

He has Risen!



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SEELOS CENTER NEWS

APRIL 2021

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

Dear Devotees of Blessed Seelos,

During the month of April we remember with thanksgiving not only the glory of Easter with the fresh growth of spring, and this year in particular the lessening of the ravages of the pandemic, but also for us at the Shrine, the historic moment when Francis Xavier Seelos was beatified by St. Pope John Paul II on April 9, 2000.

Fr. Seelos was revered during his life in the places he served in ministry. Not only the people of the parishes, but also the Redemptorist novices and students he was charged with instructing and nurturing knew there was something special about this man. At his wake, people touched religious articles to his body and it was urged that his letters and other witnesses of his life be gathered in the hope that he would soon be canonized a saint. This was the conviction of all who knew him.

Fr. Seelos died in 1867 and was very beloved. Why, then, did it take so long for the Church to declare him Blessed? The simple answer is that as a rule, being raised to the altar as a Blessed takes a period of time. The Church is very careful and thorough in its consideration of sanctity. Volumes of material must be gathered showing that the individual was truly venerable, and a healing attributed to his or her intercession must be shown to be scientifically inexplicable. This was demonstrated for Blessed Seelos in the account of the healing of Angela Boudreaux in 1966. We at the Seelos Center continue to gather information about extraordinary happenings in the lives of the faithful who seek the intercession of Blessed Seelos.

At the time of his death, Brother Louis Kenning, C.Ss.R. wrote about Father Seelos: "...every one of us, and actually everyone who has ever known him, considers him a saint and rightly so, for he is one." To this day, pilgrims continue to stream to his shrine and beg him to join his prayers with theirs in their need. His powerful intercession is constantly invoked and noted.



Fr. Richard Boever, C.Ss.R.

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

THE MIRACULOUS HEALING OF ANGELA BOUDREAUX

Excerpt from Liguorian.com

In 1966, a medical examination revealed that Angela Boudreaux's abdomen was swollen to proportions of a six-month pregnancy from a liver nine times normal size. Exploratory surgery determined that 90% of her liver was "replaced" by a malignant tumor. Several pathologists confirmed the findings. Angela, a wife and mother of four, was told she had two weeks to live. On her way home from the hospital, she prayed at the tomb of Fr. Seelos and was blessed with his mission cross.

When Angela was still alive a month later, she was placed on a highly experimental chemotherapy with little chance of success; she was also warned that the chemicals were painful enough to confine her to bed for a year. Angela suffered no side effects and made a complete recovery. A few years later, gallbladder surgery revealed only minor scars on her liver. Her surgeon was not aware of such an advanced case of liver cancer being cured so rapidly—especially considering the rudimentary chemotherapy available at that time. This non-Catholic, self-described man of science—whom Angela had persuaded to wear a memento of Father Seelos during her exploratory surgery—said it was the closest thing to a miracle he had ever witnessed. Angela's cure was unanimously approved by the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints as the miracle needed to beatify Father Seelos.

Seelos: Part 11 – A not-so-ordinary soldier in the sunny South

This series, 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 arrived in New Orleans on September 28, 1866. On the train ride with me to the Crescent City, there was a School Sister of Notre Dame also heading there for her apostolic work. She asked me how long I would be staying in New Orleans. I told her that I'd be there for a year and then die.

New Orleans was not an assignment most Redemptorists thought of as a plum. It was hot and humid and so many died of fevers that most preferred not to be assigned there. For me, however, I was very pleased to be going there.



St. Mary's, New Orleans

There were seven priests and six brothers in the local community which served three large churches—St. Alphonsus for the English speaking, St. Mary's for the German speaking and Notre Dame for the French speaking. Fr. Duffy was the rector of the community and pastor of

all three parishes, while another priest was given special charge of each of the parishes. I told the rector that it was good to be assigned to the sunny south and to be assigned as an ordinary soldier without authority. I did not get off the hook so easily; I was appointed prefect of St. Mary's Church and was expected to make most of the decisions for the community of parishioners.

Like all the priests and brothers, I also took duty in the other two churches as needed. In addition, I was appointed prefect of the Brothers and spiritual director to the German speaking School Sisters of Notre Dame. My regular duties included saying Mass, hearing confessions, visiting the sick and orphans, preaching and giving conferences to various religious communities in the city. There was always a lot of work, and I was fully engaged in being a parish priest. I wrote to a fellow Redemptorist: "Oh, what a blessed winter in New Orleans — I had no idea, though you often told me. And the southern plants!!! The bananas, oh, wisdom God! Oh, beauty of that creative power which brought to existence such vegetation. Sometimes it happens to me as it happened to the Queen of Saba, 'and she had no breath any more' for admiration."

