

# SEELOS CENTER

## News



2030 Constance Street ❖ New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 525-2495 ❖ [www.seelos.org](http://www.seelos.org)

*National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos*

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SEELOS CENTER RECOVERY STRAIGHT AHEAD!

### “ARE YOU FROM NEW ORLEANS?”

The elderly woman cradling her small dog and wiping her eyes sat in the car next to mine at the gas station in Baton Rouge. “Are you from New Orleans?” she asked wistfully. The crestfallen couple from Chalmette ahead of me in the long line at a fast-food restaurant began our conversation with the same inquiry. “Are you from New Orleans?” was the

ubiquitous question in a capital city that was overcrowded with evacuees from those areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. It was perhaps a conversational attempt among strangers to connect to what was familiar while in unfamiliar surroundings. At a Sunday Mass in the Diocese of Baton Rouge I asked the question to a congregation of more than a thousand people. About two-thirds of the worshipers raised their hands, but it was more often the look in their eyes as they exited the church that revealed their place of residency. Some of them I knew personally. There was a malaise of profound loss and acute homesickness that was easily recognizable amongst the displaced.

The National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos in New Orleans includes a dedicated staff of volunteers & docents, a corps of hospital blessers throughout the state, and countless friends dear to the Seelos Cause. They are not confined to the boundaries of any one particular church parish. Because these friends of Father Seelos live in various parts of the region – including the state of Mississippi and the southwestern part of Louisiana — they are all impacted by the one-two punch of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Some of our Seelos Center staff members lost everything but the few items in tow when they evacuated. Our close friends and Shrine volunteers who lived in the Lakeview area of the city and in St. Bernard Parish had all of their homes

submerged, and some have evacuated to other states. Let us hope the move is only temporary. Many others had several feet of water in their homes. There is a feeling of fatigue and discouragement in starting all over again. The record-breaking heat so late in the year during clean-up, other hampering hurricanes in the Gulf, and the delays in allowing people to rebuild whatever can be called “home” has all taken its toll.

One of our hospital blessers from Mandeville was hospitalized in Metairie before Katrina. I had visited him there for an anointing and blessing with a Seelos mission cross. He and his wife were stranded in the hospital after the hurricane with no power. They existed on rationed food behind locked patient room doors. He is a survivor of much more than a triple heart bypass!

These beloved individuals and their families are far from nameless, and they are certainly most in need. While feeling somewhat helpless myself as a “wounded healer,” the question is how to reach out. They have a lot invested in the Shrine. We all do. It has been a vital part of our lives. There is an emotional attachment that is difficult to describe for those who have worked hard to see the Seelos Cause develop over the years. That is why we have derived such consolation in the many people who have expressed concern for the Seelos Center staff and condition of the Shrine. In the weeks immediately following the hurricanes, over 600 personal e-mails arrived from all over the country and elsewhere. German journalists were in contact to report abroad on the situation of the Shrine. Offers of prayers and assistance have been tremendous. As we attempt to rebuild a sense of “home,” your compassion to us has meant more than we can ever say.

Fr. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R., Seelos Shrine Director



UPROOTED MAGNOLIA IN COURTYARD

## Did Father Seelos Eat Tomatoes? And Other Juicy Tidbits

### When the Hurricanes' Gravity Invites Much-Needed Levity

1. Was Father Seelos considered a chirk?
2. What did "sam hill" have to do with Father Seelos' sermons?
3. The train that brought Father Seelos to New Orleans from Chicago traveled at what speed?
4. What was the cost of postage for a "man of letters" like Father Seelos?
5. When performing weddings, did Father Seelos encourage the bride & groom to honeymoon alone?
6. Did Father Seelos eat tomatoes?



