

# 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 8  
August 2006

### ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY SEELOS: CENTER OF CALM IN A WHIRLWIND OF UNCERTAINTY

Not far from the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos in New Orleans is the oldest operating streetcar line in the world, in service since 1835. Father Seelos himself was a passenger on this railway line when he ministered in New Orleans during his final year of life in 1867. If one could somehow magically and momentarily suspend the other noisy activities of a thriving metropolitan city, the sound of the streetcars could be heard from the shrine as they travel under the graceful tree-lined canopy on Saint Charles Avenue.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina took a fast train into New Orleans and pummeled almost everything in its path. For decades, the city played "Southern Roulette" with Mother Nature, so the only uncertainty of a major hurricane disaster was *when*, not *if*.

The menacing visitor that rode into town on that fateful Monday morning submerged 80 percent of this historic municipality and ostensibly suspended the magic of New Orleans, if only temporarily. New Orleans will be rebuilt, and the only uncertainty is *when*, not *if*!

On the morning before Hurricane Katrina made landfall, the mayor of New Orleans issued a first-time mandatory evacuation for the entire city. Remaining members of the local Redemptorist community attempted to secure the church and rectory premises before leaving. The Blessed Sacrament was removed from the tabernacle. The shrine was sealed to make an

"inner sanctum," and all flickering votive candles were extinguished. Significant Father Seelos items that could be transported were removed at this time. A final prayer was offered in front of the Sacred Reliquary of Blessed Francis Seelos, seeking his intercession for those in need of safety from the storm and for the protection of the church and city that he so loved to call home.

*A final prayer was offered in front of the Sacred Reliquary of Blessed Francis Seelos, seeking his intercession for those in need of safety from the storm and for the protection of the church and city that he so loved to call home.*



By the time Katrina reached New Orleans, its velocity had been reduced to a Category 4 storm, and its intense eyewall path had shifted to avoid a direct hit to the city. This good news, however, was offset by grim reports that the storm surge had breached faulty portions of the levees protecting New Orleans from the rising waters of an adjoining lake. The tempest now filling the teacup (New Orleans sits mostly below sea level) was not a matter of insignificance -- it was one of incomprehension!

Massive flooding suddenly became a reality for a city that just endured 140-mph winds. "The City That Care Forgot" lost meaning when it transfixed a global village with haunting images of survivors being rescued from rooftops of their flooded homes, dazed families wading through murky contaminated water, disturbing fires and social upheaval spiraling out of control. In horror and disbelief, concerned people everywhere witnessed a "national treasure" engulfed in flames and floods and the agonizing delays in providing relief to those stranded.

When these circumstances prevented residents from returning to the city in a timely manner after the storm, it was decided that additional items should be retrieved from the shrine for safe-keeping. Only days after the storm, the Seelos shrine director learned that a sheriff's department from the Cajun area of the state was organizing a humanitarian transport to New Orleans -- miraculously, within the hour! They were willing to provide the clearance, assistance, and protection to make this secondary mission to the shrine possible, after the humanitarian aid was delivered. How appropriate that the spirit of Father Seelos would accompany a relief operation to those literally most abandoned in the city!

(continued on page 2)



Plant a Tree for Father Seelos Details Inside

(continued from page 1)

The Seelos shrine director traveled with a lieutenant and detective in the lead car of the convoy. Three sergeants and personnel associated with the large food cargo followed behind. The necessity of entering New Orleans in vehicles loaded with ammunition and the ordeal of being outfitted in a bulletproof vest to return to our Redemptorist home and church can only be described as surreal.

Few words were spoken as we approached the magically muted city. We were viewing signs in the wake of the worst natural disaster to ever strike the United States, so to have said anything at this wake would have been disrespectful to the sheer forces of nature. Katrina had cast a pall over the city: contorted railroad tracks across swamps, languished neighborhoods in utter disarray, ravaged familiar landmarks wallowing in eerie loneliness. With no functioning traffic lights and few vehicles on the roads, the beleaguered city appeared isolated, as alone and cut off as it had ever been in his history, struggling to survive like the SOS signals issued by its many distressed citizens. The once thriving metropolis was in need of resurrection.

