



the Chalice

Volume 50

July - August 2023 Issue No.1



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Ken J.

Well it's been a while since we published a Chalice and I want to thank board member Susan H. for stepping up to try and get us back on track.

Our retreat is next week (8/4-8/6 in Malvern, PA), where we will vote for a new president and vice president. It's been an honor to serve as the interim president following the death of my good friend and President Cyndy P. back in November of 2021.

I have served on the board for about 12 years and have seen many changes over the years, and I see great change coming again soon. We will make a short video at this year's retreat to show people what Calix is. We hope to distribute this video to Catholic outlets (diocese, bishops, Catholic organizations, etc.) to spread the word about Calix. The board would also like to invest in a new website. If you or someone you know is in the business of building websites, please contact us!

As treasurer, I also oversee membership. We have about 675 people on our email distribution but only 275 active, dues-paying members. All dues-paying members get a copy of Fr. McKay's book, "The Story of the Calix Society." If you are current and have not ordered your book, paperback, or ebook, please do so ASAP. If you want to become a member or renew your membership, you do so on the website. If unsure, you can always email me at treasurer@calixsociety.org.

When I first joined the board and was elected president back in 2011 or 2012, I said that I thought Calix could be to the 21st century what AA was to the 20th century. I believe that now more than ever. Our online meeting presence has grown by leaps and bounds since we first started in March 2020. We get new contacts constantly, and we're starting to see movement in new in-person meetings. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact a board member and make them known. We are all volunteers doing what we can to make Calix known and available, but we can always use more help. Get in touch with us if you are interested in helping.

Thanks again for your support!

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE

Presidents Message	1
Father Douglas McKay Article	2-3
Sobriety, Surrender, Sacraments	4-5
Odd or God	6
Learning About Icons Part 1	7-10
"Ask and you shall receive..."	11-12

THE CHALICE OF THE LORD

From the beginning of our Society (1947 in Minneapolis, Minnesota), our Calix members knew all about the 'Higher Power' of the Sacraments. Sober for three years, Earl Rooney told his God story to alcoholic and suicidal Bill Montroy, our Founder. Earl stopped drinking, he told Bill, by the "Grace of God" he received through daily Mass and Holy Communion. Looking into bloodshot eyes, Earl told him, "What I ask you to believe is what kept me going—that I humbly and blindly accepted Jesus Christ."

Hearing the Most Holy Name of Jesus Christ, Bill had his moment of truth. After his last drink, he went to confession and became a daily communicant. As an A.A. member, he began helping other alcoholics with sobriety and sanctity.

One night, Father Rudolf Nolan, pastor of Saint Stephen's, called Bill to help Father Pat Cunningham, an alcoholic priest who couldn't get sober for any time. After much effort, many attempts, and failures to help this priest stop his drinking, he invited four A.A. buddies for a 5:00 A.M. Mass with Father Nolan—along with Father Pat—to petition the Eucharistic Lord for the grace to set this priest free from his alcoholic battle. After several weeks of daily Masses, Father Pat achieved his ongoing sobriety and sanctity, returning to his priestly ministry by substituting the cup that sanctifies for the cup that stupefied.

Also, Matt Talbot conquered his alcoholic addiction through his Sacramental life. By receiving the Sacraments, our Calix patron became a mystic and a candidate for canonization. Venerable Matt Talbot told us, "If I can do it, you can do it by the grace of God." And this grace pours out of the 'Cup that Sanctifies.'

Over and again, I heard testimonies from recovering addicts, and 12-Step members, who proclaimed that the Sacraments enhanced their sobriety and sanctified them. They knew that their Eucharistic Lord was the Twelve Steps' Higher Power.

And in this Calix article, once again, I share my recovery testimony: After waking up from my last drunk, I attended Mass and heard from my miserable heart, "Go to Dublin." Like Matt Talbot, I took the pioneer pledge there for three months.

THE CHALICE OF THE LORD

After three months without a drink, I prayed a Holy Hour at Saint Richard's Church in Philadelphia. Kneeling, face-in-hands, before the tabernacle, I prayed, "O Jesus, I want to drink again. Please help me!"

Suddenly, a golden chalice appeared in my mind. "That's it!" I whispered. "If I see a chalice outside the church, I will renew my pledge. If not, I will drink again."

