



# the Chalice

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## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN** By Gretchen S

Greetings and God Bless!

This time of year fills me with gratitude for the blessing of sobriety, and for all the other blessings we have from Christ. One of the things I am most thankful for is our Calix fellowship. I am so glad that there is Calix for those who thirst.

As we look back on 2014, it has been a year of growth, and of sorrow.

We have added "Calix and the 12 Steps" in Spanish to our list of literature and hope that it is being distributed to those parishes with large Spanish populations. Our groups continue to grow in numbers and members, and our units are spreading the Good Word. This year, following the Convention in Philadelphia, groups started in Ireland.

Calix has also grieved for the loss of several members, and though we know they are with God, they are dearly missed. I hope the loved ones of those who have passed are comforted in the love of Christ, and know that our thoughts and prayers are with them.

When I first attended Calix meetings, as a non-Catholic "seeker" I felt as though I found a missing puzzle piece, or a soul shaped key. There is a peace with Calix that I wish I could

share with everyone. Our community enhances all areas of my life, and keeps my thoughts close to God. When I see our members provide Christian examples of living life it makes my heart sing.

As we look to the New Year, it is my hope that we can expand our groups and allow more people to experience Calix. Our Convention is a great way to introduce newcomers to the group. Don't be afraid to share! Stay tuned for information on the 2015 Calix Convention. It will be held at Mt. Saint Mary's in Emmittsburg, MD on July 17 -19. More details will follow.

I wish each of you health and happiness in the New Year.



## **In Memory of Ed Kroft**

At the 2012 Convention, I was on the ballot to become the next President of Calix Society International and my opponent was Ed Kroft. I expected to lose that election since Ed had been in Calix for so long and everybody knew him. As the outcome was announced, my first order of business was to name Ed my right hand man. In the next months, with the resignation of our Vice President, the Board elevated Ed to Vice President by unanimous vote.

I am mourning the loss of a long time member of Calix, my friend, and my Vice President: Ed Kroft left us on Christmas morning. That morning, Ed went to an AA Alcolthon meeting before Mass. Following Mass,

Memory of Ed Krofta (cont. on pg. 2)

Memory of Ed Krofta, (cont. from pg. 1)

and with our Lord Jesus in him in the form of the Holy Eucharist, Ed moved forward on his journey seeking the Lord at the home he shared with his loving wife, Marlene. Ed was born October 2, 1938 and a lifelong Catholic. He was a veteran of the USAF. He is the father of 3 daughters, a grandfather and great-grandfather. It is impossible to imagine the number of people he's influenced as a member of AA for over 40 years.

He was also a member of Calix for 40 years. I had sent him an email in the past month asking him to write an article for The Chalice as an 'Old-timer'. It pains me that we won't be able to appreciate Calix through Ed's eyes. We can learn from his service to Calix, however.

As we began the process to dissolve the Office into a virtual office, Ed and Marlene volunteered to assume the responsibility of mailing out Calix literature. He served as Vice President, has been on the Board of Directors for a long while, had been the President of the Omaha Group and Lord knows what more he did for our organization. He and Marlene had been planning on the trip to Dublin with those pilgrims seeking to learn more about Matt Talbot.

The most striking thing Marlene shared with me that night when she broke this news was that her faith grew dramatically because of Ed and Calix. I ask us all, is there anything more important than that?

I love Ed Kroft and my heart mourns with Marlene. I pray that Ed intercedes with our Lord and saves me a seat where I know he's going! (Just don't be in a rush, Ed!)

Mike Sanders



- We have heard from Fran Little dove who has become busy writing books making her time to write for The Chalice limited. Mary Costello has offered to write reflections for upcoming issues of The Chalice. Thanks Mary.

- In this issue, you will see 2 articles from Calix Old-Timers. If you've been around for a while, why don't you share your experiences with Calix and send it to me [drmikesanders@gmail.com](mailto:drmikesanders@gmail.com)

- If your group does anything special throughout the year, send the details and I'll publish them to give other readers ideas. Below, is the agenda used by the Cathedral Group in St. Paul to conduct a group conscience meeting.

#### Calix Group Conscience

1. What are your expectations when you attend a Calix meeting? Are your needs being met? If not, why?

2. Is the meeting day and time suitable for you? If not, what alternative do you suggest? Should we meet more frequently?

3. Is the venue suitable? If not, what other facility would you prefer?

4. Should we continue to serve a hot breakfast? Have pastries, fruit and coffee instead? Pot luck?

5. Do you like the flow of the meeting? If not, what should change?

6. Have you enjoyed the latest meeting topic? If not, what would you like to do? Some groups have broadened the subject focus beyond recovery topics. Is that of interest? Would you be willing to serve on a committee to select meeting topics?

