



the Chalice

Volume 49

November-December 2022 Issue No. 7



**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**
By Ken J.



FROM HOPELESS TO HOPEFUL

Hope is one of the many theological virtues of our Catholic faith. This, unfortunately, was something I did not have just prior to getting sober. I was hopeless. My financial problems were overflowing, and my wife was calling my mother telling her that she had had enough. The only light at the end of the tunnel was the proverbial train wreck of my life.

What happened next was nothing short of miraculous. **A TRUE MIRACLE**. In the middle of an alcoholic blackout, God led me to an individual that who take me to an AA meeting the next night, which happened to be December 31st - New Year's Eve! My life would change forever at that 6:00 PM meeting on New Year's Eve. Why? Because the three other people at that meeting gave me hope!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

In This Issue	page
President's Column	1-2
Article – For Goodness Sake By: Father Douglas McKay (Calix Society Chaplain)	3-4
Welcome - Director Kevin S. from the Sydney, Australia Unit	5
Article – Matt Talbot Accompanied Me To Ireland. By: Sheila D.	6-7
Article - My First Calix Retreat By: Susan H.	8
News on Membership	9
Membership Drive	10
Social Media and News from the Calix Society International Board of Directors	11
New Book Announcement	12
Call for Articles	13-14
Christmas Crossword Puzzle	14-15
Prayer Requests	16

HAPPY NEW YEAR

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed by individual members are not necessarily the opinions of The Calix Society.

President's Column, by Ken J. (continued)

They gave me hope that my financial problems could be handled, that my wife and kids might stick around and that I don't ever have to drink again. The miracle on that New Year's Eve led to almost thirty-one years of continuous sobriety and a life that is FULL OF HOPE!

This hope based upon the experience that others shared with me. Imagine this - They found a way to live life without a drink! My heart told me that I, too, could learn to live life without a drink. That hope continued to grow and carried me through the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. What I did not know in those early days was what God had in store for me!

Early in recovery, I realized that this "thing" was going to depend on a relationship with God. That would be easy – twelve years of Catholic schooling, six years as an altar boy and lecturing at Sunday Mass when I was in high school. I could simply just go back to Church.

That worked for a little while. But, as we all know, God never leaves us where we are. He is always inviting us to go deeper, get closer AND bring others with us. And that, my friends, is the secret of why twelve-step programs and our faith works. Many people – in and out of "the rooms" experience hopelessness. Because we can identify with their hopelessness, we have the unique ability to share how we went from being **hopeless to hopeful**. For those of us with more than a few twenty-four hours of sobriety "under our collective belts" is to be a beacon of hope in those rooms, in our workplace, in our parishes and in our families.

Finally, our beloved Calix Society has as its primary purpose, to provide hope that people can totally abstain from whatever it is that they are addicted to AND they can develop spiritually, and one day be Saints. Essentially, this is fulfilling that hope for union with God and eternal happiness for that is the fulfillment of that theological virtue we call HOPE!

Wishing you all the best for Joyous Advent Season and a Holy, Happy and Hopeful Christmas and New Year!



For Goodness Sake, by Father Douglas McKay, Calix Society Chaplain

It was Advent season, 1958. The 45 record-player played all through our beautifully decorated house: *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*. Over and again, I heard it, dancing and singing to it . . . “He’s making a list. He’s checking it twice. He’s going to find out who’s naughty and nice.” I wondered, would Santa be checking me out?

