



the Chalice

Volume 47

January - February 2018 Issue No. 1



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN By Bruce G.

Dear Calix Family,
Father Edward Dowling, SJ is revered in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous as Bill Wilson's sponsor. Father Dowling was motivated to seek Bill out one cold November night in 1940, traveling from St. Louis to Manhattan, because he recognized the principals of Ignatian Spirituality embedded in the 12-Steps. Since that time, others, most notably Father Jim Harbaugh, SJ have recognized the applicability of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola to recovery. Two years ago, I was privileged to attend a lecture delivered by another Jesuit, Father Robert Spitzer, SJ, Ph.D., the title of which was "Mercy as the Condition of Human Happiness." As someone who thrives on concepts, I was smitten by Father Spitzer's "Four Levels of Happiness" model. While attending an event at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception recently, I chanced across Father Spitzer's book that expounds on this model, *Finding True Happiness: Satisfying Our Restless Hearts*. This book is the first volume in a quartet of books dealing with the transcendent nature of the human person, and our call to be in relationship with the Divine. The relationship with the Divine described by Father Spitzer is meant to be a *relationship of the heart*; a relationship in which we remain in gratitude for God's Mercy in our lives, and in which we freely accept transformation into the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

As Father Spitzer clearly explains, Jesuits work on this relationship daily through something they call the "Examen Prayer", an unstructured reflection on gratitude and the Beatitudes (not to be confused with an examination of conscience). As an experienced 12-Stepper, the need for daily gratitude has become second nature to me. What was new for me was the idea of striving, with God's grace, to live the Beatitudes daily and to reflect on where I have and have not lived up to them each day. This reflection is meant to be gentle, and shortcomings are to be handled as Step 7 directs; humbly asking Him to remove them.

Father Spitzer recommends working one Beatitude at a time for at least several months, and for perhaps several years. Of the eight Beatitudes, Father Spitzer takes three as being of particular importance, and in the book he reflects on them in some depth. Of particular importance to those of us in recovery is the Beatitude of Mercy, here it is worth quoting Spitzer at length: "The *fifth Beatitude*, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy', merits special consideration because it is at the heart of Jesus' preaching about love. For Jesus, it has two important dimensions: forgiveness and compassion for those in need.

Forgiveness is key to the practice of love (*agape*) and is Jesus' highest moral priority – mentioned more often than any other moral precept in the New Testament. Without forgiveness in the heart, there will be no relief from the cycle of harm causing resentment, resentment causing retaliation, and retaliation causing more harm. Vengeance will continue to beget vengeance, and violence to beget violence. The only way of interrupting the cycle is for someone to *let go* of the resentment and the desire to exact a "just" penalty for an unjust harm done by another.

Given the imperfect motives of virtually every individual, it is difficult to imagine how love could even get off the ground without forgiveness. Forgiveness not only interrupts the cycle of anger and vengeance; it provokes us to a deeper understanding of others and to try to walk in another's shoes."

It is interesting to note that the word "forgiveness" appears 10 times in the *Big Book*, most notably in relation to Steps 5, 8, 11 and 12. Given Father Spitzer's assertion that forgiveness is "Jesus highest moral priority" though, the ten sentences in the *Big Book* containing the word forgiveness seems a bit underwhelming. And here, precisely in discussions of forgiveness, mercy, gratitude and Beatitude, that Calix radically enhances basic 12-Step recovery. If all we are searching for is sobriety (Level 1 Happiness), there is no need for Calix. Distinguished thinkers like Father Spitzer remind me that what I am really searching for is True Happiness (Level 4). Personally, I am grateful that Calix is here to aid me on my journey beyond sobriety and toward spiritual growth and sanctification. I hope you will feel the same way after reading this edition of *The Chalice*, and that your membership in Calix brings you Peace and Joy in the year ahead.

Pax,
-BG

Forgiveness Is Divine

Once upon a Mass time, on a bitter beautiful day, someone in authority ridiculed me in front of parishioners for something I didn't do. Enraged, I left the one who assassinated my character to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. As I preached on 'loving our neighbor as God loves us', I stubbornly refused to look at my enemy who sat in front of me listening to my poor homily.

As I prepared for the Mass Offertory, I didn't want to continue. In truth, I wanted to rush back into the sacristy, rip off my purple vestments, and run out to the nearest bar. Somehow, with a divided heart, I stayed celebrating the Lamb's Supper, but right before the consecration, I felt paralyzed to continue my feeble priestly act, until I beheld the bread in my anointed hands. Lifting my wounded heart, I spoke to Jesus, "Lord, I know You want me to offer You my hurt, right? And so I do."

Only then, could I go on with the Sacrifice of Christ.

Gazing upon the elevated Lamb of God, held tightly in my priestly hands, the truth rang out—like chiming bells—resonating my bitter soul, clearer than these words: "*Yes, I want You to offer Me your hurt, but not for yourself. Instead, I want you to offer your hurt for the one who hurt you.*"

Nourished with 'the Truth' and united with the Crucified One, I humbly responded with my fiat, "Yes, Lord, let it be done to me as You say!"

