



# the Chalice

Volume 44

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Issue No. 4



## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN** By Bruce G.

Dear Calix Family,

My home parish has a number of great 19th century stained-glass windows saved from an old, closed, church. Two of these windows, installed next to each other in the nave, depict firstly, the Prodigal Son and secondly, the Good Samaritan. As you will read elsewhere in this edition of *The Chalice*, the 60th annual Calix Retreat in St. Paul, MN was a great success, and a source of tremendous grace for our entire society. The Retreat's theme was "Jesus, the face of the Father's merciful love," as seen through the lens of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. This Gospel parable certainly resonates with me in my recovery, as I am sure it does for most of you. But I have always wondered how the story of the Prodigal Son progressed after the celebration of the younger son's return? Was the elder brother reconciled with his father and brother? What kind of activities did the younger brother undertake after he settled back into home life? Is the Parable of the Good Samaritan the logical next step in the story, as my parish's windows seem to suggest?

If I look at both parables through the lens of, I see Step 1 through Step 10 facilitating our return to the Father, enabling us to receive His merciful love. Naturally, this fits with the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Having received that love, Step 11 shapes our response through gratitude and a willingness to do the Father's will. And this is where,

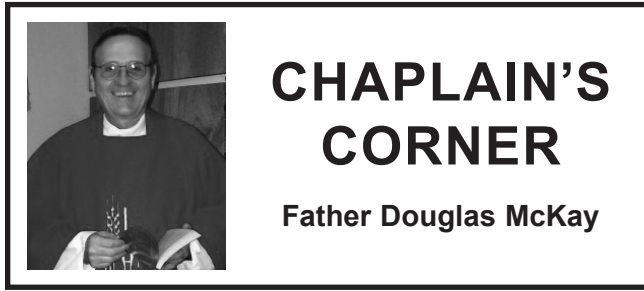
I think, the Parable of the Good Samaritan comes into play. Jesus tells us that if we love Him, we will keep his commandments. And He has given us one new commandment, to love each other as He has loved us. To me, as someone in recovery through Calix, this new commandment captures the essence of Step 12. If my "spiritual awaking" is to know through experience the Father's deep love for me, then my job is to share that love with others in need of recovery, imitating Jesus in gentleness, kindness, meekness and patience in all of my affairs, and in all of my relationships. Like the Good Samaritan, I should see my wounded brothers and sisters and act to help them, solely out of loving obedience to Christ's commandment.

I am reflecting on the 12-Steps here at the end of the summer in preparation for the last third of the calendar year, a challenging time for recovery given the new school year, fall sports, and the upcoming holidays. I am also reflecting on the 12-Steps in light of the three stated purposes of the Calix Society, as expressed in our Credo. In my recovery, should I stay strictly focused on physical and emotional sobriety, preparing for and receiving the Father's healing love? This seems very necessary and a safe course of action. Or should I simply trust in that love, aim to grow spiritually, and dare even to strive for personal sanctity? In short, is my current self-image that of the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan?

How do you see yourself?

Pax Tecum

-BG



**Catholic Addicts Living In Christ**

By Father Douglas McKay, O.F.S

While reading through the May, 1980, newsletter from the Chalice, I came across this acronym that had defined our Calix Society. A California man writes: “Accepting ‘X’ as a universal symbol for Christ, he says, the letters in C-A-L-I-X then become an acronym for “Catholic Alcoholics Living In Christ.” Today it may be necessary, in the plague of addictions, to make the letter ‘A’ stand for Addicts. And so in our ‘Culture of Death and Addiction’—the plain purpose, the true meaning, and the exact ‘Why’ of Calix could read: “Catholic Addicts Living In Christ.”

The story of William J. Montroy shows us how Catholic addicts live in Christ. Bill said that the thought of Calix really began to form from his spiritual encounter with Earl Rooney, an A.A. member and a ‘12-Stepper’ who led our alcoholic founder from a near death experience to a new life in Christ.

It was on a cold winter night when Earl proclaimed to Bill that the way he quit drinking was by the grace of God that came to him through daily Mass and Holy Communion. Hearing the God story of his new found friend, Bill longs to live in Christ by going to confession, attending daily Mass, and receiving Holy Communion. Being filled with these sacramental graces, his thirst then becomes a thirst for Christ alone.