And then it happened. At the young age of seven, Santa visited me three times. On his first visit, I was pulling my sister Jo Ann’s ponytail, making her cry. Suddenly, somebody knocked hard at the front door. Peeking through the window’s lattices, my mother whispered, “It’s, you know who!” “Santa?” I whispered. “Yes,” she said. Similar to petting a puppy, I caressed my sister’s ponytail. My mother then opened the door just enough to stick her head outside. “O yes, Santa, Dougie’s being *as good as gold*,” she told him. Believing in Santa’s presence, my bad behavior changed instantly into good behavior. “Oh yeah,” I mumbled. Dashing through the clutter, I flew up the stairs thinking that mom would surely hang up the telephone. Out of breath I grabbed the phone. “Hello.” “Ho! Ho! Ho! Are you being good, Douglas?” “Ah, ah, yeah, Santa, I’m, I’m... *good as gold*.” “Ho! Ho! Ya better be good, Douglas. What do you want for Christmas besides your two front teeth?” I caught my breath. He knows my name, I thought, and he knows about my missing teeth. I wondered how he knew so much about me? He *must* be seeing me when I’m sleeping and awake. “Hello... North Pole to Douglas... Long distance. Are you there? Come in, Douglas.” “I’m, I’m here” “So what do you want?” “Oh Santa, I want a bicycle for Christmas.”

Right before Santa’s second visit, my father asked me to go to the corner store and buy ice cream for the family. “O dad, No! Make Harry Go!” I yelled, referring to my older brother. “I’m too—.” “Well, well, who’s that looking through the window?” Dad asked. “It’s Santa!” Harry shouted. “I love that Santa!” Jo Ann said, springing up and kissing the frosty window. “I’ll go!” I said, frog-leaping over pajamaed Peggy, my little sister. “Sanna! Sanna!” she sputtered, “Don’t forget the pretzels!” Harry added. Believing in Santa’s presence changed my bad behavior instantly into good behavior.

On the way back and forth to the corner store, I looked up and down the block and the alley ways. No Santa. Savoring the ice cream and pretzels, I gazed through the window doubting the Santa Claus routine. After all, I didn’t hear or see him. I wanted proof. Just like a detective, I waited for his next visit.

Immediately before the third and final Santa visit, I made a lot of noise messing up the basement. Over my clatter, I heard the telephone ring. My mom hollered down the stairs, “Dougie, Santa is on the phone. He wants to talk with you.”

For Goodness Sake, by Father Douglas McKay, Calix Society Chaplain (continued)

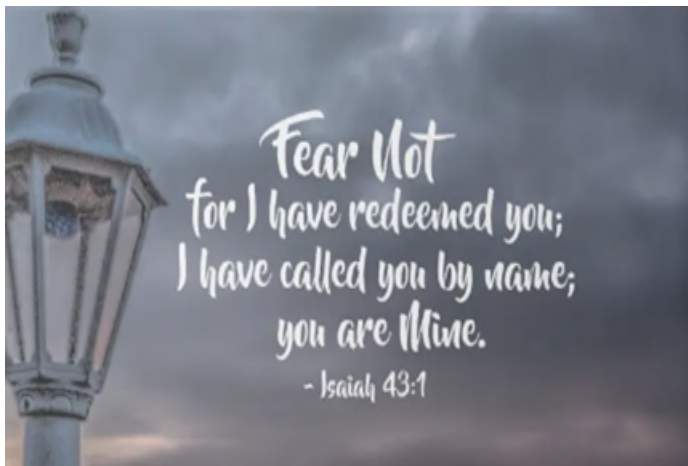
“Well, you better be *as good as gold*, or it’s ‘a bag of coal’ you know. Ho! Ho! Ho!” Hanging up the phone, I flew back down the stairs and quietly cleaned the basement. For the rest of that Advent season, I remained on my best behavior, believing that Santa was watching me day and night. And that Christmas morning, I got my bicycle, because I was *as good as gold*. Once again, believing in Santa, changed my bad behavior instantly into good behavior.

Later in life, I related my belief in Santa’s presence to my faith in the abiding presence of Jesus Christ. He’s always knocking at the front door of my heart. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” (*Revelation 3: 20*). He always sees me. “Here He stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices.” (*Song of Songs 2: 9*). And He knows my name. “I have called you by name; you are mine.” (*Isaiah 43: 1*).

However, like Saint Paul, I must confess that some things I should do, I don’t, and some things I shouldn’t do, I do. That goes for my words and thoughts, too. But, once I remember His abiding and graceful presence, I let go of ‘the ponytail’ of sin, and my bad behavior changes instantly into good behavior, and I’m *as good as gold* and ready for His Second Coming.

