



VOLUME 117

SEELOS CENTER NEWS

NOVEMBER 2024

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

Dear Devotees of Blessed Seelos:

It was a wonderful sight to witness the presence of the many pilgrims and devotees of Blessed Seelos who filled the pews at the most recent Seelos Healing Mass held this October! Your presence, whether in person or in spirit, was deeply felt and cherished. For those unable to attend, please know you were remembered in our prayers.

During our time together, we reflected on the life of Blessed Seelos, a man who embodied the Christian values of hospitality and welcome. He embraced the many challenges of Christian discipleship with a contagious joy and unwavering charity. When Blessed Seelos arrived in New Orleans for what would be his final assignment, he predicted that he would only serve for one year before succumbing to yellow fever. Even with this knowledge, he welcomed the opportunity to serve as a missionary, ever open to the unknown.

Blessed Seelos' welcoming spirit was not limited to his missionary zeal. He was constantly available to those in need, spending long hours in the confessional and ministering to those on their deathbeds. His life of welcome was deeply rooted in a profound sense of joy and gratitude.

When we recognize the blessings we receive from God, we are called to joyfully share those blessings with everyone we encounter – friends, neighbors, and strangers. This act of sharing is a testament to our faith and a source of inspiration for others.

At the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, we strive to embody this same spirit of welcome. Our Shrine is a place of refuge, hospitality, and peace for all who seek healing and hope. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated staff and many volunteers of the Shrine. Their service truly reflects the gentle and welcoming spirit of Blessed Seelos, who reminds us in his own words: *"Oh, come without fear or trembling! I promise to receive you with all gentleness."*



Father Aaron Meszaros, C.Ss.R.

Vicar Provincial Superior, The Redemptorists, Denver Province

PRAYER FOR GENEROSITY



Eternal Word, only begotten
Son of God,

Teach me true generosity,

Teach me to serve you
as you deserve,

To give without counting
the cost,

To fight heedless of wounds,

To labor without seeking rest,

To sacrifice myself without
thought of any reward,

Save the knowledge that
I have done your will.

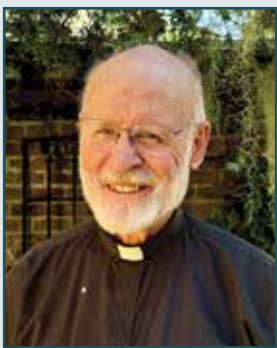
Amen.

– St. Ignatius of Loyola

~ Moments from Mass ~
Seelos Healing Mass, October 6, 2024



Meet Father Tim Watson, New Seelos Shrine Chaplain!



Hi, I'm the newest member of the Redemptorist Community here in New Orleans. I'm Father Tim Watson, C.Ss.R. and I am not a complete newbie to Louisiana. I have been serving in Baton Rouge since 2019. In Baton Rouge we have St. Gerard Majella Church, which was established in 1944; and we also have a large Hispanic community from Mexico and Central America which we serve in five churches from Gonzales, LA in the southeast to Morganza near the Mississippi border. I arrived in New Orleans on September 23rd, and am looking forward to ministry here.

I am originally from Portland, Oregon, and am the oldest of five. I was educated in Catholic schools through high school. After high school, I joined the Air Force and was on active duty for almost 13 years during the Vietnam war, but was never sent there. I graduated from Colorado State University in 1969 thanks to the Air Force.

After military service, I sold real estate for almost five years in my home town of Portland, Oregon, then worked in technical management in Alaska at Air Force Radar Sites. After some time in Alaska, I started thinking about the priesthood. I entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer at the age of 42, completed 8 years of studies and was ordained in 1990. After a few years in Bolivia, South America to learn Spanish, I served in various parishes on the west coast, and as a federal prison chaplain for several years. I am now happily in New Orleans to see what the Lord wants me to do here.