Then the silence was broken. If offering a prayer was the last activity in the shrine before evacuating, the first thing upon returning to New Orleans with the deputies was an invitation to prayer. As our armed vehicle raced by Louis Armstrong International Airport, now functioning as an emergency rescue center, we recited the Lord's Prayer and Father Seelos' intercession was invoked for the safety of our mission.

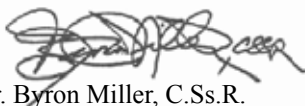
There was great relief upon arrival at the Seelos shrine. The 20 percent of the city that was *not* waterlogged included the area occupied by the Redemptorists, but the large military presence in the city had yet to concentrate their stabilizing efforts on our neighborhood. Wind damage and resulting water intrusion affected isolated areas of Saint Mary's Assumption Church and the Seelos shrine, notably to the bell tower and a choir loft window. Thankfully, the skilled German immigrants who constructed this majestic house of God in 1860 ensured an edifice to withstand some of the most adverse conditions.



The city of New Orleans may have been an "accident waiting to happen." Nevertheless, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, there were several miracles waiting to happen through the prayers of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos. First and foremost, all of the dedicated staff members at the Seelos Center survived the storm. While some staff and friends of the Seelos Cause lost everything they owned due to the breach in the levees, faith was not lost in Divine Mercy and God's intercessory saints!

The Seelos Center is committed to help rebuild a derailed city, where a defoliated tree-lined avenue will one day rumble again with the sound of its streetcars. Moreover, there is a tremendous sense of gratitude to God for allowing the shrine to resume its vital ministry to people in need by welcoming them to the spirituality of Father Seelos with hospitality, hope, and healing.

Consequently, the votive candles to Father Seelos that were extinguished before the storm have all been relit.

  
Fr. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

Reprinted from *Orbis, Annales Congregationis Sanctissimi Redemptoris 2005*, Rev. Gary Ziuraitis, editor (Rome: Gubernium Generale C.Ss.R.)

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**  
**SEELOS MEMORIAL MASS ON**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2006**  
Gala: Andrea's Restaurant, 5:30 p.m.  
Limited Seating  
Call 504-525-2495 for dinner reservations

**HELP US PLANT A TREE**  
**TO COMMEMORATE THE 1-YEAR**  
**ANNIVERSARY OF**  
**HURRICANE KATRINA**



Please help us beautify New Orleans again and leave something behind for generations to come. Designate "Seelos Trees" on the enclosed envelope with your contribution.

## 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

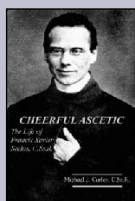
◇ **Veneration of Bl. F. Seelos' Mission Crucifix** in historic St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine & Constance streets).

◇ **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



The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:

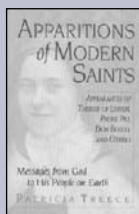


**Cheerful Ascetic: Life of F.X. Seelos**, a 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$22.95 + 6.95 p/h)

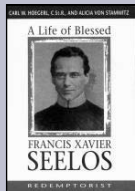
◇ **"Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice,"** an informative documentary on the life of Bl. F. Seelos; 30-min. VHS cassette. (Donation: \$17 - includes p/h)



**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)



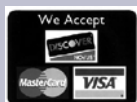
**Seelos Perpetual Mass League:** A one-of-a-kind lasting remembrance for you or for someone dear, living or deceased. (Donation: \$25, contact Seelos Center for enrollment)

◇ **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).



## SHRINE AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO NEW ORLEANS STUDENTS



Scholarships at the National Seelos Shrine support students who demonstrate academic merit & financial need, and offer the same inspiration from Father Seelos that the students in his day received. Scholarships are awarded to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of the New Orleans Archdiocese who are currently enrolled in non-parochial Catholic schools with the intent to continue their education at any Catholic high school located in the New Orleans Archdiocese.

