



VOLUME 70

SEELOS CENTER NEWS

DECEMBER 2020

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

Dear Seelos Devotees,

You'll hear often this month that there are only so many days left to shop for Christmas. Gift giving is a long standing tradition as a means of expressing our love. In the Church, we also prepare for Christmas during Advent. In our attempts to fill in our valleys and take down our hills so God has a straight path into our hearts, we prepare for the gift of Christ the Lord. In February of 1860, Father Seelos wrote a letter to his sister about visiting his former parish, St. Alphonsus, at Christmastime:

I arrived there on Christmas Eve and Father Ruland, the present rector, after a most kind welcome, asked me to celebrate Mass at five o'clock at the orphanage. Then I was to sing High Mass at Saint Alphonsus Church... At five-thirty, all the children were present. They really sang out with one accord as if all the shepherds of Palestine had gathered to bring to the Christ Child their innocent hearts and carols. But the most striking thing happened at ten o'clock in St. Alphonsus Church, ... when I came out of the sacristy to give the Asperges, the school children recognized me first. You should really have seen those little ones; what joy suddenly lighted up all their faces. ... The grown ups, too, quickly nodded to each other and didn't know what to do to express their great joy. ... After Mass, there was nothing else I could do but to say at least a few words to the many who came without interruption and brought me gifts of all kinds. This happened with such a warmth and depth of feeling that both men and women could not talk except with tears in their eyes.

I'm sure that those who have devotion to Blessed Seelos understand the joyful celebration he felt at his return to St. Alphonsus; but even more, we know why there was such affection for him. In his daily life, he filled in the valleys and lowered the hills, welcoming always the presence of God in his soul. He was a beloved priest and the people honored that. We, too, honor Blessed Seelos in our own day as we pray in our Seelos prayer: "You lived here among our ancestors. You taught them, blessed them and prayed for them. Now we come to you!" And we know he will pray with us this Christmas for our many needs.



Blessed Christmas to all,

Fr. Richard Boever, C.Ss.R.

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

ST ALPHONSUS' CHRISTMAS MORNING MEDITATION



Come, then, O all ye devout souls.

Jesus invites you to come and kiss his feet this night.

The Shepherds who came to visit him in the stable of Bethlehem brought their gifts; you must also bring your gifts.

What will you bring him?

The most acceptable present you can bring him is that of a contrite and loving heart.



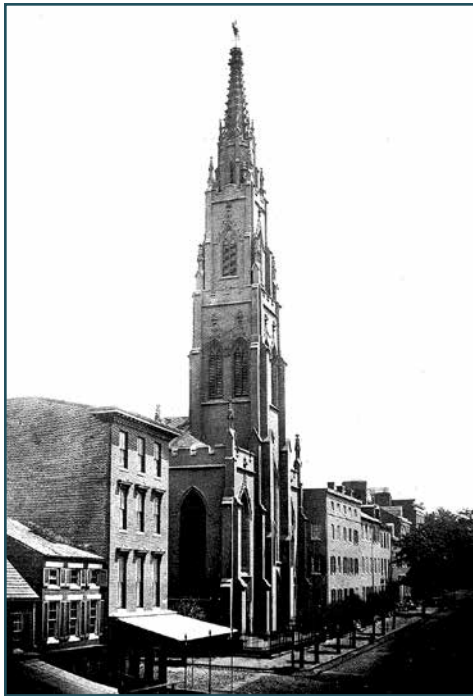
★ To learn how you can volunteer from home or at the Shrine, call (504) 525-2495. ★

Seelos: Part 9 – Shouldering a heavy load in Baltimore

This book, written by Fr. Richard Boever, C.Ss.R., is the story of Blessed Seelos' life told as though he were telling his own story. Look for additional installments in future issues of this newsletter.



I learned a lot during my years as a parish priest at St. Philomena's in Pittsburgh, but in 1854, I received a new assignment. Fr. George Ruland was named provincial of the American Province in January and I was transferred from Pittsburgh to St. Alphonsus Parish in Baltimore to succeed him as pastor and superior. I arrived there on March 2.



