



the Chalice

Volume 46

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN By Bruce G.

Dear Calix Family,

Advent is upon us, and with it comes the reminder that as Calix members our recovery, spiritual growth and ultimate sanctification are grounded in the real Eucharistic presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fittingly, the articles in this edition of *The Chalice* all focus on the theme “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” taken from the first chapter of the Gospel According to John. We hope you like this edition, and find in it food for thought during your preparation for Christmas.

Praying the Rosary has always been a challenge for me, but one with which I am having better success this year. One of my recent aids has been a pocket-sized volume of meditations entitled *Father Peyton's Rosary Prayer Book*. For those who do not know of him, Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C, also known as “The Rosary Priest,” was an Irish Roman Catholic priest and 20th Century promoter of the Holy Rosary. In the early 1940's, Fr. Peyton founded the "Family Rosary Crusade," which held stadium-size Rosary prayer gatherings in the USA and throughout the world. He also famously coined the phrase “The Family That Prays Together Stays Together,” which was the motto of his long-running radio shows from 1947 – 1969.

One of the passages from Fr. Peyton's book spoke to me as I meditated on the theme of this month's edition of *The Chalice*, and I thought I would share it:

"The fullness of time. The Mother of God held the fruit of her womb wrapped in swaddling clothes – her arms filled with the harvest of her body. But this was not an autumn, not a completion, not the final brush stroke on a masterpiece. It was spring, the beginning of new things, the first unpretentious line across a canvas. Jesus had come to grow in wisdom, age, and strength, to teach, to redeem, and finally to sanctify those He had saved with His Spirit. The Holy Spirit living in my soul is the ultimate purpose of Christmas. Bethlehem looked forward - to me."

We re-consecrated ourselves and our society to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary earlier this year. As her spiritual children, through her intercession, our souls may be filled with the Holy Spirit, her Beloved Spouse. Bethlehem truly looked forward to each and every one of us! As John's Gospel reminds us: "...to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God..." This power is the true purpose of a recovery that starts with the 12-Steps and continues on.

Invite Mary into your heart this Advent season, receive Jesus through her, and discover who you were created to be!

Pax Tecum, -BG

The Third Incarnation

It was a stormy night when little Johnny woke from lightning flashes and thunder clashes. Wrapped in a blanket and springing from bed, he dashed into his parents bedroom shaking his mother awake while his father snored away, saying, “Mommy! I’m afraid. Let me sleep with you?”

“No Johnny, honey, there’s nothing to be afraid of. The storm can’t hurt you. God’s in your room. He’ll protect you. Now go back to bed and go to sleep.”

Staring at his mother, Johnny blurts out, “Then mommy you go sleep with God in my room, and I’ll sleep with daddy in your room. I want a God with skin on Him!”

“In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwells among us.” John 1: 1,14

Utterly amazing, we got God with skin on Him. Think about it... if I had the power to become an ant and did so, it still wouldn’t be a condescension as low as the mystery of the Incarnation, because I—a creature—would become a creature; but in the Incarnation of God, Creator becomes creature. Wow! Why? Because, love stoops; and God, who is love, stooped way down to save us from our sins, destroy our death, and bestow on us eternal life, divine life.

Now, I endeavor to write about the Word made flesh in the mystery of a continuation in Three Incarnations:

The First Incarnation happens in the Blessed Mother at her ‘Fiat’ when the angel Gabriel announces to her that she was to have a child and name him Jesus, a name meaning ‘he will save his people from their sins’. Mary asks, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” “The Holy Spirit will come upon you,” Gabriel answers, “and the power of the most high will overshadow you.... for nothing will be impossible for God.”

If creation had a breath at that sacred moment in history, it would have held it for Mary’s answer. Then, at that précised instant, what seemed impossible happened at her faithful ‘Fiat’: “Let it be done to me as you say.”

And maybe just maybe, perhaps all creation, if it could, would breathed out the wonder at the Word becoming flesh in the Mother of God by the power of the Holy Spirit to save us from our sins.

The Second Incarnation happens in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass through the ‘Yes’ of the ordained priest. At the altar, the celebrant joins his hands and holding them extended over the bread and wine says, “Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall so that they may become the Body and + Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And by the power of the Holy Spirit the priest in the ‘Person of Christ’ takes bread and says, “Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you.”

Then he takes the chalice and says, “Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.” And the Word becomes flesh in the Eucharistic species by the power of the Holy Spirit to save us from our sins.

