



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXVI, NUMBER 7

JULY 1987

FATHER SEELOS IN CUMBERLAND-MARYLAND



Saints Peter and Paul Seminary

Cumberland is in the heart of the Potomac Highlands. In 1849 the Redemptorists had taken over the parish of the German-speaking Catholics. The parish was dedicated to the holy apostles, Peter and Paul. Shortly thereafter, they started the first Redemptorist seminary in America. Within a few months after the arrival of Father Seelos on the scene, the number of seminarians had risen to seventy, far too many for the available accommodations.

Here Father Seelos was to wear three hats, pastor, teacher in the seminary, prefect or superior of the seminarians.

During his pastorate much of the work was understandably done by Father Adrian Van den Braak, the second in command, and the newly ordained priests. However, Father Seelos was much in evidence in preaching, catechizing and hearing confessions.

A good deal of his time was spent in the classroom. He taught dogmatic theology and sacred scripture for the first three years; for the last two years he taught sacred scripture and church history.

Father Seelos was at his best in his relations with the seminarians. He was kind and gentle – the drill-master technique was foreign to his nature. He was compassionate toward the sick. He was most approachable. He exacted obedience more by exhortation than by commanding it by military or semi-military methods. He was loved and respected by all.

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS

The sin by which man was lost, by which Adam forfeited his heavenly inheritance for himself and his posterity, was the sin of disobedience. To save man from the consequences of this sin, it was necessary to bring him back once more to a life of obedience and submission to the will of God. It was to encourage man in this that Jesus, the Most Holy Redeemer, led a life of the most perfect obedience.

His obedience began with His entrance into this world. I came from heaven, He said, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. Scripture represents His crying out with the prophet when He came into the world: "Sacrifice and oblation You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me . . . Then I said, Behold I come to do Your will, O God" (Heb. 10/5).

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John, 4/14). In every circumstance of His life Jesus was perfectly obedient to the will of His Father. This was the supreme love He rendered to Him. It was this, His Father's will, that gave merit to the sacrifice for the redemption of the world. From Bethlehem to Calvary He sought and performed only His Father's will. "I do always the things that please Him" (John, 8/29). In this He sets an example which we must follow. All our sanctification consists in submission to and union with the divine will. "The perfection of the human soul," says St. Thomas, "consists in its subjection to God." We must show this subjection by our humble acceptance of God's arrangements in all the circumstances of life – in sickness, failure, humiliations and contradictions. This is the service God desires most from us. This is the greatest sacrifice we can offer to Him. St. Alphonsus says, "The greatest glory we can give to God is to conform ourselves to His will."

Let us, therefore, endeavor always to render this homage to God. At times we may not be able to offer Him much else. No great work, unless done out of love, out of obedience, may be in our power. But if we offer to Him the sacrifice of complete submission to His holy will, it is enough!

George Corbett, C.S.S.R.

SPECIAL LETTERS

Gibsonia, Pa.

I read with great interest your article, "The Pittsburgh Connection", in the FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY newsletter, dated March, 1987.

My great grandparents, John Meinert (1818-1881) and Fransicha Lenger (1825-1903) were married in 1847 by Father Francis X. Seelos in a rural community near Pittsburgh. Now it is O'Hara Township. Interestingly enough, on the spot where stood the house they were married in, is now the site of a Catholic church. The parish is St. Joseph's, Pittsburgh, PA 15215.

Through the years my father related the story told to him by his mother that their parents were married by the small pious priest from Pittsburgh. He traveled in the countryside and ministered to the people. They would take him into their homes and he would marry, baptize, give the Eucharist. It was said that he was a most understanding confessor.

It was also said many times that Father Seelos encouraged the men and women he would visit to go to Pittsburgh to meet the Redemptorist priest, Father Neumann. Father Neumann would feed them spiritually.

In the years between 1830 and 1900 times must have been very difficult with much sickness and many babies died at very young ages. Times in general were very tough for people like my great grandparents. However, because of the Redemptorist priests, Father Neumann and Father Seelos, they gained faith, hope and charity. Certainly even today people remember the two instruments of the Lord sent to help lead souls to their Maker.

Very sincerely,
Evelyn Fabian

New Orleans, La.

My nephew was hit by a car and his right leg was badly crushed to the extent that all the bones from the knee down were crushed. The surgeon tried all known devices for such an injury. We didn't know whether he would lose his leg or not. Finally a bone transplant was made. Prayers to Father Seelos were made. The leg bone is healing, the graft is taking, and my nephew intends to run the River Road Run. Thanks to Father Seelos.

MARCH

Mail received during ~~January~~ 1987

Petitions 421 - Thanks 143 - Other 703 - Total 1267

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In conformity with the decree of Pope Urban VIII all statements contained herein are unreservedly submitted to the judgment of the Holy See and the decision of the Sacred Congregation of the Causes of Saints.

Published with Ecclesiastical Approbation.

Rev. Joseph Buhler, C.S.S.R., Vice-Postulator; Rev. Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R., Director and Editor; Miss Regina Beck and Warren Gautreau, Executive Assistants.

SPECIAL NOTES

1. The Father Seelos Museum is open on Saturdays after the vigil Mass in St. Mary's at 3:00 o'clock. It is open on Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 11:00. At other times by appointment. Call 525-2495, Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. We are pleased to accommodate pilgrimages to St. Mary's and the tomb of Father Seelos. Call or write for details.
 2. Every Sunday morning there is a special prayer service for the canonization of Father Seelos at 11:00 in St. Mary's church. It consists of exposition and benediction of the most Blessed Sacrament, a short meditation on the life of Christ, and time for private prayer. This service is followed by the 11:30 Sunday Mass.
 3. Telephone numbers to remember (the area code is 504):
 - 525-2495 - Father Seelos Center
 - 586-1803 - daily spiritual message
 - 895-6176 - blessings of the sick with mission crucifix of Father
 4. The contributions to the burse in memory of Father William Grangell, C.S.S.R., long-time vice-postulator of the cause of Father Seelos, continue to come in. The total amount is now over \$4,000. The burse is to help educate young men to the Redemptorist priesthood. The Redemptorists thank you.
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7/87

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