



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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“A CHILD IS GIVEN TO US”

When the cold winds blow more often from the north and the bare limbed trees stretch starkly toward the sky and the grass takes on an ugly brown and the snow is threatening to fall, our depressed thoughts turn toward the festival that is dark winter's bright light, it's Christmas.

The stores are filled with toys and shiny baubles and enticing merchandise for gifts and people buy evergreen trees to decorate for their homes and large men in red suits and flowing white beards ring bells and from time to time shout “Happy holidays.”

We know it's Christmas and we know we are celebrating the birth of Jesus and His birth was the watershed of human history — before Christ and the year of the Lord. What a pity it is to hear people shy away from acknowledging His birthday on the flimsy excuse that maybe it would offend some people's sensibilities. A fact is a fact.

In the fullness of time the Angel Gabriel brought a message from God to the Virgin Mary of Nazareth. When she gave her consent, the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity, took flesh in her womb and became man.

Why did the Son of God become man? As we profess in the Nicene creed said at Mass on Sundays: for us men and for our salvation, He came down from heaven. In the famous statement in the third chapter of his Gospel, St. John boldly proclaimed: “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him may not die, but may have eternal life.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church comments on the reason for the Incarnation: Jesus became man: 1) in order to save us by reconciling us with God, 2) so that we might know God's love, 3) to become our model of holiness, 4) to make us partakers of the divine nature.

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In the Vigil of the Mass of the Resurrection celebrated on Holy Saturday night, that wild hymn of churchly joy as one writer termed it, we sing of the happy fault which merited for us so great a Redeemer. Put in simple terms, Jesus became man in order to be able to pay the price of our sin, His death on the cross. Some theologians think that He would have become man even if we had not sinned — that is how much He loved us.

Why did Jesus suffer? One writer says Jesus embraced suffering. Another says He accepted the human condition. The difference between the two may be only a matter of semantics. The fact is Jesus did die for us. He suffered the agony in the garden, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the piercing of His hands and feet with nails, and the lance in His side.

As the picture which accompanies this article indicates, the stained-glass window depicting the flight into Egypt in St. Mary's Assumption Church, the human condition was operating from His earliest days on earth, someone wanted to kill Him, and this just a few days after His birth in a stable.

The crucifix is prominent in Catholic homes and institutions. It is visible in sick rooms, How often the sight of His suffering, innocent though He was, brings relief to the patient who realizes his role in the crucifixion, through his sins.

It is through suffering that we come close to our Redeemer who died for us. There are many who are unwilling or unable to accept suffering. Maybe we can make up for them by accepting our crosses in imitation of the Lord who bowed His head and said, "Not as I will, but as You, Father."

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R.

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: Yvonne Sevin, 888-1250, Gerry Heigle, 482-4404, Jack Pitkin, 524-6591, Teresa LaCour, 887-0214, Rita Kaul, 271-4520, Thad and Ethel Kuhn, 837-3957, Rosary Stoltman, 393-9423, Jim Howard, 277-7949 or Marie Callahan, 525-1775.
 - 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 SANCTITY 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

Houston, TX

I always enjoy your column in Father Seelos' monthly newsletter. My husband and I and one of my daughters attend the yearly Mass in October — for ten years now. Father Seelos' intercession has helped this one daughter twice during major illnesses. Once again we need Father Seelos' help. Another daughter has a lot of problems making good choices in life. I ask Father Seelos' aid in helping her choose the right path for herself and her unborn child. Also to bring her back to God's house every Sunday and for a safe delivery.

Mesa, AZ

A very special thank-you for prayers said and answered. Our beautiful daughter-in-law had a kidney-pancreatic transplant at Loma-Linda University Hospital. Many anxious days — but a miracle. We asked for comfort for the donor's family and the operation, eight hours, was a success. Both organs that she received started functioning immediately. She is off of insulin — the first time in 25 years.

We thank Father Seelos for his intercession and pray for his canonization.

Beverley, E. Yorkshire, England

A lady from Michigan lives in our parish and I passed her on a book which was about Fr. Solanus. She was so interested that she got in touch with her mother in Michigan. The mother wrote to me and told me that she prays for Fr. Solanus' and Fr. Seelos' causes every day.

This is a rushed note — sorry. I must send in petitions now while they are fresh in my mind. We have had a retired Jesuit here last year and again this year from Boston doing research at St. Mary's Church which is late 12th century, now Church of England. Two saints were born here, St. John Fisher and St. John of Beverley.

St. Martinville, LA

My daughter had systemic lupus and had a very severe flare-up three and a half years ago. She was taking chemo treatments. My aunt from Jennings told me about Father Seelos, so I prayed to him for a miracle or a sign that my prayer was being heard. My daughter had received eight chemo treatments for her kidneys, which the lupus was attacking, and none of the treatments had started to take any effect.

One Tuesday morning we drove to the Seelos Center and had my daughter blessed with the mission crucifix of Father Seelos, just before her ninth treatment. We went to the Center around 10:00 that morning and she received her treatment at 2:00 that afternoon. The Thursday after she went in again as usual to give blood for the test, to see if the treatment was taking yet. Since the test takes a couple of days for results, the Tuesday following the next week the doctor calls her and tells her to come in the next morning (Wednesday) to run another series of blood tests. He wanted to make sure he was reading the report correctly and the lab was making no error. The doctor was amazed at the tremendous improvement in her kidneys. She went from four degrees to below two degrees. He'd never seen a patient climb so high before. I feel strongly that Father Seelos' intercession had a lot to do with this improvement. I pray every day for his canonization.

Mail: August, 1997

Petitions: 698

Thanksgivings: 197

Others: 512

Total: 1407

Dial-A-Messages: 749

Volunteer Hours: 1061