SEELOS CENTE

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

Kational Shrine of Blessed Francis Kavier Seelos

Volume XLV + Number 2 February 2006

New Seelos Parish in Biloxi

St. John Church was established in 1921 & St. Louis Church was established in 1957 to serve the Catholic population of east Biloxi, Mississippi. However, declining membership brought the continued viability of both parishes into question. A 2004 study, in which the people of each parish participated, concluded that the best possible solution was to merge some of the parishes on the east side. The plan was approved, but not implemented. At the invitation of Bishop Thomas Rodi, the Redemptorists had agreed to staff both parishes, deferring the issue of a possible merger.

However, Hurricane Katrina changed everything. Both St. Louis & St. John parishes were badly damaged in the storm and once again the question was raised regarding viability as separate parishes. It was then decided that the Catholic population on the east side would be best served by merging the two parishes into one single faith community. Once again, at the invitation of Bishop Rodi, the Redemptorists agreed to staff the new parish formed out of the former two.

The question then arose as to what to call the new church. In the end it was determined that it was most appropriate to give the brand new parish a brand new name. Henceforth, Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos is the name given the new parish formed out of the former parishes of St. John and St. Louis.

The name is particularly fitting for this new parish as Bl. Francis Seelos was not only a Redemptorist, but he ministered in the South. He was assigned to New Orleans where, exhausted from visiting and caring for the victims of yellow fever, he contracted the dreaded disease and died in 1867. His shrine is located in the city of his death, only a short drive from Biloxi. His Holiness Pope John Paul II proclaimed Father Seelos blessed in St. Peter's Square on April 9, 2000.

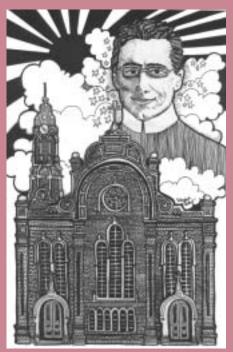
(Adapted from announcement read to parishioners by Pastor Steve Wilson, C.Ss.R. in December 2005)

The Seelos Parish in Biloxi is the second parish in the United States to be honored with the name of Father Seelos as patron. Similarly, in 2001 then Archbishop Francis Schulte of New Orleans announced the closure of three historic churches below the French Quarter, whose congregations merged with two others nearby to create a new parish in honor of Blessed Francis Seelos. For clarification, the Seelos Parish on Dauphine Street in New Orleans and the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos are not one in the same. The church where Father Seelos was pastor in New Orleans is St. Mary's Assumption Church in the Irish Channel/ Lower Garden District. It is here at 2030 Constance Street where his remains are and where his national shrine is located.





Redemp-torist Frs. Chuong Wilson & The Pham



Artwork by New Orleans artist & preservationist, Lloyd L. Sensat, "in grateful appreciation to Father Seelos for protecting Sun Oak House Museum during Hurricane Katrina & its aftermath, August 29, 2005."

Message from the Editor

THE SNUFF SAINTS ARE MADE OF!

Chewing tobacco and dipping snuff was so popular in America throughout the nineteenth century, that even rural women enjoyed the indulgence. Francis Xavier Seelos was not immune to its appeal -- that is, until he entered the Redemptorist novitiate. In 1844, he wrote to his family in Germany: "Snuffing tobacco here is very fine, at least in its natural state, although it is not prepared with great care. I have taken it with relish, but the novice master counselled me to abstain from it. No sooner said than done. Now for more than a year I haven't taken a pinch of it, and God willing I will not take any more." Seelos never took another pinch, remarking that he knew there would be snuff in heaven.

Occasionally, over the years, we have received testimonials from various locations commenting on a similar phenomenon. Here is one example from Pennsylvania dated 2002 found in our "Seelos & Snuff" file: "This is an unusual story about Father Seelos and

his intercession for me to God during the ongoing trial of breast cancer. I prayed hard for a miracle, but the news following tests continued to be gloomy. Stage 3, undifferentiated invasive tissue was biopsied from my right *breast. I had had a simple mastectomy* and needed further surgery to remove scar tissue from 17 years ago and to place a port where IV chemotherapy could be infused. The morning of the surgery, I had a great deal of anxiety. I wanted to run away but I finished the Father Seelos Novena and read the Seelos prayers. The room filled with the sweet scent of tobacco. All of my fears were calmed. Surgery went well. Throughout it all so far, I give thanks to God for loaning me this powerful and cheerful intercessor."