7. Should we do service work, e.g. serve a meal at Dorothy Day, do something with the St. Paul Mission, visit a woman's shelter, etc.

8. Rate your Calix experience: A B C D F How could your experience be better?

## *An Old-timer Reflects*

Tony T.

A short time ago I was corresponding with Jim B. regarding our group membership. It was just before Thanksgiving and, aside from wishing him my best, I commented about my good fortune - a terrific wife, three married children, ten grandchildren, and all living close by. (My wife, Helen, lives with me, not close by.....although there was a time!).

None of this good fortune would be possible if it were not for AA, Al Anon, Al Ateen, Calix and my Catholic faith.

We all realize that alcoholism is a family disease. Family members affected may drink heavily, may drink socially, or may not drink at all. (I was the most social drinker you would want to meet!). The alcoholic leaves his footprints on every other member, and each one must deal with that unfortunate influence. They can work through it alone or seek help in Al Ateen and Al Anon.

I lived my pre-Army years in northeast Philadelphia with my sister, my mom and her parents. My dad died when I was eleven. I never had much of a relationship with him due to his absence and his inability to grasp the A A program. I heard AA mentioned, but have no idea how effective or available it was.

My grandparents had a corner grocery store. My grandfather and later my mom was the butcher. I delivered orders to the neighbors from the time I could carry a box or a bag. Mom would drive and I would deliver. Responsibilities came early, but I had time to play sandlot baseball and high school football, and hang out on the corner with the guys in

the evening. That is where, starting at about age thirteen, I honed my smoking and drinking skills. The smoking ceased seventeen years later, and the drinking did me in five years after that.

My grandparents came from Poland and were religious. We all went to Sunday Mass together until I went to parochial school for nine years; then I attended nine o'clock Mass with the school children. In tenth grade, I transferred to Frankford High, the neighborhood public school. (I was on my own by then, but Mom would check on Sunday by asking what the Gospel was about!)

I drifted away from church when I knew I could get away with it- especially in the Army and college. However, there were a few times I attended Mass or spoke with a priest, if a special event occurred - like my first parachute jump at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky.

Another occasion was by invitation. Helen had visited Holy Family Monastery for a Mass card and met Father Vincent Youngberg, a Passionist priest. In the course of conversation, he asked how things were at home. Helen said our marriage, and specifically, her husband could use a tune up! Father Vincent said he would phone me on a Sunday morning when I would be most vulnerable. He did and I was vulnerable, and we met.

I was ready for this meeting as I had a significant void in my life. Career-wise I considered myself successful. We had relocated to Connecticut. I had a responsible position with a national corporation and was a very dynamic individual - the kind that could make a round peg fit into a square hole! Outwardly, all was well!

Why Calix, (cont. from pg. 3)

Fr. Vince honed in on the influence of alcohol and offered three suggestions:

1. AA 2. High Watch, Kent, CT (dry out) 3. Psychiatrist

“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”

-Mt 18:19-20

*(Ed. Note. Bruce G and Sally B are involved in building the Northern Virginia Group [Washington DC] which been a spin-off of sorts from the Ellicott City [Baltimore] groups. In the months ahead more details will follow about the next Convention hosted by No. VA and Ellicott City, MD groups).*

## ***One Oldtimer's Calix Story*** by Craig C.

In '85 I was recently divorced, sober barely 2 years, and already tired of my own culinary skills. Our church bulletin gave notice once each month “For those concerned with alcoholism” of a Calix meeting. It gave those of us who were concerned a chance to attend Sunday Mass at 5:00 PM then enjoy a covered dish meal. With my alcohol haze finally cleared away I reasoned that I'll bet there would be at least one really good dish there. As it turned out there were several great dishes there. One Calix meeting followed another, and my future wife Mary agreed to join me going to Calix.

More meetings followed and Msgr. Keenan

married us at a Calix meeting in '96. Mary and I have been to conventions in England (then visited Ireland), New York, Las Vegas, St. Paul and many other cities, because we enjoy participation in Calix. I have been to conventions in Philadelphia and am looking forward to this year's convention in Maryland.

As I consider what growth I have enjoyed in recovery, there are several factors which have had a huge influence and include: many AA meetings; service work; Calix meetings, Calix associations, and certainly Calix conventions.

Without any doubt though how I believe in my Catholic Faith has grown much stronger. The sacraments offered through the Roman Catholic Church are unequaled. On the surface our Calix meeting may not be very impressive. We have Mass, share a meal, have a short meeting and close with a blessing from Fr. Divis. I enjoy sharing in the Eucharist Celebration with others in recovery. The meal is a great time for friendship, bonding, and all those other activates that make us feel a part of something supportive.

