



the Chalice

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN By Bruce G.

Dear Calix Family,

A fellow Calix Board member asked me recently what I thought was the most important thing that we had to offer people in recovery. My answer was Christ's Peace, which to me is qualitatively different and superior to the serenity obtained through regular 12-Step programs. Christ's Peace and serenity are both God's merciful gift to those of us in recovery, but feel they are different. My ability to articulate the difference between the two is totally inadequate, however. All I can say is that what I experience when fully engaged in Christian prayer and meditation, participating in and partaking of the Sacraments, reading Scripture and other faith-filled works, and practicing the Works of Mercy, is significantly different than the improved outlook I first experienced in the rooms. And Calix has been at the focal point of all these spiritual activities, allowing me to share all that I have received, and to further receive from others in an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

My friend listened patiently without comment, and then offered something far simpler: "Calix offers *family*."

Granted, I start these columns by greeting my "Calix Family." And I think of the members of my Northern Virginia unit as my recovery family. But that *family* was the most important thing that we offer as a society did not resonate with me.

That was, it did not resonate until several weeks later, when in a meeting a different person shared the thought that the "antidote to addiction is community." Then it hit me, the connection between community and family. One way to see addiction is as bondage to self. When we work Step-12 and have compassion for others, we are building community. And that community, through grace, becomes the key that releases us from bondage! And the most fundamental, the most loving, the basis of all community, is *family*. The light bulb finally went on! By the time you read this edition of *The Chalice*, the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima will have passed. Much will have been made about Mary's request for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart. Because of the failure of popes and bishops to properly carry out Our Lady's request prior to March 25, 1984, Russia was able to spread its errors throughout the world. One of the most significant of Russia's errors was communism's teaching that all evil in the world was perpetrated by and transmitted through families. Significantly, during the final apparition at Fatima on October 13, 1917, the three little shepherd children saw Our Lady with St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, both blessing the world, while at the same time tens of thousands of other people were witnessing what has become known as the *Miracle of the Sun*. The appearance of the Holy Family to the seers at Fatima reinforces the importance of family in God's plan. Family, a communion of persons, prefigures the Communion of Saints and provides building blocks for the Kingdom of God.

It is humbling to think that through family recovery, the Calix Society has a special role to play in God's redemptive plan. As we experience it locally in Virginia, family recovery unites alcoholics, addicts, and codependents in Calix activities - something to ponder in light of Heaven's message. Pax Tecum, -BG

**“Walking with Jesus from Hope to Faith
to Freedom”**

A Retreat in the Spirit of Calix.

By Fr. John McHale

Purpose

The retreat reflects the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous—AA.

- The concept of “God as we understood Him” is a challenging idea for many AA members.

- For some, this god could just be the group they joined that would listen without judging them and love them until they could love themselves.

- The purpose of “Walking with Jesus from Hope to Faith to Freedom” is to incorporate the profound insights of 12 Steps into a healing, Christ-centered experience.

- Scripture Exercises are the focus of the retreat. They use a re-enactment of the Scriptures scenes. Jesus is alive to us in the Word.

Explanation of Scripture Meditation

- Each Scripture Exercise will begin with a reading from one of the Gospels.

- These readings are followed by a meditation where we are invited to identify with a person in Scripture and imagine ourselves in the scene

- There are many Scripture Exercises during the retreat. Each is different and will invite us to reach out in faith and explore our feelings.

- The exercises will facilitate our opening up fully before Christ, who is present and waiting to speak to us.

- After each exercise we will share our thoughts and feelings about what we experienced.

Friday’s Retreat Activities

- Welcome, Introductions and Explanation of Living Scripture
- Celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass
- Dinner
- Prodigal Son
- The Man Possessed by Demons
- Jesus Cures the Paralytic
- The Woman Caught in Adultery
- Night Blessing
- Reconciliation
- Adoration

The Prodigal Son

We will confront our sinful actions and omissions and this will assist us in committing to the steps necessary to address these failures. It's an invitation and a challenge to acknowledge our brokenness and to humbly ask God to remove those defects of character.