Blessings for the Sick

*Hospital visits with a Seelos Crucifix
(Only family members may request)*

JEFFERSON / ORLEANS

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

EAST JEFFERSON GENERAL HOSPITAL
Anne Batt (504) 458-0310
Amy Morel (504) 416-5018
Matt Morel (504) 416-6073
Norris Plaisance (504) 235-1961

OCHSNER (JEFFERSON)
Amy Morel (504) 416-5018
Matt Morel (504) 416-6073
Norris Plaisance (504) 235-1961
Monica Surprenant (401) 207-5521

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

ORLEANS PARISH
Amy Morel (504) 416-5018
Matt Morel (504) 416-6073
Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

WESTBANK
Elaine Freeman (504) 341-2213
Mary Grace Orsag (504) 367-7515

LOUISIANA

ALEXANDRIA
Mary Ann Reddoch (318) 277-0545
Deacon Bill & Joan Travis (318) 664-7069

BALDWIN / FRANKLIN
Patti Ibert (337) 828-0141

BATON ROUGE
Gloria Bacqué (225) 753-3800

COVINGTON
Dr. Ann Logarbo (985) 886-0218

HOUMA / THIBODAUX
Debbie Badeaux (985) 438-4096
Margo Battaglia Clement (985) 637-6056
Deacon Rod Fonseca (504) 320-7450
Sheila Fonseca (504) 320-9807

IOTA
Anne Ritter (337) 254-8451

LAFAYETTE / ABBEVILLE / ERATH
Boniface "Boni" Suire (337) 937-5675

LAKE CHARLES
Lisa Verrette (337) 274-4810

LULING & SURROUNDING AREA
David Fauchaux (504) 908-4120

MANDEVILLE / SLIDELL
David Brumfield (985) 234-9355
Lisa and Eric Johnsen (985) 640-1677
Kathy Newcomb (225) 978-9284

NEW IBERIA / ABBEVILLE / JEANERETTE
Rachel Gonsoulin (337) 224-7855

OPELOUSAS
Suzanne Pitre (337) 351-8489

PONCHATOULA
David and Joan Diaz (504) 715-6642

PRAIRIEVILLE / GONZALES
Deacon Claude Bourgeois (225) 337-0945

SHREVEPORT / BOSSIER CITY
Tom and Marjorie Rivers (318) 797-3116

OUTSIDE OF LOUISIANA

MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST
Elena Guida (228) 596-3085

KATY, TEXAS
Donna Johnson (713) 826-4191
Lauren Johnson (281) 851-1321



SHRINE SPOTLIGHT

Noah & Amber Billeaud-Lehotsky



What would you like to share about your health journey?

Amber says, "In March 2024, at 23 years old and pregnant with our first child, I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma (HL). It's a rare blood cancer that makes up only 10% of all blood cancer cases. One day, I had a head cold and noticed a swollen lymph node on my neck. Thinking nothing of it, I went to urgent care and they sent me to the ER. The swollen mass was biopsied and I was diagnosed with stage 2 Hodgkins Lymphoma. I was told that the chemotherapy would possibly make me infertile and that I would lose my hair. My husband and I are Catholic and do not believe in using IVE, but my doctor recommended that we visit a fertility clinic before starting chemo to see if I could save my eggs. The clinic tested me and said that my egg levels were low but I should be ok because of my age. Ironically, I was already pregnant but we didn't know.

I became Catholic on Easter 2024, and the day after, on my birthday (April 1), I found out that I was pregnant. Two days later was port placement surgery, and chemotherapy the following week. I had to cancel those appointments because the baby was only 4 weeks old in gestation and chemotherapy would have caused a medical abortion. I found out about the pregnancy at the best time to save our baby's life, but now it wasn't just about me anymore. I asked my doctor bluntly if he thought that I'd die if we postponed treatment. He said that I could wait but couldn't tell me if the cancer would spread. Luckily, HL at any stage is treatable while pregnant, as long as the treatment is in the second or third trimester. So, I made the decision to wait until the second trimester, knowing the risk of the cancer worsening. We learned that I had 12 tumors in my chest and neck, the largest being the size of a lemon next to my heart. I was in a lot of pain waiting for the chemo, but I knew it was what I needed to do to help give our baby the best chance to live.