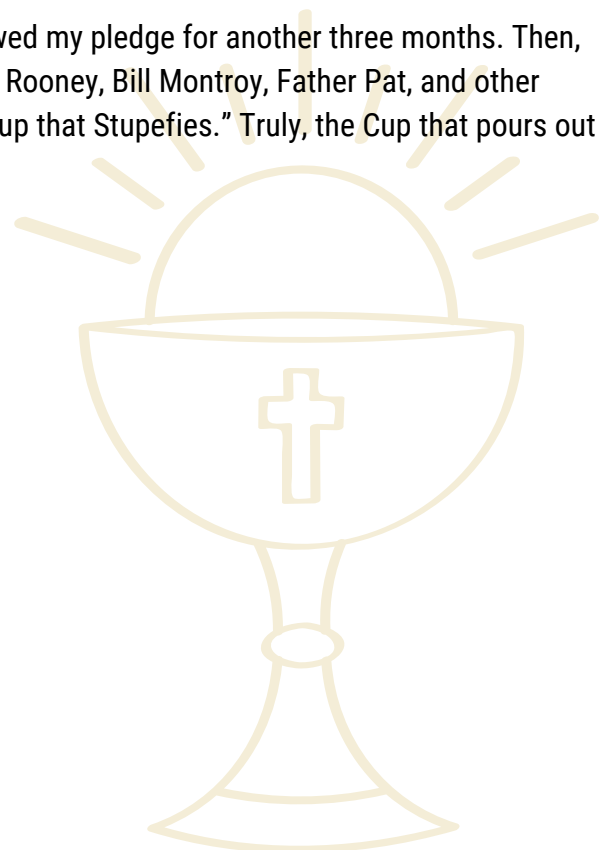
Looking up at Saint Richard's statue, I saw a golden chalice in his right hand. "Lord, outside," I said. On the marble below the tabernacle, I saw another chalice. Then, I saw another chalice on the glittering tabernacle door. Leaving the church, on the glass doors, I saw chalices! "Oh Lord," I persisted, "Outside! Outside!"

Outside the church, I prayed, "Dear Jesus, even if I see a picture of a chalice on a piece of paper, I will renew my pledge." Looking up and down the pavement, I saw 'no' chalice images and thought: It's Miller Time!

Driving home from church, I heard a bang on the side of my car door. The loud sound came from the burned-out window motor. Unable to get the window back up, I drove to see Johnny, my mechanic, to fix it. "We'll take care of it, Father," he said. "Not to worry. By the way, I got something for you." In a moment, not believing my eyes, he came back with a golden chalice.... "Can you use this for your ministry?" he asked. I was speechless. "Do you want it or not, Father?"

"Do it!" Kneeling, I received my God-given prize possession. I renewed my pledge for another three months. Then, on May 17, 2016, I took the pledge for the rest of my life. Like Earl Rooney, Bill Montroy, Father Pat, and other Calix members, I too 'Substituted the Cup that Sanctifies for the Cup that Stupefies.' Truly, the Cup that pours out the grace for sobriety and sanctity is the Chalice of the Lord.

Father Douglas McKay
Calix Chaplain



SOBRIETY, SURRENDER, SACRAMENTS AND SERVICE

The mere thought of sobriety was out of the question. I was managing quite fine, thank you. I had been a responsible, law-abiding woman all my life, and I just wanted to relax and take the time I deserved for myself. I went through the fatal progression in the big book: social drinker, moderate drinker, heavy drinker (when did that happen?). Then it was a lack of control, my friends slipped away, and my home was in a near wreck. I was on my unhappy path of doom to rock bottom, in an unconscious state in the Intensive care unit for five days (I stopped drinking and hallucinated). My doctor told my husband, "I had such a promise." *Proverbs 20:1 'Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.'*

That was eleven years ago.

I understand I was blessed to survive; God had other plans for me. On the other hand, if I would have died sooner, I wouldn't have been an alcoholic. Yup, crazy thinking.

Well, I had to regain my strength and clear my head physically. I started going to AA meetings morning, noon, and night. A firm foundation was what I received. I felt like a blank slate. I knew I didn't want to go back to where I was. Jeremiah 18:6 'Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.' As I was coming to, I was more honest, open, and willing than I had been in years. My sponsor was patient, we were working the steps, and I didn't drink. Coming from the pit of desperation, my expectations were low.

Surrender sounded like a relief to me. You mean, 'I didn't have to be in charge - I wasn't responsible for controlling my world?' I could stop fighting whatever I was fighting. So I did.

