



VOLUME 99

SEELOS CENTER NEWS

MAY 2023

from the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.

Dear Devotees of Blessed Seelos,

It's hard for me to think of May without immediately thinking of beautiful flowers. Some of the prettiest of the season are in bloom and the sprouts of so many others offer the promise of good things to come. When this beauty is combined with Mother's Day and the Blessed Virgin Mary, it's spectacular. All of the events are well celebrated.

A traditional practice in many schools and parishes is the special honor bestowed upon the Mother of God by a crown put upon the head of a statue of the Virgin. Many have this spiritual exercise on the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, May 13, or on the day we remember the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth on May 31. The traditional songs enhance the beauty of the celebration and for many older folks they remind them of warm feelings from their childhood. "O Mary, we crown you with Blossoms Today..." "Bring Flowers of the Rarest, Bring Flowers of the Fairest..." "Mother Dear, O Pray for Me..." "On This Day, O Beautiful Mother..." all may be sentimental songs but there's nothing wrong with stirring up a bit of affection in a May crowning. After all, Mary is certainly a reminder of the closeness we have with God and she offers us the promise of her prayers now and at the hour of our death.

Lately I have noticed that the gift shop at the Seelos Center is getting ready for May. Our dedicated workers are gathering beautiful objects of devotion giving honor to Mary and/or things that are appropriate for gifts to our own mothers in the spring season. For many whose mothers have gone before them into death, the month reminds them to say a prayer for them.

The 40 days since Easter are celebrated this month in the Feast of the Ascension and the 50 days since Easter in the Feast of Pentecost. May is obviously a great time for celebrating so much of our faith.

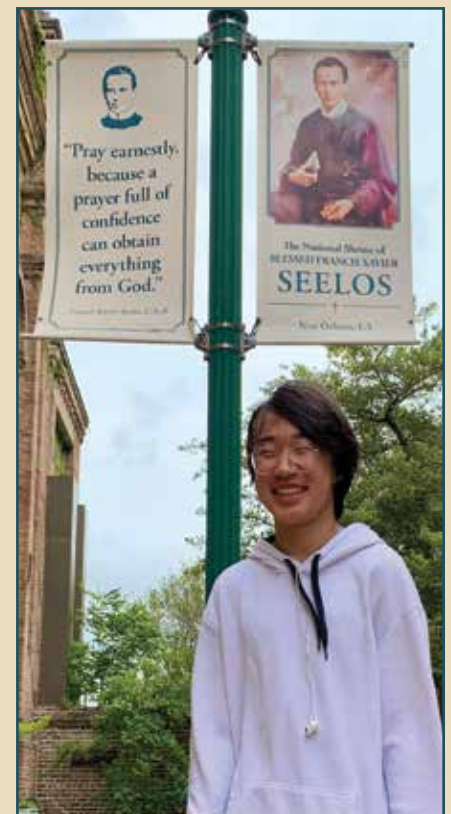


Fr. Richard Boever, C.Ss.R.
*Director, National Shrine of Blessed
Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.*

A FAMILIAR NAME



In April, the Shrine welcomed a pilgrim with a very familiar name. While on vacation in New Orleans, Seelos Kim stopped by with his family from Baltimore, Maryland to visit the shrine of his namesake.



Four Saints Who Were Devoted Mothers

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first American to be canonized as a saint and is best known for her role in starting children's parochial education in America. Born in 1774 on Staten Island, Elizabeth was raised as an Episcopalian. After spending time in Italy, she was struck by the beauty of Catholicism, and converted in 1805. Following her husband's premature death, Elizabeth started a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore, Maryland. Elizabeth's most lasting impact was her founding of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph's in 1809 – the first religious order in America. This order helped hospitals and orphans, but its most prominent work was in establishing the parochial education system in America. Elizabeth's devotion to educating children and caring for the less fortunate has had an impact lasting well beyond her own life.

Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa's extraordinary selflessness caused Pope John Paul II to skip the customary 5-year waiting period between beatification and canonization. Born in Macedonia as Gonxha Agnes Bojaxhiu in 1910, she joined the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland in 1928. Here, she was given her religious name, Mary Teresa, and was sent to teach at Saint Mary's School. In 1946, Mother Teresa experienced a pivotal moment while riding the train. It became overwhelmingly evident to her that she was to commit her life to the poor. Her realization inspired her to found the Missionaries of Charity, where she committed herself to the service of the lowest slums of Calcutta. Mother Teresa's order would eventually send women all across the world to minister to the impoverished. Her mercy and sacrifice were so profound that she was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1979.

Saint Gianna Beretta Molla

As Patron Saint of mothers, the unborn, and physicians, Saint Gianna Beretta Molla exemplified a commitment to honoring human life and the vocation of motherhood. Born in Italy in 1922, Gianna trained as a medical doctor, specializing in pediatrics. Throughout her life as a single woman, she dedicated her medical skills toward helping mothers and babies, as well as the underprivileged. Following her marriage in 1955, Gianna devoted her life to raising her family. Her pregnancy with her fourth child brought an unforeseen trial. Complications forced her to choose between risking her own life and saving her child's. Gianna chose to honor the dignity of human life, giving birth to a healthy child on April 21, 1962. She passed away in the days that followed. Her ultimate sacrifice for her child is demonstrative of her devotion and commitment to the sacred vocation of motherhood.