So, you better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I’m telling you why. Jesus Christ is coming to town. He’s sees you when you’re sleeping, He knows when you’re awake. He knows when you’ve been bad or good. So be good for goodness sake!

Father Douglas McKay
Calix Chaplain



There He Stands Behind Our
Wall, Gazing Through The
Windows, Peering Through
The Lattice.
Song of Solomon 2-9

Welcome Director Kevin S. from the Sydney, Australia Unit

The International Board of Directors introduces one of our newest members, Mr. Kevin S. from Sydney, Australia.



From Kevin:

Dear friends in Sobriety and in Jesus Christ,

The Sydney Unit of the Calix Society is blessed by being associated with men who have served for over one-hundred years with the Brothers of the Hospitaller Order of St John of God. Our Chaplain is Brother Martin.

"Acceptance and service of the others - inviting the poor, the lame, and the blind to your feast" (*Lk 14:13*) Are not alcoholics and addicts poor, lame, blind in many ways?

The role of the Brother is now defined as:

A critical conscience

In any situation the Brother should be the one who can be relied upon to critique the situation according to Christian values and John of God tradition.

A moral guide

In any situation the Brother should be the one who can be relied upon to promote the course of action that is right and just according to Christian values and the John of God tradition

Prophetic presence

In any situation, the Brother should be the one who can be relied upon to proclaim and promote the reign of God

The charism of the Brothers of the Hospitaller Order of St John of God permeates the Sydney, Australia Calix Unit. You can join the Sydney, Australia Unit meeting on AUSTRALIAN TIME – 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays. Please use an on-line time converter such as: www.timeanddate.com

The Sydney Unit also has Mass and in-person gathering at St Joseph Enfield on the first Saturdays at 9am in October, November and December.

The Calix Society is for recovering alcoholics, addicts, and their friends who wish to pray with us.

Who will you invite to your feast?

Kevin

Matt Talbot Accompanied Me To Ireland, by Sheila D.

The Venerable Matt Talbot accompanied me on a trip to Ireland, the land of saints and scholars, in the spring of this year. His statue was snugly wrapped in my suitcase while I visited several of my first cousins, and a few holy places, along the way to his destination. (More about that later.) After landing in Dublin, I traveled to Galway and stayed for a few days with my cousin Jerry and his wife, Anne. From there, I ventured to beautiful Kylemore Abbey, a Benedictine convent and gardens in Connemara, County Mayo, and prayed in their neo gothic church hidden in the woods.

Clonmacnoise, the remains of a 5th century ecclesiastic site in County Offaly was my next stop on the journey. Founded about 548 by St Ciaran, it is situated overlooking the River Shannon in a location that in earlier times was literally at the crossroads of Ireland. It became a major center of religion, learning, trade, craftsmanship and political influence. The site contains the remains of seven churches varying in date from the 10th to the 17th century, a round tower, a castle, three stone High Crosses and a large collection of grave slabs. One of the grave slabs grabbed my attention as on it was carved our Calix symbol, the Eucharist within a chalice.

A train and bus ride from Galway through Limerick took me to Ballybunion, a lovely seaside town in County Kerry, and the home of my cousin, Colm, who is one of us. He took me to several A.A. meetings where the members wanted me to speak, not to hear my story, but rather my American accent. In the Irish countryside, aside from the sheep and cattle, I noted many wayside shrines and holy images revealing Ireland's deeply Catholic roots. Despite the decline in the practice of the faith in recent years, the rural churches where I attended mass, we're full of old and young alike. It was lovely to hear the Our Father recited in Irish Gaelic.

Upon my return to Dublin, where cousins Mary, Margaret, Bernadette, Anne and Elsie reside, I spent one day on my own in that bustling city. After three hours on my feet, I longed for a spot to sit down and rest. When I didn't see a bench on the horizon, I said a quick prayer. Upon looking up I discovered that I was in front of the Blessed Sacrament Adoration Chapel on Henry St aside the river Liffey in the heart of town. What a joy to spend an hour with the Lord while I rested my weary feet! The next day we drove to Glendalough, Saint Kevin's place in the magnificent Wicklow mountains.

