

# SEELOS CENTER

## News



2030 Constance Street ❖ New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 525-2495 ❖ [www.seelos.org](http://www.seelos.org)

National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

Volume XLV ❖ Number 9  
September 2006

With permission of the superiors, [Father Seelos] went to the community at Saint Michael's, Chicago, where, as a preparation for his last sacrifice and to the great edification of the members of the community, he made his annual ten-day retreat. He ended it with a general confession of his entire innocent life, made with marvelous compunction of heart. In his well-known deep humility, he asked the superior of that house for forgiveness for all the annoyances he might have caused him and even later he expressed in a letter his desire to be able to make amends as his subject. This superior, however, could not recall that Father Seelos had ever occasioned him even the slightest injustice; on the contrary he himself had many spiritual benefits for which to be grateful to him....

About to leave for the South, he said very distinctly to a father of the house who had worked very often with him on the missions: "Your Reverence sees me today for the last time. Take that for granted!" The father answered that certainly he did not mean this seriously. "Yes, indeed," he answered, "that is certain." He gave no further explanation, repeated this for the third time, and then said a warm goodbye that has still not been forgotten. The father did not see him again. Thus full of holy resignation, he departed for New Orleans, suspecting or seeing clearly beforehand, what was awaiting him there.

— Rev. Peter Zimmer, C.Ss.R., superior of Saint Michael's, Chicago, who later became the first biographer of Father Francis X. Seelos.

### Terminus ad Quem

Organized in 1852 for German immigrants, Saint Michael's is one of the oldest parishes in the city of Chicago. The Redemptorists came to Saint Michael's in 1860 and broke ground for the new church on September 23, 1866. It was during construction of the red brick and elaborate limestone Romanesque church, that Father Seelos made his ten-day retreat at Saint Michael's rectory in September 1866. (This church was completed in 1869, and has the distinction of being one of the few buildings in the path of flames not totally destroyed by the Great Fire of 1871.)

It is not known what personal resolutions Father Seelos made while on his ten-day retreat; however, on a retreat some years earlier in Pittsburgh, he resolved to include additional forms of penance and self-discipline along with those already prescribed for Redemptorists in their Rule. In 1848, he resolved to abstain even from the little food that was allowed in the morning on days of fasting. He also resolved to reflect on the Passion of Christ during his thanksgiving after Mass and to sleep on the floor three nights a week.

(continued on page 2)

PLEASE JOIN US!

### The Annual Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Memorial Mass

Sunday, October 1, 2006 - 11:00 a.m.  
St. Mary's Assumption Church  
(corner of Josephine & Constance streets)  
New Orleans, LA



Presider & Homilist:  
Rev. Andrew Costello, C.Ss.R.  
of St. Mary's, Annapolis, MD - where Fr. Seelos served during the Civil War

### Third Annual Blessed Francis Seelos Gala Dinner & Auction

Sunday, October 1, 2006 - 5:30 p.m.  
Andrea's Restaurant  
3100 19th St. at Ridgelake  
Metairie, LA

Contact the Seelos Center 504-525-2495 for Gala reservations (seating is limited).



Voted Best Italian Restaurant by New Orleans Magazine & AOL City Guide

By the twenty-fifth of the month, Father Francis Seelos and Brother Lawrence Fischwenger were on the "iron horse" - the popular appellation given to a locomotive - bound for the Crescent City. With an average speed of twenty to thirty miles an hour, one traveler by rail during this period wrote, "The rapidity of the locomotion is frightful to those who are unused to it, but you adapt yourself to the speed, and soon become, like all the rest of the world, impatient of the slightest delay."

If Father Seelos was impatient at the speed of the train, it was not apparent. On the contrary, he was observed as being recollected and absorbed in prayer by two School Sisters of Notre Dame en route on the same train. Although the new Pullman sleeping cars had been introduced a few years earlier, Father Seelos did not make use of one. He was described as sitting up all night - not an extraordinary posture for religious on board, but

his demeanor was unusual for the typical passenger. It is good to recall that despite sleeping coaches and other improvements in locomotion at this time, train riders were still subjected to conditions of improper ventilation, inadequate heating, and severe noise pollution.

