



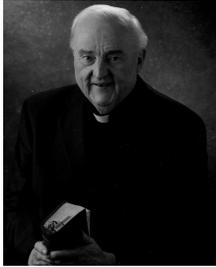
the Chalice

CALIX NEWSLETTER

Volume 40

July - August 2013

Issue No. 4



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By Fr. Tom Gallenbach
Associate Chaplain

Father Gallenbach is away. We'll hear from him in the next issue.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Mike Sanders

World Youth Day

There are a few things floating in my mind this evening, and as the young pilgrims head into Rio for World Youth Day with Pope Francis, I am reminded of a passage from the Gospel. Matthew 18:3 reads: "Then he said, 'In truth I tell you, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven'". I was assured by my spiritual director that Jesus didn't want me to pout, throw tantrums and demand my way in all of my affairs. Rather, I was to listen intently with amazement and hear the words as if I were hearing them for the first time ever,

each and every time a Gospel passage was read. That isn't always easy, as I sometimes find that my mind wanders.

A number of years ago, I had established a rather consistent pattern and belief that my life seemed easier during this segment. I would attend the 7:30AM Mass at my home parish and sit with a coffee and donut at a nearby gas station and think about the Gospel passage and homily for an hour after Mass. Then, I would go to the AA meeting at the hospital at 9:30 to see if the central message of the readings were applicable to what topic emerged. Following the meeting, I would head over to the 11:30 Mass at a different parish on my way home where I had the chance to hear the same reading and a different homily, a different perspective. Those were some very powerful Sunday mornings for me. I had mentioned to a priest, who visited the hospital where I worked, how much I was learning from this pattern and found his response to be quite profound. He said "A diamond can be viewed from many different perspectives, and it remains a precious gem."

Truth. It doesn't matter how you see it, or hear it or live it. Truth is truth. That conversion for me was amazing, exciting and remains true to this day. I admit it; one of the driving forces that resulted in my decision to

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President's Column, (cont. from pg. 1)

convert to Catholicism about 17 years ago was the magnetism of Pope John Paul II. His work with the world's youth generated legions of new Catholics. I was profoundly affected by his actions towards his would be assassin – he visited the man in his prison cell and offered to pray with him. A number of years later, and after my conversion and confirmation, I received the attached photograph in the mail.



On occasion during my brother's seminary formation in Rome, he would receive phone calls from visiting priests and bishops from the US, typically good will calls to see if he needed anything from the States. On one occasion he was asked to 'suit up and show up' (by whom I believe was Edmund Cardinal Souzka from Detroit), if he had some time and would like to join some pilgrims for a meeting inside the walls of the Eternal City. As the doors opened, in an almost child-like way with widening eyes, he realized the meeting was with the Holy Father. The photograph taken of my brother kissing the Ring fills me with such joy. As I recall, following the meeting, Pope John Paul II, the Cardinal, other priests in attendance and my brother went out for some

pasta.

Now that John Paul II has been cleared for canonization, the photo has gained a different significance. Now that Fr. Phil is back at Lateran in residence to complete his doctorate, he will be in Rome for the canonization. It was not even imagined when he began this journey that he would be in Rome for two conclaves and the canonization of the man who had impacted our choices to convert to Catholicism. My brother ate spaghetti with a Saint. It's not the easiest thing to wrap my head around.

This brings me to the informative part of this article. At last year's convention I floated the idea of organizing a Calix Pilgrimage to Rome, hoping to utilize my brother's geographic location and connections to organize a Papal Audience. Unlike Pope John Paul 2, Pope Benedict didn't accept private audiences, so it became a bit of a challenge thinking of ways to accomplish that. With the surprising decision to retire, and Pope Francis' apparent willingness to accept private audiences (He recently had a large group of motorcyclists to coincide with an anniversary of Harley Davidson), it might be far easier to arrange. I am taking the idea of a Calix Pilgrimage off the back burner and moving it more forward. We'll see what God thinks of that idea, right?

Elsewhere in this edition, you'll see the biographic sketches of three new Calix Board Members. Please join me in thanking Gretchen C. from York, PA; Jim O from Ellicott City, MD (Baltimore); and Vince L. (Wilmington, DE) for their willingness to volunteer and serve Calix. Each has displayed an

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President's Column, (cont. from pg. 2)

almost childlike curiosity in their efforts for Calix. Both Jim and Vince organized and started new groups. Gretchen has been to every York meeting since her first visit, attended last year's convention, and was baptized and confirmed Catholic at this spring's Easter Vigil. She has visited the Calix Groups in Harrisburg, Ellicott City, and attended a Day of Recollection in Grey's Ferry/Philadelphia. Each of our new Board Members have caught fire with Calix and we're hoping to employ their enthusiasm in the years ahead.

