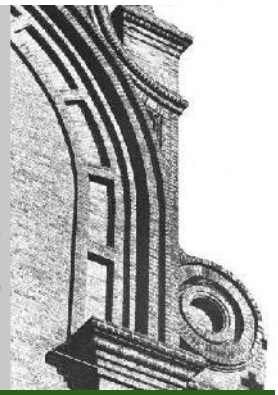


# Seelos Center News

2030 Constance Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
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www.seeos.org



## National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

*In the Redemptorist Church of Saint Mary's Assumption*

Volume XLVI  
Number 7  
July 2007

### Light a Fire to Heaven

Baltimore, Maryland  
August 1845

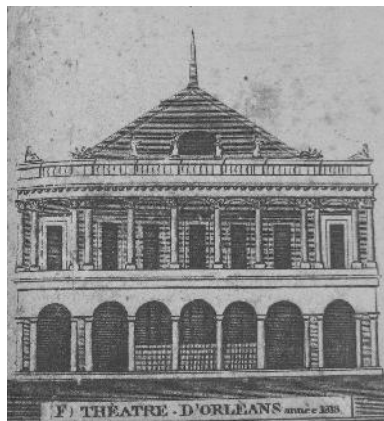
Danger of fire and water characterized nineteenth-century New Orleans. Is it any wonder, then, that the Germans displayed a statue of Saint Florian in St. Mary's Assumption Church? Florian (d. 304) was a commander of the Roman army and an organizer of firefighting brigades in eastern Bavaria, Germany (what is now Austria). He had secretly become a Christian during the time of persecution under the emperor Diocletian. When Florian refused to renounce his faith, he was set on fire and thrown into the river Enns with a stone around his neck. His body was later recovered. While being scourged, he reportedly said, "If you want to know why I do not fear your tortures, light a fire, and I will climb upon it to heaven." Many miracles are attributed to his intercession, and he is a patron of firefighters and a powerful protector from the hazards of fire & water.



"Daily during the Holy Sacrifice, I think of my dear parents, especially, often and fervently, of my best of mothers. Never will I forget you, particularly on your nameday, and at such times as remind me of your motherly love. Just this year, I could really pray on the night before your nameday, and I did it to fend off the danger into which we had fallen, and for your well-being. Suddenly during that night, the fire alarm went off, and as I opened my eyes, the room was all lit up, and I could no longer be in doubt about the danger. At the entrance to the chapel and the church, I could see that the house of a German Catholic carpenter, right next to the church, was in flames from top to bottom, and at every moment threatened to set fire to our house and church. Quickly the Blessed Sacrament was brought safely out of the church into the garden. Soon afterwards, the father superior told me that the American firechief was no longer afraid of any more danger."

Excerpt from Francis Xavier Seelos' first letter to his family after his arrival in the U.S. [The fire occurred on March 8; his mother's nameday, Saint Frances of Rome, is March 9; Letter translated by Carl Hoegerl, C.Ss.R.]

*Oh gracious God, you have given us life & health. Guardian of our homes, keep from our door any harmful elements that would destroy us. We ask for this protection in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.*

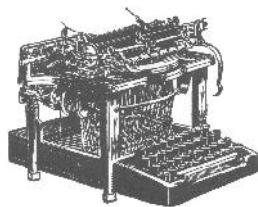


Above: Florian is known for miraculously extinguishing a huge fire with only a small pitcher of water, as depicted here on the mid-19th century High Altar in St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans.

Left: The sumptuous Theatre d'Orleans near Bourbon Street opened in 1813. It burned a year later, and was rebuilt in 1819 as one of the country's finest. During the time that Fr. Seelos ministered in New Orleans, the theatre burned in the morning of December 7, 1866. The site was later occupied by the Convent of the Holy Family Sisters; the Bourbon Orleans Hotel now occupies it.

Right: Neighborhood fire tower in Seelos' day at Magazine & Washington Ave. New Orleans, 1850s.





## Message from the Editor

Francis Xavier Seelos answered an urgent appeal to leave his German homeland for ministry as a Redemptorist priest to the emerging immigrant Church in the United States. In so doing, he encountered unimagined hostilities aimed at him and his compatriots for being both German and Catholic. The very religious freedom that immigrant Catholics sought in leaving their homeland was sometimes not easily expressed without peril.

When Seelos first arrived in 1843, a book said to be one of the most widely read in 19th-century America was already in circulation. In fact, *The Awful Disclosures of the Hotel-Dieu Nunnery* by Maria Monk, was second only to the Bible in U.S. sales prior to the Civil War. It has never been out of print in the U.S. since it was written in 1836.

