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SEELOS CAPSULES: For blessings of sick in hospitals in New Orleans area phone 895-6176 Visit Father Seelos' tomb - make monthly holy hour in St. Alphonsus Church Donation box now on pillar near tomb our thanks to all who made the Father Seelos Centennial a great success.

IT'S UNBELIEVABLE

by
John J. Vaughn

"It's unbelievable!"

This was the only comment we could make. I was standing in the rear of St. Alphonsus Church on Sunday, December 10 about 3 P.M. I was talking to one of the priests of the parish who was preparing to administer Baptism. In my hand was the cruifix of Father Seelos. ~~Kneel-~~ing in the church were over 300 people.

This had been going on all day. Crowds far surpassed my wildest expectations. I expected only a trickle of people to come for the blessings throughout the day and to visit St. Mary's Church. How wrong I was.

It began with the televised Mass at 9:30 A.M. Archbishop Hannan was celebrant, assisted by ten Redemptorist Fathers as concelebrants. Close to 1100 people packed the pews and the rear of St. Alphonsus Church.

The choir under the direction of Mr. Lloyd Celentano sang most beautifully. Commentary for the television audience was provided by Mr. T. J. Spitzfaden. Seminarians from Notre Dame Seminary under the direction of Mr. H. J. Adams, served the Mass. Mr. Dennis Waldron was commentator.

The devotion of the people was quite evident. At the conclusion of my sermon I read a passage from the writings of Father Neithart, an eyewitness of Father Seelos' death. He described how the Redemptorist Fathers sang hymns as Father Seelos died. In memory of that event the choir sang the same hymns - "Milde Koenigin" and "Mutter Ich Vergehe." During the singing the people knelt and prayed.

The camera crew under the direction of John Domec of WDSU-TV did an especially fine job of presenting a truly interesting program.

After the Mass I stood by the tomb of Father Seelos and administered blessings to anyone who came. It took me 35 minutes to complete these individual blessings.

This was only the beginning. The people streamed into St. Alphonsus Church every hour on the hour so much so that toward the end of the day I had to sit down for fear of fainting. I shall to my dying day always remember that crowd as they marched past me, a glint of faith and hope was in their eyes. The Blind groped their way forward in the line of humanity. Lame children in braces, retarded children, wrinkled old folks, sturdy workmen, frail women with several children, people with countless problems - Yes, all of them paraded before me to receive a blessing from the crucifix used by a man whom they consider to be a close friend of God.

I could not help thinking of the days of our Lord. Vast crowds of every day folks streamed to Him crying for just a little relief from the pains and distress of daily living. I knew that each person there had a real problem of one kind or another. I am sure there were many people present whom the doctor had told they had only so many months to live. I am sure there were many there whose marriages were in difficulty, whose children were creating problems for them, who were having financial worries. My guess is that almost any problem you could think of was represented there.

I cannot say that any startling miracles occurred on this day. However, I am certain that many hidden miracles did occur. The greatest miracles always occur in those who are not cured. I am sure that many who left that church with the same problem as they had entered left with a little more faith and hope in their hearts and a greater willingness to accept their cross. After all this is what is most important, isn't it?

The crowds that visited St. Mary's Church also surpassed our dreamiest expectations. Several of the guides were on their feet from 8:00 A.M. till 8:00 P.M. First, the guides explained the altar, its symbolism, and the names of the statues on the altar. They then displayed the open tomb of Father Seelos, where his remains had lain from 1902 until April of 1967. After this, the group proceeded

to the Perpetual Help altar, where there stood the original casket in which Father Seelos was buried in 1867. It was explained that the original sight of burial was in that location. The tomb was opened in 1902 and the bones removed from the metal casket and placed in a wooden box in the tomb in the sanctuary. In April of this year the remains were taken from the vault in St. Mary's and moved to St. Alphonsus Church.

Those present for the Mass or the visits in St. Mary's received a small piece of wood from the wooden casket in which he had been buried in 1902. We had prepared 11,000 of these small pieces of wood by lamination. Unbelievably our supply was gone by 1 P.M.

Incidentally we are preparing more of these and they will be available for distribution shortly. If you would like one, please write or phone the Seelos Center. We would like to apologize for not having sufficient supply on hand. We never dreamed they would go so fast.

In the rear of the church we had many relics of other saints and other interesting items concerning the history of St. Mary's Church. A large supply of literature was available and doubloons and pictures of Father Seelos were on sale.

Judging from the comments made by those touring this beautiful church, they were most impressed. Incidentally we have a sizeable leaflet explaining the various statues and symbols in St. Mary's Church. If you did not obtain one you may get one by writing to the Seelos Center.

The entire day was truly a visible demonstration of the extent of the devotion to Father Seelos that exists in the hearts of the people in the New Orleans area. May this devotion spread throughout the United States and may Father Seelos' name inspire faith and hope throughout the world.



Happy

New

Year



A PRAYER TO FATHER SEELOS

For your own intentions, and all the petitions placed before the tomb of Father Seelos, let us pause and say

O, MY GOD, I TRULY BELIEVE YOU ARE PRESENT WITH ME, I ADORE YOUR LIMITLESS PERFECTIONS. I THANK YOU FOR THE GRACES AND GIFTS YOU GAVE TO FATHER SEELOS, IF IT IS YOUR HOLY WILL, PLEASE LET HIM BE DECLARED A SAINT OF THE CHURCH SO THAT OTHERS MAY KNOW AND IMITATE HIS HOLY LIFE. THROUGH HIS PRAYERS PLEASE GIVE ME THIS FAVOR. . .