While some have sensed the sweet smell of roses as a sign from Saint Therese of Lisieux, "the Little Flower," could it be that Father Seelos occasionally makes his intercession felt accompanied by the "sweet smell of tobacco"? If so, it provides further proof that our heavenly intercessor is truly "up to snuff!"



Fr. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R

"In February 1867, the eloquent and saintly Father Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R. of New Orleans preached the priests' retreat at Natchez [MS]. He also held a special evening service -- sermon and benediction -- for black parishioners." -- St. Mary's Announcements, 1879-1882 (Feb. 24, 1867 entry)



"Seelos Window"

Inspired by the lifetime works of artisan and iconographer, Fr. Norbert Hess of Notre Dame University, this Seelos Window brings beauty, peace and spiritual power to everyday settings. A timeless treasure featuring a profound ceramic image: the tile print is not a decal – the ink actually permeates the tile to ensure a vivid, long-lasting image. This is an expensive process but with dramatic results. Tile mounted on raised panels to create a three-dimensional effect and set in a natural wood frame that is finished front-to-back. Excellent craftsmanship! Measures 15.5 x 16.5 in.; weighs approx. 6 lbs. \$95, includes certified postage & handling.

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 area hospitals. Please call:

East Jefferson	
Gerry Heigle:	504-554-1912
Teresa LaCour:	504-887-0214
Uptown/Innercity	
Jack Pitkin:	504-524-6591
Westbank	
Elaine Freeman:	504-341-2213
	or 504-328-0648

Rosary Stoltman: 504-393-9423 **Baton Rouge**

225-767-8432

337-984-4607

Gloria Bacque: **Covington**

Pam Crutchfield, R.T.: 985-892-6560 Dr. Ann Logarbo, MD: 985-886-0218

Houma/Thibodaux

Dan Montz, L.P.C.: 985-446-1805 **Lafayette/Abbeville**

Rita King:

Mandeville
Bill & Sunny Schulz: 985-792-5394

Reserve/LaPlace

Deacon Percy Vicknair: 985-652-0039

Slidell

Carmelie Mancuso: 985-502-7325 Mary Jo Stewart: 985-502-9033

Sulphur/Vinton

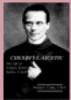
Warren Touchet: 337-527-2607

♦ Veneration of Bl. F. Seelos' Mission Crucifix in historic St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine & Constance streets). Contact the Seelos Center for details.

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

Does your employer have a matching gift program? Please consider the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos Fed. Tax ID #72-0576253

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 paper-back 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).



Cheerful Ascetic with Corrected Vision!

In 2002 Providence brought me a new spiritual director who taught me about mortification, meditation, prayer, study, virtues and vices, etc. I felt as a child who suddenly received eyeglasses, & saw everything brand new for the very first time!

After a year in spiritual direction, I think he recognized my laziness with regard to reading. If I wanted to read something, I would devour it. But if I found it tedious in any way, I would put it down. In 2003, he gave me a book & with it a little relic. The book was called *Cheerful Ascetic*, the biography of Blessed Francis X. Seelos.

I was so honored that my spiritual father had given me this book to read. But, one tedious detail followed another, and soon I lazily put it down. Though I was not interested in all the details, I was fascinated by Fr. Seelos' little round rimless glasses, and thought how much I liked those. I enjoyed seeing the pictures of his home in Germany. But reading the text? Oh, yawn! How much I did not want to do that!

Cheerful Ascetic sat on the nightstand by my bed for months. Sometimes I would pick it up and look at it, and feel guilty that my priest, so eager that I become holy, had given it to me, and I had not read it. So a whole year later, I wrote a very sweet thank you note, excusing myself that I had not read the book, but thanking him for thinking of me. I reasoned that surely he had others in mind to read the book, so I was returning it & the relic, so that I did not keep someone else from enjoying it.

Reading *Cheerful Ascetic* stretched me.

I tucked the thank you card, relic and book in a manila envelope and when my son served at daily Mass that week, I asked him to deliver them to the sacristy. After Mass, Father handed me the

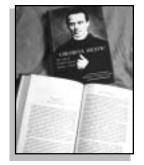
manila envelope in the vestibule. His voice was as cheerful as the tone of my little note. He thanked me, but said there was no one, in fact, waiting for this book. He encouraged me to take my time, but to read *all* of it. He kept the relic, but handed the rest to me.