The Man Possessed by Demons

We come to grips with the “demons” that have bound us in chains. We will be encouraged to recognize and acknowledge that there is one that can restore us to sanity and to make the decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Cures the Paralytic

We are invited and challenged to acknowledge the mercy and healing power of God and to make a decision to turn our will and lives over to the one who is most able to transform us into the wonderful persons we're meant to be.

The Woman Caught in Adultery

We experience Jesus foiling the attempt of the religious leaders to use the law to victimize a vulnerable woman. Jesus reaches out in forgiveness and mercy to heal her sinful brokenness and to show the true image of God, a God of boundless love. This gives us an opportunity to recognize Christ’s desire to heal our brokenness and to surrender it all to Him.

Saturday Morning Retreat Activities

- Celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass
- Breakfast
- Good Morning
- Group Sharing
- Lunch

Saturday Afternoon and Evening Retreat Activities

- Peter Confesses His Sinfulness to Jesus
- Zacchaeus Makes Amends
- Nicodemus Learns that Jesus is the Messiah
- Jesus Suffers and Dies on the Cross
- Jesus Rises from the Dead
- Disciples on the Road to Emmaus
- Proclaiming the Good News
- The Agape Meal

Peter Confesses His Sinfulness to Jesus

We observe Peter, blinded by pride, resenting the command that Jesus gives. We have the opportunity to see - like Peter - that confessing failures to Jesus and surrendering to him opens up the way to be transformed into the persons God intends.

Zacchaeus Makes Amends

This Scripture Meditation focuses on the need to make amends. It helps us to identify the actions to be taken and to plan to make them. It's an invitation and a challenge to "clean the slate" thereby removing barriers to lives that are happy, joyous and free.

Nicodemus Learns that Jesus is the Messiah and Must Die

We are able to discover that Jesus is the Son of God sent by the Father to save us from just punishment for our sinfulness. It will help us to understand that that despite our ungratefulness, Jesus willingly consented to a horrible death. This Scripture is an invitation to give thanks and praise to our loving Savior.

Jesus Suffers and Dies on the Cross

We experience the reality of Jesus offering himself up for our salvation. It will help relate his suffering to the sufferings in our lives. It is an invitation and a challenge to accept the sufferings God allows so that he may use those to heal and transform us.

Jesus Rises from the Dead

We are able to experience the amazement and joy of Jesus' victory over sin, suffering and death. It will assist in understanding that the defeats of this life are passing difficulties on the path to eternal glory. It is an invitation to rejoice in the gift of eternal life that God offers.

Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

We observe and experience the joy of the disciples in coming to understand God's true plan for the Messiah through the teaching of their new companion. It's an invitation to be open to becoming Jesus' disciples and reap the eternal rewards of discipleship.

Proclaiming the Good News

We experience Jesus' call to become his witnesses and join with the disciples in receiving the Holy Spirit and taking the Good News to those who open themselves to the forgiveness and mercy of the Lord, Jesus Christ.



To find out about having the
 “Walking with Jesus from Hope to
 Faith to Freedom” Retreat
 at your location visit:
Hopetofaithtofreedom.org

The Agape Meal

- The dinner is to be a sharing of agape love.
- The retreatant will have listened to and reflected on the Scripture Meditations that helped them recognize their powerlessness.
- Come to believe that God can do for them what they can't do for themselves.
- Made the decision to turn their will and life over to the care of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Acknowledged their sinfulness.
- Asked God to remove their defects of character..
- Planned to make amends to those they have harmed
- Are willing to share the message of their spiritual awakening and of God's mercy with others in bondage.
- Ask God to break the Soul Ties which stand in the way of completely surrendering to Him.
- During the meal the retreatants will hear the testimony of the companions of the Apostle Paul about their work sharing the Good News throughout Asia Minor and areas of Eastern Europe.
- In the concluding portion of the meal the retreatants will give their testimony on:
 - What the retreat experience has been for them
 - How they plan to apply that experience.

Sunday Retreat Activities

- Celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass
- Breakfast
- Good Morning
- Retreat Closing

Evaluations of

*The First “Walking with Jesus” Retreat
 9/15 – 17/2017*

The feedback from the participants on the Retreat rated it from Great to Excellent. One change two of the attendees suggested was to provide more time in the schedule for both personal stories and all the Scripture Meditations.

Now, many including those who attended the Retreat are asking when the next one will be held.

