

Seelos Center News

2030 Constance Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
(504) 525-2495
(504) 525-2499
www.seelos.org



National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

In the Redemptorist Church of Saint Mary's Assumption

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August 2007

The New Orleans Neighborhood that Father Seelos Knew

Father Seelos' inauspicious arrival in New Orleans in September 1866 followed the annual return of the "well-to-do" who left town for the three unhealthy summer months. He took up residence in a city "where alligators could be found on the edge of town, where over sixty inches of rain fell each year, and where for months, the thermometer hovered in the 90's" (*The Garden District*, Sanders & Schoenberger). If Father Seelos was unprepared for his new semi-tropical surroundings, he gave no indication. On the contrary, by December of 1866, he wrote, "Oh, what a blessed winter as that in New Orleans. I had no idea.... And the Southern plants! The bananas, oh wisdom of God. O, beauty of that creative power which brought to existence such a vegetation."

Father Seelos' introduction to the area's abundance of Spanish moss, palm trees, and banana plants may have given him reason to write, "It is good to be here in the bright warm south ... Here is my home."

To create the proper *mise en scene*, let us recall that Seelos lived in a section of the city about four miles upriver from the French Quarter, defined mostly by its Ger-

man and Irish immigrant population and its dependence to riverfront commerce. This rowdy area was home to blacksmiths and brewers, soap boilers and saddlers, confectioners and cigar-makers — not to mention circus actors and musicians, who no doubt, found employment in Tivoli Circle (renamed Lee Circle in 1884), where traveling circuses showcased their entertainment under big tents.

"Appropriate to both the climate and limitations on land were the countless one-story houses with three or more rooms stretching back through the narrow lots," built primarily by Germans, and designated as "shotgun" houses (*Southern Comfort*, S. Frederick Starr). Other homes combined a storefront with residential living, as did the Joseph Barth Grocery at the corner of St. Andrew and Laurel streets, or the religious articles shop on Constance and Josephine streets, owned by Philip Antoni. These stores were both in the shadow of St. Mary's Assumption Church when Father Seelos was pastor.

Adjoining Seelos' immediate neighborhood was the Garden District, home to those who had made their fortunes during

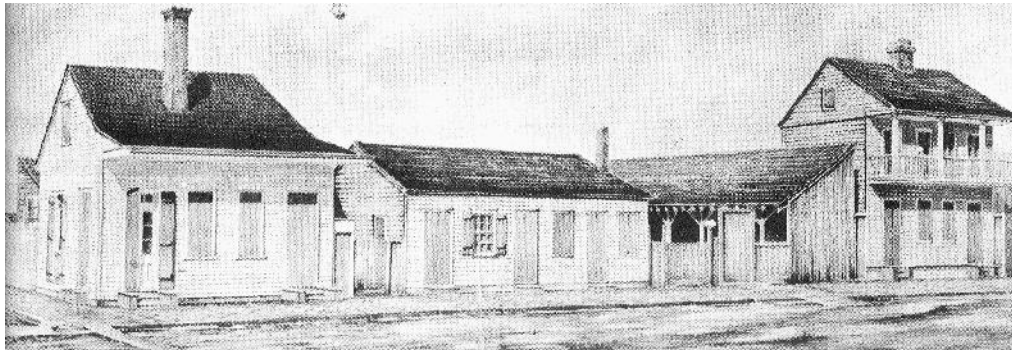
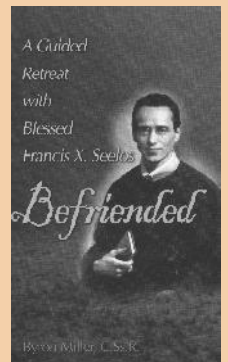
the city's golden era. Almost half of the Garden District gardeners were German immigrants, according to the 1860 U.S. Census. It is quite possible that Father Seelos personally knew some of these laborers and the German craftsmen and artisans who were hired to adorn the many mansions that still exist today.

"In my Father's House, there are many mansions" (*John 14:2*) and "in verdant pastures, He gives me repose" (*Ps. 23*). Whatever verdant plantings and vast mansions Father Seelos saw during his last year of life in New Orleans, it was in Saint Mary's Assumption Church that he felt most at home. "Here I'll rest my bones," said Father Seelos, "for I think I have wandered enough."

