



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXXIV, NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER, 1995

FATHER SEELOS MEMORIAL MASS, OCTOBER 1



*Tomb of
Father Seelos*



Father Seelos

On Sunday, October 1, the annual memorial Mass for Father Francis Xavier Seelos, C.S.S.R., will be celebrated at 11:30 A.M. in St. Mary's Assumption Church (on the corner of Josephine and Constance Street in the Irish Channel of New Orleans). The principal celebrant of the Mass will be Father Monroe Perrier, C.S.S.R., and the homilist will be Father John Hensgen, C.S.S.R. The mission crucifix of Father Seelos will be venerated after the Mass. A reception will be held in the garden of St. Mary's after the ceremonies.

Father Perrier, a native New Orleanian, is the vice-provincial of the Redemptorists of the New Orleans vice-province. Father Hensgen, St. Louis-born, is a veteran missionary and now is stationed in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Father Seelos died in St. Mary's rectory on October 4, 1867. His earthly remains lie in the sanctuary's Church. His cause for sainthood progresses both here in America and Rome.

"CHEERFUL ASCETIC"

One thing Francis Seelos was not was a sorry saint. His biographer, Father Michael Curley, C.S.S.R., was moved to name him "the cheerful ascetic." Francis grew up in the place of his birth, Fussen, Bavaria. He learned his prayers from his mother. His father was sacristan of the parish church and he loved to traipse after him as he performed his duties. He admired the statues and the tabernacle where he learned Jesus was present in the Blessed Sacrament. At an early age he longed to be a saint like his patron, St. Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary.

In his spiritual development he soon learned the necessity of practicing mortification in the ancient tradition of the saints. Witnesses testify that his great act of mortification was to sleep on the floor. They saw his bed littered with papers and books during the day and saw it again in the same condition in the early morning.

(Continued on next page)

When he was in Detroit he asked his superior permission to sleep on the floor but was refused for reasons of health.

However much he practiced mortification in utmost privacy, he heeded the injunction of the Lord not to let the world know he was doing it. He did it with a cheerful face. Hence, the title of his life, "Cheerful Ascetic."

In his letter to his two sisters he revealed his idea of mortification and self-denial, saying:

In your holy and enviable vocation you must persevere with fervor and joy. The more fervor we exercise, the more God and the Blessed Virgin will assist us. Everything becomes lighter in the degree in which we do violence to ourselves. We must strive to embrace the crosses which God sends us with a willing, even joyful heart. We must prefer the sufferings He sends to those penances which we like to choose for ourselves.

We may summarize Father Seelos' thoughts on mortification in this way: 1) be constant, persevere; 2) practice mortification cheerfully, not with a sorry face; 3) pray to Jesus and Mary for the strength and courage to continue; 4) choose rather the crosses that come our way in daily life rather than ones of our own choosing.

The crosses which come with God's permission come in many forms: the weather, whether it is hot or cold; our food, tasty or tasteless; our health, good or poor; our talents, with their limitations; our strengths and joys, our sufferings, our failures and successes, our good fortune, our frustrations, and even death itself.

Mortification, despite its bad press, has a place in our spiritual life. Father Seelos practiced it without calling undue attention to it and always with a smile. Can we do no less?



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 SANCITY BULLETIN IS FOUR 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

Omaha, NE

Our dear friend, Ethel LeBlanc, introduced us to the wonderful works and holiness of Father Seelos. My husband had surgery on his arteries and had an aneurysm in the lower extremities. Ethel brought a memento from Father Seelos' church in New Orleans and my husband and all of us pray to him. My husband called out to me and said, "*My leg is getting real warm.*" After that he was on the road to recovery and is doing much better. Thanks to Father Seelos. I know he heard our prayers and we pray he will soon be declared a saint.

We told our parish priest about this and he said, "*to be sure and write to you, so he may be canonized before you know it.*"

I have one more heart-breaking favor to ask and pray that Father Seelos will again come to my aid.

Baton Rouge, LA

This is in thanksgiving for a favor granted through prayers to Father Seelos. My daughter had a serious operation for a brain tumor. The doctor said the operation left her brain damaged. Thanks to Father Seelos, she has recovered completely.

East Meadow, N.Y.

I am writing this letter to acknowledge Father Seelos' intercession on my behalf. Several months ago I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and prayed to Francis X. Seelos asking for his intercession so that this cancer had not spread and the cancer would be completely removed. A biopsy showed no spread to other organs and, after surgery, the doctor said the cancer had been completely removed. I feel Father Seelos' prayers were responsible for this gift of God.

Worth, IL

This past August I developed a digestive problem and I was concerned that I might need surgery as a result. I prayed to Father Seelos seeking his intercession that the condition would not require surgery and that it could be treated with medication. My family physician after examining me and my test results (which were negative) has been able to treat me with medication alone. I thank Father Seelos for interceding on my behalf and for my answered prayers to him, Our Lady, and Jesus.

Broomall, PA

Several weeks ago I sent in a request for prayers for a friend of mine who was about to have an operation for a brain tumor. The operation was performed on a Wednesday. The following Sunday this friend was home from the hospital and writing out a list for her daughter to shop for her. I and her sister-in-law consider this a miraculous recovery. We wish to thank you for your prayers to Father Seelos.

Mail: May, 1995

Petitions: 379

Thanksgivings: 275

Others: 573

Total: 1227

Dial-A-Messages: 749

Volunteer Hours: 1031

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