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SEELOS CENTER NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2024

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

“Seelos in St. Louis” Guest Column

by Father Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

In the mid-nineteenth century, St. Louis gained a reputation for welcoming Catholic immigrants, while many other major cities either disdained them or tolerated them, at best. “As no city in the United States enjoys greater opportunity for the practice of the Catholic religion, so there is none that expresses Catholic life and Catholic character better than St. Louis,” wrote Bishop Peter Kenrick of St. Louis to a German prelate in 1844.

Significant numbers of German immigrants began to arrive in St. Louis in the late 1830s. The city had only 5,825 inhabitants in 1830, but by 1860, its population swelled to 160,773. “The ratio of immigrants to native born reached fifty percent with many poor Irish fleeing the potato blight and a distinct group of Germans coming from financially stable north and west German communities,” wrote William Barnaby Faherty, S.J. in *St. Louis: A Concise History*.



St. Mary of the Victories in St. Louis
Image courtesy smov.info.

Of the number of immigrants to St. Louis, no other nationality equaled the Germans. As a result, the Church of St. Mary of the Victories was established for German-speaking Catholics as a succursal church, or subsidiary to the Cathedral. Bishop Antoine Blanc of New Orleans blessed the cornerstone on June 25, 1843, and the first Mass took place the following year.

Father Joseph Melcher, the second pastor of St. Mary’s and Vicar-General of the diocese, managed the parish for twenty-one years before he became bishop of Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 1868. During his pastorate, the

church was enlarged according to the original cruciform design, and a massive campanile was added on the north side of the edifice.

A local church historian wrote that in this same period of time, no other church of the city had a more solemn High Mass than at Old St. Mary’s.

SEELOS HEALING MASSES

& ANOINTING OF THE SICK



Sunday, October 6, 2024

ENGLISH MASS ~ 1:00 pm CT

St. Mary’s Assumption Church
and on Facebook Live
Maurice Nutt, C.Ss.R., Celebrant

VIETNAMESE MASS ~ 3:30 pm CT

St. Mary’s Assumption Church
Tat T. Hoang, C.Ss.R., Celebrant



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Mass, call (504) 525-2495.

Moreover, to help meet the spiritual needs of the faithful, the Redemptorists were invited to conduct a parish mission in 1865. The year had been a tumultuous one for the country. Robert E. Lee's defeat on April 9 began the long-awaited end of the Civil War, but President Lincoln was assassinated within the week, his assassin was killed later that month, and four conspirators were hanged in July.

A chronicle of missions, and other sources from the Redemptorist archives, records that Fathers Francis Xavier Seelos, John Schneider, Joseph Jacobs, and William Loewekamp gave the mission at St. Mary's Church from October 1 to October 15. "This mission was even more successful than the previous one that had been given there. During the last three days Father Seelos took the larger boys who were going to school and prepared them for confession; the number of communions were 1350."

The Redemptorists had been conducting one- to two-week parish missions to help strengthen the spiritual life of the faithful and convert lapsed Catholics since their earliest days in America in 1832. However, to Father Seelos' credit, during his time as superior of the missions in the mid-1860s, the prestige of the Redemptorist missionaries in the U.S. reached new heights and the demand for their apostolic labors was great. In some places, Catholics made the effort to travel between ten and thirty miles to attend the mission.

"No one else made such a favorable impression on the missions as the saintly-looking Father Seelos. When he mounted the pulpit, tall, slight, and ascetic-looking, his listeners were immediately attracted to his cheerful personality, gentle manner, and kindly tones."

A contemporary noted the one who made the most favorable impression on the missions was always the saintly-looking Father Seelos. When he mounted the pulpit, tall, slight, and ascetic-looking, his listeners were immediately attracted to his cheerful personality, gentle manner, and kindly tones.

On one occasion, when a "hellfire and brimstone" fellow missionary boasted how strongly he intended to castigate the congregation in a sermon, Seelos objected, "It's out of place, Father, entirely out of place."

On another occasion at Woodstock, Illinois, in 1863, the missionaries had to lodge with a tavern keeper. Yet, despite their accommodating host, some of the preachers not only spoke vigorously from the pulpit on the evils of drink, they also persuaded the tavern keeper to agree to specific stipulations to help his patrons stay on the side of sobriety!

