



# FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXX, NUMBER 1

JANUARY, 1991



## SHRINE FOR A SAINT

ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE NEUMANN, C.S.S.R., JANUARY 5

John Neumann, born in Bohemia in 1811, came to New York twenty-five years later and was ordained a priest for the diocese of New York. In 1840 he was the first novice of the American Redemptorists and in 1842 made his profession as a Redemptorist. When Father Seelos came to Pittsburgh, Father Neumann was the pastor and superior of the Redemptorist community. For almost three years the two of them lived together in the rectory at St. Philomena's. The bishop of Pittsburgh himself called this "the rectory where the saints lived."

In 1852 Neumann was appointed the fourth bishop of Philadelphia. In 1860 he died suddenly at the age of forty-eight. In June of 1977 he was the first male citizen of the United States of America to be declared a saint of the Church. His feast day is celebrated on January 5.

The bishop's body was buried in St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia. The lower church has become his shrine. Pope John Paul II paused here in prayer on his first papal visit to our shores.

## THE MAN AND WOMAN OF FAITH

With the Christmas events still vivid in our minds, it should be no surprise to our readers that as the woman and man of faith we choose Mary and Joseph, the Mother of the God-man and His foster father.

Nowhere was their faith (a humble acceptance of God's word) more exercised than in the mysterious event called the Incarnation of the Son of God. Both of them received the heavenly message in different circumstances. In both instances the message came through God's messengers, the angels.

Mary's heart must have skipped a beat when she heard the archangel Gabriel greet her with these words, "Rejoice, O highly favored daughter. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women" (Luke, 1/28). To calm her fears and to explain the reason for his greeting, the angel told her, "You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name of Jesus" (1/31). This statement caused her to ask one question, "How can this be since I do not know man?" (1/34). She was a virgin.

Then Gabriel proceeded to tell her that this conception would take place through the power of the Holy Spirit and "the holy offspring to be born will be called the Son of God" (1/35). It was then that Mary gave her reply: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" (1/38). God spoke, Mary heard, Mary accepted God's commission in faith. And through her humble act of faith, behold the Second Person of the Trinity took upon Himself our human nature and became man to dwell among us.

For Joseph it was another matter, more earthly in its dimensions. Mary did not tell him anything about the message of the angel. All of a sudden she was with child, Joseph knew but one thing, it was not his. Joseph was puzzled, and Mary confidently hoped that in God's good time and way her secret would be made known. In the meantime Joseph was pondering what course of action to take in regard to this unexplained pregnancy, to accept the child as his own and thus condone what may have been adultery or to divorce her quietly, as if that were possible. Joseph was too good a man to cause his intended wife such pain. But no matter what he did, it would seem Mary would have to bear the brunt of it.

But heaven to the rescue. The angel appeared to Joseph to tell him he need have no fear to take Mary as his wife, "that it was by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child" (Matthew, 1/20-21). Now Mary's secret was shared by Joseph and soon, Elizabeth and the shepherds and the Magi and holy old Simeon and the prophetess Anna, and then the world!

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

## SPECIAL LETTERS

Lafayette, LA

Our ten-month old grandbaby recently underwent a liver transplant at the Children's Medical Center in Dallas. I am happy to report that through the intercession of Father Seelos our grandson is doing remarkably well. We pray daily to Father Seelos and we certainly hope that he will be declared a saint of the Church.

Baton Rouge, LA

Not long ago I wrote to ask you to pray for my brother-in-law who had a stroke. His voice was paralyzed and he was unable to say a word. He was being fed through a tube into his stomach. I prayed to Father Seelos. He has made a great comeback. He is able to speak and has a good appetite now.

Gretna, LA

Father Seelos has come to my rescue once again. I finished taking radiation therapy for a cancer behind my nose. I went to my doctor this morning and he found the area where the cancer had been perfectly clean. I thank the Lord for His great gift.

New Orleans, LA

On a recent vacation two of our traveling group became seriously ill and required hospitalization. I prayed to Father Seelos asking that their condition would stabilize enough so that I could get them home to their family doctor. Needless to say, my prayers were answered and I was able to drive a great distance (with the approval of the doctor) and got them to their doctor.

Palestine, TX

I don't even know where to begin or how to start telling you about all the wonderful things that have happened to me in the last few weeks. Father Seelos has been so helpful, patient and understanding. He really is a fantastic and miraculous person. I have prayed every day to him about my job and the new contract that has been ratified. The company just accepted a new three-year contract, with raises, job opportunities and health benefits. I have been so worried about this and now I have chance to excel in the company. I have also prayed for a good hay harvest, much needed rain and success at the horse shows that I participate in. Father Seelos has been very gracious in all of these small and trivial matters, but he has helped me out in all my morning prayers. He is a very special friend and he listens to me all the time. I thank God for such a wonderful friend and confidant.

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Mail, September, 1990

Petitions: 573    Thanksgivings: 280    Other: 388    Total: 1241

Volunteer hours: 903

Dial-a-message: 701

Published monthly by the Redemptorists at the Father Seelos Center, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130. Telephone 525-2495. Subscription is \$2.00 per year.

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; Mrs. Angela Boudreaux and Mr. Cletus Stack, Executive Assistants.

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## SPECIAL NOTES

1. The Father Seelos Center offers the following:
  - a. "The Cheerful Ascetic," a biography of Father Seelos. Price: \$10.00.
  - b. "Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice," a TV documentary of the life of Father Seelos. VHS cassette only: \$45.00.
  - c. "Nothing Short of A Miracle," a book on the healing power of the saints, written by Patricia Treece. In it there are two chapters on Father Seelos. Price: \$8.95 plus postage.
  - d. "The Sanctified Body," by Patricia Treece, a study of the physical phenomena that accompany people who are close to God. Price: \$17.95 plus \$2.00 for postage.
  - e. Pamphlets, prayer-cards, mementos.
  - f. A daily spiritual message: dial (504) 586-1803.
  - g. Blessings of the sick with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos. Call The Father Seelos Center at 525-2495.
  - h. Pilgrimages to St. Mary's Church, the tomb and museum of Father Seelos. For further details and appointments, call the Center. (504) 525-2495.
  - i. PRAYER SERVICE FOR THE CANONIZATION OF FATHER SEELOS: every Sunday morning at 11 A.M. in St. Mary's Church. It is followed by the 11:30 parish Mass.
2. A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY IS TWO DOLLARS PER YEAR. We appreciate your letting us know you want to continue to receive the bulletin. Please use the form below for changes of address, corrections, duplications and renewals. Please return the lower portion of this page to us.

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Second class postage paid at New Orleans, LA.

New Orleans, LA 70130-5099

The Father Seelos Center

2030 Constance Street

is published monthly for \$2.00 per year, by

FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY (USPS 488-660)