

NEWS *Seelos Center*

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SEELOS AND SANCTITY: *One Step Closer!*

Finally,
and at long last,
the fruit of our labors,
the dream realized,
the many prayers
answered!
Father Francis X. Seelos
was beatified at
St. Peter's Square
in Rome by
His Holiness John Paul II
on April 9th!



What is meant by "Blessed"?

A person who is beatified by the Pope is called "Blessed". Beatification is the next-to-last step in the process of canonization. The Pope beatifies the person after an investigation into the person's life, writings and heroic practice of virtue, and, except in the case of martyrs, the certification of one miracle worked by God through his or her intercession. If the findings of the investigation so indicate, the Pope decrees that the person may be called "Blessed" and may be honored locally or in a limited way in the liturgy.

Miracles must be of major proportions and proven to be an intervention of the supernatural order into the natural order whereby natural causes offer no plausible explanation.

What is the miracle associated with Blessed Seelos?

In 1966, Angela Boudreaux, a New Orleans mother of four, underwent an operation to remove a malignancy of the liver. Shortly after examining the liver, her surgeon stopped the operation because he said the tumor was so large it was inoperable. Despite

being told she had two weeks to live, Mrs. Boudreaux prayed for intercession of Father Seelos. She has been cancer-free since. She recently underwent a CAT scan at the LSU Medical Center and received a clean bill of health.

What is "Canonization"?

Canonization is the final stage in the process of sainthood. It is a papal decree that a person who died as a martyr and/or practiced Christian virtue to a heroic degree is now in Heaven and is worthy of honor and imitation by all the faithful. Such a declaration of sainthood is preceded by the process of beatification and by another detailed investigation concerning the person's reputation for holiness, writings, and (except in the case of martyrs) a second miracle ascribed to his or her intercession after death. A saint is worthy of honor in liturgical worship throughout the universal Church.

Could Blessed Seelos become a saint?

A second miracle would be needed. Redemptorist Father Carl Hoegerl, who wrote the 2,000-page official report that attested to Seelos' holy character, says that there are several candidates for the miracle that could bring Seelos' canonization as a saint. He believes one of the more promising documented cases involves a young girl who doctors say was completely cured of sickle cell anemia. ■

A Message from the Editor

Like the lily's trumpet, our throats and hearts are opened wide, ready to join with all of heaven and earth in singing out the symphony of joy at Easter's annual return. This year, Earth Day 2000 is on the weekend of Easter Sunday, the ultimate Earth Day, in which all of creation is made anew.

Astronauts who have flown in space are the first human beings to have been away from the earth. As a result, they have an expanded sense of "home". Mickey Lemle - whose movie *Our Planet Earth* is a love poem to the planet we inhabit - notes that astronauts represent not only the five billion of us on the planet, but in a way all of life here. They have left earth and looked back at it and one thing they all report is how beautiful and fragile the earth is.

An astronaut from the Apollo 14 mission explains: "One of the stronger feelings of being by yourself in a spacecraft built for three was going through an area around the moon that is so totally dark. It is the quarter of the moon that is not lit by earth light or sunlight. And as you pass through this total darkness, it is so incredibly dark you almost ... feel it. And the spacecraft drops in temperature, and with condensation on the bulkheads it gets a clammy feeling to it. So here you are feeling this darkness, and then suddenly the sunlight comes in the window with no warning ... Around the moon, one instant you're in total darkness, with all of these feelings, and then the next instant it's sunlight, and you just feel good."

The followers of Jesus were feeling this total darkness, and then suddenly the sunlight comes from the tomb with no warning: "And very early on the first day of the week [the women] went to the tomb when the sun had risen ... and they were told 'He has risen, He is not here.' Afterward Jesus appeared to the eleven and said to them 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation'" (Mk. 16). Without the Resurrected Christ, the earth is a "vicious circle" too often ruled by war, hunger, disease, and inhumanity. In the 1860's, Father Francis X. Seelos ministered to those affected by hunger, disease, and inhumanity in the aftermath of war. He believed there were rays of hope to those in darkness.

Through the inspiration of Blessed Seelos, let us seek to help others feel good by journeying with them through their total darkness into the warmth of the sunlight.

SEELOS FOUNDATION CREATED AT LIGUORI, MISSOURI

"What a difference a beatification makes!"