St. Alphonsus Church archival photo

The Redemptorist community of St. Alphonsus also served the parishes of St. James and St. Michael in the city as well

as several German speaking immigrant communities across a much larger area. It was a big job. The congregations were large and all the fathers and brothers were kept busy with the sacraments, spiritual conferences, individual spiritual direction to the parishioners and religious in the neighborhood, as well as the details of administrating and maintaining the parishes. There were seven parish priests besides me and eight brothers stationed at St. Alphonsus.

Later that year, the Redemptorists superiors were called to Rome to consider legislation for the men worldwide. For our Chapter, we elected a delegate from the province to make the trip. Secretly, I really wanted to be elected, not so much for the honor this would bestow upon me but because a trip to Rome would enable me to visit my family back in Bavaria while I was in Europe. Unfortunately, I was not chosen.

For some reason or another, people often ask me about several wonderful healings that took place when I prayed with these sick or injured people. I was always thankful to the power of God in these instances and I really don't want to talk about them for fear of taking the credit for the healings. Any wonder involved in these events belongs solely to the compassion of God. In fact, I was very much aware of my own weaknesses. I was also reminded of my inadequacy when a burden fell upon my head. I was, at the time, the highest authority among the Redemptorists in America when one of our men became

mentally unstable. We had to place him in a facility run by the Sisters of Charity for the mentally deranged. When I visited this man later, I thought he seemed recovered and, against the recommendation of the hospital staff, I brought him back to community. It didn't work out well and he had to be readmitted into the hospital. The confreres didn't much appreciate my compassion and even wrote to Rome about the incident, condemning me.

Beyond my spiritual struggles, my body showed me just how vulnerable I was. In March 1857, I fell sick. After hearing confessions for many hours, when I left the confessional and stretched to restore my circulation, blood started coming from my mouth. One of the confreres saw this and reported the incident to the provincial. From Saturday afternoon until Sunday afternoon, the blood continued issuing from a hemorrhage in my throat. I did go back to the confessional after supper on Saturday evening and Sunday morning but was eventually I transferred to the smaller St. Mary's Parish in Annapolis, Maryland, for health reasons. But my time in Annapolis would be short-lived; after only a month I was sent to Cumberland, Maryland. I was appointed prefect of our professed students in Cumberland. The former director of students was considered too rigid, melancholic, and ignorant of the American character. I was seen as the person who could bring stability to the house of formation. So I moved on to Maryland.

To be continued...

Save the Date: Upcoming Events at the Shrine

Sunday, January 10, 2021 ~ Seelos Healing Mass

Monday, January 11, 2021 ~ Seelos' Birthday & Celebratory Fundraiser

To learn more about these events, call (504) 525-2495 or visit SEELOS.org.



Blessings for the Sick

Hospital visits with a Seelos Crucifix

(Only family members may request)



JEFFERSON / ORLEANS

EAST JEFFERSON GENERAL HOSPITAL

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 / ORLEANS PARISH

Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

WESTBANK

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

LOUISIANA

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

HOUMA / THIBODAUX

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

IOTA

Anne Ritter (337) 254-8451

LAKE CHARLES

Lisa Verrette (337) 274-4810

LULING & SURROUNDING AREA

David Faucheaux (504) 908-4120

MANDEVILLE

David Brumfield (985) 234-9355
Lisa and Eric Johnsen (985) 276-4445
Kathy Newcomb (225) 978-9284

NEW IBERIA / ABBEVILLE / JEANERETTE

Rachel Gonsoulin (337) 224-7855

OPELOUSAS

Suzanne Pitre (337) 351-8489

PONCHATOULA / 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 Nootte (504) 460-2340

OUTSIDE OF LOUISIANA

KATY, TEXAS

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

GRACES RECEIVED & PRAYERS ANSWERED

KENNER, LA

I was diagnosed with stage 3-B lung cancer with a tumor the size of a grapefruit pushing against my heart. They could not do surgery until they shrunk the cancer with radiation and chemotherapy. After the tumor shrank, two-thirds of my lung was removed. I

have been in remission for 10 years. The oncologist and intern said they honestly did not think I would make it because 3-B stage cancer is usually incurable. I attribute my healing to the glory of the Lord Jesus and the powerful intercession of Blessed Seelos.