Prayer Requests

- I will like to find prayer groups in my area that I can participate with. Thank you very much for your prayers. God bless! **Dan S**
- Recovery, reconciliation with my wife Mary after current separation, and reuniting us all as a family with our six children. **Ray F**
- For the repose of the soul of John Forest who died from the disease of addiction and for his family who mourn. **Sheila D**
- My mother in law. Lee H. who is in hospice now. Pray for restful passing into eternal life with Jesus our Lord. **Dale C**
- For the humility to commit to working the 12 steps of the AA program. I'm currently working on my first 24 hours. **Nick R**
- I have struggled alcohol addiction since 1990 with only one sober period from 2000 to 2005. Please pray for my deliverance which I sorely need and desire. Thank you. Steven K
- For my friend Dan who is struggling with detox from alcohol addiction, that he may continue with the rehab treatment he needs. Deacon **Don S**

Victorious Sting?

Before my priestly ordination, the one thing I dreaded most was to officiate at my parent's funerals. How would I do that? With trepidation, I wondered.

May 21, 1995, my brother Anthony, died in a crack house with a needle in his arm from a drug overdose. At Saint Gabriel's, my home parish church, I stood in the sacristy with priest friends praying for the repose of my brother's soul and for the grace to celebrate my brother's funeral Mass. After my the prayer, I heard in my heart, "I got this. He's my brother more than yours. Let me do it."

"How?" I asked.

"Watch me," the Lord said.

Trusting, I surrendered to Jesus, watching Him.

Through the eyes of priesthood, I saw the savior in my body standing before Anthony's casket, sprinkling holy water, and claiming him as His own. During my homily, before the crowded congregation, I felt as if I were sitting with my family listening to the Risen Lord speaking through my voice, tongue, and lips about eternal life. Truly, thus far, this was the highlight of my priesthood.

March 30, 2003, my father suffered a stroke. At the hospital when I sprang from the car, my Saint Joseph medal—that I carried with my sacred oils—fell out of my pocket. Kissing it up, I realized that my father was going to die a happy death. About 20 of us gathered around my dying father singing, *Be Not Afraid*.

Interrupting us the doctor requested that we leave the room while he removed the ventilator. When we returned, I placed the Blessed Sacrament upon the blue blanket that covered him. Then we sang *O Sacrament Most Holy and Immaculate Mary*.

Watching the monitor numbers steadily falling, I noticed the vertical line becoming like passing 'M's" reminding me of Mother Mary's presence.

We were praying the rosary as the numbers were dropping low.

Coming to the 'Hail Holy Queen' at the words *after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus*, I heard 'beep', and saw the flat line go by. Wiping my eyes, I believed that my father was with Our Father.

Again, at Saint Gabriel's, in the sacristy, surrounded by priest friends, I heard another divine whisper, "He's my son more than your father." Surrendering to the High Priest, I trusted that the Merciful Lord would do the same for my father as He did for my brother during his funeral Mass. And he did! It was graceful, peaceful, joyful. On the Fourth of July, 2013, my brother Harry—suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and a recovering alcoholic and a member of Calix—dreamt about the horrors of Viet Nam. Springing out of bed, on that diabolical night, he landed into the bureau and broke his neck. During his 14 months of paralysis, he was professed into the Secular Franciscan Order as Brother Joseph Francis, the same religious name as Venerable Matt Talbot. We all prayed that Harry would be the miracle for Matt's beatification and that he would resume his heroic acts for Our House Ministries.

Realizing that the miracle wasn't happening, I prayed, "Then, please God take him home." After praying that prayer for weeks, I finally prayed, "O God, I'm tired of telling you what to do. Thy will be done!" Then God took Harry to Himself, September 2, 2014, for the Miracle of Homecoming.

Again with my mournful family, in the midst of our crowded church, surrounded by marines, secular Franciscans, and priests, I was carried through the funeral services knowing that my Big Brother was more His brother than mine, and I believed he heard the Lord Himself say, "Harry, Semper Fi! Hurrah!".

The day after Mother's Day, 2017, my mother was hospitalized with pneumonia. Because she refused the ventilator, she was placed in hospice at my sister's home. Always I saw my mother as a religious woman and daughter of the Church, but in these last months of her life, I really saw her great sanctity.

