



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXXV, NUMBER 3

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ST. ALPHONSUS, SEPTEMBER 27, 1696



This year Redemptorists around the world are commemorating the third centenary of the birth of St. Alphonsus, their revered founder. A pilgrimage to Italy is being organized to honor the occasion. The pilgrims will visit the venerable places in Naples where the saint was born, and also the places where the Redemptorists had their origin, Scala, Nocera, Pagani, Caposele, Materdomini. There will be a visit to the Redemptorist headquarters in Rome and an audience with the Holy Father. If our readers are interested in such a trip, they should write to the Father Seelos Center.

GOD LOVES US

We owe this representation of Saint Alphonsus to the Redemptorists of Germany.

When Jesus taught the crowds, people hung on every word coming from His lips. There were always some Pharisees among them who listened carefully to every word, not so much for their own

edification, but to catch Him in His speech. On one occasion a certain Pharisee asked Him what was the greatest commandment of the law. Jesus replied "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment" (Matthew 22:37).

It is only natural that we should ask ourselves the question, why should we love God. Scripture tells us the answer in the first letter of St. John: "Love, then, consists in this; not that we have loved God, but that He has loved us . . ." (1 John 4:10). Or again, "We, for our part, love because He first loved us."

God first showed His love for us by calling us into being. He is our Creator. Of the billions and billions of human creatures He could have created, He did create us and allow us to enjoy the beauties of His handiwork. He calls each of us by name. By the power of His creative hand He is with us and sustains us in life all the days of our lives.

Even when we human creatures turned on Him by sin, God never gave up on us. As Jesus said to Nicodemus: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son" (John 3:16). In becoming our Brother by His birth of the Blessed Mother Mary, the second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, the Son of God remained what He was, God, and then took something upon Himself that He had not had, our human nature. As St. John says in the first chapter of his gospel, "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14).

(Continued on next page)

As one of us, He accepted the human condition: He was a baby, a child, an adolescent, a grown man. He could feel pain, hunger, thirst. He could laugh, He could cry. And, we know so well, He could suffer and die. He ended His life on the cross between two thieves. But because He was also God He fulfilled His own prophecy, He rose from the dead three days after His death.

God loves us so much that He gives us a share in His own life. Jesus said: "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). He is as close to us as the grapevine is to its branches. "I am the vine and you are the branches" (John 15:5). "I no longer speak of you as slaves", but "You are My friends if you do what I command you" (John 15: 14-15).

There are no limits to His love for us. He loved us first even when we were sinners. He told the parable of the prodigal son to illustrate the depth of His Father's mercy. He forgave the sinful woman who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. He forgave the woman taken in adultery and told her to sin no more, He forgave the penitent thief and promised him paradise that very day.

To clinch our love for Him, He died for us on the cross. St. Paul wrote that it is not easy to die for someone else, perhaps for a very dear friend it would be possible. Jesus died for all of us. "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

Is it even possible that even one of us cannot return that love?



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

Pasadena, CA

I had requested a prayer before the tomb of Father Seelos for the recovery of my mother from open-heart surgery which took place on October 27, 1995. After the surgery the surgeon told me that he did not think my mother would survive the operation. Needless to say, I had sensed that when I spoke to the doctor the day before. The only hope I had was to pray to God and to ask Father Seelos for his intercession. I was so afraid. Only faith gave me the strength to pray night and day. My mother has recovered well from the heart surgery, but still is in the hospital due to an infection in her leg. I continue to pray for her complete recovery.

Nebraska

One day while looking at the book of modern saints, I came to Francis Xavier Seelos. Why I stopped there, I will never know. My sister had a son who was very ill; he soon died. I promised that when I went to New Orleans, I would look up St. Mary's Assumption Church, so I could visit the tomb of Father Seelos. Three years later I went to New Orleans. Mass was going on when we got to church, so we stayed for Mass.

After Mass the priest blessed us with mission crucifix of Father Seelos. We picked up some holy cards with the picture of Father Seelos on them and mementos. Days later I flew back to Nebraska. I told people about Father Seelos. They all wanted the prayer cards. So you see he has touched my life and many others.

Jacksonville, FL

I received a phone call from my daughter who lives in Pensacola. She had just received word from her doctor that the lump on her breast looked very suspicious. She wanted to do a biopsy as soon as possible. The doctor indicated that the outer tissue did show signs of cancer cells. My daughter, who was pregnant, was told there was a possibility that the pregnancy would have to be terminated. The doctor warned about the removal of the breast. The doctor was so concerned about the lump that she postponed her vacation and scheduled the surgery for Friday of that same week. Just before the surgery I touched the lump (which was the size of a golf ball) with a memento of Father Seelos and left it there. The doctor was in total shock when the lump proved to be benign. Many thanks to Father Seelos for his intercession.

Cebu, Philippines

As I write it is seven months since the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes when I was near death from a liver disease (diagnosed as cirrhosis) and inoperable gall stones, inoperable because of a low prothrombin time (a defect in my blood-clotting mechanism).

Two Redemptorist priests came to anoint me. My own Jesuit brother came a few days later to do the same for me. The day before I was hospitalized, a memento of Father Seelos came through the mail. I asked that it be pinned on my gown and began praying to Father Seelos. My pains were excruciating. My doctors, including my own brother who practices in Mississippi, thought everything was hopeless. My doctor brother had me brought home, believing that the hospital could do nothing more for me. But, thanks to the Divine Healer, I slowly but steadily began to improve. I am walking again, although I'm not yet as strong as I used to be. I believe Father Seelos was, and is, instrumental in bringing about my recovery. God bless you and reward you in your apostolate for the sick.

Mail: November, 1995

Petitions: 566

Thanksgivings: 289

Others: 345

Total: 1200

Dial-A-Messages: 753

Volunteer Hours: 1049

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