



VOLUME 63

SEELOS CENTER NEWS

MAY 2020


from the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.

Dear Seelos Devotees,

May is a month of flowers and new life. We celebrate the women who gave us life, our mothers. We remember the glories of the Mother of God. But as of late, we have had troubling times and many have died from an invisible enemy, a virus that has suddenly appeared.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus heals a boy who was infected. The evil spirit came out of the boy with convulsions to the point that some thought the boy was dead. Later

his disciples asked Jesus, “Why could we not cast it out?” And Jesus replied,

 *“This kind can come out only through prayer.”*

These words carry special meaning for us in the face of this pandemic. Many are dying and more are suffering sickness; heroes serve the sick in close proximity, many giving their lives in this effort. The reality we are experiencing has a

special relevance for those who know Blessed Seelos. He himself served those who were stricken with Yellow Fever and gave his life in ministering to them. The Archbishop of New Orleans added the petition “Blessed Seelos, pray for us” in the prayer he wrote for these troubled times. The life and example of Seelos is a companion to our own sufferings. We implore his powerful intercession. Please join me in praying for the deliverance of our world from COVID-19:

Blessed Francis Seelos, you knew the sufferings of the sick at the time of the Yellow Fever Epidemic in New Orleans many years ago and gave your life ministering to those who were afflicted. Be with us in our times of trouble. So many prayers have been answered with your intercession in our struggles, and we ask you to join with us now in begging God’s protection in the face of an unseen foe which wreaks havoc in our world. We acknowledge our dependence on you, Almighty God, and pray for solace in this troubled time.

Blessed Seelos, visit the sick suffering in our hospitals and homes and help them to know God’s merciful healing in their time of need. Safeguard those who are serving the suffering with great dedication. Protect them from harm. Pray that we be surrounded by a shield to protect us as we continue in our daily endeavors. Give wisdom and right judgment to our leaders as they seek to direct us in our human efforts to be safe. Blessed Seelos, manifest your powerful aid, praying with us for healing for all who seek your help. Pray with us that we be protected from spiritual and temporal harm.

Gracious God, we know that You do not desire the destruction of Your holy people. Let us know Your mercy and free us from the affliction of coronavirus. We long to gather again as the Christian community around Your altar. Free us soon from the affliction that so limits our ability to gather for worship. Mother of Perpetual Help, be with us in your motherly tenderness for Christ’s body. Blessed Francis Seelos, powerful intercessor, join us in our humble prayer to our loving God. Amen.



Fr. Richard Boever, C.Ss.R.
Director, National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.

Seelos: My European Years – Schooling Young Seelos

Seelos: My European Years, written by Fr. Richard Boever, C.Ss.R., is the story of Blessed Seelos' life told through his voice. Look for additional installments in future issues of this newsletter.



When I was six years old, I began my formal education in the Volksschule, generally thought of as our parish school, but officially a public school. The school building was located on the corner of Schrannengasse and Brunnengasse, called “the old Kornhaus” because the first floor was the marketplace for the sale of corn to the local inhabitants of the town. The school occupied the second floor.



Our school year consisted of two semesters from November to Easter, and then from May through August. Class was held from 8 - 10 AM and 1 -3 PM six days a week. We were drilled in what later would be called “The 3-R’s” but we also had classes in religion and moral development, and attended morning Mass at 7:30 each day.

I especially liked music and singing and even learned the violin. Music delighted my soul and helped me express all the wonder I felt within my heart.

I went to the Volksschule for six years and got good grades for my study, if I do say so myself. I was also an altar boy at St. Mang's church where I received my Confirmation in 1828 and First Communion in 1830. These were special celebrations for me. Those were happy days for me.

When I was a kid, the Industrial Revolution was sweeping the continent of Europe and life was changing for many people. This revolution effected my father's trade because new machines could manufacture cloth cheaper than he could weave it. We suffered financially during my grade school years. My parents never let us children worry about money but we knew things were tough. But then, in 1830, by God's providence, my father got a new job. He was invested as the sacristan at St. Mang's church and, shortly after my sister Kunigunda's birth, we moved into the sacristan's house on Sankt Mang Platz.

What a great place! It was right next to the church which held such a special place in my family's life! My father certainly deserved the new position for he was very pious and had an excellent reputation amongst the town folk. In our new house, which was one of the benefits of the new job, we had much more space to live our family life.

Personally, I loved living so close to the church where I could help my father with his many duties. I'm sure the location helped deepen in me the spirit of faith and prayer we experienced at home.