Also, the story of Pat Cunningham, an alcoholic priest, shows us how Catholic addicts live in Christ. Father Pat allows himself to be escorted to an ongoing daily Mass by our Calix Founders: Bill Montroy, Steve Levi, Sol Humbarger, Chuck

Jennings, and Bob Doherty. Then and only then, through the early morning sacrifices of our founders, will Father Pat find his sobriety and priestly sanctity. By renewing his life in Christ through Mass, Holy Communion, and Confession, this almost hopeless priest becomes the inspiration for the Foundation of our Calix Society.

Seeing the change wrought in Father Pat through the power of our Lord’s Eucharistic presence, Montroy exclaims: “Dear God, this is the answer! This is the only sure and permanent way to sobriety and to true peace and happiness. I began to remember my first meeting with Earl and how my hopes were strengthen by my knowing that Mass and Communion would be my victory.”

Montroy continues, “What more do we need? This is the strength, we are looking for. We can not fail if we continue this.”

And even more assuring, Christ Himself calls us to remain and live in Him. How? In the Gospel He clearly tells us: “Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.” (John 15: 4-5). And nothing means nothing—no sobriety, no sanity, no sanctity!

The Lord of Life also plainly proclaims to us in the same Gospel how to live and remain in Him. “Amen, Amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. (John 6: 53-56).

Therefore, I conclude that a new and abundant life is not found in a bottle, a joint, a pill, or a syringe but only in the sacraments of Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The Calix Chaplain's Corner, (cont. from pg. 2)

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Recovery and Venerable Matt Talbot may we in recovery always celebrate the sacraments faithfully and remain as Catholic Addicts Living In Christ.

## Running into Sobriety

By Jim Billingmeier

In 1980 when the walls closed in on me, and I went into treatment for my alcoholism, I was mixing prescription meds for my depression with beer, wine and whiskey just to cope and go to work. I weighed 213 lbs. and was as nervous as the proverbial cat on a hot tin roof. I went to treatment because I had no other choice.

I didn't enjoy treatment, but I did buy into the possibility that I could stay sober "a day at a time." However, it was very apparent to me that then that my "coping medicine" was gone and trying to get through each day was scary and nerve wracking. I had zero coping skills. To illustrate my condition at that time, I can relate that on my first day back at work, I looked down at my feet and realized I had 2 different shoes on!

I realized that I was ashamed of my physical appearance as well as my emotional struggles in the work environment. I was a supervisor in a product development laboratory, and now I had to deal with subordinates, customers and bosses without my booze and scripts as a crutch. I decided that I needed to lose weight and relieve my anxiety some way. I started walking and running, walk a minute, run a minute. Pretty soon I was up to running a mile to a mile and a half without stopping. I hated it! However, with diet modification and my exercising, I lost about 20 lbs. in 2 months. Also between AA, running and getting into Toast Masters, I began to feel a lot better.

One day I found myself talking with a technician, Phil, who I knew was a runner. I told him that I just hated it, but I knew it was doing me a lot of good. He asked me how far I was running. I told him about the mile, mile and a half routine,

and he said that I just wasn't running far enough! He challenged me to train over the next month to get my average run up to 4 miles, and then he suggested we could run a 10K race together. I was dubious, but I really went at it. Two days before the race I went out and ran 6 miles. At the 10K I left Phil at about the 4-mile point and pushed myself to the finish. I averaged a little less than 8 minutes per mile, but more importantly, I felt this huge influx of satisfaction and peace.

I later went on to run many races, including marathons at my new weight of 173 lbs. I now had an antidepressant/tranquilizer (running) and AA that really filled in the "holes" in my basket of coping skills. I ran for about 25 years, stopping when arthritis began to take hold. I still go to the gym 3-4 times a week to do stretching, weights and the elliptical or stair mill. I always feel tired and tranquil afterwards. So, you don't have to run if that's not your thing, but there are myriad other ways to get that aerobic fix. The toughest step is the first step out the door!

## New Website!

In June the board voted to overhaul the Calix website. The existing site had become cumbersome to maintain, was often difficult to see and lacked many features that we felt were necessary to maintain a good internet presence for the society. Half of the expense was offset by 2 members and one unit. If you have not visited [www.calixsociety.org](http://www.calixsociety.org) recently, now is the time! Current members should have received an email asking you to go to the website and update your password. If you did not receive an email, please send an email to [help@calixsociety.org](mailto:help@calixsociety.org) and we'll get it straightened out. Also let us know what you think via the same email OR log in so you can access the forums (need to be logged in to access them via the Resources link) and chat with members online!

