

SEELOS CENTER

News

2030 Constance Street ❖ New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 525-2495 ❖ www.seelos.org

National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

Volume XLIV † Number 1
January 2005

Old-Time Religious Hero Hailed

“If the Americans were as expert in spiritual matters as they are in business affairs, all of them would be saints.” – The Rev. Francis Xavier Seelos

The Reverend Thomas Picton opened his homily on a nostalgic note. “I don’t know about you, but I sometimes long for that old-time religion,” he said.

St. Mary’s Assumption Catholic Church on Constance Street is the perfect setting for a certain flavor of old-time religion. Its high ceiling inclines your glance heavenward. The intricate detail of its architecture reminds you of a time when there was something at once spiritual and human in the design of great churches.

Picton spoke of various traditional Catholic celebrations in places he has served. Then he arrived at what I took to be his main point: the importance of saints. “Even today we need stories of heroes,” he said. “The saints help us find these stories.”

The “saint” of the hour was in fact a man who is one step away from sainthood, the Reverend Francis Xavier Seelos. Born in Fussen, Germany, he arrived in New Orleans in 1866 and served at St. Mary’s. For about a year he tended to the spiritual needs of the

German immigrant population before succumbing to yellow fever. Yet in the course of his brief stay at the church, he gained a stellar reputation that attracts admirers still.

Known as the “cheerful ascetic,” Seelos spiced the simple lifestyle of his Redemptorist order with his ebullient personality and gentle demeanor. “The priest who is rough with people does injury to himself and to others; he sins, at least in ignorance, against charity, patience, poverty, humility and self-denial,” Seelos wrote. “Thousands reject the Church and the sacraments and perish in eternity solely because they have been badly treated by a priest.”

Though Seelos was ordained in Baltimore and served in Pittsburgh before coming to New Orleans, our city is home to a national shrine to him on Constance Street.

Early last week, I toured the church and shrine accompanied by Jack Guidry, a retired insurance adjuster who serves as a volunteer. He persuaded me to attend the annual celebration of Seelos. It is always a standing-room-only affair held on the first Sunday of October at St. Mary’s, Guidry told me.

On Sunday, latecomers among the 1,100 or so worshippers stood in the back of the church or endured the exile

of the rough balcony seating. Even on the balcony’s rock-hard wooden kneelers and the narrow wood benches, something of the old-time religion seeped through. ✠



Article by Lolis Eric Elie in the October 4, 2004 issue of the New Orleans newspaper, The Times-Picayune. © 2004 The Times-Picayune Publishing Co. All rights reserved. Used with permission of The Times-Picayune.



Very Rev. Thomas Picton, C.Ss.R., Superior of the New Orleans Vice Province, blessed the new outdoor Seelos statue after the October 3, 2004 Memorial Mass.

Judge Dennis Waldron and Friend.



Message from the Editor

In *The Seven Storey Mountain*, Thomas Merton wrote: "The first and most elementary test of one's call to the religious life ... is the willingness to accept life in a community in which everybody is more or less imperfect." Such an acknowledgement may well have been Francis Xavier Seelos' secret to happiness in a religious community. It also provides a good starting point in a new year, when we often make resolutions to strive for perfection! Acceptance and forgiveness of one another's imperfections – both in and out of religious life – can do wonders to our strong emotion of anger.

Anger, whether repressed or forcefully expressed, serves a useful purpose



in helping us easily identify our wound. The wound is seldom healed when we bury the anger or let it simmer, or when we channel it in vengeful behaviors. "Virtue," said St. Thomas Aquinas, "consists in being angry at the right person for the right reasons and for the right amount of time." And St. Bonaventure said, "Do not become angry with those who speak evil of you, for what they say is either a truth or a lie."

There is no better time than the present in resolving to truthfully allow our anger to help us locate our hurts, so that acceptance and forgiveness can help to heal them!

Fr. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

The Order of Seelos Witness

The Seelos Center held its 2nd annual Seelos Gala Dinner at the Southern Yacht Club on Lake Pontchartrain, with a crowd of 200+ in attendance. Anne Batt and her organizing committee did another superb job! The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the second inductee into "The Order of Seelos Witness." The inscription at the base of the bust in the likeness of Blessed Francis Seelos reads:

*To the Glory of God & In Honor of
Jay C. Albarado
Inductee Into*

THE ORDER OF SEELOS WITNESS
For Exemplifying the Principles & Values

*brought forth by
BLESSED FRANCIS X. SEELOS, C.Ss.R.
October 3, 2004*

In 1962, Mr. Albarado played an integral part of this newsletter's history in its seminal stages, and he has been the one and only Master of Ceremonies at the April Seelos Luncheons during its sixteen-year history.