We are pleased to share with you the exciting news: On April 1st, the Seelos Center and the Redemptorist New Orleans Vice-Province established the Seelos Foundation in Liguori, MO. The purpose of the new Seelos Foundation is to handle the printing and circulation of the newsletter you are presently reading and process all monetary gifts in remembrance of Blessed Seelos.

Now that Father Seelos is beatified, the ministry at the Seelos Center in New Orleans has intensified. For almost 40 years, dedicated staff members and volunteers at the Seelos Center have circulated a monthly newsletter, *Father Seelos and Sanctity*, in order to further Seelos' cause for canonization. Due to an ever-increasing readership, the Seelos Center has now reached the point where it can no longer function primarily as a publishing/distribution center, because of inadequate equipment and resources.

By establishing the Seelos Foundation within the Redemptorist New Orleans Vice-Province Foundation in Liguori, the Seelos Center, Shrine, and Museum in New Orleans can concentrate on other

ways to spread the good news about Blessed Seelos. Theoretically, two wheels spinning in the same direction can get us where we want to go faster than a unicycle! "Where we want to go" is the canonization of Blessed Seelos, and we are delighted to have this new "wheel" set in motion - the Seelos Foundation!

How does this change affect you?

Hopefully, only to the degree that you enjoy the new look of this newsletter! Everything else remains the same: ALL prayer requests and ALL proceeds to support the cause for Blessed Seelos belong to the Seelos Center, New Orleans. The Seelos Foundation Office has the means at its disposal to better process all responses from our monthly newsletter and everything is then directed to the Seelos Center in New Orleans. Now that Blessed Seelos has been elevated to such a widespread devotion in this country, the Foundation Office can assist the Seelos Center with their expertise in publishing, development, and promotion. May Blessed Seelos smile upon our double efforts and doubly reward them! ■

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Bishop John Neumann, C.Ss.R., was beatified on October 13, 1963, during the Second Vatican Council with cardinals and bishops of the world in attendance.

He was canonized 14 years later on June 19, 1977.

This saint received a supreme honor on October 4, 1979, when Pope John Paul II visited the altar of St. John Neumann during his historic trip to the United States.

(Information from *Relics*, by Joan Carroll Cruz; Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984)

SECOND-CLASS RELICS OF BLESSED SEELOS AVAILABLE!

In the New Testament we read about second-class relics of the Apostle Paul and the wonders the Lord worked through them:

"...God worked extraordinary miracles at the hands of Paul. When handkerchiefs or cloths which had touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases were cured and evil spirits departed from them"
(Acts 19:11-12)



Father Seelos died on October 4, 1867. His body was first exhumed in 1902 when the diocesan inquiry was made into his life. On February 26, 1999, Redemptorist Postulator-General Father Antonio Marrazzo was in New Orleans to conduct another exhumation of the earthly remains of Father Seelos. This

private ceremony was presided over by His Excellency Archbishop Francis Bible Schulte of New Orleans. The examination of Father Seelos' remains was made by the Vatican officials as a necessary part of the beatification process.

Second-Class Relics of the cloth that bound the bones of Blessed Seelos during

this examination are now available in a 2" x 3" special envelope for the purpose of carrying in a wallet, purse, glove compartment, etc. In order to maintain the upkeep of the Seelos Museum, would you please consider helping defray the cost of postage and handling to send this to you? ■

"With Him is Plentiful Redemption"

(Psalm 130:7)

The Seelos Center offers the following services:

- Pilgrimages to St. Mary's Assumption Church, the Shrine and Museum of Blessed Seelos in New Orleans. For details and appointments, call the Center at 504-525-2495.
- A Daily Spiritual Message. Call 504-586-1803.
- Blessings of the Sick with the Mission Crucifix of Blessed Seelos in the Greater New Orleans area, please call:
Gerry Heigle-504-482-4404 Jack Pitkin-504-524-6591
Teresa LaCour-504-887-0214 Rita Kaul-504-271-4520
Rosary Stoltman-504-393-9423 Jim Howard-504-277-7949
Elaine Freeman-504-341-2213
- Veneration of Blessed Seelos' Mission Crucifix every Sunday after the 11:30 am Mass in the historic St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine and Constance Streets, New Orleans).
- Weekly Mass celebrated for the intentions of the Seelos Center. If you have Special Intentions, please list them in the space provided on the enclosed envelope.