Everyday, I visited my mother with Holy Communion. On a few occasions I celebrated Mass at her bedside. Our family conversations were always spiritual. Sometimes mom would break out singing hymns, especially Marian ones. Once she said to me, "Father Douglas, Reverend McKay, Dougie, go into the world and tell the good news of salvation." Then she prayed, "Our Father...."

Another time, she said, "Pray, pray, pray."

"Pray what?" I asked.

"Hail Mary full of grace...."

And often she'd say, "Stay together in love." Then she would pray, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...."

Sometimes, in the midst of my family, she would lift herself up and fixate above us speaking to the angels, the saints, and to God Himself: "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you." And to her guardian angel, "Saint Bernadette, pray for me." Or just "Jesus... Jesus... Jesus..." I never heard anyone say the Holy Names more sweetly than my mother. "Jesus, Mary, Joseph come take me home," she would repeat again and again, and she never let go of her rosary beads.

On Labor Day, 2017, I felt frustrated for missing my morning visit to mom. Priestly obligations kept me away that morning. However, I got to her around the three o'clock hour. After kissing my mother, I sat down with some relatives reminiscing about family times. Suddenly, my mother grunted as if to proclaim, "It's Time!"

My sister Peggy and I, after our relatives left, started the prayers for the dying.

When I held up the Most Blessed Sacrament, mom fixated on His real presence, and I blessed her with the sacred host. Sensing His crucified presence in my mother, I prayed out loud His seven last words. When I said "It's finished" she swallowed hard and stopped breathing.

Patiently, I waited to hear one more breath believing that Jesus would breathe it Himself and destroy her death. Sensing that she was now outside her body standing next to Mary at the foot Calvary, I heard in my heart Jesus speaking to my mother: "Woman behold your daughter, Agnes behold your mother. Father, forgive Agnes, she didn't know what she was doing. I thirst for Agnes. This day, Agnes, you will be with me in paradise." And then, I heard, "Mother, we won, we got Agnes. It's finished!" All of this was going on as I held my hands on my mother's head. She who formed my hands in her womb and who ushered me from God into this world were upon my mother ushering her into God. It's hard to put into words what I experienced in her last hour when all her 'Hail Mary' prayers were fulfilled. It was above space and time making me aware of His presence in priesthood, in Eucharist, and in my mother. A wonderful wave of peace flowed over me, and I knew my mother was all right with God. After kissing mom good-bye, Peggy and I embraced with grateful hearts, peaceful minds, and joyful tears. It was all a Holy Communion in the Mystical Body of Christ. Truly, it was!

Still in that same joy and peace and gratitude, I celebrated mom's Graduation Ceremony. Yes, she graduated life with the highest honors, Summa Cum Laude, in the presence of so many priests, religious, friends, and family members in the church she dearly loved. Today, I know I will be a better priest, because I have two mothers in heaven praying for me: my saintly mother and my Blessed Mother.

O death where is your victorious sting? Thank you, fellow Calix members, for all your prayers for my mother, my family, and for me.

Father Douglas McKay O.F.S.

Members Who have past away**2010 -2017****Eternal Rest Grant unto Them, O Lord**

*Bette Baxter, James "Butchie" Brown,
Annie Burns, Chuck Daley, Phyllis "Irish"
Guthrie, Dave Hachel, Terry Haggerty
Father Charles Keenan, Carol Leone,
Debbie Marchese, Pat McLaughlin
Monica O'Kane, Andy Williams
Evy Wybest, Fr. Leo A. Dolan
Marriane Hinderks, Beatris Jacques
Loretta A. Kallaugher, Cecilia and Phil
Oknich, John Pucek, Joseph Pytko
Jan Racek, John Stone, Don Gostomski
Bob Johnson, Ed Krof, Joseph M. Lynch
Frank McGill, Harry McKay, Mary
Walters, Margaret Stutsman
Fr. Simon Wood, Bev Adams
Hannah Kiernan, Mike Moen
Herb Rigg, Rev. Cornelius Carr, SJ
Pat Hewitt, John Leuzzi, Joe McGehrin
Jim O'Keeffe, Mary Reardon
Billy Wagner, Stanley Jackson
Carl Ursino, Tom Gibbons*

**St Monica, Patron Saint of Alcoholics
By Christina B.**

As Catholics, we are richly blessed with a treasure trove of Saints from whom we can learn so much and lean on in times of need. While we are introduced to Saints in many ways, most have come to know St. Monica because she is the mother of St. Augustine, one of Christianity's most influential theologians.