At the end of my time at the local school, when I was 12 years old, I came to a fork in the road. I was expected to either be apprenticed in some trade or go on to a more formal education at what was called “the Gymnasium” at St. Stephan in Augsburg. For us, the Gymnasium was not a place one goes for exercise but the next step in the education process between grade



school and university. Unfortunately, going on to higher education also cost money and that made a difference in the choice of what to do next for me and for many of my classmates. My family did not have the money necessary to continue my education even though I did very well in grade school. The parish priest at St Mang's, however, came to my rescue. He was convinced that I should continue my education and committed himself to provide me with money for meals and an allowance while I was at the Gymnasium.



So, I was able to begin the next step of my schooling at St. Stephan in Augsburg, 90 miles north of my hometown of Füssen. Until the day I could enter the gymnasium, Fr. Heim instructed me privately so that I could go directly into the second year at St. Stephan when I was 13 years old.

To be continued...

Blessings for the Sick

Hospital visits have been suspended temporarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you wish to receive a blessing over the phone, please call one of the Blessers listed below.

EAST JEFFERSON

Gerry Heigle (504) 482-4404
Anne Batt (504) 458-0310
Norris Plaisance (504) 235-1961

OCHSNER (KENNER)

Linda DiMaggio (504) 287-8732
Wendy Whittaker (504) 722-0089

OCHSNER (JEFFERSON)

Mark / Monica Surprenant (504) 895-5371
Norris Plaisance (504) 235-1961
Marie Giorlando (504) 568-0522

UPTOWN / INNERCITY

Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

WESTBANK

Elaine Freeman (504) 341-2213
Mary Grace Orsag (504) 367-7515
Tori Winters (504) 237-2962

ABBEVILLE / ERATH / LAFAYETTE

Boniface "Boni" Suire (337) 937-5675

ALEXANDRIA

Deacon Bill / Joan Travis (318) 664-7069

BALDWIN / FRANKLIN

Patti Ibert (337) 828-0141

BATON ROUGE

Gloria Bacqué (225) 753-3800

COVINGTON

April Mayo (985) 892-1828
Dr. Ann Logarbo (985) 886-0218

DENHAM SPRINGS

Kathy Newcomb (225) 978-9284

HOUMA / THIBODAU

Debbie Badeaux (985) 438-4096
Margo Battaglia Clement (985) 637-6056

IOTA

Anne Ritter (337) 254-8451

LAKE CHARLES

Lisa Verrette (337) 274-4810

MANDEVILLE

David Brumfield (985) 234-9355
Lisa and Eric Johnsen (985) 276-4445

NEW IBERIA / ABBEVILLE / JEANERETTE

Rachel Gonsoulin (337) 224-7855

OPELOUSAS

Suzanne Pitre (337) 351-8489

PONCHATOUA / HAMMOND

Gasper Corpora (225) 294-5938

PRAIRIEVILLE / GONZALES

Deacon Claude Bourgeois (225) 337-0945

SHREVEPORT / BOSSIER CITY

Tom and Marjorie Rivers (318) 797-3116

SLIDELL

Billy Bachemin (985) 288-7006

ST. BERNARD / ARABI

Patricia Noote (504) 460-2340

KATY, TEXAS

Lauren Johnson (218) 851-1321
Donna Johnson (713) 826-4191

GRACES RECEIVED & PRAYERS ANSWERED

METAIRIE, LA

God our Father, truly our Savior, did not prepare me for the day my son, Thomas, was born. Nothing could have prepared me.

On May 26, 2010, my son was delivered via emergency C-section. Earlier, I received my first spinal epidural at which point my diastolic blood pressure dropped too low; the doctor administered ephedrine to correct the issue. A few hours later I received another dose. Shortly after, I began experiencing excruciating pain and was given another epidural.

Following this second epidural, I went into respiratory and cardiac arrest and the fetus was in distress. A "code blue" was called and the medical team revived me enough to perform an emergency C-section. My son was delivered roughly 24 minutes after the initial code was called. Thomas' Apgar score was 1 (on a scale of 0-10, 0 is stillborn and 10 is optimal). He was not breathing, not crying, had no movement, was resuscitated and rushed to the NICU. After my son was taken out, I coded 3 more times, and testing determined that my heart was severely damaged. I needed an intra-aortic balloon pump to assist my heart to function for at least 24 hours. Both of us were hospitalized for 10 days, and required numerous tests and treatments. We were put into medically induced comas in order to increase our chances of survival and recovery.