Finally, Matt Talbot surfaced from my suitcase on my last day in Dublin when I presented his statue to Michael Murphy, a prominent Calix leader in Ireland, at Matt Talbot's image in Saint Dominic's Church. Perhaps you met Michael at the 2014 Calix Retreat, Malvern, PA along with Father Brian Lawless, who was the vice postulator for Matt Talbot's cause for canonization. (Father Lawless is in the far right of a group picture on pg. 137 of Father Douglas McKay's latest book, Story of the Calix Society.) Michael and his wife Nolleen took me down Granby Lane outside Saint Dominic's Church to say a prayer at the spot where Matt died on his way to Mass. Graciously, Michael drove me to Ashbourne, county Meath where I spent my last night with cousin Brendan and Cathy. slán anois, eire! (goodbye now, Ireland!)

Matt Talbot Accompanied me to Ireland by, Sheila D. (continued)



Mural outside St. John Church Tralee, County Kerry



St. John's Church Kerry, County Ballybunion



Sheila D. presenting the "traveling" Matt Talbot statue to Dublin Calix Unit Member Michael M. in front of an image of The Venerable Matt Talbot (5/7/22)

My First Calix Retreat by, Susan H.

I have been to AA retreats and Catholic retreats, but 2022 was my first time at the Calix Retreat during my ten years of sobriety.

What did I like the most about the retreat? For me, the retreat embraced the purposes outlined in the *Calix Credo*:

- To promote the spiritual development of our membership
- Our association should be a source of information and encouragement to each other, geared to our growth toward spiritual maturity
- Strive toward sanctification of the whole personality of each member through frequent celebration of the Liturgy, reception of the Sacraments, personal prayer and meditation, Holy Hours and retreats

So much was included during the 32 scheduled retreat hours, and I continued pondering the material long after I arrived home. Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie provided a new facet to understanding forgiveness, grieving and the 12 Steps. His thoughtful outlines also provided further questions for prayerful thought. Each of his slides could easily be an hour of discussion. Hopefully, he will be our retreat master again!

A special thank you to Father Paul Richardson part of the retreat team, and “One Eye Open” provided an hour of musical enjoyment and laughter during Saturday night’s evening sessions.

Site visit opportunities were offered to the Basilica, JPPII Shrine and the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land. I visited the Saint John Paul II National Shrine and hopefully acquired a plenary indulgence. Next time, I will visit the other sites,

Our retreat center at the Washington DC retreat house was quite comfortable and we were well cared for! We were well nourished physically and spiritually.

Thank you to the Calix Society Retreat Team! I’m ready to sign up for next year!

I’ll close with this quote from Pope Francis:

“A journey always involves a transformation or change.

After a journey, we are no longer the same.

There is always something new about those who have made a journey: they have learned new things, encountered new people and situations, and found inner strengths amid the hardships and risks they met along the way.

No one worships the Lord without experiencing the interior growth that comes from embarking on a journey.”

News on Membership, by: Ken J., President**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CALIX SOCIETY**

When I first joined The Calix Society in 2007, all memberships were based on the calendar year – January 1 to December 31st. At some point, the Board of Directors decided that a better alternative would be to have memberships begin the month a person joins - i.e., June 2022 to June 2023.

Unfortunately, this alternative has made it difficult to remind people that they should renew their membership and might also be the reason we only have 130 dues-paying members and 700 people in our email database.

To improve “renewal reminder” communications, we are going to return to the calendar year memberships. This way, we can send only a few reminders in the beginning of every year to members that have not renewed.

When this issue was discussed at the monthly International Board of Directors meeting, I mentioned that there might be some members who will not be pleased that they recently paid their dues in let’s say in October 2022 and are now being asked for their 2023 dues. During the discussion, I was reminded of the parable of the vineyard workers – some worked a full day and some only worked for an hour, yet they all received the same wage. If an additional \$25 is truly a burden, please e-mail me and we will work out a solution.