The Outstanding Recipient of the Seelos Catholic 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 was **PARKER E. THERIOT** (Metairie, LA) to Archbishop Rummel High School.

The two Honorable Recipients of the Seelos Catholic 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Scholarship were **ERIKA T. HAYDEL** (River Ridge) to St. Mary's Dominican High School, and **MYLES R. RODRIGUE** (New Orleans) to Brother Martin High School.

A Seelos High School Senior Scholarship is also awarded to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of the New Orleans Archdiocese who are currently enrolled in Catholic schools with the intent to continue their education at any Catholic university in the country.

The 2006 Outstanding Recipient of the Seelos High School Senior Scholarship was **ASHLEY PUNTILA** of Pope John Paul II High School, Slidell.

Anyone wishing to support the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade or 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Seelos Scholarships, please designate your intentions on the enclosed envelope.

**NEW FEATURED ITEM!**

**PROTECTOR KEY CHAIN**

Measures 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches with color Seelos image. Practical & ideal as a gift of appreciation. \$7 includes P/H



## DID FATHER SEELOS EVER VISIT YOUR HOMETOWN FOR A MISSION?

When Francis Seelos was assigned the arduous task of preaching parish missions from 1863 to 1866, the prestige of the Redemptorist missionaries in America reached new heights and the demand for their missions was great. Below is a listing of his missionary activities:

### 1863

Loretto, PA (clergy retreat of Pittsburgh Dio.)  
 Waukegan, IL (Immaculate Conception)  
 Woodstock IL (Saint Mary parish)  
 Hartland, IL (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Ottawa, IL (Saint Columba parish)  
 Henry, IL (Saint Mary parish)  
 Chicago, IL (Saint John parish)

### 1864

Chicago, IL (Saint Mary parish)  
 Toledo, OH (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Cleveland, OH (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Cleveland, OH (Ursuline Sisters retreat)  
 Providence, RI (Sts. Peter & Paul Cathedral)  
 Chicago, IL (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Bloomington, IL (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Bridgeport, IL (Saint Bridget parish)  
 Morris, IL (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Joliet, IL (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Peoria, IL (St. Mary & St. Patrick)  
 Loretto, PA (clergy retreat of Pittsburgh Dio.)  
 Providence, RI (Saint Joseph parish)  
 Waterbury, CT (Immaculate Conception)  
 Hudson City, NJ (Saint Joseph parish)  
 Cincinnati, OH (Saint Joseph parish)  
 White Oak, OH (Saint James parish)

### 1865

Bucyrus, OH (Holy Trinity parish)  
 Shelby Settlement, OH (Sacred Heart)  
 Massillon, OH (Saint Mary parish)  
 Toledo, OH (Saint Patrick parish)  
 Chicago, IL (Saint Patrick)  
 Joliet, IL (Saint Patrick)  
 Danbury, CT (Saint Peter parish)  
 New York, NY (Saint Peter parish)  
 Chicago, IL (clergy retreat of Chicago Dio.)  
 Buffalo, NY (diocesan clergy retreat)  
 St. Louis, MO (Saint Mary)  
 Cincinnati, OH (Saint Mary)  
 Nazareth, OH (St. Mary's College)  
 Dayton, OH (Holy Trinity parish)  
 Toledo, OH (Saint Francis de Sales parish)  
 Connors Creek, MI (Assumption of Mary)  
 Ionia, MI (Sts. Peter & Paul)  
 New Baltimore, MI (Immaculate Conception)

### 1866

Nazareth, OH (student retreat)  
 Alton, IL (clergy retreat of Alton Diocese)  
 Alton, IL (Ursuline Sisters retreat)  
 Chicago, IL (clergy retreat of Chicago Dio.)  
 Milwaukee, WI (clergy retreat of Milw. Dio.)  
 Buffalo, NY (clergy retreat of Buffalo Dio.)