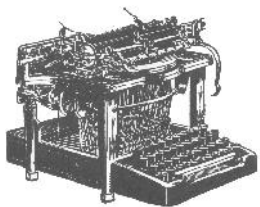


Befriended: A Guided Retreat with Blessed Francis X. Seelos

Mr. Philip Antoni lived in New Orleans in 1866, at the same time as Father Seelos. He was a parishioner of Saint Mary's Assumption Church where Father Seelos ministered during the final year of his life. These two men became friends. Through the 8 meditations in this 48-page booklet, Mr. Antoni will guide you on a spiritual journey in the hopes that you may experience the goodness of Father Seelos' heart and develop a heavenly friendship with this holy Redemptorist priest. (Donation: \$5 incl. p/h).



Homes, hovels, and tannery at Seventh & Laurel streets, 1866. Notice the plank sidewalks over streets and yards that were deep in mud most of the year. (New Orleans Notarial Archives)



Message from the Editor

The Civil War had ended the year before Father Seelos began his ministry in New Orleans in 1866, and the beleaguered city was still under Federal occupation. No doubt, he encountered many in the city who longed for its antebellum glory.

As we solemnly commemorate the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina this month, there are many in New Orleans who long for certain elements of its antediluvian past.

Author Mary Cable begins her 1980 book, *Lost New Orleans*, with these prophetic words: "All cities impose on nature, but it might be said that New Orleans doesn't just impose, it defies. Common sense had little to do with its founding ..." If common sense had little to do with its founding, what can be said of its governance?

As displaced citizens continue to struggle through a Byzantine process to rebuild and restore their lives, may common sense prevail at federal, state and local levels of bureaucracy, and faith and hope sustain those who need it most.

Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

"If I had to live in a city, I think I would prefer New Orleans to any other – both Southern and Catholic and with indications that the Devil's existence is freely recognized."

— Flannery O'Connor, novelist



Photo Credit: Jude Theriot

A Katrina-damaged Sacred Heart of Jesus statue in front of a looted building continues to provide visual commentary.

Mark your calendar!
Seelos Memorial Mass on
Sunday, October 7, 2007
 11:00 a.m.
Gala: Sheraton New Orleans Hotel
500 Canal Street
 5:30 p.m.
 Limited Seating
 Call 504-525-2495 for dinner reservations

There is a New Orleans city accent ... particularly with the German and Irish Third Ward, that is hard to distinguish from the accent of Hoboken, Jersey City, and Astoria, Long Island, where the Al Smith inflection, extinct in Manhattan, has taken refuge. The reason, as you might expect, is that the same stocks that brought the accent to Manhattan imposed it on New Orleans."

— A.. J. Liebling, *The Earl of Louisiana*

We thank the Lord each day at the Seelos Shrine for all our benefactors. Below is a partial listing of our most recent helpers in ministry:

Anne Rice -- Kenner, LA
 Dr. Richard Sherman, M.D. -- New Orleans, LA
 Kermit & Sue Menard -- Crowley, LA
 Father Charles Mallen, C.Ss.R. -- Venice, FL
 Louis Kieffer -- Kenner, LA
 Nicholas Parrendo -- Pittsburgh, PA
 Carol M. Holcomb -- Orlando, FL
 Lawrence & Victoria Winter -- Lakewood, CA
 Donald H. Brehm -- Metairie, LA
 Linda Boteler -- Harvey, LA
 Claire L. Seelaus -- Gladwyne, PA

A monthly newsletter for friends of Bl. Francis X. Seelos

Seelos Center News

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

Seelos Center / Shrine ☐ 2030 Constance Street
 New Orleans, LA 70130-5004
 504-525-2495/2499 ☐ FAX 504-581-9181

www.seelos.org
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The Seelos Center offers the following services:

☐ *Pilgrimages* to St. Mary's Assumption Church, Seelos Shrine & Museum. Call the Center at 504-525-2495 or 525-2499.

☐ *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

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

Houma/Thibodaux

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

Lacombe/Abita Springs

Billy Bachemin: 504-232-0349

Lafayette/Abbeville

Rita King: 337-984-4607

Mandeville

Bill & Sunny Schulz: 985-792-5394
 Pam Crutchfield: 985-966-0358

New Iberia/Berwick/Baldwin

Rachel Gonsoulin 337-224-7855
 Fred Roy 337-380-0646

Reserve/LaPlace

Deacon Percy Vicknair: 985-652-9313

Slidell

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

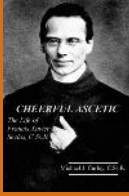
St. Bernard/Arabi

Patricia Noote: 504-756-4163

☐ *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.