Saint Anne

Saint Anne is known as the mother of Mary and the grandmother of Jesus. Existing information about Anne is Catholic legend. According to accounts, Anne was barren for much of her life. One day in her advanced years, she conceived Mary. Anne dedicated the life of her child to the service of God when she was only three – a decision that was undoubtedly formative in the shaping of the future Mother of God.

Excerpt courtesy of www.nationalshrine.org

SHRINE SPOTLIGHT



Joanne Spedale

How long have you been volunteering at the Shrine? “26 years.”

What brought you to the Shrine?

“My parents were recruited to volunteer at the Shrine after they retired and I followed.”

What do you do at the Shrine?

“I volunteer at events, stuff envelopes, and answer the phone.”

Where's your favorite spot at the Shrine? “I can't choose one particular spot because as soon as I walk through the gate onto the grounds of the Shrine and Center, I feel a sense of peace. The whole place is one of my favorite spots in New Orleans.”

What does volunteering at the Shrine mean to you? “It is a continuation of lifelong volunteerism. When I was a child, my parents encouraged me to help an elderly neighbor with her garden. Ever since then, I've been blessed with many volunteer opportunities. I am lucky to use some of what I've learned to be able to assist at the Shrine and am grateful to help with the cause of canonization for Blessed Seelos.”



Prayer Partners Available By Phone

Can't make it to the Shrine? Volunteers **Jack Guidry (504) 554-3078** and **Gerry Heigle (504) 482-4404** are available to pray with you by phone 7 days a week. Jack: 10 am - 7 pm CT. Gerry: any time day or night.



Blessings for the Sick

*Hospital visits with a Seelos Crucifix
(Only family members may request)*

JEFFERSON / ORLEANS

EAST JEFFERSON GENERAL HOSPITAL
Gerry Heigle (504) 482-4404
Anne Batt (504) 458-0310
Norris Plaisance (504) 235-1961

OCHSNER (KENNER)
Linda DiMaggio (504) 287-8732
Wendy Whittaker (504) 722-0089

OCHSNER (JEFFERSON)
Mark / Monica Surprenant (504) 895-5371
Norris Plaisance (504) 235-1961
Marie Giorlando (504) 568-0522

UPTOWN / ORLEANS PARISH
Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
Dennis Waldron (504) 442-6336

WESTBANK
Elaine Freeman (504) 341-2213
Mary Grace Orsag (504) 367-7515

LOUISIANA

ABBEVILLE / ERATH / LAFAYETTE
Boniface "Boni" Suire (337) 937-5675

ALEXANDRIA
Deacon Bill / Joan Travis (318) 664-7069
Mary Ann Reddoch (318) 277-0545

BALDWIN / FRANKLIN
Patti Ibert (337) 828-0141

BATON ROUGE
Gloria Bacqué (225) 753-3800

COVINGTON
Dr. Ann Logarbo (985) 886-0218

HOUMA / THIBODAUX
Debbie Badeaux (985) 438-4096
Margo Battaglia Clement (985) 637-6056
Deacon Rod Fonseca (504) 320-7450
Sheila Fonseca (504) 320-9807

IOTA
Anne Ritter (337) 254-8451

LACOMBE/SLIDELL AREA
Lisa Johnsen (985) 640-1677
Eric Johnsen (985) 640-9226

LAKE CHARLES
Lisa Verrette (337) 274-4810

LULING & SURROUNDING AREA
David Fauchaux (504) 908-4120

MANDEVILLE
David Brumfield (985) 234-9355
Lisa and Eric Johnsen (985) 640-1677
Kathy Newcomb (225) 978-9284

NEW IBERIA / ABBEVILLE / JEANERETTE
Rachel Gonsoulin (337) 224-7855

OPELOUSAS
Suzanne Pitre (337) 351-8489

PRAIRIEVILLE / GONZALES
Deacon Claude Bourgeois (225) 337-0945

SHREVEPORT / BOSSIER CITY
Tom and Marjorie Rivers (318) 797-3116

OUTSIDE OF LOUISIANA

KATY, TEXAS
Lauren Johnson (281) 851-1321
Donna Johnson (713) 826-4191

GRACES RECEIVED & PRAYERS ANSWERED

CHANDLER, AZ

On January 2, 2022, my son, Isaac, was not breathing very well and was extremely exhausted. He struggles with sleep apnea, so his wife Sarah said he should go to the hospital. He said he just needed to rest, but his breathing was labored, so Sara put the oxygen monitor on him. The monitor read 36%. She called his brother Caleb and told him to get Isaac to the emergency room immediately. In the ER, Isaac's oxygen level was at 27%. The entire ER staff went into action to get him on a ventilator. By the time he was hooked up to the ventilator, his oxygen level was at 22%. Isaac was diagnosed with COVID.