Now the Third Incarnation will happen in the faithful People of God. However, we too, who believe, must give our Fiat, our Yes, our Amen to the Word made flesh so that our sins may be forgiven and our humanity may become one in His divinity by the power of the Holy Spirit for nothing will be impossible for God. Such wonders!

In the First Incarnation He came in History through the Blessed Mother by the power of the Holy Spirit to save us from our sins. In the Second Incarnation He comes in Mystery through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by the power of the Holy Spirit to save us from our sins. And in the Third Incarnation He will come again in Majesty for us His people by the power of the Holy Spirit to save you and me from your sins and my sins. It’s all personal!

Realize that His coming wasn’t just to save the world from sin but to save you and me from our own sins. Even more than that He came to save you and me from our own death—for the penalty of your sins and my sins is death.

But even much more than that He came to bestow on you and me His own divine and eternal life to be happy with Him in paradise in verdant pastures beside restful waters where your cup and my cup will overflow in the Banquet of the Beatific Vision for God Himself became man so that you and I may become God by participation in order to possess everything that is His. Wow, wee!

This year as we celebrate the Birthday of Our Savior, may our hearts ponder the Word made flesh in the Holy Virgin Mary and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Also, in particular, as we receive our Christmas Communion may our 'Amen' become our 'Yes Fiat' so that the Word will become flesh in you and me for the glorious enjoyment of divine life forever and ever....

"And the Word became flesh," by the power of the Holy Spirit, "and dwells among us" to forgive our sins, to destroy our death, and to bestow on you and me eternal life.

Utterly amazing! We got God with skin on Him so that we may have divinity on us and within us to live immortal like the angels—for nothing is impossible for God. Ponder it.... There's no higher ascension than the creature becoming Creator in the Third Incarnation.

Father Douglas McKay O.F.S.

My Name is Peter

I first attended a Calix unit meeting in St Stephens RC Church about seven years ago at the suggestion of my wife. This Calix unit in Coatbridge is only a few miles away from Grayfriars in Uddingston Scotland where the first ever Calix unit in the UK was established.

I had been 'drink free' for 23 years and had attended AA for a good while but, found that I was still lacking something in my life. Yes, my life had changed in many different ways because of the support I was given from some very special people in AA.

However, it's fair to say, now, that most of the changes in my life were material.

But I will be always grateful to the Fellowship for awakening me to and helping me to understand better, my problem with the drink. Staying away from drink just for today and things did get better eventually worked for me.

Back to Calix, I contacted the parish priest at St Stephens and he gave me the phone number for Tommy Flannery who ran the meeting. Tommy invited me to come to the Friday night prayer meeting. When Friday night came, I said to my wife that I was going to go this meeting 'just for tonight'. Needless to say the rest is history, thank the Lord. I was inducted into the Calix Society on the 11th Nov 2012.

My spiritual renewal started the night I first attended the Calix meeting. it changed my attitude on who I was – as a practicing Catholic. I was somewhat overwhelmed, as the weeks went by, at the real lack of understanding I actually had. That Friday night when I arrived home to the questions, 'well how did it go? Are you going again?'

Now I am trying to produce a short article for the Calix Society about my recovery and reflect how this verse from scripture '**The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us**' [John 1:14] relates to it. This verse reminds me now, of how ignorant I had been of the love, forgiveness and promises gave to me by God through Jesus, which were rejected when the word was made flesh. I imagine now that I was one of those people: yet now realising that even though I did reject his bounties – he never forgot me. And now every day I strive to follow his teachings to the best I can.

My recovery I now firmly believe, is supported by his guiding hand steering me through the long and joyful road to full spiritual recovery which will last a life time.

The reason Calix is so important to me is that through the wonderful mysterious ways in which God works he directed me there, when I most need it.

God bless, Peter Brawley, St. Stephen's R.C.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Before I got sober, I had never thought about what this meant. I had heard it around Christmas-time. That's it.

After getting sober and having had a "spiritual awakening", the concept of Christ's birth became a matter of great importance to me. Why did the Church make such a big deal about it? Why didn't the Church pay as much attention to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, since they are equally God?

This question – along with dozens of others I had after my newly sober mind had a chance to process some of the deeper elements of our faith – led me directly to where I am right now. When I was newly sober, the one thing I became fixated on was the 11th step prayer. I practically was obsessed with praying to know God's will for me, and the power to carry it out. I even took several trips to Rome, thinking that being physically close to the heart of the Church would open my heart and mind and lead me to His guidance.

It was during one of my meanderings in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome that the stained glass window of the Holy Spirit (represented by a dove) hit me like a ton of bricks. I instantly felt a deep conviction. This conviction was to heed Christ's words as recounted in St. Matthew's gospel: "Go and make disciples of all nations."

