



SEELOS CENTER NEWS

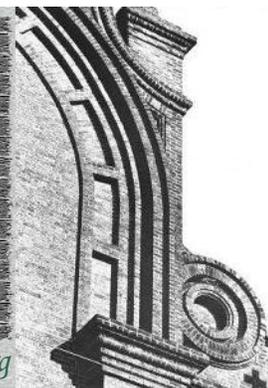
Volume XLVII Number 8 August 2008

National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos

In the Redemptorist Church
of Saint Mary's Assumption

2030 Constance Street (504) 525-2495
New Orleans, LA 70130 (504) 525-2499

www.seelos.org



CHECK-UP ON DR. ANNA POU, M.D.

In July 2007, a Louisiana grand jury refused to indict head & neck surgeon, Dr. Anna M. Pou, on second-degree murder charges stemming from the death of nine patients at a New Orleans hospital in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The case attracted international attention & widespread media coverage for almost two years. During that same period, Dr. Pou found solace as a frequent, almost daily, visitor to the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos. In an interview with the editor, Dr. Pou was invited to share her ordeal from a faith perspective:



Q. What were the conditions like at the hospital three years ago? I was on call when Hurricane Katrina made landfall on Monday, August 29, 2005. Events occurring in the days following would forever change the city as we knew it and my life forever as I knew it. The winds had caused minimal structural damage to the building and minimal flooding in the streets outside the hospital. At this time the hospital was being powered by generators. We thought that we had “dodged a bullet” and made plans for transferring patients to other facilities. Unbeknownst to us, the levees had breached due to engineering failures, and the city began to flood. The following day, the streets around the hospital began to rapidly fill with water. The hospital was eventually surrounded by 10 feet of water and the generators failed due to the flooding. We were cut off from the outside world – no electricity, no use of modern equipment, no lights, no running water, very limited communication, limited supplies, food & drinking water. 2,000 people were trapped inside the hospital – patients & their family members, employees & their family members and people from the community who used the hospital as a shelter. The heat was relentless, the air rancid with the smell of human waste which caused one’s throat to burn with each breath, and complete dark-

ness made the hospital unsafe and at times, frightening. We were told that we were “low priority” and that if we wanted to be evacuated, we had to do it ourselves. Conditions deteriorated, patients died. Although we had been abandoned, in the midst of chaos, every able-bodied person helped to care for the patients, including young children. Everything humanly possible was done to care for & comfort the patients under these conditions & we all comforted each other. The nurses who had children, made the ultimate sacrifice a mother could make – they stayed to care for patients, sending their children to the boats not knowing where they would land and not knowing if and when they themselves would be rescued. Cries from the children could be heard when they were taken from their mothers—acts of heroic love in the midst of suffering & despair. The hospital was finally evacuated 4 days after Katrina made landfall. I arrived in Baton Rouge where my family had evacuated & tried to make sense of the most devastating thing I’ve ever witnessed.

“I have always believed that God never gives a cross to bear larger than we can carry. No matter what, He wants us to be happy, not sad. Birds sing after a storm. Why shouldn’t we?” – Rose Kennedy

Q. Who first introduced you to the intercession of Fr. Seelos & what drew you to his Shrine on such a regular basis? The grand jury had been empanelled in February 2007, but I continued to wait & wait to learn my fate. During this time, I ran into an old acquaintance that I had not seen in 28 years, nor have I seen again. The Holy Spirit obviously led her to me. My rebirth was about to begin. She took me to the Seelos Shrine, this very holy place where “healing” miracles occur, to meet some of the holiest people I have ever known. The Shrine is a place of peace, a safe haven, a piece of heaven on earth – where heavily burdened people come to pray, to console each other because they’re suffering and are looking for comfort & for someone with whom they can identify. I felt completely safe at the Shrine – I could cry without shame and talk of my pain & fears without hesitation. Many were there to continually comfort and pray with me. I could not have survived without these self-sacrificing & loving people, who are such powerful prayer warriors. I knew that if I could get myself there to pray, I would be all right. The people here, in addition to my friend, taught me how to really pray again and reminded me that God would not abandon me & that He could be trusted to help me through this hell. (Continued on Pg. 3)



Message from the Editor

A brand of breath mints that has been in existence before the time of Father Seelos advertises itself as "curiously strong." However, people who are "strongly curious" have been in existence far longer! It is good that people are naturally curious, but what can be said about those whose curiosity tends to be rather *unnatural*?

An acute interest in the affairs of others and the desire to gossip about it may be attributed to people who lead uneventful lives. Those who do not consider themselves to be good conversationalists may also resort to gossip to feel superior and important when information is imparted that is seemingly in demand. Some find it permissible to spread gossip only when the truth of the rumor has been verified; for others, the truth of the matter is irrelevant. After all, "truth is not hard to kill," but "a lie well told is immortal," wrote Mark Twain on character assassinations.

