



SEELOS CENTER NEWS

National Shrine of Blessed
Francis Xavier Seelos

In the Redemptorist Church
of Saint Mary's Assumption

2030 Constance Street (504) 525-2495
New Orleans, LA 70130 (504) 525-2499

Volume XLVIII Number 4 April 2009

www.seelos.org

Remains of Abraham Lincoln
The Greatest Man of Our Century
Assassinated April 14th, 1865



GOOD FRIDAY - 1865

At breakfast on the chilly Good Friday morning of April 14, 1865, Mary Todd Lincoln announced to her husband that she had already acquired tickets to a brand new spectacle, *Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp* at Grover's Theatre for that night. However, she desired instead to see the nation's most popular comic actress, Laura Keane, play at Grover's main competition, Ford's Theatre. Regardless, "Good Friday was not a good night for theater," wrote Alan Axelrod in *Lincoln's Last Night*, for "audiences were so sparse it was scarcely worth the expense of raising the curtain."

Father Francis Xavier Seelos also did not think Good Friday was a good night for theater. His reasons were less mercenary, and more spiritual. In a letter to his sister in Germany, only a few days after Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre, Seelos wrote: "Today, April 18, is a day of general mourning. Everything is closed and almost everyone, women as well as men, are wearing cockades or something similar to show their sympathy. At the beginning, everyone complained and mocked and swore about this president, but he has become the idol of the people, and this tragic end has increased the shared feelings for his tragic death." Then Seelos recounted the time that he and another Redemptorist had met Lincoln in 1863: "His personality did not strike me unfavorably. He spoke with us very openly and freely and was very friendly, and if we returned, promised us a private audience." Finally, Seelos commented to his sister that "it certainly was not proper to go to the theater on Good Friday where he was shot."

Fatefully, Lincoln was attacked on Good Friday, and in what was possibly the most well attended religious services of the century, multitudes heard preachers compare Lincoln to Christ in pulpits on Easter morning. The Kunhardt authors of *Looking for Lincoln* note, "It was on this day that Lincoln's reputation was established as one of the country's greatest secular saints and evermore as the nation's 'savior.' He was a 'Christ-figure' who had died for the sins of his nation, and who would now rise into the hearts of his followers." Likewise, Andrew Ferguson in *Land of Lincoln* describes the similarities: "both Jesus and Lincoln were born of carpenters and rose from lowly beginnings, both were storytellers, both were killed on Good Friday, both were saviors - of the world, in one case, of the Union, in the other. And in the days before his death each made a profound journey of mercy: Jesus to Jerusalem, Lincoln to Richmond." Thus began the secular sanctification of the beloved martyred president; the religious sanctification of the beloved Father Seelos continues still!



Ford's Theatre, with guards posted at entrance & crepe draped from windows, April 1865.



21st Annual Bl. Francis Seelos Day on April 26 -- 1:00 pm

The 21st Annual "Blessed Francis Seelos Day in New Orleans" will be celebrated on the last Sunday of the month, April 26. A memorial Mass will take place in St. Mary's Assumption Church (at Josephine & Constance streets in the Irish Channel) at 1:00 p.m. Father Edward Monroe, C.Ss.R. of Oconomowoc, WI will be the principal celebrant & homilist. After the Mass there will be an opportunity to venerate a mission crucifix of Fr. Seelos and to view the National Shrine of Francis Seelos, where his mortal remains are permanently housed in a sacred reliquary. Parking for the Mass is also available in an adjacent lot on St. Andrew Street.

Immediately following the Mass, at 2:00 a Kick-Off Fundraiser for the new Seelos Welcome Center will be held at Saint Alphonsus Art & Cultural Center (across from St. Mary's on Constance St). A Parade of Prizes will support the building project. Refreshments/hors d'oeuvres will be served. Tickets for the Kick-Off are \$30 per person. Contact the Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, or by calling 504-525-2495 or 525-2499.

"It was our common custom to visit nine churches on Good Friday and kiss the cross in each. One of the pure delights of living in New Orleans was that one could easily walk to nine Catholic churches. Indeed one had choices. I remember loving this devotion, in part because of the singular beauty of each church, ... and I also loved the fun of the walking on the way." — *Called Out of Darkness: A Spiritual Confession*, Anne Rice (2008)

SEELOS WELCOME CENTER UPDATE

Built as a School Sisters of Notre Dame Convent circa 1939, this 3-story building is presently being converted to a Seelos Welcome Center to include exhibit space & orientation theater for visitors, staff offices, gift shop, Seelos archives & chapel -- and an "answer to prayers" for anyone who has ever endured long lavatory lines at the Seelos Masses! The completion date is summer 2009. \$1.3 million is our needed goal. Please visit www.seelos.org for more information.