# TESTIMONIALS

## CANONSBURG, PA

In 2000, my 4-1/2-year-old grandson was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML), which is rare in children and requires a different and very intense chemotherapy. He was at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh undergoing treatment for 9 months. There were only two other children with AML there during that whole time and both have died. We nearly lost our grandson a few times, but a friend gave me the blessing and healing prayers of Father Seelos, which we followed. He recovered, went into full remission, and was able to enter kindergarten belatedly when his white cell count was back up. He is now over ten years old, an A student, with musical talent and a great personality, going into the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Our family feels that the prayers of our many friends and Father Seelos have given us this miraculous recovery.

## MARYSVILLE, WA

I have MS and was experiencing severe nocturnal muscle spasms for one year. Before asking my doctor for medication to treat this problem, I decided to pray to Bl. Francis X. Seelos. Relief was quick in coming and I have been spasm-free for five months now. I say a prayer each day in thanksgiving for the healing from God through the intercession of Father Seelos.

## BALDWINVILLE, NY

Last fall I gave a Seelos prayer and relic to my sister, who said the prayer daily. In 2005 she had to have triple-bypass surgery, and while hospitalized, she looked up and saw a priest in full vestments for Mass at the foot of her bed. He was holding open a book and seemed to be praying for her. She also saw many people on either side of him, but could not see their faces. He had little gold crosses down the side of the chasuble. She motioned for him to come closer as she couldn't hear him. He looked up at her and she recognized him as Father Seelos. Then he was gone. She had no fear of the operation and came through very strong!

## OPELOUSAS, LA

I started praying to Father Seelos in 2000 when a friend called me and told me her mother prayed to him all the time. There was a bus trip going to the Seelos Center from Opelousas, so I went. Since that time I have prayed to him, and in my heart, I know he intervened twice or more, especially when I was told that I had a lesion on my right lung. Three doctors thought I had cancer. A biopsy was done and it was only a granuloma from a previous pneumonia. I will always be grateful.

## BELLINGHAM, MA

I was having severe pain in my back molar, and after many months of pain, visits to the dentist, and x-rays that didn't show anything unusual, my dentist felt I needed a root canal. I then asked Blessed Francis Seelos to help me see this thing through because the pain was so bad. People had told me 'horror stories' about their experiences, and I was petrified, but felt confident that our Lord, Blessed Mother and Blessed Seelos would help me. On the day of the procedure, I wore my first-class relic under my clothing and prayed every day for his help. I experienced a bit of anxiety and racing heart, but absolutely no pain during the procedure and no pain afterward. Blessed Seelos, once again, you have come to my aid. Thank you!

## NEW HYDE PARK, NY

In January, my husband received a knee replacement. Within one hour of his discharge from the hospital he had to return because he had extreme stomach pain and was throwing up violently. Days later it was concluded that he had cancer on the wall of the gall bladder that rested on the liver. He had to have an appendectomy, and after much fear and apprehension, the surgeon found no liver cancer, thanks to our prayers to Blessed Seelos. There are not enough thanks for Father Seelos!

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.

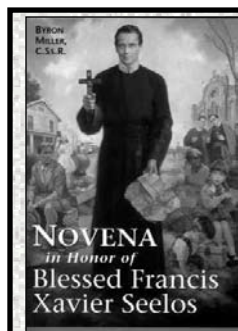
Seelos Center Administrator: Joyce Bourgeois

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Visit our Web site at [www.seelos.org](http://www.seelos.org)

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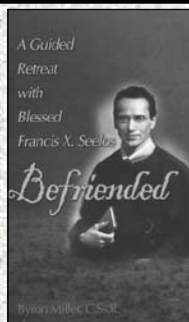


**DID YOU KNOW** that a gift of \$42 to our Annual Appeal will help defray the operational costs for the Seelos Daily Dial-a-Prayer, which averages 3,000 calls a year?



### ENJOY THE COMPANY OF FATHER SEELOS!

Treat yourself to a Novena and Self-Directed Retreat in the special presence of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos.



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- Please delete me from your mailing list.
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Please return in the enclosed envelope with any corrections or CALL 504-525-2495. Allow a minimum of 30 days to process your request.