## Announcement- Spiritual Retreat

A spiritual retreat is being held on September 15-17 in Warrenton, VA for women who are practicing Catholics and active in AA. Explore the 12 steps within 12 parables at this priest-led three-day retreat. This retreat is limited to 10 women. The retreat costs \$275 which includes all meals. Contact Molly at drmolly3@aol.com for more information.

### 2017 Retreat in St. Paul

The 2017 retreat in St. Paul was a wonderful success, although a bit chaotic for the organizers. There were folks signing up on the Friday of the retreat weekend! There were 60 attendees for all or part of the retreat including a person who was new to the area and was moving into his new house. Another attendee is in the midst of starting a new ministry for addiction in his church in Oklahoma, and his attendance in St. Paul was to learn about Calix and possible synergy with their plan. There was an attendee from Canada, who has known about Calix for a long time and who's considering starting a unit in his town. A couple from Faribault attended to see if they could develop a Catholic recovery link for their sons.

The retreat began on Friday with a welcome by Dana C. and Christian W., who were the lead organizers of the weekend. This was followed by a video welcome by Annetta Sutton, an Al-Anon member and author. Some of the attendees visited St. Stevens Church in Minneapolis where Calix got its start through Bill Montroy and his AA friends. Other folks went on a walk by the Mississippi river and/or recited a rosary at the Marian Grotto. Bishop Andrew Cozzens was the lead celebrant at the evening Mass and the keynote speaker for the banquet. He focused his remarks on the parable of the Prodigal Son, relating the parable to the present day and recovery. Also, he told his story of his first meeting with Pope Francis.

Saturday began with Liturgy of the Hours followed by reconciliation. Afterwards Fr. Jim Livingston celebrated a Healing and Renewal Mass where many of the attendees were deeply, spiritually moved. After a sobriety countdown and cake following lunch, we were treated to a video message from Cardinal Tobin, the archbishop of the Newark, NJ archdiocese. Cardinal Tobin said he introduces himself in some basements by saying, "Hi, I'm Joe and I'm an alcoholic". He centered his remarks on the story from the New Testament about Jesus curing the 10 lepers, and having only one of them coming back to thank him. In the afternoon Fr. John McHale gave us a preview of a new retreat format that he's developing for people in recovery entitled "Walking with Jesus, from hope to Faith to Freedom". Following that discourse, Ephraim N. gave a moving AA/Calix talk about his road to recovery and spiritual growth. AA and Al-Anon meetings were held after dinner to top off the day.

On Sunday a large group discussion was to get attendee's impressions of the retreat. Ken J. followed with a discussion of his experiences in Calix and a preview of the next retreat which will be held in Philadelphia. Ken was the founder of the first Philadelphia unit, and has been deeply involved with the Greys Ferry Unit and Our House Ministries which he and Fr. McKay provide the driving force. We concluded the retreat with a Mass celebrated by Fr. McHale

We in the St. Paul Unit are deeply indebted to Fr. McHale, who stepped into fill several roles for Fr. McKay. Unfortunately, Fr. McKay had to cancel his trip here due to his mother's serious illness. Please pray for Fr. Doug and his mom, who is in hospice.

## Unit News

### Las Vegas, NV

I was copied on an e-mail from Madge L. of the Las Vegas Unit in which she asked for prayers for several unit members who are ailing. Please keep these folks in your daily prayers.



Unit News (cont. from pg. 4)

## Norristown, PA

A new unit has been founded in Norristown, PA. They held their first meeting on August 26. Congratulations to these folks and best wishes from our Calix Board!

## The Lord Give You Peace!

All of our “Golden” Hail Mary’s were answered this afternoon (9/4/17) when Fr. McKay’s mother, Agnes, celebrated her eternal birthday. The Blessed Mother, angels and saints came to escort her to paradise after spending almost 5 months in hospice care at home.

I will send another email when the arrangements have been made. In the meantime, please keep the entire McKay family in your prayers.

Father’s mailing address is 1441 S. 29th St., Philadelphia, PA 19146.