*"The budget here is very sound.
Donations come from all around.
Offerings keep going up!
Like an overflowing cup.
'Giving extra' -- that's the rule.
There's too much money --
April Fool!"*

(Ralph Mineo)

CAN YOU PLEASE HELP ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?

No amount is too small.
Please designate "SWC" on your offering so that we may honor your intentions.



Hard-Hat VIP
Visitors Inspect
a Work in
Progress:
Seelos Center
Administrator
Joyce Bourgeois
& Assistant Nick
Punch; Co-Vice-
Postulator Rev.
John Vargas,
C.Ss.R. from
Rome, Italy.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

On Mardi Gras this year, I had the thrill of being part of Jazz legend, Pete Fountain's Half-Fast Walking Club. On St. Charles Avenue, I encountered a man in the crowd dressed as the pope in a pointy hat; further along the parade route, I spoke to a man dressed convincingly as a priest; later, I met a man dressed as a monk with a fake tonsure on his head. By the time we passed Canal Street, I gave beads to a woman dressed as a nun; and when we crossed over into the French Quarter, I saw a man dressed as a nun!

New Orleans is wonderfully steeped in Catholicism, so it's only natural that Mardi Gras costumers would opt to wear such religious-looking apparel. (Imagine, though, if the life that the religious garb represents was more appealing than the longing to wear the garb!)

Saint Paul wrote, "You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self ... to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God" (cf. Ephesians 4:17-24). Metaphorically, we shed the guise of Mardi Gras merrymaking to put on an extended Lenten sackcloth garment, and now our heads have found the opening -- like a turtle emerging from its shell -- to be clothed in the robe of salvation at Easter! Even our churches that were stripped during Lent, are adorned again with ritual apparel: dazzling banners, altar cloth, and vestments! Why? Because Mary Magdalene and the disciples -- the original Half-Fast Walking Club -- hurried to the tomb on the first Easter morning to see the burial cloth that Jesus had shed, and to hear an angel dressed in dazzling white tell them, "He has been raised, exactly as he promised!" Alleluia!

Seelos Center News

A monthly newsletter for friends of
BL. FRANCIS X. SEELOS
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
Vice-Postulators: Frs. John Vargas & Byron Miller
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Seelos Center 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 Seelos Crucifix in designated area hospitals. Please call:

East Jefferson

Gerry Heigle: 504-482-4404
Teresa LaCour: 504-887-0214

Ochsner

Mark/Monica Surprenant 504-895-5371

Uptown/Innecity

Jack Pitkin: 504-524-6591
Dennis Waldron: 504-442-6336

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: 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

Pearl River

Gail Garay: 985-863-7562

Ponchatoula/Hammond

Gasper Corpora: 225-294-5938

Shreveport/Bossier City

Tom & Marjorie Rivers: 318-797-3116

Slidell

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

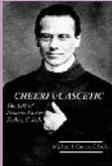
St. Bernard/Arabi

Patricia Noote: 504-756-4163

☞ **Veneration of Bl. Seelos' Mission Crucifix** in St. Mary's Assumption Church at Josephine & Constance St.

☞ **Weekly Mass** celebrated for Seelos benefactors. Please include Special Intentions in the enclosed envelope.

Seelos Center Devotionals



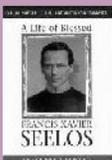
Cheerful Ascetic, 480-pg. hard-bound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality; index/photos (Donation: \$30, incl. p/h)



.999 Fine Silver Seelos Medal Round, 3/4" dia., with loop; brushed image with polished reverse & edge. Marked with .999 FS on reverse top. (Donation: \$58 - includes p/h).



Seelos Rosary Ring: Made in Italy, great gift for First Communion in honor of Mary for the month of May. (Donation: \$3, incl. p/h)



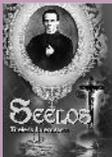
A Life of Blessed Seelos, 108-page paperback biography, illustrated. (Donation: \$12 - includes p/h)



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: one-of-a-kind lasting remembrance for you or for someone dear, living or deceased. (Donation: \$25, contact Seelos Ctr. or website for enrollment)



Seelos, Tireless Intercessor, a 68-min. documentary on Seelos' miraculous life; seen on EWTN. (Donation: \$25 DVD / \$10 VHS - incl. p/h)



Death, Where Is Your Sting?, tender account of Seelos' final weeks of life as told by witnesses of his death to yellow fever. Seldom revealed details transport us to the bedside of a true martyr. Hardcover, 175 pp., photos. (Donation: \$24 - incl. p/h)



Sincerely, Seelos, the 201 collected letters of Fr. Seelos. Hardbound, 512 pgs., illustr. (Donation: \$35 - incl. p/h)

☞ **A Seelos Vigil Candle** will burn near his sacred resting place in Seelos Shrine, New Orleans, for an offering of \$4.

