

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CALIX SOCIETY

Saturday, 11 May 1974

We are happy to greet members of the Calix Society on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their foundation. As we welcome you on your pilgrimage to the See of Peter, we express our appreciation of your earnest commitment to working for the elimination of alcoholic abuse, including alcoholism itself.

In our apostolic ministry we are deeply aware of the gravity of this problem and how it is closely linked to the overall problem of drug abuse. We see the disastrous effects that these disorders have on so many people throughout the world: the effects on the individual, on families, on communities.

We know moreover the effects on society as a whole.

We see how widespread alcoholic abuse is and how it causes great human suffering, anguish and deterioration - even death. It produces marked disorientation of the whole person, especially when accompanied by grave lack of personal responsibility and by serious sin. To be properly confronted, alcoholic abuse and, in particular, alcoholism must be fully understood with all their various implications: physical, psychological, moral and religious. In this way, rehabilitation can be effectively undertaken. We know that this rehabilitation of those in need calls for fraternal interest and professional help on the part of others, together with strict personal discipline and repeated and sustained effort.

We are greatly pleased, therefore, to express our sincere and lively commendation of the valued efforts that are being made by many through the application of the appropriate natural means. We are even more pleased when efforts, like your own, take into account supernatural reality and admit the impact that must come from Christian principles and from the exercise of the Catholic faith. In recognizing a dimension-beyond natural forces-needed for the cure of alcoholism and for the Christian reconciliation of persons afflicted thereby, you are in effect finding yet another application of the broad and time-proven principle enunciated by Saint Thomas- a principle expressing an immutable relationship between nature and grace: *gratia perficit naturam* (Cfr. S. TH. I, q. 1. a. 8 ad 2).

I've rejoice to see how many people esteem recourse to a higher power in overcoming the problems related to alcoholic abuse. And worthy of special mention is the fact that you identify this higher power as the supernatural grace of Jesus Christ, the healing power of his word and of his sacraments. In this latter regard we are happy to encourage you to draw special attention to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the Eucharist. We are confident moreover that your efforts, motivated as they are by authentic Christian concern for your fellowmen in need, will be effective in helping them to undergo the genuine *metanoia* of true renewal and reconciliation.

We express our double insistence on the need of taking into account both nature and grace for the benefit of the unified whole which is the new man in Jesus Christ.

You have chosen to look upon Matt Talbot as an admirable exemplar of discipline and supernatural virtue. It is our hope that his success will encourage countless men and women throughout the world to realize the need for conversion, the possibility of real rehabilitation, the serenity of Christian reconciliation, and the peace and joy of helping others to overcome abuses, disorders and sin.

May your efforts and those of all men endeavouring to assist in such an important work be blessed by God, "in whom we live and move and have our being" (Cfr. *Act.* 17, 28), and without whose help we are incapable of supernatural conversion.

And with the expression of our hope goes our Apostolic Blessing.