For Thomas, he required an EEG test that indicated seizure activity in his left brain hemisphere. He took anti-seizure medication for 7 months until a normal EEG was determined. However, Thomas exhibited the inability to move or control the right side of his body. He also "fisted" both hands which we had to

continuously massage to relax his palms and fingers. In March 2011, these signs miraculously disappeared.

I was not only denied the experience of giving birth to my first child, but I have no memory of my labor. I was unable to bond with Thomas for the first 10 days of his life. I have no videos and only a few pictures from my family that were taken during that time. I suffered a lot of pain, fear and anxiety over this entire episode, let alone worry over the condition of Thomas through his first several months of life. I was told of the possible effects and the potential for him to have deficits due to the lack of oxygen and blood flow between the time I initially coded and the time of his birth. For quite some time, I experienced nightmares and depression. I was diagnosed with PTSD and suffer with anxiety as a result of this incident.

I have been told the story from my parents and siblings perspectives. It is truly surreal to listen to them speak of this horrific story and to realize without the intervention of Blessed Seelos, prayer groups with my family, and the blessings and miracles from God that my son and I would not have survived. It is my understanding I was blessed with crosses and relics of Blessed Seelos. I received (and still have) cards with the cloth touched to relics of him, I received a rose petal rosary blessed by the Pope, along with receiving the Last Rites, flowers and prayer cards. It was quite scary to be told of what happened to me and my baby.

I strongly believe that without Blessed Seelos' intervention my son and I would not have survived that incident. To me, it is a miracle, really two miracles, that we are alive and healthy.

SHRINE, MUSEUM & WELCOME CENTER HOURS

Monday-Friday 9am-3pm & Saturday 10am-3:30pm



Reflections on the devotion of Blessed Seelos to Mother Mary

From Seelos' early childhood to his final days, he upheld a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother. In a letter to his mother Francesca, Seelos writes, "Dear Mother, I want to thank you for instilling into us children a great devotion to Mary; such a legacy from parents is worth more than gold or silver."

In 1837, Seelos joined The Greater Latin Marian Confraternity, following in the footsteps of fellow members such as St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Francis de Sales, St. Stanislaus, St. Peter Claver, St. Therese and St. Bernadette.

On May 16, 1844, the day Seelos became a Redemptorist, he vowed to the Blessed Mother, "I promise not only to love, to

serve, and to venerate you myself, but to do all in my power to cause others to love and venerate you." This was a promise he kept his entire life.

During this month of maternal appreciation, we pray for the strength to follow Blessed Seelos' example and strive to dedicate our lives and our love to the Blessed Mother.

MOTHER'S DAY GIFT SHOP SALE

These beautiful mementos make great gifts for mothers. Call (504) 525-2495 to place your order for delivery!



PERPETUAL MASS LEAGUE – \$20
1 YEAR MASS REMEMBRANCE – \$10

Honor the special mother figures in your life during weekly Masses at the Seelos Shrine in perpetuity with our Perpetual Mass League enrollment, or for one year with our 1 Year Mass Remembrance.



**"HEAVEN SENT"
ORNATE VOTIVE
CANDLE – \$23.50**

Handmade by New Orleans artist Heidi Groat

SUPPORT THE MISSION OF THE SHRINE



LIGHT A CANDLE: A vigil candle will burn near Seelos' sacred resting place for an offering of \$3.



REQUEST A RELIC: 3rd Class Relics are available in either laminated prayer cards or as a crocheted memento for an offering of \$2.50 each.



SHOP ONLINE: Many items in the Gift Shop are available for purchase at www.seelos.org. Visit today!

VISIT SEELOS.ORG OR CALL (504) 525-2495 TO ORDER

DONATION & CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

I would like to support the Seelos cause by donating \$_____ to be used for:

- The ministry and maintenance of the Shrine
- My 1-year newsletter subscription renewal (\$12)
- Other items: _____

Make checks payable to "National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos".

Please remove change my name and address as follows:

Name: _____

Address: _____

A Friendly Reminder

Newsletter Renewal Donation



If you would like to continue to receive "Seelos Center News" and have not submitted your yearly renewal, please fill out the form to the left and mail it with a \$12 donation in the enclosed envelope. Your contribution is tax deductible and helps to defray the cost of printing.

If you would like to remove or change an address, please fill out and mail the form to the left or call (504) 525-2495.

Please allow a minimum of 30 days to process your request.

SEELOS CENTER NEWS (USPS 4472) is published monthly by the Redemptorists at the National Shrine of F. X. Seelos.

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The National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R. is a member of the National Association of Shrine and Pilgrimage Apostolate