

SEELOS CENTER

News



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

National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

Volume XLV † Number 7
July 2006

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ON RESPECT FOR RELICS



Well-intentioned, but uninformed Catholics are advised to know that bidding and posting of relics on Internet auction sites are prohibited. When the practice of venerating bone fragments from the bodies of the saints became widespread as early as the fourth century, abuses often accompanied this devotion in the form of simony, that is, the buying & selling of sacred things. Church authority did what it could to assist the faithful against deception and thwart those who were profiting from the sale of fraudulent relics. In medieval times, those who created or wittingly sold, disseminated or displayed

false relics for veneration were subject to immediate excommunication reserved to the bishops. Nevertheless, even relics of which the validity is certain, the revised 1983 Code of Canon Law declares in the strongest language possible, "It is absolutely forbidden to sell sacred relics" (Canon #1190). This strong language only appears elsewhere in the Code to describe sins against the Blessed Sacrament, forced ordination and priests breaking the seal of confession.

While it is true that a relic may not be sold, the Church does allow a contribution to cover expenses, such as for the relic case and mailing charges. These contributions help support the ministry and/or canonization causes of holy persons who have been officially declared Blessed by the Church. The trade of these sacred items on Internet auction sites is all the more questionable when the seller's identity is unknown and when the relic's documentation of authenticity is missing. Equally disturbing is the possibility that an unscrupulous buyer could be using these sacred items for profane use. It is not safe to assume in cyberspace that only good Catholics bid on relics for noble reasons.

Catholics who, for whatever reason, have acquired a first class relic, such as through the estate of a deceased relative, and do not find it useful in their own spiritual life, would do well to consider a few options:

Offer it freely to another family member, friend or person of faith who would benefit from its intended purpose to strengthen one's faith and aid one's spirit of prayer and devotion. Recall that a reason first class relics became so esteemed in our tradition to those who were fortunate enough to possess them was due to the belief that the saint's intercessory power permeated their every bone and marrow.

Offer it to the local church or return it, for example, to the religious community to whom the particular saint belonged. As rightful proprietors of these sacred items, they find it distasteful and reprehensible to see a member of their own "religious family" for sale to the highest bidder on the Internet. Be aware that in some instances actual family members or descendants of the recently canonized are still living and would react in the same way to see such bidding.

As a concerned Catholic, write to the corporate owners of Internet auction sites to express displeasure with the specific



Rare first class relic of Fr. Seelos

"People have always had a love for relics. Baby's first tooth, a lock of hair, and the ashes of the departed become treasured collections of millions. Relics of important people from presidents to movie, sports, and music stars are also treasured and take on commercial value. From John Kennedy's golf clubs to the baseball cards of Mickey Mantle, much money has chased objects that have no intrinsic value other than they give the owner a sentimental connection to a person they admire. For this reason the matter of authenticity is rarely controversial. But religious relics go beyond sentimentality and admiration; they are called upon to bring us closer to God, to provide favors, to grant protection, to heal sickness, and in some cases even to perform miracles."

"The relic trade, after having assumed a more dignified role since medieval times, has just begun to face the glaring world of the online auction. Sainly bones, artifacts of the Crucifixion, and rare reliquaries are traded alongside Beanie babies and Barbie dolls. Armed with better tools and technology, tomb raiders in Italy, icon thieves on Cyprus, and cathedral robbers in England can take advantage of the new market for religious relics. They have created a threat not seen since monks raided one another's collections centuries ago."

-- Steven Sora, *Treasures from Heaven*

Continued on page 2

trade of first class relics. While public outcry caused Internet auction sites to prohibit the sale of vital human organs for transplant purposes to the highest bidder, pressure from Catholics who find the relic trade offensive may result in a similar ban.

Specifically bequeath relics in verbal and/or written form to loved ones so there is no uncertainty regarding their disposition after you are called from this life. The survivors are apt to cherish these keepsakes, not only because of their sacred nature, but also because of your care and concern in determining who will inherit them.

Handle relics sensibly and reverently, without abuse. Also resist the temptation to rationalize the disposal of these sacred items: "The bidders are Catholics and I want these relics to have a good home." All justifications aside, involvement with the trade of first class relics to bidders on Internet auction sites gives the Church's good intention for relics a bad name overall.