I began to find the Mass and Eucharist more meaningful. I returned to the sacrament of Reconciliation and went for a women's Christ Renewed His Parish (CRHP) retreat weekend at my parish in January 2017. I met such giving Catholic women; out of the 20 of us, I was the token alcoholic. I did share my witness and have been able to provide info for families with questions. I have been on the 'giving' end of the retreat since then, and my eyes have been opened to the beauty of our faith. Since then, I've become an Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister and Minister of Care to the homebound and hospitalized and assist Deacon Mike in Communion Services at two assisted living facilities. I am so grateful to give back.

SOBRIETY, SURRENDER, SACRAMENTS AND SERVICE

Deacon John, the chair of our Tuesday evening open meetings, always had these interesting flyers on the literature table about Calix meetings at St. John Vianney Church on Saturday mornings. I didn't go for a while - my Saturday mornings were booked. Deacon John always bugged me to go. Within a year, he died, and two guys who went to the Calix meetings encouraged me to come (in John's honor) with them to the rosary and prayers, followed by a Calix meeting. I went to my first one in 2018 and was pleasantly surprised to find a small, faithful Catholic group of AAs! Father Charlie is our spiritual director. I was in the right place. Then, we were shut down and went to online Zoom meetings, which kept us connected.

Fast forward to August 2022, and I attended my first live Calix Retreat in Washington, DC. What an overwhelmingly spiritual experience with the Sacraments, Rosary, and Benediction. I attend two or three online Calix meetings a week, two live AA meetings per week, and our local Calix is back to one Wednesday evening a month with rosary, Mass, Benediction, and meetings. I'll let you know how things progress!!

(Proverbs 3: 5-6) Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight.

In service,
Susan H.

ODD OR GOD?

Back in the day of my drinking tenure lasting, approximately 23yrs, I viewed my monthly income as salary + Bank overdraft + any credit that remained on my credit cards that I had amassed over time.

So, as I began my journey and gift of sobriety, the reality of accountability hit me on many levels, especially my disastrous financial plight.

I had decided that my personal health was precarious, borne out by my doctor and various medical referrals to specialists.

After attending a swimming session at our local swimming pool, on my way out, I passed a middle age woman sitting at a desk who called out "excuse me, Sir, do you own your property" I stopped in my tracks and smiled as I could probably, if I was lucky to own a small tent.

However, this lady, Margaret, had such a sweet smile and spoke so kindly that I decided out of courtesy to reply that I was not in the position to buy property. She mentioned that it might be to my advantage to view her homeownership information. As I had nothing planned and felt exhausted after the swimming, glad for a seat, she explained the process of part own and part buy, which was very interesting, and to please her, I filled out some forms, which were not a big deal and off I went.

My Sobriety journey began in earnest with parent meetings, sponsors, 12-step programmed meetings, and service + service + service. Through the Love and Guidance of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, my life completely had a major makeover, especially physically, mentally, and spiritually

Then 5yrs on, I received a letter from Nottingham Housing Association inviting me to discuss the possibility of participating in their home ownership scheme. After jumping through many hoops, financial, medical, and various red tape, and against all odds, I was offered a flat in Shepherds Bush valued at £60,000. I had purchased 40 o/o with a mortgage.

Fast forward 6yrs, I have paid off the mortgage and all outstanding debts, so I have little in the bank, but I owe nothing financially to anyone and own a flat now valued at over £300,000 +.

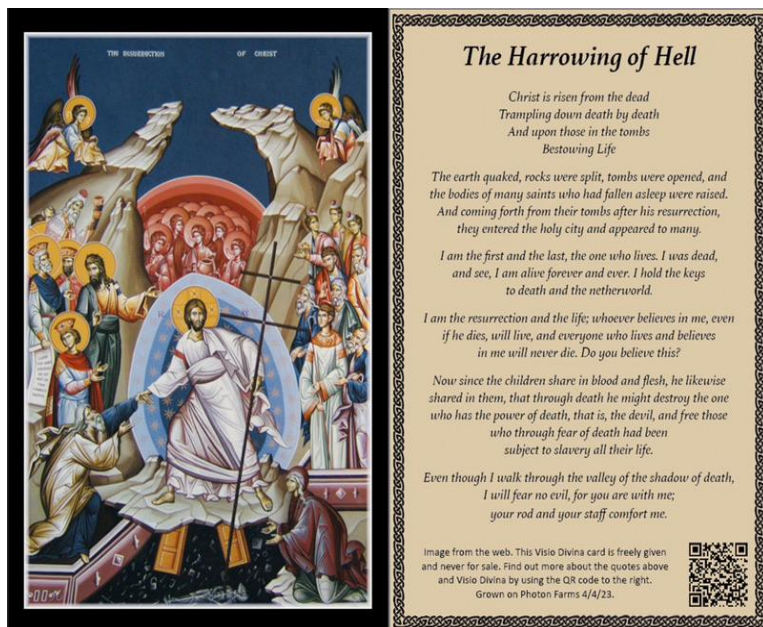
But owes!! So much for the gift of sobriety (now 34yrs) from God, the Fellowship of AA, which led me back to my Catholic Faith and a new venture of spiritual recovery (15yrs) with Calix, also that little Angle who said, "Excuse me, Sir, do you own your own property?"

