



# FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XXXV, NUMBER 7

JULY, 1996

## FATHER SEELOS, EDUCATOR



During his relatively short ministry as a priest (less than 25 years), Father Seelos spent a majority of those years in forming future priests for his Redemptorist congregation in America. This stained-glass window, showing him with his young charges, is in St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia. St. Peter's contains the earthly remains of St. John Neumann, C.S.S.R. These two holy men labored in old St. Philomena's Church in Pittsburgh in the 1840's.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND SELF-FULFILLMENT

Father Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish Franciscan. During World War II he was imprisoned by the Nazis for refusing to cooperate with them in communications. He was sent to Auschwitz, the notorious death-camp. Once when some of the prisoners were going to be executed in reprisal for one escapee, he volunteered to take the place of a prisoner who was a married man. He subsequently was starved to death and killed with a lethal injection. He was declared a saint by Pope John Paul II. Patricia Treece wrote his biography and called him "A Man for Others."

The other day I heard a talk-show on the radio. The host, a psychologist, was explaining to a caller who felt short-changed in his human relations, "You're a Catholic. What is the first commandment and what is the second? One is to love God and the second is to love your neighbor. To love yourself must come in third place." That is putting it on the line.

On the face of it, the word 'self-fulfillment' should be easy to define. The dictionary tells us it is the fulfillment of one's hopes and aspirations. No one quarrels with that. We all have been endowed with special talents by our Creator, and we should all work to achieve our potential. Many people have a low sense of self-esteem.

If a follower of Christ is looking for the foundation of a good self-image, he can go to the Scriptures. From the sacred books we learn that we are all God's creation. His children, living on an earth He created by His word. We

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know that we have departed from His ways, that we are sinners. When we were in need of redemption, the Son of God, through birth of the blessed Virgin Mary, became man, our Brother. By His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, He restored us to friendship with the Father. He solemnly assured us that we would have eternal life, if we believed in Him and would eat His body and drink His blood in holy Communion. God loves us and knows each one of us by name. He loves us to death. That thought alone should raise the level of our self-esteem.

What concerns us more at this moment is the excessive seeking of self-fulfillment. Excessive seeking of self-fulfillment leads to selfishness and self-centeredness, the 'numero uno' syndrome, even to the trampling on the rights of others.

Selfishness can never be a part of the Christian life. Jesus asked us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and dared to challenge us to love the neighbor as He loved us — to death. St. Paul fills out for us the exercise of our love for neighbor: *"Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, to its hope, its power to endure"* (1 Cor. 13:4)

By our obedience to the command of Jesus to love our neighbor, we fulfill our potential to be a sign by which we will be recognized as true followers of the Master.



Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

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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 - one half hour long. VHS cassette: \$20.00 (includes postage).
  - c. "Nothing Short of A Miracle," a book on the healing power of the saints, by Patricia Treece. Two of the chapters are on Father Seelos. Price: \$8.95 plus postage.
  - d. Pamphlets, prayer-cards, mementos.
  - e. Blessings of the sick with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos. Call: Mrs. Yvonne Sevin, 888-1250, Mrs. Gerry Heigle, 482-4404, or Mr. Jack Pitkin, 524-6591.
  - f. A daily spiritual message: dial (504) 586-1803.
  - g. Pilgrimages to St. Mary's Church, the tomb and museum of Father Seelos. For further details and appointments, call the Center (504) 525-2495.
  - h. Veneration of the mission crucifix every Sunday after the 11:30 A.M. Mass in St. Mary's Assumption Church.
  - i. Every week a Mass is celebrated for the intention of the Father Seelos Center.
2. A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FATHER SEELOS AND SANCITY BULLETIN IS FOUR DOLLARS PER YEAR. Please let us know you want to continue receiving this bulletin. Please use the form below for changes of address, corrections, duplications and renewals. Return the lower portion of this page to us. Include your old address.

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# SPECIAL LETTERS

Jefferson, LA

On February 28, I was involved in a very serious fall which resulted in a visit to the ER of Ochsner Hospital. Because of the fall, I was left with seventeen large, black, ugly stitches between my eyebrow and eye, a badly broken nose, badly chapped cheeks, a great loss of blood, two black eyes, total discoloration of my face, twisted neck and shoulders, the loss of much blood, the loss of two prominent front teeth, a sprained right wrist and fingers, badly bruised ribs and back.

When the doctor informed me that I would be unable to take any pain medication due to the serious head injury, I had visions of throwing myself out the second story window without giving it a second thought. So I began to search through my list of saints for help. St. Jude came to mind at first. Then I remembered Julia Callahan's devotion to Father Seelos, and I searched for the prayer cards she had given me. I placed the memento to my eye, to my mouth, and to my heart which was badly in need of comfort. As I sat in the semi-darkness of my room, an inner peace came over me, as if the good Father Seelos had come to comfort me and protect me from the pain. It was as if I had a "Dutch uncle" who cared what was happening, and who would stand by my side until things got better. I was advised that my mouth could be made as well as before. When I fell, I could have driven my implanted lens into my eye-ball, but I didn't. It was God's gift of love, and I thank Him for everything He has done. I thank Him for this adventure that I have had with Father Seelos.

As a Catholic who has had a great deal of joy as well as sorrow in her life, I somehow felt abandoned during my most recent trials. I was badly in need of hope; my faith was rather thin and worn. Father Seelos' prayers have given me a real reason to greet each day, and I will continue to "sing his praises". Please know that prayers to and for Father Seelos will be a part of my daily work and of my offering thanks to God.

Houston, TX

It has been some time since I have written you. Please forgive me. But I have "wonderful news." I am becoming "Catholic." I am so happy, excited and thankful to God and to you at the Father Seelos Center for all your help over the years. I feel truly blessed.

I have been attending classes for one year. I received the rite of sending, the rite of election Sunday. What a day for all of us! There were about two thousand people from different churches gathered together to meet the bishop. Please continue to pray for me. I don't know that I would do without my Father Seelos mementos. They are a part of me now. I hope to visit again soon.

Baton Rouge, LA

In August, 1993, I lost my job. I was unemployed for four months. In December, 1993, I got another job; it was not really what I wanted, but I took it for possible advancement. The longer I stayed with the job, the more stressful it became. I must have had ten job interviews. Each time I went on an interview, I prayed that I would get the job, that it would pay more and be less stressful and it would be best for me and my two sons.

A friend and I attended the Mass on Father Seelos Day on April 30. On May 1, 1995, I was offered a better paying job and, I hope, less stressful. I accepted. I have told this story to many people. I continue to pray to Father Seelos in thanksgiving.

New Orleans, LA

Many thanks to Father Seelos for favors I received. My brother had an operation three weeks ago. His chances were zero to four. Thanks be to God, he made it. He is home now. The people at the Seelos Center prayed for him, too. Please pray for my family, for my friend, for me, too.

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Mail: March, 1996

Petitions: 708

Thanksgivings: 204

Others: 402

Total: 1314

Dial-A-Messages: 749

Volunteer Hours: 1071

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