## When the Son of Man Comes

by Fr. Maxim Popov, CMF

“When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?” - sincere, living faith? When I look out on the world and current events, when I observe so many broken relationships between people, this question frequently haunts me. And I ask myself further: When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith in me?

At this time I cannot give a straightforward answer to this question. Perhaps I even fear to venture an answer. I only know that I would like to respond with a complete affirmative. At the present I have a certain knowledge, a certain experience of the Lord’s daily presence in my life – a real feeling of His accompanying me through life. An incomprehensible, closeness, which I dates back to my first conscious childhood memories. This gives rise to acts of faith and love in my heart. I am not yet at a point of being able to conclusively answer the Lord’s question. Still, I hope that my

will, which strives to respond to the real action of His love, will always be united with His, despite all the obstacles, spiritual aridity and imperfections of my life. Jesus, I trust in You. Without You I cannot live. I believe that You will not abandon me, nor those close to my heart. I beg You, bless every one who will read these words. Give them true knowledge of the significance and inestimable value of Your particular path for each one of them. Amen.

In 1998 I began to prepare for final vows. Before profession, every day during Mass I would offer up my vocation to the Lord, saying “Not my will but Thine be done.” By May of that year I had developed difficulty walking and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I accepted this verdict with considerable calmness, but the question emerged “Lord, do You really want me to serve You?”

The moment of silence had come regarding my relationship with the Lord. I simply lay in bed and stared at the ceiling. I knew He was there but ignored Him. Things had not worked out the way I had wanted. Formerly, when I had worked with sick people, I used to speak with them frequently about suffering, about its salvific value, and of the value of offering sacrifices. At this moment, however, I didn’t want to apply all this to myself. I RESENTED HIM. As a mute protest, I refused to talk with Him: I knew this would hurt Him. I had wasted so much time and energy on the path of my vocation. And now.... Where is Your love in all this, Lord?

That particular day almost no one except me knew my diagnosis. Suddenly, one by one, different people began to come into my room to visit. Each one told me that which I had never heard from him: “I love you.” – and that was all. After spending a few minutes with me, each one left. These were various acquaintances, from my religious brothers to lay friends. And, notwithstanding the fact that most of them did not know each other, each one said the same simple sentence. When the first visitor told me that, I felt a little surprised. My astonishment increased with the second such message. With the third my amazement knew no bounds. When I had heard the ninth such message, I said to the Lord, “Was it You who sent me these

When The Son of Man Comes (cont. from pg. 5)

people? All right. – let’s talk. If you truly want me to serve You bring it about that I be able to remain in my congregation. O.K?”. After this the tension in my relationship with the Lord lessened, but didn’t altogether disappear. I only get into serious conflicts with those whom I truly love.

And now the long awaited day of my priestly ordination had come. The Krasnoyarsk parish, Transfiguration of the Lord, had been preparing for this for some time. Everything was very warm-hearted and ceremonial. As with my diacnal ordination, my ordinating bishop was Bp. Jerzy Mazur, SVD. Unfortunately, at the time of this writing (February of 2003) he is not with us. In April of 2002 the Russian authorities prevented him from returning from Poland to carry out his pastoral responsibilities, not giving any explanation for their actions. This is very painful to the Diocese of St. Joseph in Irkutsk. I believe that love is nourished on sacrifice, and that Bp. Mazur’s complete humility, trust in God’s will and acceptance of the situation will bring about great spiritual fruit.

From the perspective of more than a year and a half of priestly ministry at Transfiguration Parish, I can say “Yes, I am truly happy and this is mine.” The Lord has healed much in me so that I can carry out my pastoral responsibilities. I regret nothing that has happened in my life. Everything has helped me better understand and better love those whom I serve. Humanly speaking, I am wounded in many areas of my life, but precisely from this vulnerability comes the strength to serve and to accept people as they are.

It is precisely Jesus as the Wounded Healer who gives sensitivity to peoples’ problems and sufferings. As I come to know people better, I have come to be aware of a great need to help people in difficult life situations, especially the addicted, co-addicted and those suffering from emotional problems. With the blessing of the parish pastor, Fr. Dariusz Bialek, I founded a group to help such people. Sr. Mary Katherine Malmros SOLT assisted me in this venture. From the outset, we placed

our group under the patronage of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, patron saint of the addicted. Despite the fact that it is based on the 12 Step Program, we strive to place more attention on the meaning and role of spiritual growth and the exodus from unmanageable situations.

