



# FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXXVIII, NUMBER 3

MARCH, 1999



*Birthplace of Fr. Seelos: Füssen, Bavaria*

## FÜSSEN TO NEW ORLEANS

In terms of geography, Father Seelos' life took him from Füssen to New Orleans. Born in the high lands of southern Bavaria, Father Seelos in 48 years made his life journey to the city of New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River, practically at sea level. From physical heights to the

low lands of a river's end, Father Seelos' spiritual life was the exact opposite, from the common innocence of a child to the rarer mountain top of holiness. Whispers from Rome convince us that we have reached a plateau in his cause for sainthood, and 1999 will give proof.

## CALLED TO BE SAINTS

This bulletin was begun in 1960 and was given the title, FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY, first of all, because it was to be concerned with promoting the cause for sainthood in the Catholic Church of the Servant of God Father Francis Xavier Seelos, C.S.S.R. Secondly, the bulletin was written to help its readers move forward and upward in the spiritual life. If anyone doubts that holiness is within his or her grasp, the Second Vatican Council emphasized that we are all called to be saints by reason of our baptism into Christ. It was thus we became members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

"The followers of Christ are called by God, not according to their accomplishments, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, and through baptism sought in faith they truly become sons of God and share in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then, too, by God's gifts they must hold onto and complete in their lives this holiness which they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live 'as become saints' (Eph. 5:3) and to put on 'as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience' (Col. 3:12), and to possess the fruits of the spirit unto holiness (cf. Gal. 5:22, Rom. 6:22). Since we all truly offend in many things (cf. Jas. 3:2), we all need God's mercy continuously and must daily pray: 'Forgive us our debts' " (Mt. 6:12). (Vat. Council II, The Church, p.67.b).

Perhaps it has come as a sort of shock for most of us to learn that we are all expected to be saints, presuming, of course, that heaven is our ultimate goal. We have all heard

*(Continued on next page)*

some of our friends and acquaintances voice the sentiment that they would be perfectly satisfied if they would reach Purgatory. Either they were never motivated to lead a more fervent life or they were too diffident in their own ability and did not realize that it is not human effort so much as God's grace that make us saints.

The grace we receive in the sacrament of baptism is called sanctifying because it makes us holy and gives us a share in the divine life. At our death it is our passport to heaven. Heaven is the fulfillment of the inheritance of our baptism.

The great doctor of the Church, St. Alphonsus, founder of the Redemptorists, in his practical way, revealed to us the secret of sanctity, the secret of love for God. Holiness, love for God, does not consist in a multiplicity of prayers, penances, or visions, or prophecies. The saint writes: "all perfection in the love of God consists in the union of our own will with His most holy will." We hear this refrain throughout his Way of the Cross, "Lord, do with me as You will."

Do we see the will of God in the ordinary events of our lives? The heat, the cold, the rain, the drought, sickness, lack of good health, epidemics? Do we see God's will in the circumstances of our birth, the country we live in, the family around us, the talents we have or do not have, the conditions of our times, the disbelief, the sins committed, the bad example? Do we see His will in the deaths of loved and trusted ones? Do we bow to His will when we are hurting and feeling cut off from His love?

A confrere of mine, Father Dennis Billy, has summed up St. Alphonsus' treatise on conformity to God's will in this way: "Through Jesus, God promises to heal and elevate our weak human nature. For Alphonsus, the conformity of the will to God is a sign that this transformation is actually taking place."

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

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### 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: Gerry Heigle, 482-4404, Jack Pitkin, 524-6591, Teresa LaCour, 887-0214, Rita Kaul, 271-4520, Thad and Ethel Kuhn, 837-3957, Rosary Stoltman, 393-9423, Jim Howard, 277-7949 or Marie Callahan, 525-1775.
  - 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 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.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

## SPECIAL LETTERS

Alexandria, VA

I want to thank the staff and visitors and volunteers who pray for the intentions of persons who are from out of town, such as myself. The Center has prayed for my father through the intercession of Father Seelos, for over a year. My father died of chronic lung cancer on June 24. He was blessed with a peaceful death. We are grateful to Father Seelos for his help.

New Orleans, LA

My wife had many serious illnesses over the years and through my prayers to Father Seelos she has always recovered. Many of her illnesses were life-threatening.

Lafayette, LA

I am writing to thank Father Seelos for answering my prayers. My daughter-in-law moved here to live. She got a very good job and is now working at the rehabilitation hospital. I will continue to pray that they canonize Father Seelos.

Jeanerette, LA

It is always such a wonderful gift for me to be able to come and share in this beautiful Mass honoring Father Seelos. I am so very grateful to him for his prayers offered to the good Lord for the healing of my son's cancer, then nineteen, now thirty-nine years old. I will forever be grateful to him.

Opelousas, LA

...I renew my devotion and intention to pray that Father Seelos be declared a saint. In addition, I hope that Father Seelos' shrine will have my name included in the Masses and prayers that this devotion implies.

You may not recall or have no information of prayers and the blessing with his crucifix of Karen Johnson (cured of sickle-cell anemia) the niece of an employee of ours, who was my introduction to devotion to Father Seelos. Please pray for them and for me and the health of my family.

Chalmette, LA

I have been ill since 1984 and have been in the hospital 28 times. I get oxygen 24 hours a day and an inhalation solution every four hours four times a day. I walk with a walker around the house, but sometimes I must use the wheelchair. I am unable to walk too far.

...I was given two months to live in 1985. However, I hung in there until October, 1995. The nurse and the aid who were taking care of me at home became concerned about me. I had 103° and my left foot was swollen and the color of eggplant. I called my doctor and he admitted me to the hospital.

Once again I thought maybe I'll call again and ask for the blessing with the crucifix. I was concerned that I had seen so many amputations in my work and that I did not want. Maybe, just maybe, Father Seelos can help me. I called the office that day and within a half an hour a lady came to my room and asked me if I had called. She gave me a rosary and a memento stitched in pink and green that matched the rosary. The second day the swelling had gone down, the color was a little better and I know that Father Seelos did the trick. I say the rosary in thanksgiving to him but I still like to be blessed with the crucifix.

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Mail: November, 1998

Petitions: 642

Thanksgivings: 351

Others: 410

Total: 1403

Dial-A-Messages: 759

Volunteer Hours: 1045

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