WALL, NJ

After an ultrasound for ovarian fibroids, my doctor called to tell me there was a mass found in my bladder, and to go immediately to a urologist for a biopsy. The night before the procedure, I placed Fr. Seelos' mission cross and holy oil on

my abdomen where it stayed all night while I slept. Waking up from the anesthesia after the procedure, the doctor was at my bedside letting me know my bladder was completely normal! Thanks be to God, thank you Fr. Seelos!

LAKE CHARLES, LA

I prayed to Bl. Seelos for his intercession in my brother's recent surgery for placement of a pacemaker and defibrillator in him. The doctors were amazed how well he did when there was little hope for

recovery. I have made many requests to Bl. Seelos for me and my family in cases of cancer, heart attack, strokes, addition and dementia. Thank you, Lord, for Bl. Seelos!!

ORANGE BEACH, AL

On September 12, 2020, my husband and I left Orange Beach in our motor home to flee Hurricane Sally. We were unable to take our van with us. We decided to leave a 3rd class Blessed Seelos relic prayer card inside the van to protect

it from flooding and wind damage. Our van was parked right next to a shed with a steel door. The steel door blew off but did not hit the van. Our neighbors were all amazed at this. Thank you Blessed Seelos for your protection.



Submit Your Testimonial Online!

Your words offer encouragement to others in need of Seelos' intercession.

www.seelos.org/submit-a-healing-or-favor

SHRINE, MUSEUM & WELCOME CENTER HOURS

Monday-Saturday 10am-2pm | Please see seelos.org for visiting guidelines.



Holiday Blessings to You from the Shrine Staff

At Christmastime, we give thanks for “God’s indescribable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15) in our prayers and Masses at the Seelos Shrine, and we remember you for the gift that you have been to us this year.

May this holy season not only bring peace on earth but abiding peace to you and your loved ones.

We extend our best wishes for a blessed Christmas & Happy New Year!

The Seelos Staff

HOT IN THE SHOP ~ CHRISTMAS GIFTS!

Visit Seelos.org to view additional items available for sale in the Gift Shop.*



SLEEPING LAMB MUSICAL PLUSH – \$18

From Baby Ganz, this sweet stuffed animal plays “Jesus Loves Me”.



OLD WORLD ORNAMENTS – \$20 each

Made from recycled paperboard. Choice of Mary, Holy Family or Cathedral



WOODEN BOX WITH NATIVITY SCENE – \$32

10” box with drawer. Perfect for storing prayer cards, rosaries, etc.



HOLY MEDAL ORNAMENT – \$22

Handmade wooden frame ornament with brass filigree & crystals. Choice of Holy Family, Seelos or Mary.



MARY & CHILD STATUE – \$26

5” resin figurine of the Blessed Mother cradling the Christ Child.



“MEDITATIONS ON VATICAN ART ANGELS” – \$36

Book with art from the Vatican Museums, angelic encounters in Scripture.

**Prices listed above include shipping / handling. Prices online and in the Welcome Center Gift Shop may vary.*

SUPPORT THE MISSION OF THE SHRINE



LIGHT A CANDLE: A vigil candle will burn near Seelos’ sacred resting place for an offering of \$3-\$4. Please visit seelos.org/light-a-votive-candle.



REQUEST A RELIC: 3rd Class Relics are available in either laminated prayer cards or as a crocheted memento for an offering of \$2 each.



SHOP ONLINE: Many items in the Gift Shop are available for purchase at seelos.org/gift-shop. 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: _____

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS



In February 2021 we will be removing inactive subscribers from our mail list. **To ensure that you continue to receive this newsletter in the mail for another year** please fill out the form to the left and mail it with a \$12 offering (to defray the cost of printing and mailing) in the enclosed envelope.

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.

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