Adrian (London)

LEARNING ABOUT ICONS PART 1: THE HARROWING OF HELL

Hello, I'm Fred H and I'm grateful to be recovering from addiction and a member of the Calix Society. My friend and board member Susan H. has been a steady attendee at the Thursday 8 pm Zoom meeting which discusses Recovery and Theology of the Body. During those meetings, I often share from my treasure trove of Icons (I'm studying Sacred Art at Pontifex University, so I have quite a collection) to illustrate a point being made in the books or articles we are reading.

Having experienced this, Susan asked if I would be willing to occasionally contribute an article on Icons to the Chalice. I said I'd love to so here goes... the first installment of what may be more to come.



This is my favorite icon of the resurrection, the Harrowing of Hell. (You can see I've turned it into a prayer card.) You can find versions of this icon in many Orthodox Christian Parishes.

I love it when I walk into a worship space and see it prominently displayed or painted on a wall. It lifts my heart so much!

Let's look at the elements of it that are common to almost every version I've seen.

By the way, these common elements make up a canon or a 'rule' for specific events in the life of Christ and the saints being depicted in various images. So... as a rule, this image showing the Harrowing of Hell will contain the following:

First, Jesus is in that oblong 'full body halo' called a mandorla. In this case, it is the intersection of two circles, namely heaven and earth. It is distinctly feminine, which is appropriate because God became flesh in the womb of Mary. Heaven and Earth were married in the womb of Mary, which is the ultimate cosmic bridal chamber.



LEARNING ABOUT ICONS PART 1: THE HARROWING OF HELL

We still have not fully comprehended the seismic ripples that occurred in the time fabric of the universe because of her simple 'yes' to the archangel Gabriel. It is beyond our grasp and rightly called a mystery.

Next, let's look at what Jesus is doing. He is razing hell. He has torn the doors off the abode of death and the devil and is using them as an elevator of sorts to rise up out of there. Notice the debris underneath and the devil or perhaps death himself bound up in the midst of the destruction.

Lastly, I love how this image pictures Jesus leading the captives of death and hell out of their prison. You can see many Old Testament Saints, including King David, on the left side of the picture. Of course, Jesus is also pulling Adam and Eve out of the grave too, representing the rest of us.

Could any image be more victorious? Could any image portray the victim becoming the victor better than this? I, for one, have never seen a single image represent victory over death better. I LOVE IT!

As I close this short article, I'd like to share something that took me even deeper into the meaning of this icon and ties it directly to the mission of our humble society.

Have you ever wondered what Jesus might have preached to the souls in Hades on Holy Saturday, moments before the resurrection? St. Peter seems to allude to this in his first letter (1 Peter 3: 18-22). Well, if you have, you aren't alone. I wondered what his Holy Spirit was doing while his body lay in the tomb.

As it turns out, there are recorded sermons on this very subject. The early Church even had passion plays that were acted out, complete with Satan scolding 'Death' for letting Jesus into Hades – 'I told you not to let him in here! Now look at what he's done!' – or similar lines.

The sermon below is most likely from the first few centuries of the Church, and we don't know who wrote it. The homilist imaginatively proposes some of the things Jesus may have preached to those souls in hades... perhaps they are some of the same things that he whispers to any of us who have been caught in our own personal hell of addiction.



LEARNING ABOUT ICONS PART 1: THE HARROWING OF HELL

From an ancient homily for Holy Saturday The Lord's descent into the underworld

Something strange is happening – there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silent because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh, and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh, and hell trembles with fear.

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives of Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the cross, the weapon that had won him victory. At the sight of him, Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: “My Lord be with you all.” Christ answered him: “And with your spirit.” He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: “Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

I am your God, who, for your sake, has become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants, I now, by my own authority, command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, and all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to wake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me, and I am in you; together, we form only one person, and we cannot be separated.