As of October 2024, I've completed most of my chemotherapy treatments and I haven't lost any hair. I've even had nurses ask to take pictures of me because they've never seen a patient with HL be pregnant, still have hair, and be energetic while receiving treatment. I have stopped chemo at 32 weeks to deliver our baby girl, and I will finish my last two chemo treatments after delivery. So far, she is healthy and my pregnancy is normal. I am very thankful that none of my doctors recommended abortion, as 60% of doctors recommend abortion in cases like mine (according to the Hope For Two Foundation).

It's been incredibly difficult physically being sick with cancer/chemo treatments and being pregnant at the same time. I am usually sick for half of the month each month. My husband and I have used all of our paid time off from work for appointments and treatment days. It's been a very long and difficult year, but also a year with many blessings and prayers that have been answered."

How did you learn about Father Seelos?

Amber says, "Our parish priest gave us a first-class relic of Blessed Seelos to have during the duration of my health journey. Dave White, a friend and volunteer for the Seelos Shrine, invited us to a Seelos Healing Mass after we found out about my diagnosis. And my nurse coordinator, Andrea, is also a volunteer and continually prays for us at the Shrine."

What brought you to the Shrine?

"We initially visited because we were invited by Dave and Andrea, but after learning more about Blessed Seelos, my husband and I really felt grateful to be kept in everyone's thoughts and prayers. It motivated us to be more hopeful about my health condition and the health of our unborn baby. It helped calm our nerves and anxieties."

SHRINE, MUSEUM & WELCOME CENTER HOURS

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



ALERT: TEXT SCAM NOTICE

We are aware that some Seelos Shrine devotees have recently been targeted by scammers requesting donations in our name, via text. **Seelos Shrine priests, staff and volunteers do not ask for donations via text.**

To donate, call (504) 525-2495 or visit www.seelos.org/donate.

ALL SOULS DAY NOVEMBER 2: PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SOULS IN PURGATORY

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen.

— St. Gertrude the Great

HOT IN THE SHOP



NEW! 13" BLESSING BEADS WITH HANDMADE CLAY CROSS – \$25

A unique way to remind you of God's love and make a thoughtful all-occasion gift! Crafted from hand-painted wooden beads, each bead set comes with a blessing card. Choose your bead color: natural, duck egg blue, gray, navy or pink.



SEELOS "MIRACLE" MUG – \$22

This 10oz mug features an image of Seelos and his quote, "Every day holds the possibility of a miracle."



"DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" BOOK – \$21

A tender account of Blessed Seelos' final weeks of life as told primarily by those who witnessed his heroic death.



HAND-PAINTED SEELOS BOOKMARK – \$8

Created by New Orleans artist Marina Reed, this bookmark features an artistic rendering of Blessed Seelos.



PURGATORY PRAYER SET – \$22

Features "Day By Day for the Holy Souls in Purgatory" book and "Apostolic Pardon for the Dying" prayer card.

Quantities are limited. Prices 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-\$5. Visit seelos.org/light-a-votive-candle.



REQUEST A RELIC: Relics are available for an offering of \$2.50 each at SEELOS.org/gift-shop.



INCLUDE US IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN: There are several options for including the Shrine in your estate plan. Visit seelos.org/charitable-giving to learn more about charitable giving.

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



SEELOS CENTER NEWS (USPS 4472) is published monthly at The National Shrine of Blessed Seelos, a ministry of the Redemptorist Fathers and Brothers.

Staff: Leila Benazo, Geri Bothman, Heidi Groat, Patricia Norman, Marilyn Olivard, Shelly Raynal

Denver Provincial Superior:
Very Reverend Kevin Zubel, C.Ss.R.

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

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: _____

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

Please remove change my name and address as follows:

Name: _____

Address: _____