The Seelos Center / Seelos Foundation offers the following devotionals:

- "Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice,"* an informative documentary on the life of Blessed Seelos; 30-minute VHS cassette. (Suggested donation: \$20 - includes postage.)
- "Nothing Short of a Miracle,"* a 207-page paperback book by Patricia Treece, on the healing power of the saints; two of the chapters feature Father Seelos. (Suggested donation: \$12.50 - includes postage.)
- Pamphlets, prayer cards, and mementos of Blessed Seelos, available in English and Spanish.
- Audio cassette of a spiritual conference talk on God as Father and Blessed Seelos, given by Father Charles Mallen, C.Ss.R. (Suggested donation: \$6 - includes postage.)
- A Blessed Seelos vigil candle will burn near his tomb or in the Seelos Museum at St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans for an offering of \$3.00.

Testimonials

New Orleans, LA

On July 9, 1999, my 12-month-old twin son, Luke, was diagnosed with Penicillin Resistant Pneumococcal Bacterial Meningitis. He stayed in the hospital for 14 days. Upon admission to Intensive Care, the physicians informed us that Luke had an infection in the membranes of his brain and spinal cord. This disease could result in numerous side effects ranging from a decreased neurological status to deafness; the disease could also be fatal.

During his hospital admission, Mr. Jack Pitkin of the Seelos Center visited and blessed Luke with Father Seelos' cross. After Luke's blessing, we began to see a remarkable improvement in his progress. He seemed more alert and oriented, and he began responding to my commands by opening his eyes. That night he smiled at me for the first time in five days. "Have faith", I repeated to myself many times during this tragic event.

On day ten of Luke's hospital stay, I visited Father Seelos' tomb at St. Mary's Church and requested another blessing for my son. Mr. Pitkin brought the cross to Luke and once again we began to see progress. The repeat blood cultures showed no bacterial growth in his spinal fluid, but the hearing test indicated that he was deaf. I continued praying to Father Seelos for a miracle in restoring Luke's hearing. In September 1999, we repeated Luke's hearing test with the results indicating normal hearing.

I believe modern medicine coupled with a miracle has contributed to my son's developmental and hearing recovery. I am so grateful to everyone at the Seelos Center for the continued prayers and good wishes on behalf of my son, Luke. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Harvey, LA

On December 21, 1999, my husband was admitted for same-day surgery at a local hospital. He was kept overnight and on the following day, the surgery hemorrhaged and repair surgery was performed. While slowly recuperating in the hospital room, he suffered a heart attack on December 24th. He ultimately required open-heart surgery consisting of a triple bypass. He never awoke after surgery, but went into a coma.

Three days later we requested a staff member of the Seelos Center, Rosary Stoltman, to bring Father Seelos' cross and to pray for a miracle. At visiting hour, I placed my hand that held the cross on my husband's head and prayed. I also pinned a Father Seelos medal on his gown. My husband awoke the following day. The nurses were amazed. The doctors were puzzled. They had no explanation for his awakening from the coma. They were definitely quite surprised. Some thought that he would not awaken - particularly after this prolonged period - or if he did, he would be mentally or physically impaired to some degree. As most said, they had no clue as to why he came out of the coma, but they were very happy that he was awake, alert, and totally normal.

Terrytown, LA

I am compelled to write you regarding what I feel was a favor received through Father Seelos' intercession with God when my son had a major stroke at the age of 32 due to a dissection of the right carotid artery in his neck. He also had pneumonia at the same time.

One evening while sitting alone in I.C.U. with my son, I remembered the prayer card my mother had given me containing a cloth touched to a relic of Father Francis Seelos. I took the prayer card and touched my son's head with it and began to pray and ask Father Seelos to intercede with God on my son's behalf. I felt an inner strength and calm come over me as I touched my son on his head and prayed as hard as I could that his brain would not continue to swell. I also went to the chapel in the hospital and prayed for his recovery.

Three years have passed and my son is now able to walk with a cane. He takes seizure medication and cannot drive a car because of the stroke. I continue to pray and thank God and Father Seelos for my son's health and inner strength to go on.

As a side mention: While reading the pamphlet about Father Seelos' life, I was surprised to learn that he suffered from a broken blood vessel in his neck in his younger years and that he died on October 4. My son's date of birth is October 3rd.

Seelos Center NEWS

A monthly newsletter for friends of Blessed Francis X. Seelos, C.Ss.R.

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