God chose me not because I have special qualities, but rather in spite of my weaknesses and wounds. I gave nothing to God; it was He who gave me all. He has made me a happy man, because He has showed me that in fact my life has value. And I feel the presence and love of the Father. For every day I live in the state of grace, I give Him thanks. For every celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, I give Him thanks. For being able to function normally each day, I give Him thanks. For every second of prayer, every grain of love and gratitude, I give Him thanks. And for the miracle and unmerited gift of my vocation, I give Him thanks.

I do not know whether the Son of Man will find faith in me when He comes; but I am convinced that I will have much for which to thank Him, especially for the unearned gift of the priesthood.

*Fr. Popov, who serves in Siberia called me a few years back to ask about Calix. He sent me his treatise entitled, “When the Son of Man Comes”. I took excerpts from this writing, since the original is 25 pages long. Jim B./ Ed.*

## Literature

12-Step Review (Set) edited by Fr. Emmerich Vogt	\$15.00 Ppd
The 12 Steps and Catholic Spirituality by Fr. Leo Dolan	\$1.00 ea.
Introduction to Calix Packet	\$1.75 ea.
A Word for the Problem Drinker	\$0.40 ea
Calix, What and Why	\$0.30 ea
How it Works-Spiritually	\$0.30 ea
Information for Chaplains	\$0.30 ea
Matt Talbot Medals	\$0.80 ea
Information for New Units	\$0.30 ea
Calix Induction Ceremony	\$0.30 ea
Calix Pin (Members Only!)	\$5.00 ea

NEW! Matt Talbot Prayer/Relic Card. Color cards contain prayer for Matt's canonization, prayer asking for Matt's intercession and a piece of relic cloth that was touched to a 1st Class relic making it a 3rd class.	\$1.00 ea
NEW! Audio Version of Recovery meditations on the Stations of the Cross by Msgr. Harrington and narrated by Gerard King**	\$6.00 Ppd
Calix and the Twelve Steps by Fr. Arnold Luger ** SPANISH EDITION **	\$9.00 Ppd
Calix, What and Why ** SPANISH EDITION **	\$1.00 ea
Matt Talbot sculpture See flyer under "resources". Send an email to <a href="mailto:help@philly-calix.com">help@philly-calix.com</a> before ordering to arrange for local pickup in Philadelphia and save the shipping cost.	\$75.00 Ppd
Matt Talbot sculptures for the UK. Due to shipping costs we need to add \$10 US to the cost.	\$85.00 Ppd
Calix Banner - with pole and rope to hang it	\$50.00 Ppd
Calix Banner - without pole and rope	\$40.00 Ppd
Sister Ignatia DVD. Documentary on the life of Sr. Ignatia and her role in early AA	\$19.00 Ppd
Recovery Meditation On The Stations of The Cross by Msgr. Harrington. Great resource for your meetings during Lent!	\$5.00 Ppd
Heaven's Homecoming by Fr. Douglas McKay (Grays Ferry Spiritual Guide) Note that the Kindle version is now available at amazon.com. Use the link from the Calix homepage to get to Amazon and then look at "Kindle Books"	\$13.00 Ppd
Calix and the Twelve Steps by Fr. Arnold Luger ** NOTE ** There is also a Kindle version of this book available at Amazon.com. Go to the Calix homepage and click on the Amazon banner to purchase for \$5.99!	\$10.00 Ppd
The Light of Faith (Reprinted!) by Fr. Francis Canavan	\$9.00 Ppd
By The Grace of God by Fr. Francis Canavan	\$11.00 Ppd
The Soul of Sponsorship (From letters between Bill W. and Fr. Dowling) by Robert Fitzgerald, S.J.	\$14.00 Ppd
Sister Ignatia Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous by Mary Darrah	\$19.00 Ppd
A 12-Step Approach to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (52 Meditations, & their relation to the 12 steps) by James Harbaugh, S.J.	\$20.00 Ppd
Let the Oppressed Go Free by Cardinal Justin Rigali	\$6.00 Ppd

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**Membership Application**

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Dues/ \$25.00/ yr: Please enclose a check to the **Calix Society**

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**THE CALIX SOCIETY**

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## **Please check your label-**

**The expiration date will always be at the end of the year.**

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