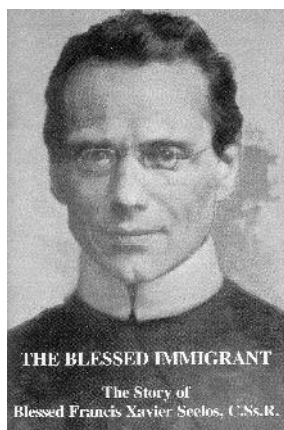
Monk allegedly recounted her experiences in a Montreal convent and her discovery of a graveyard under the convent for slaughtered infants of the nuns and for the tortured sisters that resisted the advances of the priests.

An inspection of the convent found no evidence of these atrocities, and it was later revealed that Monk had never been affiliated with Hotel-Dieu. Nevertheless, the sensational book

perpetuated many myths and fomented rising anti-Catholic nativist activism throughout the country, with particular concentrations in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore — the city where Father Seelos first ministered as a priest.

It was under these adverse conditions that Father Seelos' apostolic zeal and exemplary witness broke down barriers, and his outstanding virtues helped to dissipate a native fear of the stranger.

Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.



THE BLESSED IMMIGRANT  
The Story of  
Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.

*“The Blessed Immigrant” is a 27-page pamphlet by Richard Schiblin, C.Ss.R. that details many of the hostilities*

*encountered by Father Seelos. (\$2 incl. p/h, contact the Seelos Center)*

## The Seelos Center offers the following services:

☐ *Pilgrimages* to St. Mary's Assumption Church, Seelos Shrine & Museum. Call the Center at 504-525-2495 or 525-2499.

☐ *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

Dr. Ann Logarbo, MD: 985-886-0218

### Houma/Thibodaux

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

### Lacombe/Abita Springs

Billy Bachemin: 504-232-0349

### Lafayette/Abbeville

Rita King: 337-984-4607

### Mandeville

Bill & Sunny Schulz: 985-792-5394  
Pam Crutchfield: 985-966-0358

### New Iberia/Berwick/Baldwin

Rachel Gonsoulin 337-224-7855  
Fred Roy 337-380-0646

### Reserve/LaPlace

Deacon Percy Vicknair: 985-652-9313

### Slidell

Carmelie Mancuso: 985-641-6999  
Mary Jo Stewart: 985-643-5548

### St. Bernard/Arabi

Patricia Noote: 504-756-4163

☐ *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.

**We thank the Lord each day at the Seelos Shrine for all our benefactors. Below is a partial listing of our helpers in ministry, especially in the last year:**

Ray & Kathryn Eckstein -- Milwaukee, WI  
Hilaire & Ethel Lanoux -- New Orleans, LA  
Anonymous Donors -- Overland Park, KS  
Mary F. Ciolino -- Metairie, LA  
Dawn Nuschler -- Springfield, VA  
Deborah Bellina -- New Orleans, LA  
Dennis & Judy Powers -- Houston, TX  
Kent J. Zimmermann -- New Orleans, LA  
Lee Roy & Kathleen Morgan -- New Orleans, LA  
Donna Jean Webb / Tim Ziifle -- Metairie, LA  
Maria Caldwell -- Houma, LA  
Mr. & Mrs. David Mumfrey -- Metairie, LA  
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Marseillan -- Reno, NV  
William & Sunny Schulz -- Mandeville, LA  
Gloria Recknagel -- New Orleans, LA

2 - Seelos Center News

*Thank You!*

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

A monthly newsletter for friends of Bl. Francis X. Seelos

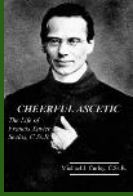
Denver Provincial Superior:  
Very Rev. Thomas D. Picton, C.Ss.R.  
Seelos Center Executive Director / Editor:  
Rev. Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.  
Seelos Center Administrator: Joyce Bourgeois

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www.seels.org  
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Subscription is \$10 per year.

Seelos Center News

The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:



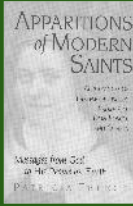
**Cheerful Ascetic: Life of F.X. Seelos**, a 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$23.00 + 6.95 p/h)



**.999 Fine Silver Seelos Medal** Round, 3/4" dia., with loop; brushed image with polished reverse and edge. Marked with .999 FS on reverse top. (Donation: \$52 - includes p/h).

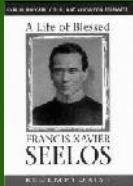


**Willy Finds Victory: A Blessed Francis Seelos Story**, Introduce youth, ages 7 - 12, to Fr. Seelos in this 110-page illustrated book by Joan Stromberg (Donation: \$11, incl. p/h)



**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: \$18 - 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.

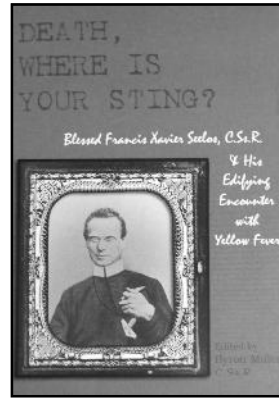
☐ **A Bl. F. Seelos vigil candle** will burn near his sacred resting place in St. Mary's Assumption Church, New Orleans, for an offering of \$3.