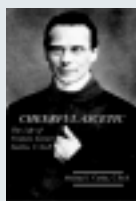
1. *Yes. The word "chirk" meant cheerful in the 1800s. Seelos was posthumously known as the "Cheerful Ascetic" because of his pleasant disposition.*
2. *Because "devil" was a more forceful expletive during the time of Father Seelos than it is now, euphemisms such as "sam hill" and "dickens" were more popularly used – although Satan was called by name in sermons.*
3. *Throughout most of the century, trains traveled at 20 to 30 mph, a break-neck speed compared to the horse & buggy pace of 9 mph under optimal road conditions. Even though this train to New Orleans had the new Pullman sleepers, Father Seelos sat up all the way, appearing "intent on prayer." Also, because Father Seelos traveled so lightly, he may have avoided "baggage smashers," the nickname from mid-century on for handlers who reportedly "treated each piece of baggage as if they owed it a personal grudge."*
4. *Some 175 letters of Father Seelos are extant. By the time he arrived in New Orleans in 1866, free mail delivery existed in cities with populations of over 50,000; the fee for registered mail was fifteen cents. Postage stamps became available in 1847. By 1851, the post office had become so efficient that Congress actually reduced the common postal rate from a nickel to three cents, which remained unchanged for over a century.*
5. *Presumably not, since the honeymoon did not become a private affair until the 1860s. Prior to this time, it was customary for friends or relatives to accompany couples on their "wedding tours" or "nuptial journeys" to popular honeymoon destinations like Niagara Falls and New York City.*
6. *Probably so. In 1824, Thomas Jefferson's son-in-law mentioned that tomatoes were virtually unknown a decade earlier, but were gaining popularity in cultivation and consumption. Even though tomatoes were generally considered poisonous and not widely eaten until the mid-1800s, the Creoles of New Orleans were already using tomatoes in gumbos and jambalayas. On the other hand, ketchup was a favorite condiment from the beginning of the century, despite the lengthy home preparation involved to make it. Heinz ketchup was bottled and sold for the first time in 1876.*

Primary Source: *Everyday Life in the 1800s* by Marc McCutcheon  
(Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1993)

## Seelos In the Scheme of Things

- 1800: U.S. Capital moves from Philadelphia to Washington.
- 1803: Louisiana territory purchased for fifteen million dollars.
- 1819: *Francis Xavier Seelos born in Fussen, Germany.*  
U.S. purchases Florida from Spain for five million dollars.
- 1836: Battle of the Alamo fought in TX.
- 1843: *Francis Seelos emigrates to the U.S.*
- 1844: *Francis Seelos ordained a Redemptorist priest.*  
Samuel Morse sends first telegraph message, "What hath God wrought?" from Baltimore to Washington, D.C.
- 1846: Pope Pius IX (b. 1792) reigns as pope until 1878.
- 1848: The French Revolution takes place. Karl Marx (1818-83) writes *Communist Manifesto*.
- 1849: California Gold Rush begins.
- 1853: Over 8,000 people die in New Orleans yellow fever epidemic. By 1860 the city drops from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> place in U.S. population.
- 1859: Charles Darwin (1809-82) writes *On the Origins of Species*.
- 1861: Civil War begins.
- 1863: *Francis Seelos visits President Lincoln in Washington.*
- 1865: Gen. Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox. President Lincoln assassinated at Ford's Theatre.
- 1867: *Francis Seelos dies of yellow fever in New Orleans.*  
U.S. purchases Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million.
- 1871: Great Chicago fire.
- 1876: Alexander Graham Bell demonstrates telephone.
- 1886: Statue of Liberty unveiled.
- 1893: Henry Ford tests his gasoline-powered buggy in Detroit.
- 1896: Radio invented.
- 1899: Aspirin created.
- 1900: Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) writes *The Interpretation of Dreams*.  
*Official canonization process for Father Seelos begins*

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)



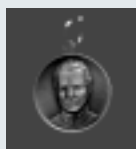
**Nothing Short of a Miracle**, a 207-page paperback book by Patricia Treece on the healing power of the saints; two chapters feature Fr. Seelos. (Donation: \$15 - includes p/h)



**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 Stamwitz. (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)



**Seelos Perpetual Mass League:** A one-of-a-kind lasting remembrance for you or for someone dear, living or deceased. (Donation: \$25, contact Seelos Center for enrollment)

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

◇ **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).



## A Lasting Gift for a Friend or Departed Loved One During the Month of All Souls

The National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos is pleased to offer a one-of-a-kind Seelos Perpetual Mass League as a lasting remembrance for you or for someone dear. The enrollment of a living or deceased person is perpetual.

*What is different about the Seelos Perpetual Mass League?*

As with all Perpetual Mass League enrollments, members are remembered in Masses and prayers throughout each year in perpetuity for as long as the Redemptorists exist. Saint Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, wrote, "One single Mass gives more honor to God than all the penances of the saints, the labors of the apostles, the sufferings of the martyrs and even the burning love of the Blessed Mother of God." Members also benefit in the ministry at the National Shrine carried on in the name of Father Seelos. An offering given in faith also assists the canonization process.

*Bring the Seelos Shrine into your home!*

Jesus went off to the desert or mountains to pray. In addition to retreats in sacred spaces, special, set-aside spaces can be created in your own home. The Mass League is a religious image for your home altar. Let it accompany your cross, relic, icon, candle, and other symbols that grace your personal shrine. If the enrolled name on the Mass League is a deceased loved one, your "altar of the dead" might include photographs and sentimental mementos as well.