All memberships will now expire on 12/31/2022. Please consider renewing. The exception are members who are in the “Gratitude Club”. Gratitude Club members make *at least* a \$5 monthly donation via PayPal AND **they don’t pay a separate membership fee.** Please e-mail me for more information about the gratitude club.

As an enticement to renew (or become a member), all members of The Calix Society will receive the new book “Story of the Calix Society” written by our chaplain, Fr. Douglas McKay FOR FREE. We can provide either a paperback or electronic version. A separate email will be sent shortly with instructions on how members can obtain their copy.

Many ask, “What do my dues pay for?” This is a valid and important question. Like our 12-step programs, our society has expenses. These expenses include, but are not limited to, Zoom fees for our on-line meetings, our annual retreats (extra materials that the registration fee does not cover), literature printing costs for new and existing units, a monthly phone bill for our 1-800 number, maintenance of our Constant Contact account (so you will continue to receive e-mails concerning events and meetings, membership renewals, etc.) and the printing of binders for newly developed units. We are also in the process of developing a Calix business card which will be available to all members either in hard copy, electronically or in a “downloadable” form from our website at www.calixsociety.org

Please consider membership.

May God Bless you and keep you.

Ken Johnston

Interim President/Treasurer

treasurer@calixsociety.org

215-327-3236

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Just a reminder that by keeping your membership current, you continue to support the efforts of the Society at the international level. We ask for \$25 annually. Another way you can help the society – which includes membership – is to become member of the Gratitude Club. These members pledge a monthly donation (via PayPal) for as little as \$5 each month. For more information about membership, please visit:

<https://www.calixsociety.org/membership/> .

To become a member of the Gratitude Club please visit:

<https://www.calixsociety.org/donate/>

Additionally, multiple membership cards have been mailed over the past few months. Please email Ken Johnston at treasurer@calixsociety.org if you have not received your card. questions.



Social Media & News from the International Board of Directors

Like and follow us on social media



FACEBOOK: The Calix Society

INSTAGRAM: calixsociety

TWITTER: @CALIXTALBOT

MEWE: The Calix Society



News from the International Board of Directors

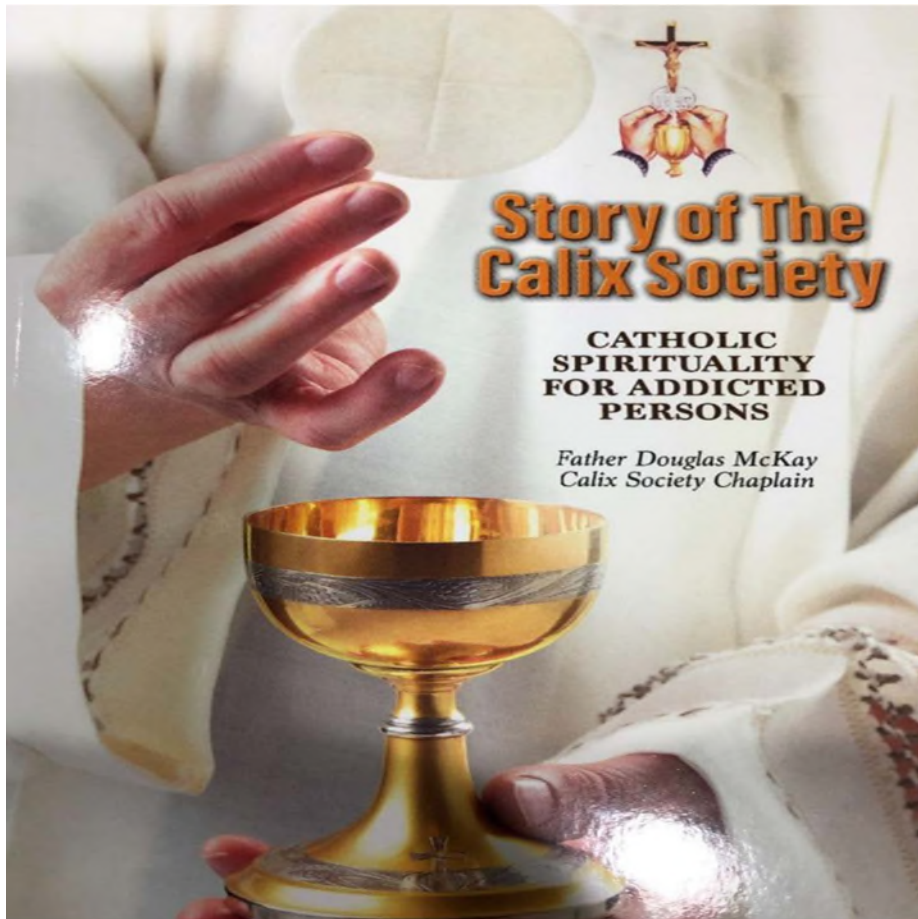
✓ The Chalice will be published on a bi-monthly basis. **Your articles are necessary and welcomed.** Kindly e-mail your articles to Heather at: serenityhet@yahoo.com.