☐ **First, Second & Third-Class Relics** of Bl. F. Seelos. Call Seelos Center, 504-525-2495 or 2499.

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



DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?



*Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R. & His Edifying Encounter with Yellow Fever* is a tender account of Father Seelos' final weeks of life as told primarily by

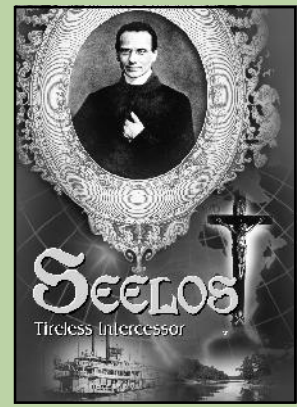
those who witnessed his heroic death. Seldom revealed details surrounding his encounter with yellow fever transport us to the bedside of a true martyr.

- ✓ Read how Father Seelos foretold his own death.
- ✓ Learn why the doctor was so amazed.
- ✓ Discover the irony of the person who spoke last into Father Seelos' ear.
- ✓ Meet the one who was cured with a touch to Father Seelos in the casket.

- Death, Where Is Your Sting?** Hardcover, 175 pages, with photos (\$19.00 + \$4.00 p/h or \$7.00 p/h for 2 or more)
- 1 DVD video & 1 *Sting* book (\$50 including p/h)
- 1 VHS video & 1 *Sting* book (\$45 including p/h)

SEELOS, TIRELESS INTERCESSOR

This documentary chronicles the heroic & miraculous life of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos. Father Seelos possessed great mystical gifts due to his intense prayer life. His ability to minister with cheerful holiness made him a spiritual father to tens of thousands. Despite his early death, so profound was his missionary zeal that sickness, persecution, and even the upheaval caused by the Civil War, could not stop him.



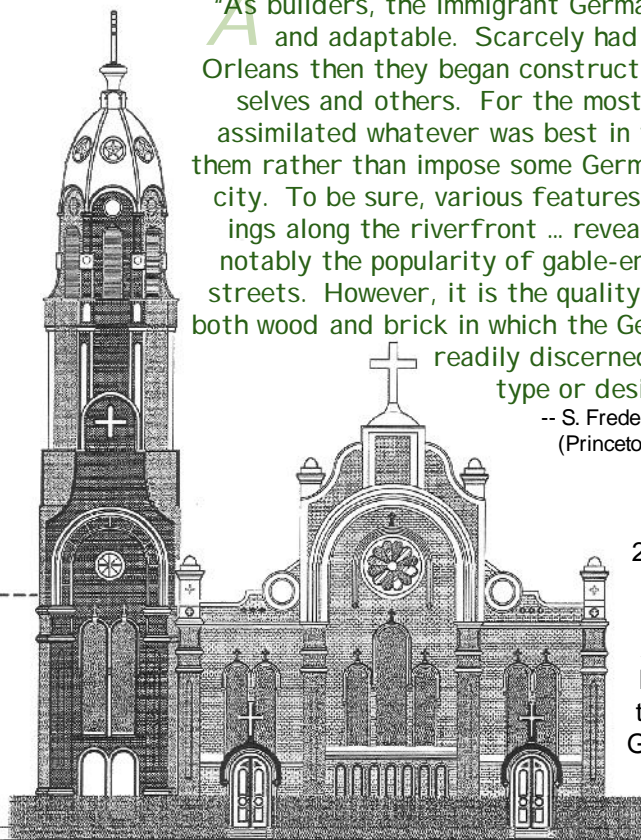
Please send request & payment to:  
Seelos Center  
2030 Constance Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130

- 68 min. DVD (~~\$29.99~~ + \$5.50 p/h) **\$25**
  - 68 min. VHS (~~\$24.00~~ + \$5.50 p/h) **\$20**
- (\$8.50 p/h for any 2 or more)



"As builders, the immigrant Germans were both active and adaptable. Scarcely had they arrived in New Orleans then they began constructing homes for themselves and others. For the most part, however, they assimilated whatever was best in the buildings around them rather than impose some German prototype on the city. To be sure, various features of the simple buildings along the riverfront ... reveal German influences, notably the popularity of gable-end facades along the streets. However, it is the quality of craftsmanship in both wood and brick in which the German's hand is most readily discerned, rather than in the type or design of the buildings."

-- S. Frederick Starr, *Southern Comfort* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1998)



SOUTH EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

2008 marks the 150th anniversary of the present St. Mary's Assumption Church. It is considered to be the finest example of German Baroque brick architecture in New Orleans.