This was clearly God's message, not mine. My professional background was in the finance industry in marketing and communications, not in evangelization! But, it is truly what I was convicted to do. At 37 years old, I don't think I had ever had a real conviction in my life about anything. And, I also felt convicted that I needed to educate myself on the faith. My knowledge of the faith and the Church's teachings were extremely shaky, and I felt convicted that if I were to try to pass on the faith, I had better understand what it was that I was passing on.

Fast forward four years later to now, and I am in my final semester of what will be a master's degree in theology (should I graduate!).

And by the grace of God, I have begun to have a deep appreciation for what the Incarnation means within the totality of the Catholic faith.

In my studies, I was struck by something St. Irenaeus wrote. He was a Church Father from the late second century. He wrote, "We are bound to death because of disobedience." Um, yep. Those of us in recovery get that, don't we?

Irenaeus then described Christ "giving his soul for our souls and his flesh for our flesh". He said it so beautifully. Christ gave himself so that we could be redeemed and have a second chance at life. Me – a lying drunk addict with miserable morals and a miserable life – could be redeemed and have a second chance at life.

Once I started to understand, it gave me a hope that I had never experienced. What an amazing thing – I could slough off every piece of my nasty past. Never look back. Always look forward and not feel like I needed to be weighed down by my disgusting past actions and life.

What a GIFT. God became man, and gave us a "do-over". That is a GIFT. The greatest one we could ever imagine. That's what it means to me now.

Chris B.

Leesburg, VA

Friday the Thirteenth

On Friday the 13th in December of 2013, I was graced with the experience of God's unconditional love and forgiveness while I lie in a snow bank in a stranger's backyard in Robbinsdale, Minnesota. Lying there in utter shame, degradation and with tremendous self loathing, I realized I had indeed become my father, who died from complications of his disease, a homeless man, living on the streets of Chicago in the early eighties.

But somehow this profound and awesome presence of the Grace of God got me to my feet and as I climbed up the incline of this unknowing (I think) neighbor's backyard, I somehow made my way to the icy sidewalk determined to make it back to my car in order to drive to the High Bridge in St. Paul in order to end my debilitating shame and despair. (The High Bridge is indeed high, towering over the Mississippi River a bit past the confluence of it and the Minnesota River.)

I made it a few steps down the sidewalk to the next door neighbor's where I fell into a snow bank with my hands glued to my face, sobbing and wailing: "Get these demons out of me! Get these demons out of me! I am sorry, God. I am so sorry..."

In the evening chill –it was about 10 degrees with a slight snow falling- I sensed an SUV pull up alongside the sidewalk. It was white...I think...and a young man came over to me and asked I needed help. I remembered exclaiming through my sobs, "Yes, get these demons out of me. I need a Priest. Get these demons out of me!" The young man began asking me a series of questions like: "What happened? Do I have family? Do they know where I am at?"

All the while between desperate requests for a priest, I did 4th and 5th steps with him. This young man listened to me with compassion, gentleness and an unconditional concern. He finally said he was calling for help.

I don't recall how long it took for the police to arrive with the paramedics but I do recall I remained kneeling in the snow bank with my hands still fused to my face. I do recall that as I was hauling my butt into the EMT vehicle, I overheard the police ask the young man for his name and address. He merely replied, "Just put down 'Concerned Citizen'"

The Word was made Flesh among us.

In the psychiatric ward of a nearby hospital, about two in the morning (or it could have been midnight...it was a blur, you know...) after I had been moaning for a priest to get these demons out of me still with hands fused to my face as a minor tranquilizer doing its thing on me, I recall a Chaplain coming into my room.

He said, "I hear you have requested a priest. I am not one, but I am a Protestant Minister.

"Good enough!" And then I went through another 4th and 5th steps with this loving brother. When I finished, he said something about Paul on his way to Damascus. I said, "Yeah, I'll go with that!"

He then put his hands on my chest and I immediately felt an all consuming sense of peace and serenity come over me.

The Word made Flesh among us.

A few hours later, Dawn, the short, round Social Worker came into my room. She had squinty smiling eyes, along with the force of a Marine sergeant. She said to me after lengthy questioning that I needed to stop drinking. I said, "Yes, I know."

She said "No. You need to stop drinking. Get to an AA meeting, and to see a psychiatrist to deal with anxiety and depression." She said she was recommending me to a in-patient treatment program.