As I understand our faith, the Catholic Church teaches us when we are at Mass time evaporates and we are united with Christ at the foot of the cross. If I can be there with Christ and my friends in recovery then there is probably no other place I would rather be.

*Editor's Note: Craig has been a leader in Calix at the International Board of Director's level for a significant period of time.*

## *The Matt Talbot Group of Calix*

by Mary Costello

I feel the Holy Spirit has given me a job to do and I may not have too many more years to do it. I am the daughter of an alcoholic, the wife of one (he's been sober for 38 years and I couldn't be more proud of him) and now I'm the mother of a couple (they're sober, too). It's my job to tell people that alcoholism (and other various addictions) touches people at every level of income, every race, every educational background and from every area of the country. Addictions are an equal-opportunity employer. They don't discriminate.

The horrible thing about addiction (and I'm here as a prime example) is that it is a family disease. When one person in the family is addicted, the whole family is affected. The whole family gets sick, sometimes sicker than the addicted person himself / herself. Statistics tell us, for example, that adult children of alcoholics often swear off the booze but then have their own problems: control issues, anorexia, gambling, or other addictions.

I talk about it often and have written other columns which have appeared in lots of places and have generated letters from all over the planet. I receive letters from a little ad I place now and again that says: "Matt Talbot Medals and Prayer Cards available FREE. For information, write to..." and then I give my address.

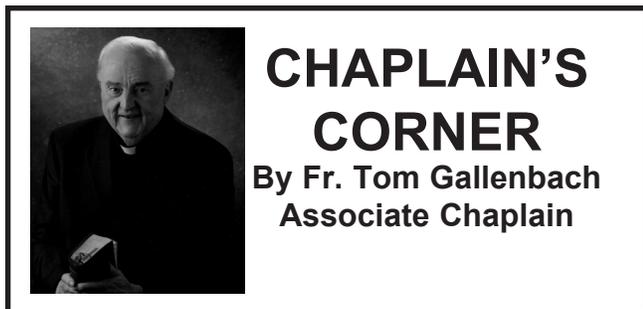
The funny thing is, I don't even have to explain who Matt Talbot is anymore. I just get these letters that say, "My brother is dying of methadone addiction.....please send me a

medal..." Some days I open the mail and cry. Sometimes I cry before I even open the mail.

Calix makes it easier. My husband Don and I met Msgr. Charles Keenan in the late 70's. Don finally got sober with a great deal of help from Msgr. K. in 1979 and he asked us to help him start a Calix Chapter in Lincoln in 1981. He was from Minnesota so he was a great fan of Calix; we thought we were doing him a great favor, but as it happened, the tables were turned. Calix has been such a blessing in our lives!

With Tom H. as President (a position he served well in for many years) and Ray B. as Vice President, we started meeting in the basement of Blessed Sacrament where Msgr. Charlie was then pastor. Frankly, it wasn't so much a basement as the catacombs, but luckily a wonderful and grace filled nun who served at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital visited us one Saturday night for Mass and invited us to that lovely facility where we have been meeting ever since. What a gift Sister Enid was to us, not only the gift of Madonna but her presence, her wit, her deep spirituality, her friendship. I could go on. I can break her anonymity as she died last year at the Benedictine Convent in Yankton, SD.

For a time there, we had one of the largest Calix groups in the US. We hosted the National Convention in the 90's and had a HUGE crowd – around 150 people as I recall. I think many of them came to see and hear Fr. Costelloe, who was then the vice Postulator for the Cause for Canonization of Matt Talbot.



## God Hears the Cry of the Poor:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Fellowship of Calix. My message is taken from a line in the Thirty Fourth Psalm: The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor, The Lord comforts the evildoers, The Lord is close to the Broken Hearted. The psalm is very much a Calix Psalm, for it comes from the marrow of David's bones. It is a confession psalm, by David, chosen and anointed one of God - a confession psalm for all of his duplicitous behaviors. I use the New American Bible, and while praying the same, I noticed a foot note on the Thirty Fourth Psalm, referring the reader to 1st Samuel 21: 13-16. Going to these chapter and verses, the reader will find the mighty King David along with 600 warriors fleeing the wrath of Saul because of jealousy (**Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands and finds himself at the feet of a tribal leader, named Achish**). Rather stand up, identify himself and confront as a warrior would, David goes down on all fours and begins acting like a mad man and feigning foaming at the mouth. Achish hollering at his guards, telling them to get this mad man out of his sight. Paying closer attention to the Psalm, I discern that the cry of the poor is a cry not only of those lacking in material things, but lacking in integrity at various times in life. As I said before, the poor referred to in this psalm, are the duplicitous. If the poor were simply the people lacking in the necessities of life, that would be too easy, We