# TESTIMONIALS

## Manhasset, NY

I write in thanksgiving to Bl. Seelos for a very important favor received through his intercession when hope seemed quite dim that our son would be able to retain his job. I am extremely grateful to Bl. Seelos for bringing about the impossible and I am forever grateful.

## Redlands, CA

About a year ago I discovered that I had a pinched nerve in my spine that was causing me excruciating pain. After several failed treatments, I prayed Bl. Seelos' novena and kept his relic always near me. After two operations, I'm on my way to a complete recovery. I write this in grateful thanksgiving to fulfill the promise that I made if I recovered.

## St. Heliers, Auckland, New Zealand

In 2001 & 2004 I wrote with the request that my son be recommended to the prayers at the Shrine of Bl. Seelos. My husband died of a sudden heart attack when my son was only nine years old. My son is now married and has two young children and a good job, but has been diagnosed with chronic depression dating back to the time he lost his dad. I am happy to say that his condition has been greatly improved.

## San Antonio, TX

I write in thanksgiving to Fr. Seelos for my remission from cancer for 18 years. I pray the Fr. Seelos prayer every day and carry his relic on my chest. I thank God & Fr. Seelos for taking care of me, & also for helping my son & daughter-in-law overcome the troubles in their marriage.

## Eunice, LA

When I was pregnant for my fourth baby, my mother visited the Shrine and brought me a Father Seelos relic, which I wore nearly every day. My mother and sister-in-law began a prayer devotion to Bl. Seelos, asking for a healthy baby, especially since I had the flu while pregnant. My daughter was born with a case of jaundice, but at age five now, she is incredibly healthy and awesomely intelligent! Thank you, Bl. Seelos!

## New Orleans, LA

People pray for different things, & for the past three years, I have been under a federal investigation for being late in filing my income taxes. There were good reasons why I was late, but now, they seem unimportant. About a year ago, I was living outside of Chicago after having to relocate due to Hurricane Katrina. While traveling back to New Orleans on business, I observed banners on utility poles sponsoring Bl. Father Seelos. The next day, I was listening to a radio talk show and people were discussing Father Seelos. The day after that, I went to Mass at St. Pius X Church, and in the rear was a prayer card with Father Seelos' photograph & special prayer. At that moment, I knew that God was telling me to pray to Father Seelos. I began asking Father Seelos to intervene on my behalf, and warm the hearts of the U.S. Attorneys who were handling my case. After almost two years of my attorneys trying to get them to charge me with a misdemeanor instead of a felony, they completely reversed their position and offered me an opportunity to plea to a misdemeanor. My attorney had no explanation for the turnaround, but I did. It was Bl. Father Seelos' intervention on my behalf.

## Metairie, LA

In 2004, my first grandson was born 2 months premature. Surgery would be required to repair his decaying intestines & serious digestion problems. His sickness advanced to the point that we could no longer touch him. We heard of someone in this area who prays with the Fr. Seelos relic, so we made the call. Gloria Bacque is a wonderful, spiritual person! We all laid hands on him & held onto one another. The next day, my grandson began to take tiny sips of formula. Within 3 days, he was home with his parents. No surgery. Thanks to Fr. Seelos, he is a healthy 3-year-old & one of the loves of our lives.

## Items to celebrate the new Our Lady of La Vang Vietnamese Chapel in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception!



Through a special arrangement with Excelsis Creations, the Seelos Center is proud to offer these creations, inspired by the lifetime ministries of Fr. Norbert Hess, C.S.C. & Artist Mary Minh-Hang Vesely.

### OUR LADY OF LA VANG WINDOW

brings beauty & spiritual power to everyday settings. These timeless treasures feature a profound ceramic image: the tile print is not a decal – the ink actually permeates the tile to ensure a vivid, long-lasting image. This is an expensive process but with dramatic results. Tile mounted on raised panels creates a three-dimensional effect; set in a natural wood frame that is finished front-to-back. Excellent craftsmanship! Measures 15.5 x 16.5 in.; weighs approx. 6 lbs. \$85, includes certified p/h. Specify Black, Dark Brown or Deep Forest Green wood frame color.

### KEEPSAKE BOXES

Specify Natural or White wood color, 7" x 7" x 2.25" / \$24.50 (incl. p/h)

### MAIL / NAPKIN HOLDER

Two Ceramic Sides  
6" x 6" x 4.25" / \$22.50 (incl. p/h)

### PEN / PENCIL HOLDER

White wood  
5" x 5" x 1.75" / \$18.50 (incl. p/h)

Created with hardwood & finished with protective enamel, each gift piece is suitable for any occasion!

**? Did you know**

that a gift of \$10 to our Annual Appeal will help defray the cost of printing & postage of this newsletter for one entire year?

Please visit our redesigned [www.seelos.org](http://www.seelos.org) as we celebrate our 100,000<sup>th</sup>-plus visitor! Check for online promotions.

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