✓ **2023 Retreat Announcement**

The annual Calix Retreat for 2023 will return to St. Joseph in the Hills in Malvern, PA. Deacon Dan Giblin will be our primary retreat director. Music will once again be provided by Marty Rotella. The Family Life Center at the retreat house has double rooms with private bathrooms, air conditioning and all the resources we need for a great retreat. The retreat will be held August 4-6, 2023. We will start rolling out details and the ability to register for the retreat in January. There is capacity for approximately 100 people, and it would be great to fill the building.

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Our chaplain, Fr. Douglas McKay wrote an amazing book on the history of our society, “Story of the Calix Society-Catholic Spirituality for Addicted Persons”. All current (2023) dues paying members will receive a free copy – either paperback or electronic. Details on how to obtain your book will be sent as a separate email to everyone in our email database.



Call for articles!!!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND GOD BLESS YOU!!
LOVE, YOUR EDITOR**

Please consider submitting an article for the January/February 2023 issue about how your journey with the Sacraments has influenced your sobriety. See the below chart for future topics!

We also invite articles on any subject matter that is relevant to The Calix Society and our tenets. For example, testimony concerning your sobriety and faith journey or transformation experiences you'd like to share that relate to sobriety and our faith.

Contact editor Heather Ondik at serenityhet@yahoo.com or 215-910-2393 with questions or to submit an article. Since writing is not everyone's favorite thing to do, if you'd like help, writing assistance is available. 😊

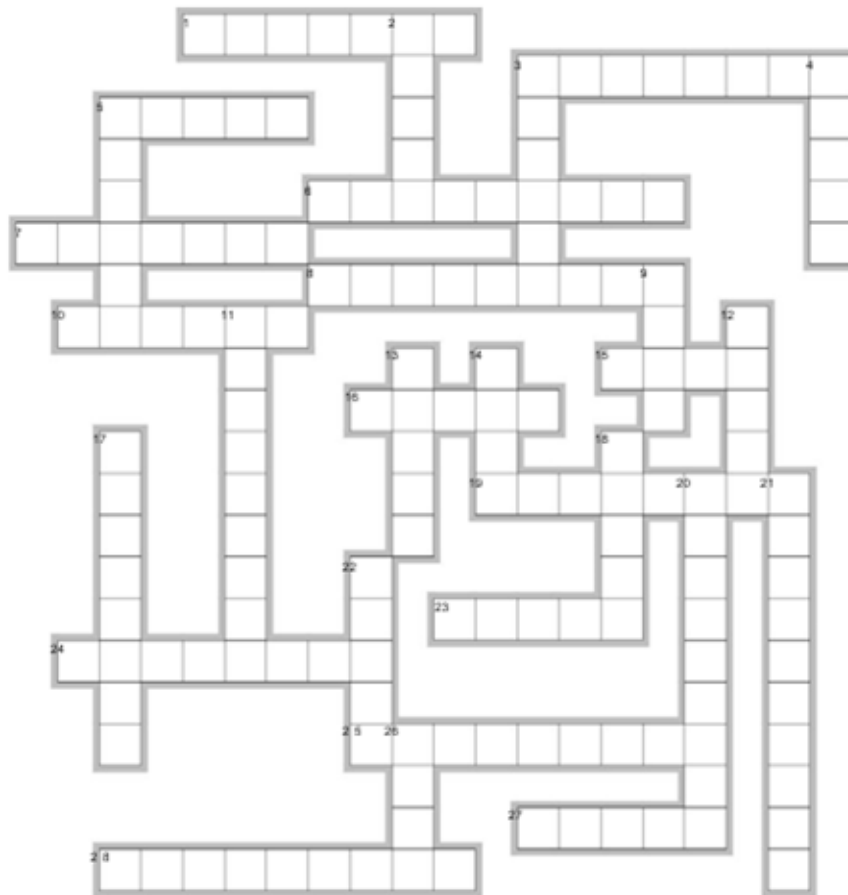
Edition	Topic	Submission Deadline
January/February	Tell us how your journey with the Sacraments has influenced your sobriety.	January 21
March/April	How has the Holy Spirit helped you along the path of happy destiny (your sober journey)	March 21
May/June	TELL US ABOUT YOUR LOCAL UNIT!!	April 21



