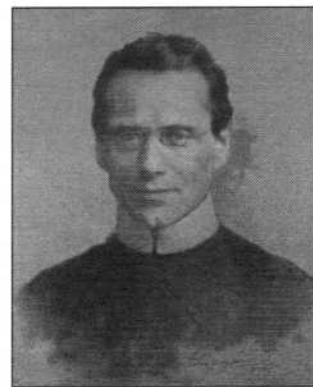


NEWS Seelos Center



VOLUME XL • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 2001

40 and Still Counting

The symbolic number forty in Scripture signifies a very long time. As we begin the fortieth anniversary year of the Father Seelos monthly newsletter it signifies that for a very long time this publication has helped to keep the *fama sanctitatis* of Francis Seelos alive among the faithful. At this significant juncture, let us look back at a period known as the "Reactivation of the Cause":

In 1959, Fr. Paul Baudry, Redemptorist Vice Provincial of New Orleans, appointed Fr. John Vaughn, C.Ss.R. "to be the promoter of interest in Father Seelos' life here in the Vice Province." This was the practical result of renewed concern about the Cause of Fr. Seelos in Rome. Fr. Vaughn expended himself tirelessly and devotedly in promoting various aspects of the Cause. In September, 1960 he had 100,000 prayer cards with a picture of Father Seelos printed. A memorial Mass for Father Seelos was held in St. Mary's Church in October 1960, beginning a tradition that continues to the present. And, in May 1962, he inaugurated Volume I, Number 1 of the

newsletter you are presently reading. This first official communiqué announced an upcoming Mass in honor of our Blessed Mother, "to whom Father Seelos was so devoted during his lifetime." It also indicated that the Mass would be televised on a local station for those who were unable to attend. And, in what has become a staple of the Seelos newsletter, testimonials were provided as a witness of Father Seelos' powerful intercession.

Today, *Seelos Center News* reaches 27,000 people every month throughout the fifty United States. Volume XL, Number 1 has the same purpose as our premier issue, namely Fr. Seelos, his sanctity, and the inspiration he gives us!



Fr. John Vaughn, C.Ss.R., Vice-Postulator and first Director of the Seelos Center, greets the great-grandniece of Fr. Seelos, Frau Lilly Aschenbrenner - Neumeier, in the 1960's.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

- Were you at the first Seelos memorial Mass in 1960?
- Do you still have one of those original Seelos prayer cards?
- Do you perchance still have one of the monthly newsletters from the early years?

Reminisce, ruminate, and reflect on any Fr. Seelos experience of yours in the early 1960's and write to us for possible publication in a future issue of this newsletter. We'll send you a free gift for your participation in our 40th anniversary year!

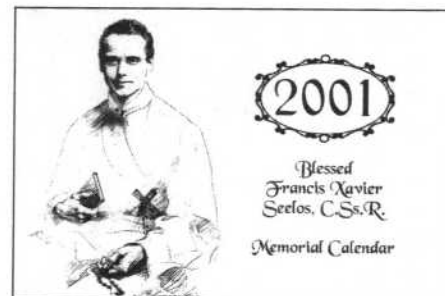
A Message from the Editor



The beginning of January is a time for committing ourselves to New Year's resolutions and then, the latter part of January is a time for re-committing ourselves to those same resolutions, if necessary! A good friend of mine from Massachusetts sent me the bulletin in her local diocesan parish and I was happy to discover the following poem that was included for that weekend. It happens to be a poem by my Redemptorist novice director:

LORD, I KNOW NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS RARELY LAST;
BUT I ALSO KNOW IT'S GOOD TO MAKE THEM.
SOMETIMES ONE OF THEM STICKS;
SOMETIMES ONE OF THEM REALLY MAKES IT.
SO THIS YEAR I RESOLVE TO BEGIN & END
EACH DAY WITH A PRAYER:
"THANK YOU, LORD, FOR THE GIFT OF ANOTHER DAY."