During my stay in New Orleans, I gathered, without intent, a large following of faithful sons and daughters. I spent long hours in the confessional and never rushed any of them. I promised always to receive each penitent with gentleness,

and I strove to live up to that promise. I was usually the first person to respond to sick calls in the homes of our parishioners, especially at night so the other fathers could get their rest.

I had only been in the parish two months when on the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, a party for me was given with such an outpouring of affection that it caught me off guard. I always found it easier to celebrate love for others better than I was able to receive it without embarrassment. There was in the parish a society of women, mostly old and poor, numbering about two hundred that some of the fathers affectionately referred to as the "Old Beauties". They worked hard to make my feast day a special time. I was sometimes teased by the confreres for being too nice to them. I responded that rudeness does no good and kindness can do no harm.

"Rudeness does no good and kindness can do no harm."

The apostolic work at St. Mary's was intense, but I found that people were always ready to respond, and they were very grateful. My English was still accented and, though I could understand others speaking to me in English and French, I sometimes had a bit of difficult time expressing myself as well as I wished in these languages. But the people didn't seem to hold my imperfection against me. The people of God are very gracious.

To be continued...

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos: My Story

The series about the life of Blessed Seelos featured in issues of this newsletter will be produced in an expanded form in a book written by Fr. Rich Boever and published by Liguori Publications. It will be available for purchase in September. If you would like to be alerted when the book becomes available, email info@seelos.org or call (504) 525-2495.



Blessings for the Sick

Hospital visits with a Seelos Crucifix

(Only family members may request)

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GRACES RECEIVED & PRAYERS ANSWERED

CINCINNATI, OH

For the past year, I have been praying for the healing of my mother-in-law's stage 4 breast cancer through the intercession of Blessed Francis Seelos. Last week we

learned that her scans have come back clear. We believe it is a miracle and we are so grateful to God!

BATON ROUGE, LA / JACKSONVILLE, FL

In 2003, my sister-in-law Martha received a miracle after a blessing at the church of St. Mary's Assumption. Martha had ovarian cancer and had already gone through chemo and radiation without success. Her doctor had informed her that she had about 3 months to live and should get her final arrangements in order. So Martha and her husband traveled from their home in Florida to visit relatives in Texas for what she thought would be their last time together.

he put his hand on her right shoulder, and I had my hand on her left shoulder. He began saying a special blessing when all of a sudden I felt a jolt go through Martha and then through myself. We didn't say anything until the blessing was finished. We thanked the gentleman for helping her. By this time we were crying about what was facing us in the next few months. Martha and I talked about what happened during the prayers, but did not realize at that time the significance of what we both felt.

On the way back, they stopped in Baton Rouge to spend a few days with us. We made an overnight trip to New Orleans to visit a variety of historical sites. That is when we saw a sign inviting pilgrims to visit the Seelos Shrine. My husband and I had heard our relatives talk about Bl. Seelos and felt we should stop for a visit. My sister-in-law, being of German descent, was particularly interested in seeing the inside of the church.

Martha and her husband left the next day to return to Jacksonville. She did not receive any more treatments and just waited for her final day. It never came.

When we entered, we saw a gentleman praying with other people. After they finished, we asked him if he would pray with Martha. He asked Martha to hold the crucifix with the relic of Bl. Seelos,

In the Spring of 2020, (seventeen years later) Martha went to see her original doctor, a world-renowned oncologist. He examined her and said he couldn't believe she was still living and that it had to be a miracle because none of his other patients with serious ovarian cancer had survived.

Our family has truly been blessed and we're thankful to Bl. Seelos. Martha is now 81 years old and still getting around.



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.

HOT IN THE SHOP

Visit SEELOS.org to view all of the items available for sale in the Gift Shop.



NEW! LAST SUPPER EASEL PLAQUES – LARGE \$29, SMALL \$20.50

These resin plaques with attached easels feature a beautifully carved image of Leonardo da Vinci's iconic The Last Supper painting. Large 3.5" x 7" ~ Small 2.5" x 5"



SEELOS SERENITY PRAYER CARD – \$3.50

Laminated card featuring an image of Seelos and the Serenity Prayer.



"CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL - THANKS MOM" – \$18

This book will touch the hearts of mothers with its stories of gratitude and love.



OUR LADY OF SMILES STATUE – \$45.50

This 8.5" resin statue of Our Lady and her gentle smile is a sweet reminder of the love she has for us.



PRAYER CARD HOLDER – \$14

Holds up to 40 prayer cards with expandable snap closure.



"GRAHAM CRACKERS, GALOSHES & GOD" – \$15

Book of conversations with God. Part funny reflection, part gentle meditation.



SEELOS MASK – \$10

Dark blue reusable 3-layer face mask with adjustable straps, featuring a quote from Blessed Seelos.



SEELOS MASK NECKLACE – \$7.50

Choice of silver or gold cord with clasps and an image of Seelos. Holds your mask so you don't have to.

Quantities are limited. 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

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