League Enrollments (\$25 offering):  
2030 Constance Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
504-525-2495 [www.seelos.org](http://www.seelos.org)



*"What does it mean to believe in a communion of saints? Simply stated, it means that, as Christians, we believe that we are still in communion with those who have died. Among other things, this says that we can relate to them, speak to them, and be spoken by them. The bond of love and of family still exists between those who have died and ourselves, and we can still be present to each other and influence each other's lives ... There is a rich mysticism, not to mention an immense fountain of grace and consolation, lying untapped here."*

— Ronald Rolheiser, OMI  
Against an Infinite Horizon

## Seelos Center News

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

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# TESTIMONIALS

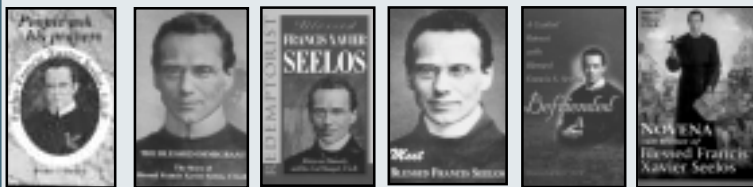
## Brooklyn, NY

During an eye exam about a year ago the physician noticed a peculiarity in my visual field, which he said might indicate a tumor in or on the pituitary gland, exerting pressure just where the optic nerves cross. It was at that point that I started to ask Blessed Father Seelos to intercede on my behalf. Much to my relief, two things happened in the next few months. First, the blood test indicated no abnormalities, and so the endocrinologist said there was not likely to be anything happening with the pituitary. Second, I took the visual field exam again, and the peculiarities noted on the previous two exams were either gone or much reduced. You can imagine my relief and my gratitude to God and to Blessed F. Seelos.

## Finleyville, PA

I was diagnosed with a very rare form of acute myelo-monocytic leukemia in 2002 and received a bone marrow transplant from my brother – which was initially successful. After a few months, my new immune system began attacking my bodily organs (called GVHD). I developed cardiomyopathy, terminal lung disease, and had heart failure in 2003. A friend from church introduced me to Blessed F. Seelos and I received a first class relic. I know that God is always with me, but being with the relic and praying makes me feel like someone (Fr. Seelos) is always present and comforting me. I continued to struggle with my health: I was put on life support and had a recurrence of the leukemia. All the while I continued to pray for Father Seelos' help. I am happy to say that I have been cancer and GVHD free since 2004. The terminal lung condition has also mysteriously disappeared. I still have damage to my organs, but even that seems to be improving over time. My doctors now refer to me as their "walking miracle."

Check out our new Shopping Cart on  
"www.seelos.org"!



(1) 24-pg. "People Ask His Prayers"  
\$2 (includes p/h)

(3) 24-pg. "Bl. Francis X. Seelos, Redemptorist"  
\$2 (includes p/h)

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

(2) 27-pg. "The Blessed Immigrant"  
\$2 (includes p/h)

(4) 36-pg. "Meet Bl. Francis Seelos"  
\$2 (includes p/h)

(6) 32-page sturdy cover Seelos Novena  
\$3 (includes p/h)

## New Orleans, LA

My son, who lives in another city, had his hours reduced at work until he was practically not working at all. This went on for about two months. I prayed continually to Father Seelos to help him find a job to at least pay the bills while he looked for something more permanent. Father Seelos came through. First he found a part-time job that gave him some money for groceries, and about a month later, he got a job in his field that he had wanted. I thanked Father Seelos in the newspaper and in my prayers. He has been a true friend to me.

## Destrehan, LA

In 2001 I was diagnosed with lung cancer that had an 80% mortality rate. I made novenas to Father Seelos and was blessed by the cross when I visited the shrine. I was treated with chemo and radiation and went into remission. Last year it started growing again. Since I had received the maximum radiation in 2001, I could only receive chemo, which is not that effective. Again I prayed to Father Seelos. In 2004 I opted to have seeds planted in my malignant tumor, a very dangerous procedure as it could also eat away at my trachea or aorta. I have had no ill effects from this procedure. In July 2005 I had a PET Fusion and was declared cancer-free. My doctors have told me that it is a miracle; I know it is a miracle from God because Father Seelos interceded on my behalf.

## Please help us help those in need!

One might be hardpressed to find individuals & families *not* affected by the storms with some variation of intensity. The Seelos Center is directly involved with those who have been impacted by Hurricanes Katrina & Rita. If you would like to offer assistance through the ministry of the Seelos Shrine, please designate "Hurricane Relief" on the enclosed envelope.

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Please delete multiple mailings to this address.

Please return in the enclosed envelope with any corrections or  
CALL 504-525-2495.

Allow a minimum of 30 days to process your request.

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