



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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FEBRUARY, 1995

HIS DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

Our
Lady of
Sorrows



As a young boy, Francis Seelos spent a good deal of his time with his mother because of the precarious state of his health. By her example, she taught him a lasting devotion to the Blessed Mother. Throughout his life he was constantly saying his rosary. As he moved from one place to another in his daily rounds as pastor, teacher, and preacher of missions, he had his rosary in his hand. As a teacher of young men preparing for the priesthood, he stoutly defended the prerogatives of Mary, especially her bodily assumption into heaven, decades before it was declared a dogma of our faith. Father Seelos left few monuments during his earthly life, but during his last year of life in New Orleans, he did bless this statue of Our Lady of Sorrows and he asked that he be buried beneath it. And so he was — until his body was exhumed during the diocesan investigation into his life in 1902. The statue of Our Lady of Sorrows now graces the garden of St. Mary's and watches over the place where Father Seelos breathed his last.

“YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN”

They asked Gilbert Keith Chesterton, a famous writer in England during the early decades of this century and a convert to the Catholic Church, how he felt after he made his first confession. He said he felt like a new-born-baby — some baby! — he weighed 250 pounds. He was always the man to make a point. What a relief for a grown man to shuffle off the burden that his conscience had carried for all those years!

In the Apostles' Creed we say we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting. In the act of hope we pray that, relying on the mercy of God and His fidelity to His promises, we hope for the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.

Father Francis Seelos carried with him an air of gentle cheerfulness. This air which was a genuine characteristic made it easy for people to approach him. This was very evident in his administration of the sacrament of reconciliation. He was a beloved and much sought-after confessor. On the missions he was the first priest to enter the confessional and the last to leave. Sinners found it easy to open up to him because he himself was so open.

In the *Cheerful Ascetic*, Father Curley writes: “To those souls tormented by past sins, unnerved by the good they never did, discouraged by their heedlessness of God's warning and the neglect of His graces, he (Father Seelos) pleaded eloquently

(Continued on next page)

for trust in God: 'It is not your justice but His mercy which is the motive of your trust. He is the God of all consolations and the Father of mercies. He does not wish the death of a sinner but that he be converted and live. He came to heal the sick and to seek those who were lost. He spared the woman taken in adultery. He showed mercy to the thief crucified with Him. He took upon Himself our punishment. He prayed for His murderers. He now intercedes with us at the right hand of God. None of the damned was ever lost because his sin was too great but because his trust was too small.'

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews exhorts us: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and favor and to find help in time of need'* (4/15-16).

In the *Hail, Holy Queen* we address Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as our life, our sweetness and our hope. In the *Hail Mary* we ask her for her prayers at the present moment and especially at the hour of our departure from this life.

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 - one half hour long. VHS cassette: \$20.00 (includes postage).
 - c. "Nothing Short of A Miracle," a book on the healing power of the saints, by Patricia Treece. Two of the chapters are on Father Seelos. Price: \$8.95 plus postage.
 - d. Pamphlets, prayer-cards, mementos.
 - e. 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.
 - f. A daily spiritual message: dial (504) 586-1803.
 - 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. Veneration of the mission crucifix every Sunday after the 11:30 A.M. Mass in St. Mary's Assumption Church.
 - i. Every week a Mass is celebrated for the intention of the Father Seelos Center.
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

Shawnee Mission, KS

I am writing this story as evidence to help the cause of Father Seelos' canonization. For five years I have been working on patenting and selling my idea for a wound dressing. Once I had it sold, but that contract fell through. So early in 1992, I started an intense attempt to interest the last of the companies I had not received rejections from. Initially, there seemed to be significant interest from several companies and I was encouraged, but through the summer of 1992 one by one the companies decided they could not pursue the project. Finally, in the fall of 1992 I received rejection from my last, best hope. At that point, I had nowhere to turn, as I had systematically contacted everyone in the field over the preceding three years.

My wife is a non-Catholic from New Orleans and her family has prayed to Father Seelos over important matters for many years. She suggested that since I had nowhere else to turn, I might pray to Father Seelos. Within a week, a representative from one of the largest medical equipment companies in the country called and very desperately wanted to talk to me about the patent. The company's patent attorney had been reviewing patents in a new field they wanted to get into and had come across my patent which covered it. He in fact "discovered" my patent within days after my prayer. We signed an option contract with this company in January, 1993, and then July, 1994, the company has formally purchased my entire patent series.

I am happy and grateful to be able to write this letter acknowledging Father Seelos' role in achieving my petition.

Baton Rouge, LA

I have enjoyed reading *Father Seelos And Sanctity* for at least 15 years and this letter is written in thanksgiving to Father Seelos for a favor received.

My husband, who was a very healthy and physically fit man became ill very suddenly with mysterious symptoms. All tests were negative and his condition was becoming worse, and the many, many doctors treating him were puzzled on what to treat him for. After seven days in ICU, on a ventilator, and twice almost dying, a relative gave me a memento of Father Seelos and prayer card.

That night, during visiting hours, I put the memento on my husband's arm (between the I.V.'s, tubes and monitors) and prayed for a miracle. That is what it would take to get him through this "unknown" illness. I also prayed that God would give his doctors the knowledge to pick the right treatment as his condition was dire. The next morning the doctors said, "*he had turned the corner*" and they did not know why . . . The doctors still do not know why he came so close to death and they admit it scares them because they do not know why he recovered. My husband and I know: it was truly a miracle!

Mail, October, 1994

Petitions: 665

Thanksgivings: 297

Others: 465

Total: 1427

Dial-A-Messages: 778

Volunteer Hours: 1053

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