Likewise, in St. Louis, did Father Seelos and the other missionaries at St. Mary's directly condemn prevalent German-Catholic brewers and tavern keepers for producing and distributing the alcoholic drink?

Not likely.

Such an assurance is due primarily to this fact: In 1864, Seelos had been part of a Redemptorist collaborative effort that instituted the first full-scale

mission regulations in America. One of these regulations was notably characteristic of Seelos. It attempted to tone down harsh vitriolic attacks from the pulpit—especially outright condemnations of tavern keepers!

New in the Shop: Mini Redemptorist Prayer Crucifix with Holy Medals



This 5" tall black and silver-toned prayer crucifix features the distinctive Redemptorist skull and crossbones at the feet of the crucified Jesus, accompanied by a powerhouse of holy medals: Blessed Seelos, St. Gerard Majella, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. John Neumann and Our Mother of Perpetual Help.

Made in Italy, this crucifix is considered a relic, having been blessed with the actual cross Father Seelos used during his missions.

\$24 in the Gift Shop

To order, call (504) 525-2495 or visit www.SEELOS.org/gift-shop.



Shrine Prayer Phone Line

Call our prayer line any time at (504) 586-1803 to hear a recorded message and prayer.

Blessings for the Sick

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

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GRACES RECEIVED & PRAYERS ANSWERED

WIGGINS, MS

In July 2023, at 70 years of age, I fell and hit my right shoulder on an iron gate, and continued to fall and hit the ground directly on that same shoulder. My arm was in severe pain, and I could not move it to the right, left, forward, backward, point up, or point down without being in agonizing pain. I went to the orthopedic doctor and he gave me some injections in the shoulder. But the injections did not help at all.

Several weeks went by and I was still in severe pain. My doctor ordered an MRI of the shoulder to see what the problem was. The results came back, and the main tendon from the arm going into the shoulder had been almost completely SEVERED. No wonder my arm was in so much distress!

The doctor said I needed surgery to fix the issue. I was taking care of my daughter

who was going through breast cancer treatment, and I was her only caregiver. I could not possibly have the surgery and be laid up for a while, unable to help her or drive her to appointments. So I prayed to Father Seelos.

After a couple of weeks of prayer, I started noticing that I was able to move my arm in certain directions without agonizing pain. Each week, my arm was gaining more range of motion.

In November of 2023, I went to pick up something heavy with my right arm without even thinking about it, and then noticed that it did not even hurt to lift it! By Christmas, I had regained full use of my arm without pain medicine, surgery, or physical therapy.

I know Father Seelos, intervened on my behalf. The power of prayer is amazing!!!



Praying for Grandparents

A book by Seelos Shrine Director
Father Maurice Nutt, C.Ss.R.

\$2.50 in the Gift Shop

Call (504) 525-2495 or order online!

Grandparents are very special people. It's hard to pay them back for everything they do, but we can pray for them. These prayers celebrate the good time we have with our grandparents and show them just how grateful we are to have them!



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PRAYER TO ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Jesus called you to bring the light of His love to those who live in darkness. By tender, loving care for the poorest and the neediest, you became the sign of God's presence, His love and compassion in the midst of suffering and pain. Following your example, help us to recognize the face of Jesus in our suffering brothers and sisters and to serve Him with humility and joy. Teach us to be carriers of God's tender love and mercy and so bear witness that God still loves the world through each one of us. Amen.

— www.entraide-missionnaire.com

HOT IN THE SHOP



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR STATUE – \$48

This beautiful 9" wooden statue of Our Lady of Prompt Succor was hand-painted by a group of Columbian widows who lost their husbands due to the violence in their country.



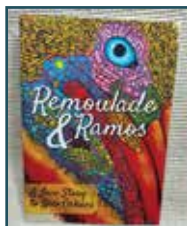
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Features prayers that cover important aspects of your grandchildren's lives.



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Comes in silver-toned or gold-toned finish and features pearl beads and a matching Seelos medal.



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This book weaves a tale of twins, fed by a pelican, with a young man's rite of passage.



"THEA BOWMAN: IN MY OWN WORDS" BOOK – \$15

Explore the thoughts, memories, and reflections of a prophetic preacher and teacher.

Quantities are limited. **Prices include shipping/handling.** Prices online and in the Welcome Center Gift Shop may vary.

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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



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