When one of the Sisters asked Father Seelos if his time in New Orleans would be a lengthy one, his remark was similar to the one he made days before to Father Wissel in Chicago, stating that he would remain in New Orleans for a year and then die of yellow fever. Did Father Seelos receive a premonition of some kind? One thing is certain: As the noisy train rested peacefully into the New Orleans terminal on the evening of September 26, 1866, Father Seelos had already made peace with his imminent death.

Excerpt from the soon-to-be released book, *Death, Where Is Your Sting? Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R. & His Edifying Encounter with Yellow Fever*. Available in November 2006.

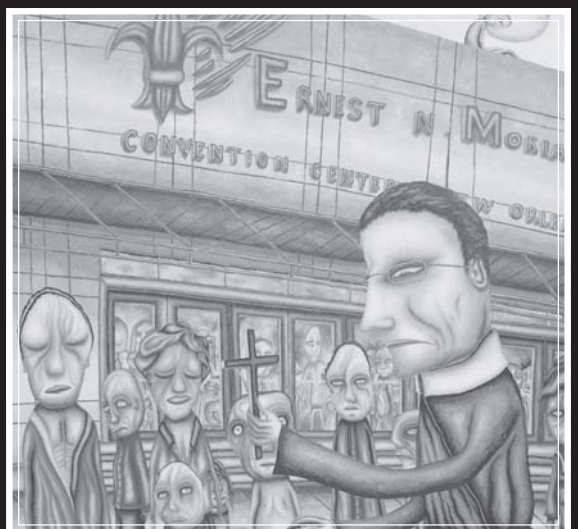
### Storming Heaven for Father Seelos

A hurricane was first detected in the western Gulf of Mexico on October 2, 1867, flattening areas at the mouth of the Rio Grande, and flooding the island of Galveston. This Category 2 unnamed hurricane remained offshore and then continued to parallel the Louisiana coast with 93 mph winds (80 knots). By October 4 - the evening of Father Seelos' death - the storm was in the Gulf, south of the New Orleans area. The hurricane traveled eastward, hitting Florida as a Category 1 storm, causing more than a million dollars in damage with "many lives lost," before finally moving out to sea on October 9.

Michael Curley, C.Ss.R. in *Cheerful Ascetic*, describes what happened after Father Seelos died at 5:45 p.m. on October 4, 1867: "Two hours later the mortal remains of Father Francis Xavier Seelos, robed in purple vestments, were laid out in a coffin in Saint Mary's church. That night, even though New Orleans was suffering a hurricane, hardly had the church bell tolled the sad message that Father Seelos was dead, than hundreds of the faithful streamed to Saint Mary's. The church was left open all night, and many, unable to go home in the violent storm, stayed within the sacred edifice."

Mark Twain quipped, "No matter how famous a man is, the size of his funeral depends partly on the weather." In the case of Father Seelos, the weather did not prevent mourners from paying their respects at his funeral in a church filled to capacity.

New Orleans professional artist, **Marcel Flisiuk**, sold his first painting at age ten. Known for his surreal and vibrant Kafkaesque paintings "of harried little men with huge chewing gum heads and wide beseeching eyes," Flisiuk has portrayed Father Seelos on more than one canvas. This haunting depiction is the artist's rendering of how Father Seelos would have responded to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, as he responded to the victims of yellow fever in 1867.



## The Seelos Center offers the following services:

◆ *Pilgrimages* to St. Mary's Assumption Church, Shrine & Museum of Bl. F. Seelos in New Orleans. For details & appointments, call the Center at 504-525-2495.

◆ *Daily Spiritual Message*. Call 504-586-1803.

◆ *Blessings of the Sick* with a Mission Crucifix of Blessed F. Seelos in New Orleans & other area hospitals. Please call:

#### East Jefferson

Gerry Heigle: 504-554-1912  
Teresa LaCour: 504-887-0214

#### Ochsner

Mark/Monica Surprenant 504-895-5371

#### Uptown/Innecity

Jack Pitkin: 504-524-6591

#### Westbank

Elaine Freeman: 504-341-2213  
Rosary Stoltman: 504-393-9423

#### Baton Rouge

Gloria Bacque: 225-767-8432  
Marie Giorlando: 225-615-7888

#### Covington

Pam Crutchfield: 985-626-8823  
Dr. Ann Logarbo, MD: 985-886-0218

#### Houma/Thibodaux

Dan Montz, L.P.C.: 985-446-1805

#### Lafayette/Abbeville

Rita King: 337-984-4607

#### Mandeville

Bill & Sunny Schulz: 985-792-5394

#### New Iberia/Berwick

Rachel Gonsoulin 337-224-7855

#### Reserve/LaPlace

Deacon Percy Vicknair: 985-652-0039

#### Slidell

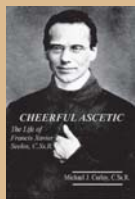
Carmelie Mancuso: 985-502-7325  
Mary Jo Stewart: 985-502-9033

◆ *Veneration of Bl. F. Seelos' Mission Crucifix* in historic St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine & Constance streets).

◆ *Weekly Mass* celebrated for the intentions of the Seelos benefactors. Please list Special Intentions in the space provided on the enclosed envelope.

Please consider the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos for your employer matching gift program. Fed. Tax ID #72-0576253

## The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:

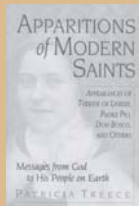


**Cheerful Ascetic: Life of F.X. Seelos**, a 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$22.95 + 6.95 p/h)

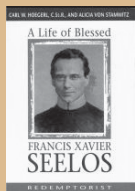
◇ **"Seelos: A Cause to Rejoice,"** an informative documentary on the life of Bl. F. Seelos; 30-min. VHS cassette. (Donation: \$17 - includes p/h)



**Willy Finds Victory: A Blessed Francis Seelos Story**, Introduce youth, ages 7 through 12, to Father Seelos in this book by Joan Stromberg, 110 pages, with illustrations. (Donation: \$11 - includes p/h)



**Apparitions of Modern Saints**, a 293-page abridged & updated paperback version of the book formerly entitled *Messengers* by Patricia Treece on the authentic appearances of the holy dead sent as God's messengers. Chapters on Fr. Seelos. (Donation: \$17 - includes p/h)



**A Life of Blessed Francis X. Seelos**, a 108-page paperback biography by Fr. Carl Hoegerl & Alicia von Stammwitz. (Donation: \$11 - includes p/h)



**Seelos Medals:** Made of nickel silver, round 3/4" dia. with loop, antique finish, finely crafted in the U.S. (Donation: \$3 each or 2/\$5 + \$1 p/h)



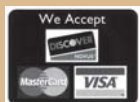
**Seelos Perpetual Mass League:** A one-of-a-kind lasting remembrance for you or for someone dear, living or deceased. (Donation: \$25, contact Seelos Center for enrollment)

◇ **Pamphlets & Prayer Cards** of Bl. F. Seelos, available in English, Spanish & Vietnamese.

◇ **A Bl. F. Seelos vigil candle** will burn near his sacred resting place in St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans, for an offering of \$3.

◇ **First, Second & Third-Class Relics** of Bl. F. Seelos. Contact the Seelos Center, 504-525-2495.

Please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery of item(s).





**NEW FEATURED ITEM!**

**PROTECTOR KEY CHAIN**

Measures 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches with color Seelos image. Practical & ideal as a gift of appreciation. \$7 includes P/H

Below: Members of the band Remnant visited the Seelos Shrine in July 2006. Remnant formed in 1998 in Arlington, Texas and has put on rallies at Catholic churches for numerous parishes, schools, universities and other groups.




**DID YOU KNOW**

that a gift of \$42 to our Annual Appeal will help defray the operational costs for the Seelos Daily Dial-a-Prayer, which averages 3,000 calls a year?

**AND**

a gift of \$9 will help defray the costs of printing & postage of this newsletter for one year?



### Seelos Memorial Allowed in All Louisiana Diocesan Calendars

In 2005 approval was given by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship to allow the incorporation of an optional Seelos memorial on October 5 in the Province of New Orleans (New Orleans Archdiocese & Dioceses of Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Houma-Thibodaux, Lafayette, Lake Charles, & Shreveport). As a general practice, before a saint or blessed is considered for inclusion on the national calendar, they must first be included on a number of diocesan calendars for a significant period of time (usually 5 to 10 years) to ensure that they have a genuine *cult* in the U.S.



