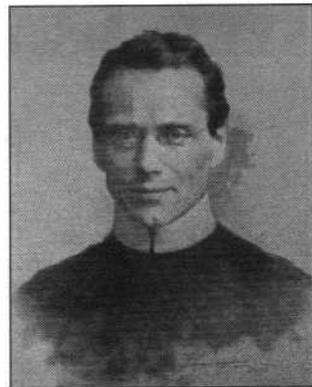


NEWS

Seelos Center



VOLUME XXXIX • NUMBER 7 • JULY 2000

A Timely Letter from the Past

The beatification ceremonies were truly magnificent. Of course, during the entire time I thought only of the day when Fr. Seelos would be so honored. This day is indeed in the somewhat distant future. However, I have no doubt that one day it will arrive.

For the beatification there were two services. The highlight of the morning service was the unveiling of the picture of Bishop Neumann. After the lengthy reading of the decree of beatification a curtain was pulled aside revealing the beautiful picture of Bishop Neumann. With this all the lights of the magnificent St. Peter's Basilica were turned on and the choir sang the wonderful strains of "Te Deum." In the evening, there was a second service - the highlight was the carrying of the Holy Father on his chair and the sermon given by him.

There must have been well over 1000 Bishops at the evening service and several hundred at the morning service. Their beautiful red robes blended in with the colorful Swiss Guards . . . and made a magnificent scene of pageantry.

Let us all pray that the day for the beatification of Father Seelos will soon arrive.

I stayed in Rome for one week after the beatification and during that time had an opportunity to discuss the cause of Fr. Seelos with several people of importance. Fr. Ferrante, C.Ss.R., the Postulator of the cause, was most emphatic in declaring that nothing could be done until a validly scientific life on Fr. Seelos is written. Once this is done it will form the general base for the entire process. This means that a skilled historian must gather together every existing document relating to the life of Fr. Seelos. All of these documents must be verified as authentic and reliable, then, using these documents, a book must be written which will truly describe . . . the character and background of Fr. Seelos. This is a much more difficult task than might appear at first sight. These documents are not easy to come by. That is why we are in Fussen [Bavarian birthplace of Fr. Seelos] today.

We have been very fortunate in obtaining the services of Fr. Michael Curley, C.Ss.R., a Redemptorist priest from the Baltimore Province. Fr. Curley is a very skilled historian with much experience in historical research. . . . It was he who wrote the scientific life of Bishop Neumann.

Rev. John J. Vaughn, C.Ss.R.
Vice-Postulator for the Cause of Fr. Seelos

(Written shortly after the beatification of St. John Neumann, C.Ss.R. on October 13, 1963)

SEELOS & SANCTITY: A Practical Examination

Rev. Richard Thibodeau, C.Ss.R., Redemptorist Provincial Superior, Denver Province



Fr. Richard Thibodeau, greets Pope John Paul II at the Seelos Beatification April 9, 2000.

Fr Seelos' nineteenth century life is not merely to be cherished like a relic of some bygone age. It is to be imitated in the twenty-first century. I would like to point out two practical ways why this is so.

Fr. Seelos had a reputation for being a very approachable confessor. St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, believed that the confessional was the premier opportunity to bring reconciliation between God and humankind. Alphonsus constantly preached, as well as wrote, about the tremendous love of God. He believed it was through the sacrament of penance that people could experience God's love and healing, as restorative, and as engendering greater love for others.

In a world of growing alienation, and widening gap between the *haves* and the *have-nots*, the call to reconciliation is needed more now than ever before. At a time that sees the sacrament of penance being used less and less, Fr. Seelos is an example of the value this sacrament, truly a sacrament of reconciliation, has in our relationship to God and to others.

The second aspect of Fr. Seelos' life that bears great witness to us today is his ministry to immigrants. We live in a time of unparalleled migration from country to country, continent to continent. We are very much aware that in the U.S., immigrants are often among the poorest of the poor. They

are easily ignored as people without political or economic clout. Often they are treated with growing animosity or even blatant contempt. Some members of our society, having seemingly forgotten where we ourselves originated, tend to quickly close the door of opportunity to others who seek the same chance.

The United States is graced with only two men, Saint John Neumann of Philadelphia and Blessed Francis Seelos of New Orleans, who have received such public recognition by the Church. I find it quite significant that both of these men are Redemptorists. This would give Alphonsus Liguori endless pleasure . . . because it confirms once again his basic belief that the Redemptorist way of life can and does lead to holiness. What a great vocation angle in today's world!

RESPECTED ARCHITECT COMMISSIONED FOR SEELOS SHRINE PROJECT

ROBERT J. CANGELOSI, JR. A.I.A., of Koch & Wilson Architects, New Orleans, has been selected for the Blessed Seelos Shrine Project. Mr Cangelosi has been involved with historic preservation his entire adult life, as an architect, educator, scholar and responsible citizen. He was project architect for the Cabildo, was co-editor of two books on New Orleans architecture, and conducts tours of the city for Elderhostel groups. He has served on the boards of the Preservation Resource Center and the Orleans Parish Landmarks Commission, and is on the advisory committee of the Friends of St. Alphonsus. He was this year's recipient of the prestigious Harnett T. Kane Preservation Award.