See you in Vegas!



OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN

By Fran
"Dancing Feather" Greer
email: frandfg@yahoo.com

The Tree

One thing my ancestors passed on to me was the knowledge that the greatest healing from ailments of the body, mind and spirit is found in the natural world, so that's where I was drawn during difficult times. During the last three years of my drinking I landed in hospitals, psychiatric wards and detoxification programs several times. I became aware that I would not live much longer. Still, I was sometimes able to get out into wilderness areas and gather my thoughts. I hadn't really prayed in years.

One day, so sick and weak that I was unable to hike, I drove my car as far out into the forest as I could and crawled out on to the forest

floor. I sat on a deep bed of pine needles on the bank of the little Sawmill River next to a large granite boulder to listen to the silence of the woodlands. Near the bottom of the boulder I noticed this hopeless little pinion tree trying to grow out from under the giant rock. It was a single, scrawny, barely alive and quite pathetic little example of life on the sacred mountain. I decided right then that the natural world I loved so much was not perfect after all. I prayed for the first time in many years, "God help me." I prayed without any real faith that my prayer would even be heard.

I was very depressed, and I turned my attention to the tiny foolish pinion tree. It was sad to think that anything so weak and disadvantaged would even make an effort to survive. I thought the tree and I had everything in common. I was born with an intestinal disability from which I had suffered throughout childhood and adulthood. The Catholic nuns, who cared for me when I was a newborn, told my mom that I had a very nervous stomach, and by the time I was maybe seven years old I was diagnosed with chronic colitis. I missed a lot of school and later lost many jobs because of it. I went to psychiatrists, doctors and other healers but nothing worked except the opiate drugs I became addicted to over time. Now even the drugs and booze were not bringing relief. I wondered how long that silly little tree had been trying to cling to life in this impossible world. There was only one frail, tiny branch with five or six pinion needles showing on one side. I told that tree that day that neither of us was going to make it. We are not survivors. That's all there is to it. "Give it up little tree. You cannot possibly make it and neither can I. You and I are just losers."

I soon discovered that no real alcoholic ever

Out of the Mountain (cont. on pg. 4)

Out of the Mountain, (cont. from pg. 3)

gets sober until they discover they are completely powerless over their addictions. We must admit complete defeat in order to allow treatment to take over. If there is even a tiny shred of self will or any kind of thinking that we can control our drinking, we are more likely to die drunk than to get sober and begin a new life. I had reached that end on that day while looking at the tiny struggling tree. Just days later, I found myself in a 12-step meeting, ready to listen and take direction. I was done with my drinking. Several months of attending meetings every day and following the direction of my sponsor passed before I had the opportunity to go back to my special place of solitude near the river. When I did, I sat next to the boulder to listen to the river sing her song. That bent, tiny tree was still there. The trunk had thickened into a grotesquely twisted thing and had shot a large exposed feeder root into ground under the boulder. It had been forced to grow sideways and up as it reached for the sun. The tiny branch had sprouted another branch, and there were maybe two dozen green needles there. Another branch had started out from the warped trunk and had a few needles on it too. I decided this was a tough little tree, but the future still looked grim for it being able to compete with other pinions and pines near the bank of the river.

Over the years of recovery I hiked to that same spot many times. The base of the trunk thickened and twisted over the years, and the tree grew and produced cones full of seeds for the squirrels to feast on at harvest time. I came to love my pinion tree, because both of us were not only surviving but flourishing. I gave

birth to my youngest daughter and watched as my oldest son began to drink just like his mama did before. It was great and sometimes terrible, but I discovered that I am always stronger than I think I am. The pinion tree was ravaged by a horrific flash flood, ripped by wind, frozen by long dark winters and scorched by summer sun, but it became one of the strongest trees around. Its roots were often exposed as the riverbank was eroded by rising waters, but the tree prevailed. And I prevailed to see my poor alcoholic son suffer until he finally got sober and raise kids and watch my daughter grow to womanhood and produce three great sons.