could let ourselves off the hook, in a stroke of a pen against the check book. But no, it is not that easy. The savior would come from the tree of Jesse, and from the tree of Jesse would be the house of David, the slayer of Goliath, and the slayer of tens of thousands, was also the David guilty of Adultery, Murder and now of feigning mental illness to avoid conflict. And guilty of not totally trusting in the providence of God. Thirty some years ago, there was a nationally known cartoon character named Pogo. Pogo was famous for saying: "**We have met the enemy, and the enemy is us!**". Take comfort that the Lord hears the cry of the poor, the sometimes dishonest, the sometimes tale bearers, the sometimes jealous, the sometimes withholders of forgiveness, the sometimes carriers of resentment. I (we) could go on and on. St. Paul speaks of the weakness of man and says: "I know that no good dwells in my flesh". He means that the blessing of our salvation comes not from us, but from God Again he says: "I am a wretched man; who will free me from this body doomed to die?"

Then he speaks of a liberator. The Lord Jesus Christ! Isaiah shouts words of encouragement when he tells us: "Hands that are feeble grow strong!! Knees that are weak, take courage! Hearts that are faint grow strong! Fear not! And so, my message is not that of a Casper Milk Toast happy holidays, but rather a meat and potatoes ...Fear not, the Lord Our God is a merciful God and hears the cry of the poor, the comfort of wrongdoers and close to the broken hearted. Together let us shout. The lord hears the cry of the poor, The Lord hears my cry and carries me in the palm of his hand now and forever. Shout! Deo Gratias Thanks be to God.

Your fellow traveler on life's bumpy and pot holed road of life..Fr Tom Gallenbach

## On Advent

A Calix friend sent me an Advent reflection on Step-1 and powerlessness, and it reminded me of the statue that was under the altar at the Malvern Retreat Center. "A Quiet Moment," by sculptor Timothy P. Schmalz, depicts Mary completely supported in the lap of St. Joseph, and the infant Jesus snuggles closely to His mother in Her lap. Both Mary and Joseph, their heads touching, look down adoringly at the Christ Child. It's a beautiful image of the Holy Family, and how they might have shared that first Christmas night together. Is there anything more powerless than a new born baby? Yet, the baby's purity, trusting simplicity, and innocence commands the full, undivided attention of its parents. Such is the power of love.

In "Calix and the Twelve Steps," Father Lugar writes, "consequently in Calix we do not limit our powerless...but recognize our creature-hood and total dependence on the Creator." In the spirit of Advent, unlimited powerlessness comes when we recognize ourselves as that baby in Bethlehem - in imitation of Christ - and we let the power of God's love fully envelope us. Then we are empowered to share that love with others.

"We love other people with the same love we see ourselves loved with." - Father Emmerich Vogt

Bruce G. Calix Northern Virginia

## We remember the Members we lost this year

Don Gostomski

Ed Krof

Joseph M. Lynch

Frank McGill

Harry McKay

Mary Walters

"Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

### CALIX LITERATURE

<b>No Turning Back</b> by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC	\$17.00 Ppd.
<b>Calix and the Twelve Steps</b> by Fr. Arnold Luger, 63 pages	\$9.00 Ppd.
<b>The Light of Faith</b> by Fr. Francis Canavan, SJ	\$9.00 Ppd.
<b>By the Grace of God</b> by Fr. Francis Canavan, SJ	\$11.00 Ppd.
<b>Parables and Ponderings</b> by A. Fenker, SPCC, D.Min	\$9.00 Ppd.
<b>Recovery Meditation on the Stations of the Cross</b> (Back in Print!) by Msgr. Harrington	\$5.00 Ppd.
<b>Sister Ignatia Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous</b> by Mary Darrah	\$17.00 Ppd.
<b>A 12 Step Approach to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius</b> 52 meditations, & their relation to the 12 Steps. by James Harbaugh, SJ	\$18.00 Ppd.
<b>One Day at a Time in Al-Anon</b>	\$18.00 Ppd.
<b>Heaven's Homecoming</b> by Fr. Douglas Mckay (Grays Ferry Chaplain)	\$12.00 Ppd.
<b>12 Step Review (set)</b> By Fr. Emmerich Vogt	\$15.00 Ppd.
<b>Let the Oppressed Go Free</b> by Cardinal Justin Rigali	\$6.00 Ppd.
<b>The 12 Steps and Catholic Spirituality</b> by Fr. Leo Dolan	\$1.00 ea.
Matt Talbot Prayer Card - B & W	.20 ea.
Matt Talbot Medal	.70 ea.
<b>Intro to Calix Packet</b>	\$1.50 ea.
Calix Induction Ceremony	.30 ea.
Calix Pin (for members only)	\$5.00 ea.

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