



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

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MARCH, 1997



The solemn unveiling of the six pictures of the new "Blessed," May, 1996.

BLESSED JANUARIUS SARNELLI, C.S.S.R.

In May, 1996, Father Januarius Sarnelli, C.S.S.R., an early and close friend of St. Alphonsus, was among six holy people beatified by Pope John Paul II.

"LOVE THE LORD, THY GOD"

We may well wonder what went through the minds of the Israelites as they, freed from the bonds of slavery and led by Moses through arid wasteland, heard for the first time the words of the 'She'ma', "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). For all their days they had been surrounded and at times infiltrated by peoples who believed in and worshipped a multiplicity of gods. The God of the Israelites was different. He was Lord alone. He wanted not their abject fear.

And Moses would continue, He wanted them to love Him. "Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and will all your strength." And yet, how could they, insignificant creatures, as so many ants crawling in the sand, embrace the great God, the Creator of all things, infinite, all-powerful, eternal?

Soon they would begin to recall how their God brought about their release from the Egyptians even though their Pharaoh was most unwilling, how their enemies were drowned in pursuing them across the water, how the Lord fed them with manna from the heavens in the morning and quail in the evening, how at the command of the Lord Moses struck a rock and water flowed to slake their thirst. Truly their God loved them dearly, and now all He asks of them is their love in return. Later on St. John the evangelist put it so succinctly, "Love, then, consists in this: not that we have loved God but that He has loved us" (1 John 4:10).

St. Augustine has an interesting observation to make: "But how can we rejoice in the Lord if He is far from us? Pray God He may not be far. If He is, that is your doing. Love and He will draw near; love and He will dwell within us. The Lord is at hand; have no anxiety. Are you puzzled to know how it is He will be with you if you love? God is love" (Liturgy of the Hours).

(Continued on next page)

When Jesus, the Son of God made man, came to earth, He made it clear what it took to love God: "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14). He knew our human nature. He understood the ways that men and women take to achieve their purposes and how so often these purposes are shortsighted and misguided.

Thus in His sermon on the mount He would counsel His hearers: "No man can serve two masters. He will hate one and love the other or be attentive to one and despise the other. You cannot give yourself to God and money. I warn you, then, do not worry about your livelihood, what you are to eat or drink or use for clothing. Is not life more than food? Is not the body more valuable than clothes?"

He went on, "Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they? Which of you by worrying can add a moment to his life-span? As for clothes, why be concerned? Learn a lesson from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work, they do not spin. Yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed as one of these. If God can clothe in such splendor the grass of the field, which blooms today and is thrown on the fire tomorrow, will He not provide much more for you, O weak in faith? Stop worrying, then, over questions like, 'what are we to eat, or what are we to drink, or what are we to wear.' The unbelievers are always running after these things. Your heavenly Father knows all that you need. Seek first His kingship over you, His way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides" (Matthew 6:14-34).

How true it is, God has first loved us!

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: Mrs. Yvonne Sevin, 888-1250, Mrs. Gerry Heigle, 482-4404, Mr. Jack Pitkin, 524-6591, or Mrs. Teresa LaCour, 887-0214.
 - 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

Baton Rouge, LA

I should have written this letter months ago. We want our favors now but we are slack in saying thank-you. I have thanked Father Seelos often in prayer. Now I thank him publicly.

My son was a school teacher. On August 16, 1994 he was coming home from Jefferson Parish where he taught. It was his first day of school. A lady ran a stop sign and was hit by an eighteen-wheeler. They both ran into my son. He had to be cut out of the car and rushed to the hospital by helicopter. The lady and her two-year old son were killed in the wreck. My oldest son had been killed in a collision with a drunk driver. And I have the hurt that goes with losing a child. My heart went out to her family.

I am a widow, so when the hospital called me to tell me about my son, all I could do was call my daughter and other son and go to the hospital. My son was in surgery. His arm was crushed and he had head injuries and massive bone breakage in his leg. After the surgery the doctor told us he could go home in two weeks. His arm was so messed up that the doctor did not try to operate. He said he would do it at a later time. His leg was full of pins but he was going to be O.K.

My son's lungs were not functioning, and he was critical. He was hooked up to tubes and had a tracheotomy. I stayed night and day at the hospital. Every time I went to see him I touched him with the Father Seelos memento. The doctor said he did not know if my son would survive. The teachers came from Jefferson Parish. They brought a rosary and memento of Father Seelos and hung it on the wall over his bed in ICU. He was eight weeks in ICU. After seven weeks the doctor told me my son was finally improving. He was four months in the hospital. Besides the broken bones and a bout with pneumonia and lungs that almost ceased functioning, my son was able to go home.

After his discharge from the hospital, my son went to the doctor's office. His lungs were x-rayed and found in good condition, although he had smoked for over 20 years. When he told the nurse his name, she said, "Oh, you're the miracle man."

While I was at the hospital, a man was in an automobile accident. He was not expected to live. I gave a Father Seelos memento to his wife. Someone else gave her one, too. Father Seelos was very visible in the hospital.

No operation was necessary for his arm. It healed by itself. His mind is fine. He walks with a slight limp. He had to retire from teaching, a little short on patience but doing fine otherwise. Thanks to Father Seelos. The other man who nearly died went home before my son did.

Marietta, GA

I feel that without the intercession of Father Seelos, I would have honestly not made it through it all. What seemed like a very simple decision at the time brought my life to a complete halt. In a matter of seconds everything changed. I think God was trying to tell me something. Immediately following my accident, my recovery was slow and painful. I found peace during our prayers to Father Seelos. He kept me believing and gave me the strength to progress mentally and physically. My mom and aunt and I are very thankful to him for his intercession and support, and know that by praying for his canonization is the best way to express our gratitude to him.

Mail: November, 1996

Petitions: 696

Thanksgivings: 237

Others: 343

Total: 1276

Dial-A-Messages: 738

Volunteer Hours: 1041

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