intercession and am now writing to let you know this favor received.

Laplace, LA

I am pleased to write of a personal favor received through the intercession of Father Seelos. On March 28, I experienced severe pain and irritation in my right eye. I used artificial tear drops to flush out any foreign matter that I thought to be causing the irritation, but received no relief. I prayed to Father Seelos for his intercession. After receiving Holy Communion the next morning, I immediately felt relief. After Mass a physician examined my eye and found no evidence of inflammation. Thanks, Father Seelos.

New Orleans, LA

Recently my husband was admitted to the hospital after suffering a heart attack (his second) with severe complications from diabetes, followed by pneumonia. He was on a respirator for eight days and in ICU for ten days and then further recuperation at home. The doctor said when he arrived at the hospital he was as close to death as you can come without actually dying and that his pulse was zero.

We had Masses said and everyone prayed especially to the Blessed Mother and the saints. I promised Father Seelos that if my husband recovered, I would write a letter acknowledging his intercession. My husband is still weak, but has made great progress and expects to return to work. We don't know what lies ahead, but we feel his life has been spared by prayers, and we are very grateful.

Mail, May, 1992

Petitions: 585 Thanksgivings: 287 Other: 378 Total: 1250

Dial-a-messages: 778

Volunteer Hours: 1069

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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.