The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:



Cheerful Ascetic: Life of Fr. X. Seelos, a 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$23.00 + 6.95 p/h)



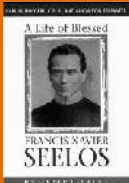
.999 Fine Silver Seelos Medal Round, 3/4" dia., with loop; brushed image with polished reverse and edge. Marked with .999 FS on reverse top. (Donation: \$52 - includes p/h).



Willy Finds Victory: A Blessed Francis Seelos Story, Introduce youth, ages 7 - 12, to Fr. Seelos in this 110-page illustrated book by Joan Stromberg (Donation: \$11, incl. p/h)



Death, Where Is Your Sting? is a tender account of Fr. Seelos' final weeks of life as told primarily by those who witnessed his death. Seldom revealed details surrounding his encounter with yellow fever transport us to the bedside of a true martyr. Hardcover, 175 pp., photos. (Donation: \$23 - incl. 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. Call Seelos Center, 504-525-2495 or 2499.

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



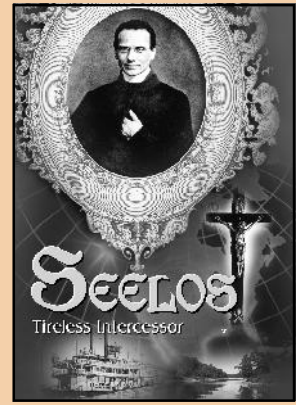
PAPAL NUNCIO TO PACIFIC ISLANDS VISITS SHRINE



Archbishop Charles D. Balvo, Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand & Oceania, toured the Seelos Shrine in June 2007. (Photo credit: Bill Coskrey)

SEELOS, TIRELESS INTERCESSOR

This documentary chronicles the heroic & miraculous life of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos. Father Seelos possessed great mystical gifts due to his intense prayer life. His ability to minister with cheerful holiness made him a spiritual father to tens of thousands. Despite his early death, so profound was his missionary zeal that sickness, persecution, and even the upheaval caused by the Civil War, could not stop him.



Please send request & payment to:
Seelos Center
2030 Constance Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

68 min. DVD
(\$29.99 + \$5.50 p/h)
\$25

68 min. VHS
(\$24.99 + \$5.50 p/h)
\$20

(\$8.50 p/h for any 2 or more)



"Our life is really like a ship on a stormy sea. So often it seems that it will be swallowed up by the waves; so often the waves of temptation & suffering crash together over our heads and threaten us with sinking. And yet, ... is there no longer even one little star that shines for you out of the storm-laden clouds; is there really no more hope for you, and are all the beautiful things you did with sincere love of neighbor, and even other things that you wanted to do, are all these things to be lost? Do you know the Spotless One, whom we are accustomed to call the Star of the Sea? O this Refuge of Sinners, O this motherly Advocate, will certainly not forsake you. I always hold fast to this dear, dear Mother and know for sure that she will not let me down." -- Francis Xavier Seelos, April 11, 1864

New Featured Items!

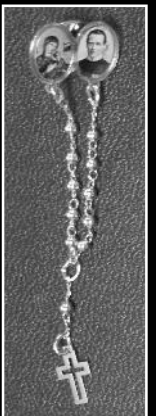
Protector Key Chain

double blessing pin

Measures 4 1/4 inches with color Seelos image & Perpetual Help image on reverse.

Measures 3 1/4 inches with color Seelos & Mother of Perpetual Help images. Gold-plated.

Both practical & inspirational. Ideal as gifts of appreciation! \$14 for both, includes P/H



TESTIMONIALS

Akron, OH

Earlier this year my husband was to have surgery to repair a surgical hernia, a result of colon cancer surgery in 2000. Prior to the surgery, another mass in the colon, the size of an egg, was discovered. We both prayed to Blessed Seelos and I kept his relic with me during the surgery. After 6-1/2 hours of surgery, the mass was removed, hernia repaired, and the small intestine resected. Miraculously, thanks to Bl. Seelos, no cancer was found, in spite of elevated CEA blood tests prior to surgery. The CEA test following surgery was normal. We are so thankful for this blessing in our life, and we continue to spread the word of this very special priest. This week we'll be in Annapolis, MD. They have a beautiful statue of Bl. Seelos in their Mary Garden and I plan to visit with him on his bench.