When I was told that it would be about a six week residential program (or something) I pleaded with her to let me go as I had many meetings the following Monday and that missing them would cause me further anxiety!

She made me promise to follow through with her recommendations...and I have.

The Word made flesh among us.

A few weeks later I went to The Robbinsdale Police Department to ask them to forward a thank you note to that young man who stopped by to help that night when I was in the snow bank. I told them I knew they couldn't give me his name and address but please pass this note along to him.

They looked up my file and said they would love to do that, but unfortunately all they had in their system was "Concerned Citizen".

The Word made Flesh among us.

Merry Christmas, Concerned Citizen. May God answer your prayers this day. And Merry Christmas to you, my brothers and sisters.

Peace,

Steve O.

Fr. John McHale

I'm the new editor of The Chalice and a 76 year old retired priest of the Diocese of Scranton, PA. My wife Diane and I have four children and ten grandchildren. Diane passed away on February 28, 1999 after having battled Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma for eight years.

Shortly before she died, Diane asked I would do when she was gone. I said that I'd like to pursue a religious vocation. "That's another degree," she responded. I had studied for and received two graduate degrees during our marriage and I'd promised her there wouldn't be a third. But next she said, "I'd like that" and in that instant my future was determined - details to follow later.

Diane was and is the reality of Christ transforming presence and love in my life.

Fr. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, a Melkite priest, and I were high school classmates and so - after a forty plus year gap between contacts - I called him in the last months of Diane's illness. His daughter received the miracle that enabled the canonization of Edith Stein and I wanted his help in praying for my wife's recovery. Shortly after Diane's death, I called to thank him for his counsel and support. I told Charlie that I wanted to devote my life to a religious vocation. Immediately he suggested I become a priest. "Charlie," I responded, "no one's going to sponsor a fifty eighty year old to the priesthood." He disagreed. He has a friend who - in a similar situation - found a diocese to sponsor him and now is a joyful pastor in a small parish in Maine.

A special blessing during that period of evaluation was meeting, getting to know and becoming friends with Msgr. John Esseff. Early on I asked him, "How will I know if I'm really called to priesthood?" He said, "If obstacles fall out of the way as you move forward - that's how you'll know." It was true and I'm so grateful for his enduring support.

Spiritual direction is a critical component of seminary formation. As I met with my director I began to worry that whatever was supposed to happen wasn't happening. I sought help from a priest at the Boston Archdiocesan office but that wasn't working either. An assignment during the Fall semester was to attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I went on a Saturday night expecting to see a bunch of guys in trench coats with flasks in their pockets. It turned out there were two meetings that night - an open discussion meeting with about 60 folks, most of them bikers, and a second, much smaller one - a speaker meeting. At that meeting I heard a man tell much of my story. The effect was profound. I knew I needed AA. As my participation grew - attending meetings, getting a sponsor, working the steps - I shared this with my spiritual director. His counsel was, "Continue doing what you're doing."

I was ordained at the Cathedral in Scranton in June 2004 by Bishop Joseph Martino. My assignment was to St Gabriel's Parish in Hazleton and to be working with a wonderful pastor, Msgr. Michael Delaney and then with the new pastor and my friend, Fr. Peter O'Rourke.

In 2006 I became the pastor of St. Patrick's in White Haven, PA. The having the role of pastor is a world of difference from being an assistant. There were deep divisions among the St. Patrick parishioners and this new pastor landed in the middle of those conflicts. It was a taunting challenge. Fortunately there was a great AA meeting each Wednesday morning at the local Free Methodist Church. Its members became my key support team. God, Our Mother Mary and my support team navigated me through the land mines of the parishioners' issues up through my retirement in 2014.

A summer parishioner at St Patrick's is Dr. Theresa Burke, the author of the abortion recovery retreat, Rachel's Vineyard. She gave me the opportunity to serve as chaplain on a few of those retreats and, after my retirement from St. Patrick's, to work in her Living Scripture Institute (LSI) until 2016. During that time, I learned how to author scripture exercises in the Lectio Divina format. I left LSI to develop a Catholic retreat, "Walking with Jesus from Hope to Faith to Freedom", for those recovering from addiction and to create the non-profit, Hope to Faith to Freedom, Inc. The retreat was first conducted in September, 2017. The eleven women retreatants were very pleased with their deep spiritual experience. Most of the ladies will gather for a follow-on one day retreat to be held in next February.