THIS YEAR I RESOLVE TO TASTE WHAT I EAT, ESPECIALLY BREAKFAST;
TO WALK MORE THAN I SIT;
TO LISTEN MORE THAN I TALK;
TO READ MORE THAN I WATCH TV;
TO LET THE SMALL THINGS SLIDE & THE BIG THINGS BE CONFRONTED;
TO SING MORE IN CHURCH & IN THE SHOWER;
TO ALLOW FOR MORE MYSTERY & MORE LAUGHTER IN MY LIFE;
TO BE COMPASSIONATE RATHER THAN COMPETITIVE
ALLOWING MYSELF MORE SECOND PLACE FINISHES;
TO ENJOY THE LOOK IN THE EYE OF THE PERSON WHO COMES IN FIRST
ESPECIALLY MY KIDS;
TO WALK MORE BY FAITH THAN BY FEAR;
TO MAKE OPPORTUNITIES HAPPEN MORE THAN TO WAIT FOR THEM TO HAPPEN;
TO EAT SALADS & FRUIT MORE THAN CHIPS & SWEETS;
TO COMMUNICATE MORE THAN TO QUARREL;
TO GET SECOND OPINIONS ON MY JUDGMENTS;
TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT ENJOYING ONE DAY AT A TIME,
INSTEAD OF BEING STUCK IN THE PAST OR HIDING OUT IN THE FUTURE;
AND TO LIVE UP TO AT LEAST ONE OF THESE RESOLUTIONS.
FR. ANDREW COSTELLO, C.Ss.R.



FRANCIS SEELOS 2001 CALENDARS STILL AVAILABLE

It gives us great delight to announce to you the printing of a commemorative calendar for the year 2001, due to the popular appeal of the first Fr. Seelos calendar in 2000. The 13-month calendar features informative details about Blessed Francis Seelos and highlights of his Beatification.

The limited edition calendar again sells for \$10 (+\$2 for p/h) to support the Seelos cause for canonization, and it reminds us daily of our universal call to holiness throughout this new year. Supplies are now limited, so please reserve your calendar by mailing your request and payment to:

The Seelos Center
2030 Constance St
New Orleans, LA 70130

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Highlights of the Seelos
Feast Day Celebration and
Procession in New Orleans,
October 7-8, 2000

Seelos Center NEWS

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

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Vice Provincial - New Orleans

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Cherub Cards

Available in time for
Valentine's Day



The people of Terni, Italy are convinced they have the real St. Valentine. He was believed to be the first bishop of Terni who was beheaded in 273 on the day that became his feast day, February 14. He was buried under the basilica that now bears his name and was adopted as patron of the city. Written in gold letters on the Tomb of St. Valentine is the inscription, "Saint Valentine, patron of lovers."

When asked about the inscription, Bishop Franco Gualdrini, a modern successor to St. Valentine as leader of the Terni Diocese, explained, "He is not the official patron the church has declared as protector of lovers," he said with a smile. "It is a popular tradition ... As often happens in the church, some things are proclaimed from above, some are proclaimed from below."

Gift-boxed sets of 20 "Cherub" cards and envelopes. Each card measures 5-1/2" x 4-1/4"; blank on inside; scripture verse on back reads: "From the angel's hand the smoke of the incense went up before God, and with it the prayers of God's people (Rev. 8:4)." Donation of \$12 (plus \$2 p/h) supports the Blessed Francis Seelos cause.



Detail, high altar,
St. Mary's Assumption
Church, New Orleans;
mid-nineteenth-century bas-
relief, wooden polychrome.
Photo by Bill Coskrey

"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 F. 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 F. Seelos in the Greater New Orleans area, please call:
Gerry Heigle (E. Jefferson) 504-482-4404
Jack Pitkin (Uptown/Innecity) 504-524-6591
Teresa LaCour (E. Jefferson) 504-887-0214
Rita Kaul (Arabi) 504-271-4520
Rosary Stoltman (Westbank) 504-393-9423
Jim Howard (St. Bernard) 504-277-7949
Elaine Freeman (Westbank) 504-341-2213
Peter Lukinovich (N.O. East) 504-241-2746
Ethel Kuhn (Ochsner) 504-837-3957
Bill and Sunny Schulz (Northshore) 504-792-5394
- Veneration of Blessed F. Seelos' Mission Crucifix every Sunday after the 11:30 am Mass in the historic St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine and Constance Streets).
- 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:

(Please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery of item(s) requested):

- "Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice," an informative documentary on the life of Blessed F. 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.)
- Messengers: After-Death Appearances of Saints & Mystics*, a 343-page hardbound book on the authentic appearances of the holy dead sent as God's messengers. Chapters on Fr. Seelos; photos included. Autographed by author, P. Treece. (Suggested donation: \$22.50 - includes postage.)
- Pamphlets and prayer cards of Blessed F. Seelos, available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Audio cassette of a spiritual conference talk on God as Father and Blessed F. Seelos, given by Father Charles Mallen, C.Ss.R. (Suggested donation: \$6 - includes postage.)
- A Blessed F. 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 F. Seelos. Please contact the Seelos Center, 504-525-2495

Testimonials

NEW YORK, NY

In early '98, I lost my hearing in one ear spontaneously. The doctors could not explain why it happened but after medication, my hearing was restored within a few weeks. Later that year, I woke up one morning and all my limbs were completely numb. Then, in early '99, I went spontaneously blind in one eye, which the doctors could not explain. A family friend sent me information on Father Francis Seelos. I put his picture next to my bed and prayed to him every night. I have always been a spiritual person but not religious in the traditional sense.

Throughout the year my balance and coordination deteriorated steadily affecting my ability to walk. I saw Eastern and Western trained doctors from around the country. The doctors finally put me on intravenous steroids and told me they thought the steroids had only a 30-50% chance of helping me at best. I have been off the medication since July and thankfully I have not shown any regression since.

During my checkup the doctors were truly amazed at the improvements in my MRI reports. My spine looks completely normal and healthy, which it did not a year ago. I continue to pray every day and have passed some of the literature on Fr. Seelos to colleagues who have been diagnosed with cancer. Even though this has been a frightening experience to go through, it has made me appreciate my life in ways that I did not before and I feel truly blessed from the experience.

BILOXI, MS

About ten years ago the Redemptorists established a residence in Biloxi. I was then introduced to the Father Seelos cause. We have a history of breast cancer on my mother's side of the family. I have had two lumps removed already. On September 14, 2000 the doctor found another lump. We decided to wait another month before any action would be taken. I prayed very hard to Blessed Francis Seelos and was blessed by his cross on October 8th at his annual Mass at St. Mary's. Four days later the doctor advised me that the lump had disappeared. Thanks to Blessed Seelos and the Redemptorists who prayed for me.

METAIRIE, LA

In 1998 I was diagnosed with the most aggressive primary brain cancer, glioblastoma multiforme. After surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, I unfortunately had a recurrence of the tumor in September of 1999.

The day before I was to go to M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston for a second surgery, I was meditating and suddenly thought of Fr. Seelos. Back when I first became ill, someone had given me his prayer card and history. I remembered being quite touched by his life and gentle, loving face. After saying his prayer I opened a drawer in a nightstand that belonged to my grandmother, who died 20 years ago. Right on top there was an old picture of St. Mary's Church and some Fr. Seelos holy cards and pamphlets that had belonged to her.

Later that day a friend said she wanted to give me something before I went to Houston. Well, it was Fr. Seelos relics and prayer cards. This was no coincidence – he reached out to me 3 times that day. The next day, before getting on a plane to Houston for surgery, I went to St. Mary's to pray and be blessed by Fr. Seelos' cross.

When meeting with my surgeon, the idea of entering a very experimental clinical trial using gene therapy was discussed. My first reaction was "no way – just do the surgery as planned". But I had a sudden, overwhelming feeling of urgency to enter the trial. I know it was Fr. Seelos pushing me forward. My surgery and gene therapy treatment were ultimately scheduled for October 4, 1999 the anniversary of Fr. Seelos' death. I knew then that Fr. Seelos was in control. I taped a relic to my hospital bracelet and was sure that he would guide the surgeon's hands on that special day, and that I was going to be okay.

It has been over a year since my surgery and treatment, and my MRI scans have been clear and free of any sign of tumor. I feel healthier than ever before. I thank God every day for this miracle of life, and I pray for the canonization of Blessed Francis Seelos.