Patchogue, NY

I want to report that the mother of a friend had a mass in her colon that was described as cancerous. I gave her a prayer card & relic of Blessed Seelos that she put on her mother and said the prayer. When she went back to the doctor for her exam and treatment, she was told that the mass was no longer there. She is sure it was a miracle. Praise Jesus!

Ft. Worth, TX

In February our daughter was stricken by MRSA pneumonia, a severe inflammation response, and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). She was given a 5% survival rate. Our pastor, Father Richard Flores, gave us a book on the life of Blessed Francis Seelos and told our family to pray for our daughter through his intercession. We also asked hundreds of relatives, friends and strangers to pray as well. Our daughter survived and is now at home with us as she recuperates. In June I was talking to the pulmonary specialist and he showed me her most recent CAT scan. He was amazed to see that her left lung was completely healed with no scarring. He had told us early on that she would have significant scarring for the rest of

her life. Our daughter continues to improve and we continue to pray to Blessed Francis Seelos and the great physician, Jesus Christ.

Plaistow, NH

I would like to report a great favor from Fr. Seelos that happened two years ago. My son was injured from a fall from a roof. He fell two stories and broke his arm in 6 places. He was lucky to be alive, and had many screws and a plate put in his arm to stabilize it. His arm healed gradually except for one place where the bone did not grow back together. There was about an inch of space separating the bone. The surgeon said if it did not come together by the next visit, my son would need more surgery & a bone graft. I prayed to Fr. Seelos and placed a first class relic of his on my son's arm. By the next doctor visit, the bone had come together and a painful bone graft surgery was avoided! I wish to publicly thank Fr. Seelos. He really does listen to us and help us.

Clinton, IA

I had successful rotator cuff surgery on my right arm, until it suddenly froze up on me, and I had to go back and have it manipulated. I was having trouble getting my arm high enough to even comb my hair. It made things very difficult, so I decided to start a novena to Bl. Seelos and I used his relic. Things seemed to remain the same for some time, until, to my surprise, my arm was so relaxed that I could reach over my head with no pain.

Thanks to God & Fr. Seelos for the sudden difference. I am now back to normal and can take care of my husband, and whatever else I need to do.

Houston, TX

My fifteen-year-old grandnephew in the Philippines had necrotic carcinoma, a black lump on his hand the size of a baseball. Surgery was not an option according to the oncologist and he was not expected to live. I gave him a relic & novena of Bl. Seelos. When the parents of this boy approached the Redemptorists in Manila for assistance, they gave him a certain sum. It was the same with friends who helped because the parents were unemployed, living in the slums with their three other small children. Over there, public hospitals do not give free procedures, blood transfusion & chemotherapy. After a year of my prayers and theirs, the lump on his hand is gone without the discoloration. He attended his high school graduation, on top of the class with a 99% average, although he had availed of home study only. I attribute all this to the Lord through His Mother Mary and Bl. Seelos.

Baton Rouge, LA

Our first grandchild was taken away from us when she was two years old, due to a bitter divorce. We saw her at three and six years old. We have had no contact with her for twelve years. I prayed very often to Blessed Seelos about this. In May we received a graduation invitation. It arrived in the mail right along with the prayer cloths and mementos of Father Seelos that I requested. Thank you God and Blessed Seelos.

Kenner, LA

I always look forward to your monthly newsletter in the mail. Can't remember how long it has been, but sometime in the early 1950s my husband had his right hand crushed by a rough tugboat as it crashed into the dock. We began to pray to Fr. Seelos for the full return of the use of his hand. Praise God for allowing Fr. Seelos to grant our plea by his intercession.

Did you know
 ? *that a gift of \$10 to our Annual Appeal will help defray the cost of printing & postage of this newsletter for one entire year?*

Please visit our redesigned www.seelos.org as we celebrate our 100,000th-plus visitor! Check for online promotions.

What to do with your old cell phone?

As part of our 2007 Annual Appeal, the Seelos Shrine is having a Cell Phone Drive to support our ministry ... and help the environment! These cell phones will be utilized and redeployed for 911 purposes in the U.S., & used in developing countries worldwide to improve quality of life through better communication. We kindly ask that you donate any inactive cell phones from your home or business. 100% of the proceeds will benefit the Shrine. Please send us your inactive cell phone & battery ONLY; chargers & other accessories have NO value. Thanks for your support!



I'VE MOVED!

.. Please delete me from your mailing list.

.. Please delete multiple mailings to this address.

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Kindly return in the enclosed envelope with any corrections or CALL 504-525-2495 or 2499

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Allow a minimum of 30 days to process your request.

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