Fr. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

(Reprinted from the July 2002 Seelos newsletter)

CAVEAT EMPTOR

I want to thank you very much for letting people on eBay know that they can obtain relics through legitimate means. I had no idea how to go about it! I have quite a collection, and I have spent ridiculous sums of money to obtain possibly fake relics. I am just a poor young philosophy student and recent convert from the Episcopal Church, but I am very devoted to the veneration of holy relics, so it is indeed a relief to know I can go about this in a more holy way.

- Hattiesburg, MS

I found your spot on eBay and wanted to thank you for speaking up. I am a convert to Catholicism and my patron is Saint John Neumann, C.Ss.R. I didn't know it was forbidden to sell relics, but I was very upset at seeing them on eBay. I rescued three of them and will take them to the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, because I know they will be properly cared for there. Again, thank you for the truth.

- Undisclosed Location

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

Ochsner

Mark/Monica Surprenant 504-895-5371

Uptown/Innecity

Jack Pitkin: 504-524-6591

Westbank

Elaine Freeman: 504-341-2213

Rosary Stoltman: 504-393-9423

Baton Rouge

Gloria Bacque: 225-767-8432

Marie Giorlando: 225-615-7888

Covington

Pam Crutchfield: 985-626-8823

Dr. Ann Logarbo, MD: 985-886-0218

Houma/Thibodaux

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

Lafayette/Abbeville

Rita King: 337-984-4607

Mandeville

Bill & Sunny Schulz: 985-792-5394

New Iberia/Berwick

Rachel Gonsoulin 337-224-7855

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).

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

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



Ambassador Lindy Boggs & Fr. Paul Bryan, C.Ss.R.

Mrs. Geraldine Heigle, third inductee into The Order of Seelos Witness for her decades of service as a Seelos mission cross hospital minister.



Seelos Day in New Orleans - April 30, 2006

Would Seelos events in a post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans have the same appeal as before the storm? That initial concern was allayed when the 18th annual Seelos Mass & Luncheon attracted record-breaking crowds! Please mark your calendars for our next Seelos celebration on Sunday, October 1.



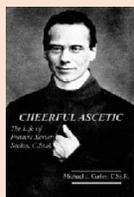
Doctor & Mrs. A. J. Giorlando

Redemptorist Father Paul Bryan of Pennsylvania, presider & homilist at the Seelos Mass; Janice Mau provided entertaining "Mid-Afternoon Catechism" at the luncheon.



Photo Credits: Dan Fitzpatrick & Bill Coskrey

The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:

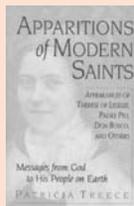


Cheerful Ascetic: Life of F.X. Seelos, a 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$22.95 + 6.95 p/h)

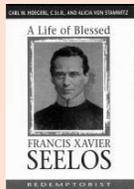
◇ **"Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice,"** an informative documentary on the life of Bl. F. Seelos; 30-min. VHS cassette. (Donation: \$17 - includes p/h)



Willy Finds Victory: A Blessed Francis Seelos Story, Introduce youth, ages 7 through 12, to Father Seelos in this book by Joan Stromberg, 110 pages, with illustrations. (Donation: \$11 - 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: \$11 - 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.

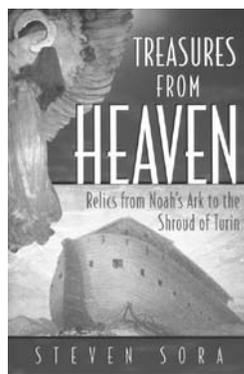
◇ **First, Second & Third-Class Relics** of Bl. F. Seelos. Contact the Seelos Center, 504-525-2495.

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



Treasures from Heaven: Relics from Noah's Ark to the Shroud of Turin

This meticulously researched book recounts the story of Christianity's most treasured artifacts and explores why millions of pilgrims are willing to travel thousands of miles each year to visit relics on display in hopes of a miracle, a cure, or in answer to a prayer.



Softbound, 250 pages; Donation: \$20 includes p/h.

What to do with your old cell phone?



As part of our 2006 Annual Appeal, the Seelos Shrine is having a Cell Phone Drive to support our ministry ... and help the environment! We kindly ask that you donate any inactive cell phones from your home. Also, if you know of any businesses that provide cell phones to employees, please ask if there are unwanted cell phones they would like to donate. 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Shrine. Please send us your inactive cell phone & battery; chargers and other accessories have no value. Thanks for your support!