To an inquisitive former seminarian Father Seelos wrote, "I know nothing about the argument that took place in the choir at Saint Philomena, and am always glad to know nothing; and so, here too, do not want to say anything, because I know absolutely nothing about the affair." And in a letter to the Redemptorist Superior General in Rome, Seelos wrote, "About the little misunderstanding that existed for a short time between me and Father Mueller, I will not say a word. It is not worth the trouble, and in the end I would not be believed, because it is suspected that I speak from passion. Everything is again in good order and in peace."

For a curiosity too strong to not relish in telling others, Seelos exercises restraint and in so many words advises us: "Don't waste your breath. Chew your tongue ... or a mint instead!"

Byron Miller, C.Ss.R.



MELVIN BOUDREAUX, passed away on July 3 in New Orleans at the age of 81. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Angela G. Boudreaux. Through the intercession of Father

Francis Xavier Seelos, her cure from liver cancer in 1966 was deemed a miracle by the Vatican. In April 2000, Melvin & Angela presented Pope John Paul II with a gift from the Redemptorists at the Seelos Beatification ceremony in Rome. Melvin was also the recipient in October 2007 of "The Order of Seelos Witness" award for his many years of dedicated service at the Seelos Center. At the family's request, Memorial Gifts may be made to the National Shrine of Blessed Seelos. May Mel rest in the peace of the Redeemer and in the company of the saints.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2008

**SEELOS MEMORIAL MASS
ST. MARY'S CHURCH
1:00 P.M.**

**SEELOS GALA DINNER
AUDUBON TEA ROOM
6500 MAGAZINE STREET
5:30 P.M.**

Call 504-525-2495 or 2499
for dinner reservations

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

Seelos Center News

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

Seelos Center / Shrine ♦ 2030 Constance Street
New Orleans, LA 70130-5004
504-525-2495/2499 ♦ FAX 504-581-9181

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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 Crucifix of Blessed Seelos in designated area hospitals. Please call:

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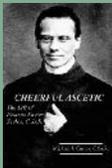
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☞ **Veneration of Bl. Seelos' Mission Crucifix** in St. Mary's Assumption Church (Josephine & Constance streets).

☞ **Weekly Mass** celebrated for Seelos benefactors. Please include Special Intentions in the enclosed envelope.

The Seelos Center offers the following devotionals:



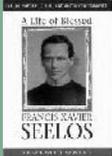
Cheerful Ascetic, 480-page hardbound biography by Fr. M. Curley that captures Seelos' piety & personality. Index/photos. (Donation: \$30, incl. p/h)



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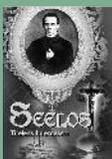
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Death, Where Is Your Sting?, a tender account of Seelos' final weeks of life as told by those who witnessed his death. Seldom revealed details of his encounter with yellow fever transport us to the bedside of a true martyr. Hardcover, 175 pp., photos. (Donation: \$24 - incl. p/h)



Sincerely, Seelos, the 201 collected letters of Fr. Seelos. Hardbound, 512 pages, illustrated. (Donation: \$35 - incl. p/h)

☞ **A Seelos Vigil Candle** will burn near his sacred resting place in the Seelos Shrine, New Orleans, for an offering of \$4.

☞ **First, Second & Third-Class Relics of Bl. Seelos / Seelos Pamphlets & Prayer Cards** available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese. Call Seelos Center, 504-525-2495 or 2499.

Please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery.



(Continued from Page 1)

Q. Was you and your family's faith strengthened by this ordeal? Yes, for the first time in my life I came to understand the meaning of faith. My husband could always tell when I didn't pray as much as I should. I found such comfort in prayer and couldn't get enough of it. When I sat in front of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel at the Seelos Shrine, I had the courage to face anything. I knew with certainty that whatever happened to me, prison or otherwise, God would not abandon me & would give me the strength to persevere with grace. This I knew because He had been faithful to me over & over again. My husband's faith was also renewed after coming with me to the Shrine & praying with me. July 24, 2007, the grand jury refused to indict me – my husband & I fell to our knees in thanks. The first part of my journey had come to an end. I had seen the greatness of God & the goodness of people.

Q. In light of your own experience, do you have any words to offer others on our faith journey? Overnight I went from a respected head & neck cancer surgeon to a hardened criminal. I fell hard & I fell far! I felt everything that defined me, my life's work, was gone. Little did I know at that time, that I had not fallen from Grace, but to Grace. My life suddenly became real and I became alive for the first time. If

I had not suffered, I would not have received so many blessings from God & others. I would have missed one of the most important times of my life, the time I realized that God truly loves me! I don't know why God has allowed all this to happen to me. It's as though He brought me to the depths of hell knowing that He would not let the flames consume me, but to purify me and to awaken in me such passion to be more like Him and to let others know of His goodness & mercy – to give hope where there is none. I have learned that if I keep my focus on Him and not on my circumstances, I can get through each day with hope.

Now I am living mainly in Baton Rouge and have been very busy with work, in addition to legislative reform regarding Disaster Medicine.