Christmas Crossword Puzzle

The Birth of Jesus

The story of the birth of Jesus is one of most beloved in the entire Bible. We know that some of these answers will be easy for you. But you may need to look up a few. We used the Matthew, Chapters 1-2 and Luke, Chapters 1-2 in the New International Version.



Christmas Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. Angel who told Mary that she'd have a Son
3. "The holy one to be born will be called the _____."
5. Old Testament prophet who said a ruler over Israel would be born in Bethlehem.
6. Where Joseph and Mary went to register for census
7. "Glory to God in the _____"
8. Governor of Syria when census was taken
10. Occupation of Elizabeth's husband
15. Wise men from the east
16. The angel told Mary she had found _____ with God.
19. Town in which Mary was living before the birth
23. The king of Judea at the time of Christ's birth
24. Name of the Caesar who called for a census
25. What Mary and Joseph offered at the Temple
27. The Wise Men brought gold, incense and _____ to Jesus.
28. Elizabeth's husband

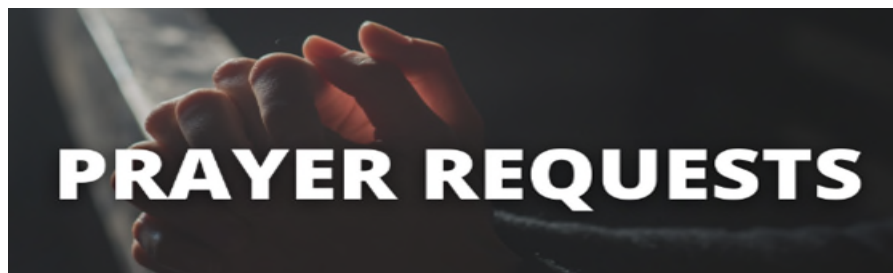
Down

2. An angel told Joseph to flee to this country to keep the Baby safe
3. Devout man who waited at the Temple to see the Christ
4. God warned the Wise Men in a _____ to take a different route home.
5. Where Mary laid Jesus after wrapping him in cloths
9. What led the Wise Men from the east to Jesus
11. They were tending flocks when an angel told them of Christ's birth
12. Number of days after his birth when Jesus was presented at the Temple
13. "He will be great...and he will reign over the house of _____ forever..."
14. Name of Elizabeth's baby
17. Name for Jesus that means, "God with us."
18. Jesus would be given the throne of this father
20. Mary's relative who was also expecting a child
21. Elizabeth was filled with the _____ when Mary visited her.
22. Name that was to be given to Mary's son
26. Prophetess at the Temple who gave thanks for the child

Prayer Requests

PLEASE FIND THE PRAY REQUEST FORM ON THE WEBSITE:

www.calixsociety.org



The Calix Society
P.O. Box 26
Glenside, PA 19038
800.398.0524