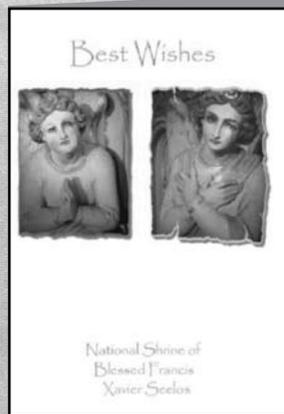
DID YOU KNOW that a gift of \$9 to our Annual Appeal will help defray the cost of printing & postage of this newsletter for one year?

After Hurricane Katrina, letters destined for the New Orleans area, even if mailed locally, made a 540-mile loop through 3 cities to be processed. During that time in certain zip codes throughout the metro area, an embargo was imposed on magazines, catalogs & other second-class mail, which included this newsletter. In April 2006, the postal service began processing mail in New Orleans for the first time since the storm and the embargo on bulk mail was lifted thereafter. **If you or someone you know is no longer receiving this newsletter, but would like to subscribe, please notify the Seelos Center of your new or existing address.**

The National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos Proudly Introduces 3 Deluxe Remembrance Cards



Healing



All-Occasion



One-Year League

Please contact the Seelos Center for cards. A gift of \$12 per card supports the ministry at the Shrine.

TESTIMONIALS

Leonardtown, MD

My right eye was causing me discomfort -- during the day it became really painful, and by evening, it hurt so badly that sleep was out of the question. I appealed for help to Father Seelos and placed a picture of him over the painful eye. I must have fallen asleep sometime during the night, for just before dawn I awoke pain-free. I am deeply grateful to God for giving us this lovable priest.

New Iberia, LA

My son's cancer started in his kidney. They removed the kidney, but it went to his lungs (four tumors). He was given 17 months to live. This was in 2003. He has had no treatments or medication. I started a chain of prayers and we visited the Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos. It is the prayer to Father Seelos that has kept my son with us. He goes every three months to M.D. Anderson in Houston and they tell him to keep doing what he is doing -- which is prayer!

San Antonio, TX

I have known about Father Seelos since 1980 and now he has come through for my son once again. My son finally graduated from college with a B.A. in Fine Arts. Father Seelos has helped us for the last six years to keep my son in school. A lot of prayers, tears and tugging from both of us! Thank you, Father Seelos, from a grateful mother.

Laguna Niguel, CA

I am very thankful for the miracle that Father Seelos gave me during my radiation treatment for 26 days without any side effect on my whole body. At my age, 84, the technicians and the doctors were in awe. I prayed and held his relic during that ordeal. Thank you, God.

Sebastian, FL

I have been sick with severe pain and cramps in my abdomen for some time. I took much medication, but it helped little. So I put my trust in Jesus and Father Seelos. I touched his first class relic to my abdomen for two weeks, and the pain has left me. I am so grateful to him.

Gretna, LA

My grandmother and I really enjoy and appreciate your newsletter. She will soon be ninety years old. She has visited your Shrine for a child in our family who suffers from ticks due to Tourette Syndrome. Since visiting, he no longer suffers and you cannot even tell he has the illness. Thank you, Blessed Fr. Seelos.

Marrero, LA

I've known about and prayed to Father Seelos for many years. After passing out and going to the hospital it was discovered that I have 4 large ulcers and 2 small ones. The ulcers were treated and in two days I was home from the hospital. Thanks to God and to Father Seelos the ulcers are fine. I took my Father Seelos relic with his picture on it and touched it to the aching places on my face because I had trouble with my teeth.

Manchester, NJ

I recently received a relic of Blessed Francis X. Seelos from my sister. I was diagnosed with kidney and bladder cancer in December. I started prayers to Fr. Seelos and carried the relic with me daily. My prayers were answered. My kidney was removed and the cancer was contained; my 3-month visit for the bladder cancer is no longer needed.

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

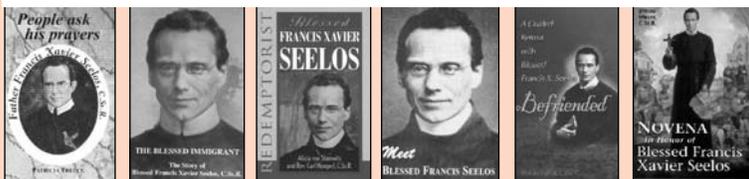
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Visit our Web site at www.seelos.org

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Did You Know? The *Novena in Honor of Blessed Francis X. Seelos* is now in its 3rd printing since August 2001 with over 28,000 copies distributed.



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

(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)

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CALL 504-525-2495.
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