I got to know St. Monica in a much different way. In mid-August 2012, after a rehab program at Father Martin's, I re-entered society. Like many newly sober alcoholics and addicts, I found every day to be an intense struggle. . I had the privilege at rehab to attend daily Mass, and after coming home, I flocked to Mass every day.

On August 27, I was amazed to discover that the Saint of the day was St. Monica, the patron saint of alcoholics. I felt blown away to consider that (1) the Church even has a patron saint of alcoholics, (2) she lived 1,500 years ago, and (3) she is a woman!

Five years ago, I held onto St. Monica as a life raft in early sobriety. Since then, I have gotten to know her even better. As the mother of St. Augustine, a man so wayward that he described himself as "wretched", St. Monica prayed constantly for his conversion. She never gave up on him and even followed him from Africa to Rome to Milan. After decades of persistent prayer, St. Augustine converted to Christianity. He credited his mother's tireless prayer as one of the factors which led him to God.

I have learned to lean on St. Monica when I pray for loved ones suffering from addiction. She has taught me two important things. First, prayer is powerful, and there is no such thing as "just" praying for someone. Second, nothing is impossible with God. Nothing.

In the Calix creed, our second purpose is to promote the spiritual development of our membership. In that respect, I would like to share with you a novena that has helped several people in my life, and has drawn me closer to this beautiful Saint, St. Monica:

"Dear Saint Monica, you were once the mournful mother of a prodigal son. Your faithfulness to prayer brought you and your son so close to God that you are now with him in eternity. By your intercession and God's grace, your son St. Augustine became a great and venerable Saint of the Church. Please take my request to God with the same fervor and persistence with which you prayed for your own son.

(Mention intentions)

With your needs, worries and anxieties, you threw yourself on the mercy and providence of God. Through sorrow and pain, you constantly devoted yourself to God. Pray for *(name of person)* that *(he/she)* might join you in such deep faith.

Above all, dear Saint Monica, pray for *(him/her)* that *(he/she)* may, like your son, turn from sin and become a great saint for the glory of God."

Dear Calix Family,

The words of St. Paul in Romans 7 resonates for many of us in recovery, “What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate.” In the selection below from her *Spiritual Letters*, Sr. Wendy Beckett provides a solution for our inability to do what we want. Notice the resemblance between the three conditions suggested by Sr. Beckett and Steps 1 thru 3 of Alcoholics Anonymous. Also of particular interest is the final line of the selection, which recommends that we turn to God in constant trust. For those who pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet regularly, the recommendation to trust should be very familiar, and be reminiscent of similar recommendations of St. Therese of Lisieux (Feast Day October 1st) and St. Faustina Kowalska (Feast Day October 5th) – “Jesus I Trust in You.”

Martha’s Need To Be Convinced of Her Helplessness

Here are areas where you truly try—yet you fail. Why? Because the desire is too surface—the “yes” to love isn’t coming from the very depths of you, and so, when taken unawares, lack of love peeps out. What can you do?...

The great agony of being unregenerate man is

precisely that: we just can’t. Our will isn’t enough “ours” to be all gathered up in one total act whenever we want to. But, when we are wholly convinced of our helplessness—and that’s a tremendous grace and we have to suffer and struggle to learn it—then we have the first condition for holiness....

And the second is to realize that, in proportion as we see that we can’t, we must believe that God can, and will, and longs for nothing more.

But, third condition, we must ask him to transform us, holding our helplessness up to him constantly, which, in turn, we won’t have the incentive to do so long as we feel we can fumble along well enough as we are....

So really, what I feel God wants so passionately to do in you is to have you see, open-eyed, your weakness, and turn with constant trust to him to be loved and so made loving. - **Sister Wendy Beckett**

Sister Wendy is a South African-born British art expert, consecrated virgin, and contemplative hermit who lives under the protection of a Carmelite monastery in Norfolk, England.

This selection appeared in the *Magnificat* magazine on October 10, 2017.