We have the utmost confidence that Mr. Cangelosi's credentials will be readily disposed to a shrine befitting a future saint!

Seelos Center NEWS

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

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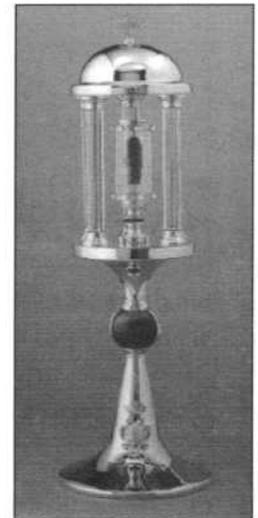
HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL 9 BEATIFICATION

Merciful Father, support with your power those who, like Blessed Francis Xavier, work diligently for the evangelization of peoples. May the seed which they sow in the arid soil of society be quickened by the dew of your Holy Spirit. Through the experience of sacramental forgiveness may man become ever more the living image of the Redeemer.



Lillian Moran, parishioner at St. Mary's Assumption Church, places the reliquary of Blessed Seelos on a special stand near the altar; the cardinals and bishops then venerated the relics.

Longtime Seelos Center volunteer, Jack Pitkin, reads this petition in English at the beatification ceremony, April 9, 2000.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Saturday, October 7: Archdiocesan Seelos Memorial Celebration 10:00 a.m. Mass, St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans; Procession of Blessed Seelos Reliquary following.

Sunday, October 8: Blessed Seelos Mass 11:30 a.m., St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans.

"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 a 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

Bill and Sunny Schulz (North Shore)-504-792-5394

- 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 Office 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.)
- "A Life of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos,"* a new 108-page paperback biography by Carl Hoegerl, C.Ss.R. & Alicia Von Stamwitz. (Suggested donation: \$8.50 - 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 and prayer cards of Blessed Seelos, available in English and Spanish (soon to be made available in Vietnamese).
- 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.
- First, Second and Third-Class relics of Blessed Seelos. Please contact the Seelos Center, 504-525-2495.

Testimonials

Mt. Laurel, NJ

My husband had recently been diagnosed with liver cancer. I prayed for one saint to intercede for me. On the front page of the *Catholic Star Herald* was an article about Blessed Seelos. I had never heard of him before, but when I read about his upcoming beatification, I knew that God sent this "saint" to me. So I went to the web page and found more info on him. I wrote to the priest and he was so kind as to answer and pray for my husband.

I am so grateful to God, Blessed Seelos and to everyone for their prayers. We are not out of the woods yet [with my husband's condition], but I just have so much faith in Blessed Seelos that I feel everything will be okay.

Waveland, MS

My niece had always been a light social drinker. However, when she was in her early 50's she began having serious pains in her neck. She went to several doctors, and had many different tests performed, but little help was provided. The pain was so severe, that she had to retire from her job after 25 years of employment. The depression coupled with the pain caused my niece to rely on alcohol for relief. Her liver could not survive the abuse of the combination of the medication and alcohol. Seven years ago, at the age of 58 she was hospitalized for cirrhosis of the liver. The prognosis was death, unless we could find a liver transplant. She spent a long time in ICU, with me at her side praying to Fr. Seelos for her recovery. Though the liver transplant was never performed, she survived and has chosen to remain sober.

I know this has taken me a long time to write. However, the delay in my writing doesn't diminish the miracle I witnessed as a result of continuous prayer to Fr. Seelos. I hope that this story helps in your efforts to canonize Fr. Seelos, because to my niece and me, he is already a saint.

Rochester, MN

I am a religious monk. Since 1966 I have cultivated a veneration for your holy confrere and prayed for his beatification and future canonization. It started when I obtained for our monastic library the newly published *The Cheerful Ascetic* [by Fr. Michael Curley, C.Ss.R.]. Years ago we read in our monastic refectory the definitive biography of St. John Neumann by the same author. Both studies are well documented and make their subjects come to life!

Arnaudville, LA

(From the letter of a pulmonary consultant regarding one of his patients three months into pregnancy and her prayers to Fr. Seelos) . . . She was hospitalized in the ICU at Lafayette General Medical Center for pneumonia and respiratory failure. She was on a mechanical ventilator for 21 days for management of ARDS (Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome). She was profoundly ill and it was indeed a miracle that she survived and that her pregnancy was not affected detrimentally. All that could be done medically was done; however, she still was not expected to survive. She did have a miraculous recovery and has no sequelae from the illness. [The child, now twelve, is normal and is named after Father Francis Seelos].

From the www.seelos.org Guest Book

Thank you Blessed Seelos for interceding for me. My medical tests were negative. Blessed Seelos is a powerful intercessor.

From the www.seelos.org Guest Book

I wrote on 4/11 asking for the intercession of Father Seelos with my dad who was diagnosed with lung cancer in December 1998. He had another CAT scan done this month and . . .they seem to think it can be cured with antibiotics. He also had a bronchoscopy done [and the lung is free of any malignant cells]. What a miracle . . . I will continue to pray to Fr. Seelos forever and thanks from the bottom of my heart for the good news.