Above: Seminarian Sam Fontana and the Saint Joseph's Catholic Church Youth Group from Parks, Louisiana (near Lafayette) visited Saint Mary's Assumption Church and the Seelos Shrine in July 2006.

Plant a Tree



Father Seelos

**HELP US PLANT A TREE TO COMMEMORATE THE 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF HURRICANE KATRINA**



Please help us beautify New Orleans again and leave something behind for generations to come. Designate "Seelos Trees" on the enclosed envelope with your contribution.

### Seelos Center News

A monthly newsletter for friends of Blessed Francis X. Seelos, C.Ss.R.

Denver Provincial Superior:  
Very Rev. Thomas D. Picton, C.Ss.R.

Seelos Center Executive Director / Editor:  
Rev. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.

Seelos Center Administrator: Joyce Bourgeois

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# TESTIMONIALS

## GRAPEVINE, TX

I thank Father Seelos for my second clean bill of health on my breast exam and mammogram. It was sketchy two years ago and ever since, I have been blessing myself with his relic. He really came through and I am most grateful.

## NEW ORLEANS, LA

My family and I firmly believe in praying to Blessed Seelos for his intercession for any of our needs. In November 2005, my niece had a serious operation, first diagnosed with ulcers, then with an operation for removal of a hernia, gall bladder and three-quarters of her stomach. Shortly after, another procedure was needed for the lower intestinal tract. Biopsies proved no malignancy. She is now back at work and our thanks for Divine help through the intercession of Blessed Seelos. We have such a special devotion to him.

## ST. LOUIS, MO

About a year ago my good neighbor was diagnosed with colon cancer. He had the surgery followed by chemotherapy for nine months. It was a trying time, but yesterday he returned the relic and prayer card that I had given him back then. He and his wife are now on a vacation and they are enjoying life! At the Liguori Health Center where my brother passed away three years ago, prayers are said daily for Father Seelos' canonization and for answers to the requests for healing. I have always felt a special closeness to Father Seelos.

## METAIRIE, LA

*From an Oncologist:* When I first met this patient, he had surgically documented advanced liver tumors that had originated in his colon. He was thin and physically depleted by surgery. He had been seen by several oncologists who had declared him terminal. This patient told me that he believed in God and would be cured, even in his very weakened state. He chose to take chemotherapy in a prayerful state, listening to scriptures and spiritual music while receiving his drugs. Miraculously, though it did not seem to surprise him, his tumor melted away. He underwent

surgery again on December 6, 1999, with ultrasound ablation of the very small residual liver lesions. This was followed by three months of chemotherapy. At present, he could be a cover boy for a health magazine. He lost no chance to encourage others who are still in the trenches fighting their disease. In my opinion, he may have been minimally helped by the surgery and drug treatment, but God has given him the miracle of being free of disease. He was given the Father Seelos scapular, which he wore during his entire illness.

## NEW ORLEANS, LA

This letter is long overdue. In June 1964, I lay dying from radical surgery. Sister Mary Cecelia, RSM, who taught me at St. Francis Xavier Grammar School in 1953 prayed to Father Seelos for me, and my family started praying to him for my life. I am here to tell about it, so I made it through with others who prayed for the intercession of Father Seelos. Divine intervention is universal -- miracles can be subtle.

## ABBEVILLE, LA

My husband and I were praying a Novena to Father Seelos, and we were also visited by [Seelos Center volunteer] Rita King. She prayed with me regarding a problem I have with my white cell blood count. It was truly a beautiful and moving experience. A blood test taken a few days later showed an increase in my white cell blood count to near normal. Thanks be to Jesus for my healing and to Father Seelos for interceding for me. We hope to visit the Shrine soon.

## NEW ORLEANS, LA

This is a testimonial to Father Seelos for going into the operating room with my 80-year-old husband. He had an emergency operation in May for a blockage in the colon. We taped the Seelos scapular to his arm band and asked that Fr. Seelos protect him, and that is exactly what happened. He had 14 inches of colon removed and he is doing fine. He is cancer-free and we are forever grateful for Father Seelos' intercession.



**ENJOY THE COMPANY OF FATHER SEELOS!**

Treat yourself to a Novena and Self-Directed Retreat in the special presence of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos.



**BOTH ITEMS FOR ONLY \$7 (INCLUDES P/H)**  
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