In summary, I would not have survived without the love and prayers from all of you at the Seelos Shrine; I would not have learned how to pray again, to forgive and I would not have regained my faith and trust in God. Many miracles occurred following my arrest: widespread public support, "no true bill" (this occurs in only 1-2% of cases brought to the grand jury), I am able to practice medicine again, and our legislative bills regarding Disaster Medicine reform have passed the state House & Senate unanimously with the governor's signature into law.

GREAT GIFT IDEA!

Sponsor Complete Seelos Book Collection for Libraries

Do you wish to sponsor a copy of *Death, Where is Your Sting?*, *Cheerful Ascetic*, & the new *Sincerely, Seelos* to any U.S. library, campus, or semi-nary of choice in a personal way or in a loved one's memory? Contact the Seelos Center or kindly designate your intentions in the enclosed envelope. A book plate on the verso of each book's front cover will inscribe your name as donor & the person(s) in whose honor or memory these cherished books are given. Sponsorship for the 3 hardbound books is \$80. Please consider a unique and useful legacy that will inspire future generations of readers!



TESTIMONIALS

FUSSEN, GERMANY

My wife now says the daily Novena to Blessed Seelos and we have already used the Seelos relic to help our oldest son aged 6. He was in extreme pain and so we placed it to his ear and asked Blessed Seelos to help. He already had two different pain-killers and they were not helping. He has had no pain since and he now has some antibiotics for it as well.

ABBEVILLE, LA

In 1957 my mother was born in Abbeville with Spinal Bifida. She was immediately transferred to a New Orleans hospital where she would spend the better part of her first 3 years. My grandfather chose your church and Father Seelos as his sight for prayer and comfort. My mother is now 50 and my grandfather is 83. He suffered two strokes and has been immobilized for the past decade. He never calls on me for anything. This week, he called with the simple task for me, a New Orleans resident now, to please visit the Fr. Seelos Shrine with flowers and say a prayer for him. We know this place grants miracles.

ANNAPOLIS, MD

My niece had a mammogram and a lump was found. The doctor said that she was sure it was bone cancer. I sent my niece the relic of Blessed Francis Seelos and I've been praying to him. A biopsy was taken and it came back negative. What a great day when we heard the news. Our favor was answered.

BOURG, LA

For a long time, I have been praying for my son who started using bad drugs after finishing high school. He listened to the wrong people and I was so helpless. I kept putting his name in the prayer box at the Seelos

Shrine and my prayers were heard! I repeatedly told him to watch out the people he called friends and God has finally opened his beautiful eyes. Thank you Blessed Seelos. I love you!

PITTSBURGH, PA

Two years ago the doctors were sure my daughter was facing ovarian cancer. I prayed so hard to Blessed Seelos to intercede for us. After the surgery the doctor wanted to know who we prayed to because she would have "bet her profession" that the ovaries were cancerous. Thank you God & Blessed Seelos. I will spend the rest of my life spreading devotions to him.

MANDEVILLE, LA

My husband was stricken with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2006, but let me explain why I am writing this instead of him. I was never what you could call a truly religious person. Then in 1999 my only living sibling had kidney failure at age 67 and was put on dialysis. While visiting him I happened to pick up a holy card on his table that someone had given him. The card sparked a memory from years ago when I read a newspaper account of Angela Boudreaux's cure of cancer after praying to Fr. Seelos. I said to myself, could Fr. Seelos get my brother a kidney? Shortly thereafter he received one. So, when my husband's first diagnosis was inoperable but treatable small cell lung cancer, we were devastated. The doctor did not seem too hopeful with the treatment, and once again I called upon Fr. Seelos. After the results from further testing, my husband's diagnosis had been changed to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a more treatable cancer. He has been cancer-free for the last two years.

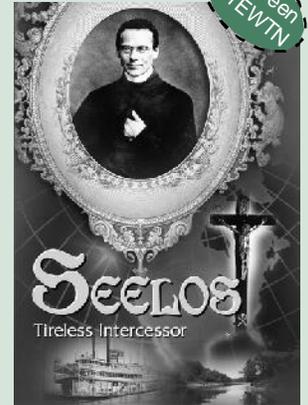
Please check out www.seelos.org as we near our 125,000th visitor!

"I enjoyed the video & I've shared it with our Youth Minister to introduce the saints to our high-schoolers."
--Viewer from Marshfield, Wisconsin

"I was deeply touched by the video on Seelos that I watched this week. It has the quality of a motion picture! I hope the Pope has seen this."
--Viewer from Virginia

SEELOS, TIRELESS INTERCESSOR

This documentary chronicles the heroic & miraculous life of Bl. Seelos. He 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. So profound was his missionary zeal that sickness, persecution, and even the upheaval caused by the Civil War, could not stop him.



As seen on EWTN

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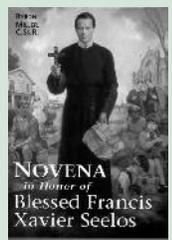
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- the Seelos Scholarship Fund to support Redemptorist Seminarians.
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