I called everyone I knew to ask them to pray. The prognosis was not good. The doctor said 2 out of 5 people that come into the hospital in the condition that my son was in do not make it out. He told me that even if he did make it, he would have to be on a ventilator for at least 90 days. He said there could be damage to his brain and his organs, especially his kidneys. As he was telling me this, I was kneeling next to my son's bed, reciting the rosary. There was such a sense of peace. I told the doctor that my son was in God's hands and that even if he died, God was the one who was in control, and everything was going to be alright. The doctor walked out.

I called for a priest to give my son the apostolic blessing and Anointing of the Sick. A few hours later, Fr. John Clote from Holy Spirit Church in Tempe, AZ, came to administer the sacraments. He also brought a relic of Francis Xavier Seelos and placed it on Isaac's chest. I had never heard of Fr. Seelos. Coincidentally, Fr. Clote was doing a presentation about Blessed Seelos on January 6 so I went to the presentation. When I realized that he was known for healing, I began asking him to intercede for my son.

A few days later, a friend passed away. When I called to give my condolences to the family, her daughter, not knowing that I had been asking Blessed Seelos to pray, told me that her mother had a relic of Fr. Seelos and asked me if I would like to place it on Isaac. I could not believe it! I gladly received the relic and drove straight to the hospital with it. It remained with him for the duration of his hospital stay. I prayed the rosary and asked for Seelos' intercession every day.

A few days later, I volunteered for a crisis pregnancy center run by the Sisters of Life. They had recently moved to my area and were still in the process of setting up. I had not mentioned Bl. Seelos, but as we were taking a tour of the facility, one of the sisters picked up a portrait of Seelos and said, "we have this picture of Blessed Seelos, and its beautiful, but I don't think we will be putting it up here. Would you like it?" I was so happy, I had tears in my eyes! I explained how I had just been introduced to Bl. Seelos, how I was asking for his intercession, and how my son was making great progress when, in reality, he should have not even been alive. I said that I would be honored to keep the portrait.

We continued to ask Bl. Seelos to pray for Isaac. He was taken off the ventilator after just 17 days, not 90, and was moved to a hospital where he could get speech, physical and occupational therapy. On the first day there, the nurses determined that he did not need speech or occupational therapy. Isaac was released from the hospital on February 5, 2022, just 33 days after he was admitted.

On the natural level, we should be visiting Isaac's grave, but God had other plans. I believe Blessed Seelos, as an intercessor before God, prayed for my son and his life was spared. We are forever grateful.

SHRINE, MUSEUM & WELCOME CENTER HOURS
Monday-Saturday 10am-2pm | Please see SEELOS.org for visiting guidelines.

HOT IN THE SHOP ~ CELEBRATE MARY & MOM



LARGE BLACK WOOD STRETCH BRACELET – \$17

This expandable black wood bracelet features black beads and various black and white images

of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Bl. Seelos, and other saints.



MARY & CHILD TAPESTRY ROSARY POUCH – \$9

This small pouch features a silver-toned crucifix and an embroidered image of the Blessed Mother holding her baby.



FULL COLOR OMPH STATUE – \$37

This 8” tall colorful resin statue features Our Mother of Perpetual Help holding

Baby Jesus with tiny angels hovering over their shoulders.



“HEART OF A MOTHER” BOOKLET – \$6

This 32-page devotional booklet features prayers for mothers in every situation: daily prayers,

prayers for spouses, family prayers, litanies and more.



OUR LADY OF GRACE ORNAMENT – \$16

This jumbo 3 1/2” holy medal ornament features Our Lady with the inscription “O Mary

conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee.”



MOTHER MARY PRAYER CARD & POCKET TOKEN – \$8

This gift set features a prayer card with a beautiful image of the

Blessed Mother on the front and the Hail Mary prayer on the back, and an enameled token featuring Mary and a short prayer.

Quantities are limited. Prices listed above include shipping / handling. Prices online and in the Welcome Center Gift Shop may vary.

SUPPORT THE MISSION OF THE SHRINE



LIGHT A CANDLE: A vigil candle will burn near Seelos’ sacred resting place for an offering of \$3-\$4. Please visit SEELOS.org/light-a-votive-candle.



REQUEST A RELIC: 3rd Class Relics are available in either laminated prayer cards or as a crocheted memento for an offering of \$2.50 each. 2nd Class Relics are available in small envelopes for an offering of \$2.50 each.



SHOP ONLINE: Items in the Gift Shop are available at SEELOS.org/gift-shop.

VISIT SEELOS.ORG OR CALL (504) 525-2495 TO ORDER



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DONATION & CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

I would like to support the Seelos cause by donating \$_____ to be used for:

The ministry and maintenance of the Shrine My 1-year newsletter subscription renewal (\$12)

Other: _____

Make checks payable to “National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos”.

Please remove change my name and address as follows:

Name: _____

Address: _____