☞ **Seelos 1st, 2nd & 3rd-Class Relics/ Seelos Pamphlets & Prayer Cards** in English, Spanish, Vietnamese. Call Seelos Center, 504-525-2495 or 2499.

Please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery.



DEAR PADRE: WHY ARE THERE SO MANY NEW SAINTS?

Why has the Church canonized so many people in recent years? I thought becoming a saint was a rarity and that most of us are struggling sinners.

Alice

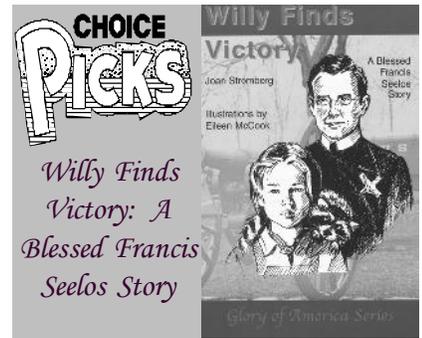
Dear Alice,
Becoming a saint was especially rare after the 1200s, when formal canonization became more centralized under the pope. So, for instance, during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries each pope canonized an average of fewer than ten saints. The number of saints increased significantly in the twentieth century: Pope John Paul II alone canonized 482 people.

People who "struggle" with their faith are the ones most in need of so many saintly role models. In *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why*, Kenneth L. Woodward wrote, "One might even say that the church exists to make saints of all its members, if by saint we mean those who become true imitators of Christ."

The universal call to imitate Christ comes first with baptism; canonization recognizes that one's baptismal call was carried out to a heroic degree. Holiness, then, is not reserved for a privileged and elite corps, but is intended for everyone. Pope Benedict XVI said recently that recognition given to saints "paves the way to true spiritual resurrection, to lasting conversions and to the blossoming of new saints." In other words, saints encourage more saints among us. Sanctity loves company! "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3, New Revised Standard Version).

Byron Miller, C.S.R.

This excerpt of "Dear Padre" reprinted with permission of Liguori Publications, publishers of *The Eucharist* from their newest series, *50 Questions from the Pews*. (800) 325-9521; www.liguori.org



Willy Finds Victory: A Blessed Francis Seelos Story

Willy is on a mission. He is determined to find his sister's husband and take his place as a soldier in the Union Army before it's too late. Will he do so before the big battle? When Willy searches a hospital, he finds cheerful Father Seelos instead. Can Father Seelos help him with his mission? Introduce youth, ages 7 - 12, to Father Seelos in this 110-page illustrated book by Joan Stromberg. \$13 (incl. p/h)

Praying the Way of the Cross CD

PRAYING THE WAY OF THE CROSS
FEATURING LIAM NEESON



MUSIC, LYRICS and PRAYERS by St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori
Prayers led by the Reverend Byron Miller, C.S.R.
LITTLE LAMB MUSIC

The 14 Stations are taken from the classic text by St. Alphonsus Liguori, Redemptorist Founder. The Prayers are accompanied by the sacred hymns of this great saint. Featuring Liam Neeson, acclaimed Irish-American actor. \$22 (incl. p/h)

Called Out of Darkness:

A Spiritual Confession

Anne Rice's first autobiography is an inspiring faith conversion account, with evocative descriptions of growing up in New Orleans, & Anne's personal memories in the parish with the Redemptorists, Mercy Sisters & School Sisters of Notre Dame. Hardbound/245 pages. Also, receive a complimentary souvenir issue of Liguorian magazine featuring an "Interview with Anne Rice." \$30 (incl. p/h).



SAN ANTONIO, TX

I always read the testimonials in my Seelos Center newsletter. I never thought I would be writing one. My 33-year-old daughter's acid reflux had become more painful. Her doctor gave a sonogram & told her she had an enlarged spleen. The following day she went to the emergency room. We passed the Relic of Fr. Seelos over the affected area and she kept it nearest to the pain. After the tests were done, she was told her spleen was normal and that everything was fine. Thanks to God and to Fr. Seelos' prayers.