The tree found the way to grow in spite of every disadvantage, to become a beautiful legacy for us all. Today many people in recovery have come to understand that if we are to change, we must surrender to life on life's terms and become adaptable. If we can adapt to our own unique life-situations and move along the course of our journeys, remaining teachable and spiritual, we can accomplish great and wonderful things.

Calix in the 21st Century

There is nothing new to report. Please contact Ken at ken@philly-calix.com if you have any web site issues.

Office News and Notes

Deaths

One of our former Board Directors, Deedo Hallen, lost her husband, Chris, on June 17. Chris had had heart by-pass surgery, and he seemed to be recovering when he suffered a massive stroke. Deedo and Chris realized a long-held dream of moving to Las Vegas a few years ago. Deedo and her sister, Karen Neuenfeld, held a memorial gathering here in the Twin Cities, so that friends could get together in remembrance of Chris. Please keep Chris and the family in prayer.

New Calix Board Directors

During the May Board of Directors meeting 3 new candidates for the office of Board Director were elected by a vote of the Board and officers. They are Vince Lunetta, Jim O'Keefe and Gretchen Covington. Their appointment will be reaffirmed at the Las Vegas convention in October. Their biographies follow.

Vince Lunetta

In Vines own words, "I am a twenty six year revert member of the Church and am a active, sober member of AA since July 2, 1982. Though a cradle Catholic mixed with the Byzantine Rite, it was the Holy Eucharist and our Blessed Mother who moved me back to the Church. At six years sober, I was able to attend daily Mass at St. Agnes (West Chester, PA) after work which redirected my intentions. Near 10 years sober, I was a co-worker of Mother Teresa at an AIDS Hospice, underwent a discernment journey for the Missionary of Charity Fathers or Brothers. In the process I found I was called to the marriage vocation. With twenty years in sales, marketing and business development at the regional and national level, I returned to school and earned a MS in Organizational and Strategic Leadership from Neumann University. I am an active teacher and instructor on leadership, sales, and communications topics.

The capstone project researched the Adult-Youth Connection at confirmation, which helped me retool my career focus and efforts for the next twenty years. I lead a parish educational program at Holy Spirit Church in New Castle, DE, conducted Sacramental formation for two parishes and I'm writing online coursework for the sacrament of Confirmation. I work with companies and individuals as a coach in my own business- "Lumenetta." (*Vince is the founder of a new unit in Wilmington, DE*)

Gretchen Covington

Gretchen Covington is originally from Nashville TN. No stranger to Christianity (her grandfather was a Southern Baptist Minister and Missionary) she turned away from God for many years. Approximately 12 years ago, Gretchen found her way into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and realized over time, through the teachings and practice of the 12 Steps, that the "God of her understanding" was not enough. When she expressed frustration with the rhetoric of 'defining God as she understood him', she was challenged with the idea of 'letting God define her' instead.

That idea sparked an interest in seeking a different exposure to God and an introduction to Calix. She began attending the Calix Group meetings in York and regular attendance at Mass. Last August, she decided to attend the Calix Convention in St. Paul and felt that she may have found what was missing in her spiritual development. To explore it more deeply, Gretchen truly turned her will and life over to the care of God. She enrolled in RCIA, continued her regular attendance at the York Calix meetings and sought individual instruction from York's Chaplain at the time, Fr Bill, and her sponsor in RCIA. Her understanding of Calix grew during visits to the groups in Harrisburg, Ellicott City, and the Grey's Ferry in Philadelphia.

She was supported spiritually by Catholic friends, coworkers and non-Catholic family mem-

bers in her quest to become Catholic. This past Easter, Gretchen was baptized and confirmed into the Catholic Church, with Mike S. (current Calix International President) by her side as sponsor and advocate. Gretchen is the second conversion witnessed by the York Calix Group.

Currently, Gretchen lives in York, PA with two Rottweilers, "Baby Rodney" and "Cooper" and is an investment advisor for a major financial institution. She and Mike S. have announced their intentions to marry.

Jim O'Keefe

Jim is the founder of the new unit in Elliot City, MD. He and several friends from AA decided they wanted 'more', that more being a connection between their faith and contented sobriety. They held their first meeting on February 16, and they have been meeting twice a month since then.

Address Change for the International

Please take note that our new mailing address is:

P.O. Box 9085

St. Paul, MN 55109-9969

Also, please address e-mails to secretary@calix-society.org.