For your sake, I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

See the spittle I received on my face to restore the life I once breathed into you. See the marks of the blows I received to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back, see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

I slept on the cross, and a sword pierced my side for you who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in hell. The sword that pierced me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

LEARNING ABOUT ICONS PART 1: THE HARROWING OF HELL

Rise. Let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I, who am life itself, am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you. Its bearers are swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, and the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The kingdom of heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.

For your reference, below are all the quotes and their sources from the back of the Visio Divina card pictured above. You can learn more about getting your free copy of this prayer card by going to [Have you ever wondered what Jesus might have preached to the souls in Hades on Holy Saturday, moments before the resurrection? St. Peter seems to allude to this in his first letter \(1 Peter 3: 18-22\). Well, if you have, you aren't alone. I wondered what his Holy Spirit was doing while he lay in the tomb.](#)

[As it turns out, there are recorded sermons on this very subject. The early Church even had passion plays that were acted out, complete with Satan scolding 'Death' for letting Jesus into Hades – 'I told you not to let him in here! Now look at what he's done!' – or similar lines.](#)

Christ is risen from the dead
Trampling down death by death
And upon those in the tombs
Bestowing life
-Byzantine Paschal Hymn

I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?
-John 11: 25-26

The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many.
-Matthew 27:51-53

Now since the children share in blood and flesh, he likewise shared in them, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death had been subject to slavery all their life.
-Hebrews 2:14-15

I am the first and the last, the one who lives. I was dead, and see. I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld.
-Revelation 1:17-18

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.
-Psalm 23:4

"ASK, AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE..."

My name is Kevin, and I'm an alcoholic. I've been in Tamworth since I changed address in Doonside, a suburb in north-western Sydney. I must say that I was warmly welcomed by the members of Tamworth when I made it clear that I needed help developing a new network.

I am not afraid to reach out and ask for help. Since I first came to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous over five years ago, I have understood the importance of "ask, and you shall receive."

It has been my experience that most folks are only too willing to lend a hand to a fellow alcoholic, but there is one question I must ask. How does he or she know if the alcoholic needs assistance? For we may try to help someone who does not feel the need. This may only cause embarrassment and injured pride.

The answer is, of course, for those who need help, to ask another sober member for assistance. In my case, I merely mentioned on the floor of meetings that I was new to town and intended to cultivate new friendships. Like a Godsend, I received no less than six phone numbers after the meeting.

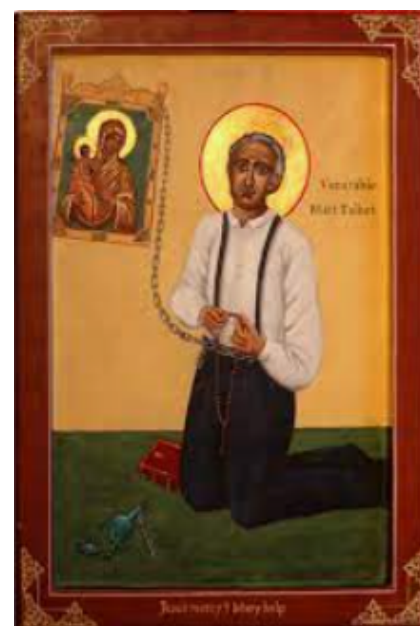
The next step was also my responsibility. I had to try to telephone one of the sober AA members. I did that and, within a few days, was having dinner at a fellow member's place and sharing what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now. To my good fortune, I was even given an air cooler on loan to be comfortable during the sultry Tamworth nights. If this isn't 'caring and sharing,' I don't know what is.

I now attend meetings in Tamworth three times per week and usually attend the Gunnedah meeting on a Thursday night. This seems to give me an even balance to function productively in day-to-day life. Attending the 'inter-group meetings is also part of my routine. I have met many fellow alcoholics at these meetings, and the group cohesion is warming to the spirit.

Recently I became secretary of a meeting here in Tamworth. I now take the opportunity to thank the members for allowing me to be of some service. This is the third time I have been secretary of an AA meeting, and it will surely be a learning experience. It will mean that I will be at no less than one meeting every week, no matter what. This is good for my recovery.

I close by pledging to welcome visitors to the Saturday night Steps group in Tamworth just as I welcomed them when I arrived. This way, I can give back some of the love and kindness that was given to me so freely.

Kevin S.
Tamworth Steps



"ASK, AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE..."



Jesus can free us from Drugs