Mr. Jay C. Albarado, second inductee into The Order of Seelos Witness

Has it been a long time since you've visited "the old neighborhood"? If you grew up in the Irish Channel but moved elsewhere, or if it has been a number of years since you've prayed before the "tomb" of Father Seelos, much has changed! The neighborhood is quite different; the "tomb" of Father Seelos is now a beautiful reliquary in a shrine at St. Mary's Assumption Church, and the Seelos Museum has been recently renovated. May your New Year's resolution include an opportunity to "come home" and stop by for a prayer.

The Seelos Center offers the following services:

◇ **Pilgrimages** to St. Mary's Assumption Church, Shrine & Museum of Bl. F. Seelos in New Orleans. For details & appointments, call the Center at 504-525-2495.

◇ **Daily Spiritual Message.**
Call 504-586-1803.

◇ **Blessings of the Sick** with a Mission Crucifix of Blessed F. Seelos in New Orleans & other areas. Please call:

East Jefferson

Gerry Heigle: 504-482-4404
Teresa LaCour: 504-887-0214

Ochsner

Marie Giorlando: 504-288-9977

Uptown/Innecity

Jack Pitkin: 504-524-6591

St. Bernard & Arabi

Jude Noote: 504-271-8481

Westbank

Elaine Freeman: 504-341-2213
or 504-328-0648
Rosary Stoltman: 504-393-9423

Baton Rouge

Gloria Bacque: 225-767-8432

Covington

Pam Crutchfield, R.T.: 985-892-6560

Houma/Thibodaux

Dan Montz, L.P.C.: 985-446-1805

Lafayette/Abbeville

Rita King: 337-984-4607

Mandeville

Bill & Sunny Schulz: 985-792-5394

Reserve/LaPlace

Deacon Percy Vicknair: 985-652-0039

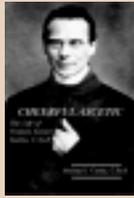
Slidell

Carmelie Mancuso: 985-641-6999
Mary Jo Stewart: 985-643-5548

◇ **Veneration of Blessed F. Seelos' Mission Crucifix** every Saturday after the 4 p.m. Mass & Sunday after the 11:30 a.m. Mass in historic St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine & Constance streets).

◇ **Weekly Mass** celebrated for the intentions of the Seelos benefactors. Please list Special Intentions in the space provided on the enclosed envelope.

The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:



Cheerful Ascetic: Life of F.X. Seelos, a 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$22.95 + 6.95 p/h)

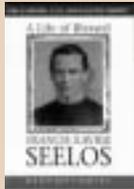
◇ **"Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice,"** an informative documentary on the life of Bl. F. Seelos; 30-min. VHS cassette. (Donation: \$17 - includes p/h)



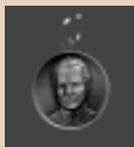
Nothing Short of a Miracle, a 207-page paperback book by Patricia Treece on the healing power of the saints; two chapters feature Fr. Seelos. (Donation: \$15 - includes p/h)



Apparitions of Modern Saints, a 293-page abridged & updated paperback version of the book formerly entitled *Messengers* by Patricia Treece on the authentic appearances of the holy dead sent as God's messengers. Chapters on Fr. Seelos. (Donation: \$17 - includes p/h)



A Life of Blessed Francis X. Seelos, a 108-page paperback biography by Fr. Carl Hoegerl & Alicia von Stammwitz. (Donation: \$9 - includes p/h)



Seelos Medals: Made of nickel silver, round 3/4" dia. with loop, antique finish, finely crafted in the U.S. (Donation: \$3 each or 2/\$5 + \$1 p/h)

◇ **Pamphlets & Prayer Cards** of Bl. F. Seelos, available in English, Spanish & Vietnamese.



Audio Cassette of a spiritual conference talk on God as Father & Bl. F. Seelos, given by Fr. Charles Mallen, C.Ss.R. (Donation: \$7 - includes p/h)

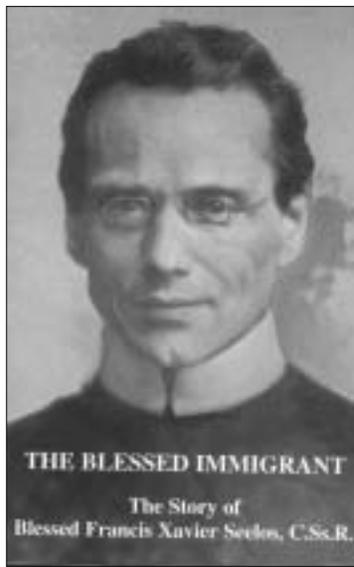
◇ **A Bl. F. Seelos vigil candle** will burn near his sacred resting place in St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans, for an offering of \$3.

◇ **First, Second & Third-Class Relics** of Bl. F. Seelos. Contact the Seelos Center, 504-525-2495.

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



New statue of Bl. F. Seelos by artist Ruth Goliwas in St. Catherine of Seina Church, Metairie LA



You are invited!

SATURDAY
JANUARY 15, 2005
11:00 a.m.