Convention

Remember the convention is in Las Vegas, NV at the beautiful St. Joseph Husband of Mary Church, October 4-6. St. Joseph is located at 7260 West Sahara Ave., tel., (702) 363-1902. The fee is only \$65.00 per person and covers all the meals and snacks. The convention registration form is on line at our web site www.calixsociety.org. or you can clip it out from this page. You can sign up on line or fill the form out and mail it in as shown on the form.

"Back to the Basics"

**The Calix Society
56th Annual Convention
October 4,5,6, 2013**

*St. Joseph Husband of Mary Church
Las Vegas, NV*

*Please sign me/us up for the 56th Annual
Calix Convention.*

Enclosed is \$_____ for _____ person(s).

Name(s):_____

Address:_____

City, State, Zip:_____

Telephone: ()_____

e-mail:_____

**Convention Registration Fee: \$65.00
/person (\$70.00/person after September 10,
2013)**

***If you need room reservations: Palace
Station Hotel is suggested. Please
arrange on your own.***

You may register on-line at

www.calixsociety.org

(fee is \$70.00 for on-line) or by mail.

Please make checks payable to the

***"CALIX SOCIETY" and mail reservations
as soon as possible to:***

Madge Lange,

909 Marion Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89110-1410

Registration Deadline: September 10, 2013.

Thank you! For questions, please call.

Note: Please make dietary requests early so that the kitchen can accommodate your needs.

In Memoriam

Please let us know when we have lost a Calix friend!

Chris Hallen
Las Vegas, NV Unit

" May his soul rest in peace..."

I am enclosing a contribution of \$25.00 because I wish to support the society in its apostolate to recovering alcoholics. Please send me a membership card and place my name on "The Chalice" mailing list.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Apt/Unit _____

Calix Unit(s) I attend _____

Telephone (_____) _____

Email _____

"The Holy Father renews his Apostolic Blessing to all who collaborate in this important apostolate at the service of Christ's brethren." (Letter from: Cardinal Villot, June, 1977)

CALIX LITERATURE

No Turning Back

by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC \$17.00 Ppd.

Drop the Rock (New!)

Removing Character Defects \$10.00 Ppd.
By Bill, Todd and Sara

Calix and the Twelve Steps

by Fr. Arnold Luger, 63 pages \$9.00 Ppd.

The Light of Faith

by Fr. Francis Canavan, SJ \$9.00 Ppd.

By the Grace of God

by Fr. Francis Canavan, SJ \$11.00 Ppd.

Parables and Ponderings

by A. Fenker, SPCC, D.Min \$9.00 Ppd.

Recovery Meditation on the Stations of the Cross (Back in Print!)

by Msgr. Harrington \$5.00 Ppd.

The Soul of Sponsorship

From letters between Bill W. & Fr. Dowling
by Robert Fitzgerald, S.J. \$13.00 Ppd.

Sister Ignatia Angel of Alcoholics

Anonymous

by Mary Darrah \$17.00 Ppd.

A 12 Step Approach to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

52 meditations, & their relation to the 12 Steps.

by James Harbaugh, SJ \$18.00 Ppd.

One Day at a Time in Al-Anon \$18.00 Ppd.

Addict in the Family

by Beverly Conyers \$15.00 Ppd.

My Name is Bill

by Susan Cheever \$10.00 Ppd.

Heaven's Homecoming

by Fr. Douglas Mckay \$12.00 Ppd.
(Grays Ferry Chaplain)

12 Step Review (set)

By Fr. Emmerich Vogt \$15.00 Ppd.

Let the Oppressed Go Free

by Cardinal Justin Rigali \$6.00 Ppd.

Lost in the Crowd (New!)

by Kathleen Haberland \$13.50 Ppd.

Recovery Rosary Booklet

by Kate H. (New!) \$5.00 Ppd.

The 12 Steps and Catholic Spirituality

by Fr. Leo Dolan \$1.00 ea.

Matt Talbot Prayer Card - B & W .20 ea.

Matt Talbot Medal .70 ea.

Intro to Calix Packet \$1.50 ea.

Calix Induction Ceremony .30 ea.

Calix Pin (for members only) \$5.00 ea.

Vol. 40, Issue 4, July-Aug, 2013

THE CALIX SOCIETY

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St. Paul, MN 55109-9969

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Consider joining the Gratitude Club.