NEW ORLEANS, LA

In 2006 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was very distraught. A friend brought me to the Seelos Center where I was prayed over and blessed with a Seelos Cross. It was a powerful experience for my friend & me. From that moment, I felt a healing take place within me. That was 28 months ago. During that time, my specialist found a metastasis to my liver, which my primary doctors originally missed altogether. How heart-breaking it was to learn that the doctors I relied on to treat me, overlooked something even more life threatening than the original diagnosis. I am now free of Stage IV Metastatic Breast Cancer within my body, recently proven by a clear PET scan. I have no doubt that Blessed Seelos had a hand in this miracle of healing. I thank him with deep gratitude & love, always for his intercession on my behalf.

PLAINFIELD, IL

For the past 9 years, I've lost about 70% of my sense of smell. Then while using a strong-smelling cleanser I noticed I could smell something. I tested different foods &

TESTIMONIALS

things around the house & my sense of smell was completely gone. I prayed through the intercession of Bl. Seelos and the next day I started smelling food again. This may not seem like much to one who has never lost his/her sense of smell, but to me it is a miracle & a great favor granted. I want to publicly thank and acknowledge this gift of God to me through the intercession of Bl. Seelos and always through our Mother Mary, who I love tremendously.

MORA, MO

Our grandson decided not to have his baby baptized. We were heartbroken! I prayed to Fr. Seelos and within a few days our grandson changed his mind. His wife was overcome during the Baptism, and she started crying. Fr. Seelos heard my prayers, and I felt that he was there at the Baptism.

BATON ROUGE, LA

In 2008 I was diagnosed with Infiltrating Ductal Carcinoma of the Rt. Breast. My world was turned upside down when told I had many months of chemo ahead, a total radical mastectomy, and then radiation. I was devastated, but had so much support. My cousin gave me a Fr. Seelos relic & I began my plan of treatment. Marie [Giorlando, Seelos Blesser] prayed for me with a Seelos crucifix. During the next 8 months I religiously carried the Seelos 1st class relic & cloth relic, and with confidence in my God & Bl. Fr. Seelos and my doctors, all my tests came back cancer-free. My thanks for prayers answered; I will always continue to pray and to advocate the request granted to me through my prayers to Fr. Seelos.

CRYSTAL LAKE, IL

In 2001 I had a serious auto accident. I sustained a seizure, brain injury, and brain bleed. Later that year, while already in rehab I had a dissected aorta. It had torn apart probably from the trauma of the accident. I was airlifted to a trauma center and my wife was told to say goodbye for I would not live. We said goodbye; she was praying to God to save me and for Fr. Seelos' intercession with a relic that I had. I departed in a helicopter, with my scans showing the dissection, and I too said a few prayers. In surgery, I was opened up but they could not find the dissection or any bleeding or tear that had been confirmed on the scans. The Catholic surgeon told us it was "a miracle." After recovery and a visit to Mayo Clinic in Rochester there are no explanations. My health is not perfect, but I am not dead, which should have been the case. I am disabled now. My wife has now converted and we are active Catholics together in our local church. I believe that through Fr. Seelos' intercession, God performed a miracle in my life. Actually, the conversion of my wife is a miracle too.

HOUSTON, TX

150 relics of the saints were recently exposed at our parish hall. The most remarkable thing happened to me: when I touched Bl. Seelos' relic, an anointing came upon me. The Holy Spirit was present there! I would like more info on this remarkable saint.



Please view our website as we celebrate our 150,000th visitor!

www.seelos.org

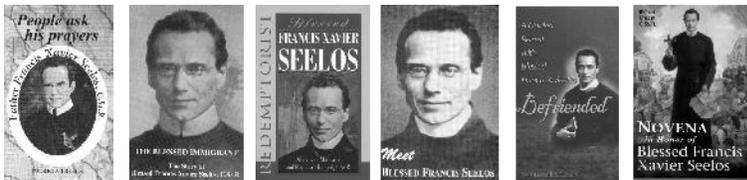
Dear Father Byron: In my own way, I want to support the cause of Blessed Francis Seelos in gratitude for Graces Received & Prayers Answered. \$_____ to be used for:

- the ministry & maintenance at the National Shrine of Bl. Francis Seelos.
- construction of the new Seelos Welcome Center during '09.
- item(s) designated below:

- my Mass Intention(s):

All contributions to the Seelos Shrine are income tax deductible.

ENJOY THE COMPANY OF FR. SEELOS



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Kindly return in the enclosed envelope with any corrections or call 504-525-2495 or 2499 or e-mail to bmiller@seelos.org Allow a minimum of 30 days to process your address change request.

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