Fr. John McHale

From the Treasurer

Just a couple of notes from your treasurer. First, it seems like every day between Thanksgiving and Christmas has a special name – Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday. I'd like to propose a Calix day where you dedicate your prayers that day for the Calix Society and its members. AND if you haven't finished your year-end giving yet, perhaps make a donation to the Calix society by visiting www.calixsociety.org/donate. Consider becoming a monthly donor and use PayPal to automatically make a monthly donation using your bank account or credit card. Those who donate this way become "perpetual" members and never have to pay membership dues while providing a little extra to the national society to help us spread the word about Calix! Secondly, the new website keeps much better track of membership for those who join and renew online. As a result, online members will be prompted to renew their membership during the month they joined. Those who pay by mailing in a check or money order will still be sent a reminder in January of each year to renew your membership. Just one more reason to renew online. Any questions regarding membership and access to the website should be sent to help@philly-calix.com. Finally, as more and more people receive The Chalice via email, the cost per printed copy with the printer had increased to over \$5 per copy and annual dues no longer covered the cost of the Chalice. Two things can be done to help with this: first, if you receive a printed copy and can receive an email version please let us know! We will make sure you get it via email and save the expense of printing. Secondly, we are now doing the printing and mailing ourselves to save quite a bit of money so any printed copies we can convert to email saves us not only the printing cost but the time it takes to send it as well. Remember – we have no paid staff! Please note that this will be the last issue you will receive if your dues are not current.

If you aren't sure whether or not you are current you can email me at treasurer@calixsociety.org or call the 800 number and leave a message. I will check your status and get back to you ASAP.

Membership numbers:

Current: 251

Expired Jan-2017: 129

Expired Jan-2016: 32

Is the Devil Nipping At Your Heels?

I had a phone call from someone interested in starting a Calix unit and during the conversation mentioned videos on YouTube by Fr. Peter Klas, an exorcist. In one of the videos he mentions that the single thing Satan despises more than anything is the Incarnation of Jesus Christ! His recommendation when you feel like the devil is nipping at your heels? Start singing a Christmas Carol! Especially during this Christmas season, what better time to sing a carol and watch the devil flee as you remind him of the Incarnation!

Ken J

Prayer Requests

I will like to find prayer groups in my area that I can participate with. Thank you very much for your prayers. God bless! **Dan S**

Recovery, reconciliation with my wife Mary after current separation, and reuniting us all as a family with our six children. **Ray F**

For the repose of the soul of John Forest who died from the disease of addiction and for his family who mourn. **Sheila D**

My mother in law. Lee H. who is in hospice now. Pray for restful passing into eternal life with Jesus our Lord. **Dale C**

For the humility to commit to working the 12 steps of the AA program. I'm currently working on my first 24 hours. **Nick R**

I have struggled alcohol addiction since 1990 with only one sober period from 2000 to 2005. Please pray for my deliverance which I sorely need and desire. Thank you. **Steven K**

For my friend Dan who is struggling with detox from alcohol addiction, that he may continue with the rehab treatment he needs. Deacon **Don S**

**Members Who have past away
2010 -2017**

Eternal Rest Grant unto Them, O Lord

*Bette Baxter, James "Butchie" Brown,
Annie Burns, Chuck Daley, Phyllis "Irish" Guthrie,
Dave Hachel, Terry Haggerty Father Charles
Keenan, Carol Leone, Debbie Marchese, Pat
McLaughlin
Monica O'Kane, Andy Williams
Evy Wybest, Fr. Leo A. Dolan
Marriane Hinderks, Beatris Jacques
Loretta A. Kallaugher, Cecilia and Phil Oknich, John
Pucek, Joseph Pytko
Jan Racek, John Stone, Don Gostomski
Bob Johnson, Ed Krof, Joseph M. Lynch
Frank McGill, Harry McKay, Mary Walters,
Margaret Stutsman
Fr. Simon Wood, Bev Adams
Hannah Kiernan, Mike Moen
Herb Rigg, Rev. Cornelius Carr, SJ
Pat Hewitt, John Leuzzi, Joe McGehrin
Jim O'Keefe, Mary Reardon
Billy Wagner, Stanley Jackson
Carl Ursino, Tom Gibbons*

Call for Articles for the Chalice

Our Newsletter provides a unique and exciting opportunity for members to share their experience, strength and hope with the wider Calix Community.

The role of the editor is to gather and format the articles members provide. Please see it as our mutual responsibility to nurture and grow the Chalice into an excellent expression of Christ's saving work among us.

The theme from the January/February issue is: "the blessing of forgiveness".

Please submit articles by January 15, 2018 to Fr. John McHale at buzzmch@hotmail.com

**May God bless you abundantly,
Fr. John**

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