What could I say? I humbly took the book and vowed to read it no matter what. I began anew to read, more with the intention to make reparation for *not* reading it before, than with the noble intention of improving myself and thus pleasing God. Once I got started, I found myself so engaged in reading that I began to love Fr. Seelos & his work. I was amazed that he could press on in such a way.

I devoured the book in what seemed to be no time, and returned it with sincere

gratitude. I thought to myself that this is truly a spiritual guide, like an athletic coach who "stretches" his players and helps them do more & be more than they dreamed possible. Reading *Cheerful Ascetic* stretched me.

Later that spring I had occasion to get new glasses, and though they are not perfectly round, they are definitely rimless, like Blessed Francis Xavier's. I see him through different eyes now - yes, pun intended.



Dallas, Texas

TESTIMONIALS

Baltimore, MD

I was booked to fly to San Francisco to visit my son on Friday. On Monday before the trip, I awoke completely unable to walk. My left hip & leg were in excruciating pain. The orthopedic doctor could not see me until Tuesday. He wanted to inject a huge needle and I couldn't stand the thought of it, so I asked if there was medication I could take instead. He gave me Vioxx and stated that without the shot I would not be able to walk, much less sit on a plane for 5 hours on Friday. I decided to take my chances. I got the medicine and when I read the side effects, I threw it away. Instead I made a 9-hour Novena to Blessed Father Seelos begging him to cure me. Thursday morning I awoke completely pain free. Incidentally, the doctor had told me that even with the shot he wanted to give me, my hip would continue through the years to pain me. That was three years ago and I have never had even a twinge in that hip. I am completely cured. Thank you Lord & Father Seelos!

Bellaire, TX

I had been going to a neurologist for my left leg. The tests indicated that the nerves above the knee were all dead. Soon after, I started to pray to Fr. Seelos. I noticed that I went up the steps to church in a normal way that I had difficulty doing before. Soon after that, the neurologist released me. There are other problems that I have added to Fr. Seelos' list for me and my wife. She fell and broke a bone in her hand. After three months the doctor said there was nothing more that could be done, but now it has not hurt her for the last two weeks. I tell others with problems about Fr. Seelos.

Did You Know? The *Novena in Honor of Blessed Francis* X. Seelos is now in its 3rd printing since August 2001 with over 25,000 copies distributed.



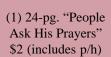












(2) 27-pg."The Blessed Immigrant" \$2 (includes p/h) (3) 24-pg. "Bl. Francis X. Seelos, Redemptorist" \$2 (includes p/h)

(4) 36-pg. "Meet Bl. Francis Seelos" \$2 (includes p/h) (5) 48-page Guided Retreat with Bl. Francis Seelos \$5 (includes p/h)

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

Plaquemine, LA

We visited the Father Seelos Shrine in 2004 on a bus trip with Father Cleo Milani. I gave a Seelos relic to a young woman trying to get pregnant. After 4 vetros, she tried a fifth one, but the doctor said, "This is it! No more vetros." I gave her the relic just before her last vetro and she prayed with it faithfully. Guess what? She's pregnant with twins, a girl and a boy! She has about 5 weeks left and says to be careful what you pray for, because you may get more! Jesus & Father Seelos, we praise you and thank you.

Houston, TX

I asked Father Seelos that the results of a bone marrow biopsy performed on my sister would come out normal. She had been near death a year ago with lymphoma. Due to her low blood count, the doctor was concerned that the cancer had come back. But thanks to Father Seelos' intercession, the biopsy came back okay, no cancer!

Wichita, KS

New Orleans' phenomenal Catholic culture had me hooked years ago on my first of two visits to your great city. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans I was gratified the Seelos Center came out so well. I look forward to your newsletter for updates and appreciate the way you 'make the people real' that we saw here on TV from so far away. I wanted you to know I am praying for you and the wonderful Catholic city of New Orleans.

Seelos Center News



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

Denver Provincial Superior: Very Rev. Thomas D. Picton, C.Ss.R.

Seelos Center Executive Director / Editor: Rev. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

Seelos Center Administrator: Joyce Bourgeois

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