Special Healing Mass & Veneration to Commemorate the Birthday of Father Seelos

ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHURCH
2030 Constance Street
(in the Irish Channel)
New Orleans

Francis Xavier Seelos answered an urgent appeal to leave his German homeland for ministry in the emerging immigrant Church in the United States. Read how he encountered unimagined hostilities aimed at him and his compatriots for being both German & Catholic. (27 pages, \$2 includes p/h)

A VALENTINE'S GIFT FOR LOVED ONES!

Cherub Marble Paperweights made from 100% natural marble. Feel the quality! "Old World" look depicting "Praying Cherub" and "Pious Cherub" from St. Mary's Assumption Church High Altar, New Orleans. Approx. 4" x 4". \$26.00 (includes p/h).



CHERUB CARDS
Detail of St. Mary's Assumption Church High Altar

Gift-boxed sets of 20 cards/envelopes. Each card measures 5-1/2" x 4-1/4"; blank on inside; scripture verse on back. \$10.00 (includes p/h).



TESTIMONIALS

Houston, TX

Sometime ago a Filipino woman was crying at a hospital chapel in Houston's Medical Center. Although a stranger to me I offered to help and I learned her nine-year-old daughter was given a mere 48 hours to live. She had meningitis at Texas Children's Hospital. I offered to say the rosary with her and prayed to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. I went with her to the ICU and saw her daughter comatose with one eye swollen like a red ball of fire. She was very stiff. I gave the mother a relic of Bl. Seelos and told her to wipe it on her daughter's face.

During those forty-eight hours I was so scared to check on them as they might say she had passed. After two days I went back and I could hardly believe it was the same girl. She was ambulating in the room, and sat down to eat a hearty meal. It was just like Lazarus raised from the dead by the Lord Himself. I am very grateful to the Redemptorists from whom I have learned about Blessed Seelos.

Somers, NY

My grandson, Kevin, age 14, suffers from Neurofibromatosis, which caused tumors to grow on his spine. Surgery was scheduled for August 11 in New York City. Kevin's mother, my daughter, was told of the dangers of this surgery so close to the spinal nerves.

Kevin has a relic of Fr. Seelos and prayed to him for help. Due to Kevin's devotion, I decided to take him and his mother to New Orleans to visit the shrine of Blessed Seelos in July. We were all blessed with the Mission Cross of Fr. Seelos. Kevin was prayed over many times by the staff at the Seelos Center. We came home faith-filled.

The surgery was performed as scheduled. Eighty-five percent of the tumors were removed without nerve damage and the tumors were benign. We offer praise and thanks to God through the intercession of Blessed Francis X. Seelos.

Mechanicsville, VA

In 1973 I was diagnosed with a Wilms' Tumor (childhood cancer of the kidney). During this time, my grandmother read information about Fr. Seelos and told my mother to bring me to St. Mary's Assumption Church. Once we entered the church, I am told that I immediately ran up to the tomb of Fr. Seelos and laid down on it! My parents rushed to keep me, a curious 3-year-old, off the altar area, then realized what I was doing. After that day, my family frequently brought me to the church and led me to lie directly on the tomb of Fr. Seelos. Within an unusually short period of time and unexpectedly (according to the doctors), the metastatic disease in my lungs was gone. My family attributes the healing to the devotion and prayers to Fr. Seelos.

I continue to experience some chronic health issues related to my cancer and its treatment, but am essentially a healthy, active, and very blessed adult! I visited St. Mary's Assumption Church in March 2004 with my family for the first time since my childhood. I was moved by the powerful feeling of healing and peace, particularly at the tomb site.

Denham Springs, LA

Over the past year I have been praying a lot to Fr. Seelos. My grandmother was a devout believer in him and since her death I have carried her scapular with me for a few years, and this year I decided to start praying to him. My father had lost his job almost a year ago and months had gone by without even an interview. My father received three interviews, and was offered two positions, after prayer requests to Fr. Seelos. The position he accepted is better than the one he had before and he has since moved up in the company. However, after he had been with the company only a month he was told that he had a blood clot in his leg and was admitted to the hospital. We again sent prayer requests for a full recovery and for understanding by his company. Our prayers were answered once more! I have the utmost gratitude to Fr. Seelos. He has helped my entire family; without him we would not have as much faith as we do today.

Seelos Center News

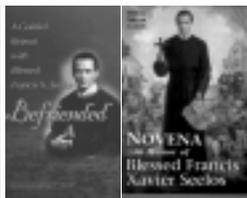
A monthly newsletter for friends of
Blessed Francis X. Seelos, C.Ss.R.

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Vice Provincial -- New Orleans

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LEFT: 48-page
Guided Retreat with
Bl. Francis Seelos.
\$5 (includes p/h)

RIGHT: 32-page
Deluxe Pamphlet with
sturdy cover.
\$3 (includes p/h)

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