Elevating 'the Cup that Sanctifies' and holding Jesus close to my heart, I realized—more than ever—that a greater sacrifice was being made for me and for all my sinful offenses through the sacrificial Lamb 'who takes away the sins of the world'.

For the first time in my life, after being a priest for 11 years, I became aware that I was like Jesus, a true Christian: loving my enemy, doing good to the one who hurt me, and praying for my persecutor just as He did for me. By giving a blessing for a curse, I was united intimately with Him in the 'Joy of Salvation'.

Later, through the amazing grace of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, my once-upon-a-time enemy and I reconciled to become friends in the Lord. Uplifted into heaven and spiritually enriched by that divine encounter, I wanted to be misjudged and even hurt again by anyone or anything so I could offer another self-sacrifice and receive another loving mystical experience. In that unholy desire, I heard the Lamb of God speaking in the silence of my heart: *Trust me, Douglas, you will have other opportunities....*

How true His words!

Once upon a Mass time—on that beautiful bitter day—from the fruits of Calvary, I gave the gift of forgiveness and received from the Lamb of God the greater gift of forgiveness. Yes, in deed, forgiveness is divine.

Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap.

Luke 7: 37-38

Father Douglas McKay, O.F.S.

FORGIVENESS AND RECOVERY

In Cleveland where I go to AA meetings and where our Calix Unit is located, almost every AA meeting closes with the Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," we all intone. It's a fundamental idea: we must forgive if we expect to be forgiven. In Matthew's gospel Jesus makes it perfectly clear: unless you forgive others, God will not forgive you.

Now a person caught in addiction, just starting in recovery like I was, will not hear this admonition too clearly. For one thing, I wasn't sure that I was really doing anything that needed forgiving, I felt I was "just a good guy that drinks too much." It took me a while to realize that my troubles were of my own making – that I was at fault. Then too, I didn't believe in God, so why would I care if he were going to forgive me. And finally, I was so focused on myself that I never really thought about others anyway, whether they needed forgiving or not was really outside my scope of existence.

But when sobriety comes, many things change. In Cleveland, the old timers (as they were called; some of them were younger than me) would say, "you need to change everything but your name if you're going to get sober!" Soon I was doing the steps and came to believe in a power greater than myself restoring me personally to sanity. Now His thoughts about how to act became paramount. If He wanted me to forgive so be it. After all, forgiveness of others is just a matter of applying your will; it's in your control. "Just do it!" my sponsor would say. It doesn't take much clarity to see that I needed to be forgiven as well. In the new world that was dawning for me forgiveness seemed an obvious goodness.

Things escalated when the discussion turned to resentments. I started to understand that not only did I need to forgive but I needed to give up all my resentments – they were the "number one offender" I was told. All those angry feelings from the past – justified or unjustified – had to be given up. I was not allowed to live there anymore. Living in the present, one day at a time, was required, so I had to give up all those feelings from the past. That's the deal! I was taught that this could be done with God's help; that while I might be

powerless over those feelings God was not. If I was willing and asked, God would ultimately remove the problem. I tried it and it worked! Let's take a side trip. Some people talk about forgiving themselves. I couldn't find that supported either by the Scripture or the teaching of the church. "Only God can forgive sins," Jesus said. Recently Pope Francis has told us categorically that it is not right to talk about forgiving ourselves. What people really mean, I think, when they talk about forgiving themselves is that they need to accept God's forgiveness and move on. They need to stop obsessing about the past and what they did wrong. This is certainly true. "Each day has enough worries of its' own" Jesus said. And think how worrisome it would be if a new person started feeling that forgiving himself for last night's debacle was the answer! Or how terrible it would be if a MADD mother whose child you had injured driving drunk heard that you were forgiving yourself! No. Ask for forgiveness from God and those you have hurt. Make amends. Move on.

Another important idea is that after you've forgiven and given up the resentment – both absolute requirements for the spiritual life – the next steps aren't so clear. Do I need to be friends with the person who has hurt me? Must I be reconciled in the sense of going back to how it was? I like the example of a lawyer who does some fine work for a client who then never pays the bill even though able to. Surely the lawyer must forgive the non-payment and surely the resentment must be given up lest the ungrateful client should live rent-free in the lawyer's head. But it is pretty clear that the lawyer doesn't need to do any more work for that client. Civility will be required, but after all we are not door mats! I once sponsored a man who was a great example of the application of these principals. Jim had become sober, working the steps, having a whole new attitude and outlook on life. Things were good until his daughter married and had a baby by a very angry and difficult man. One day the man shook the baby in a fit of anger and the baby was permanently and very seriously injured. Jim was understandably and justifiably angry. The man was prosecuted and went to prison but the injustice for Jim's grandson kept Jim in a rage.

the Chalice

It was sobriety threatening and worse. Jim's life was being ruined by his resentment just as his grandson's life was so terribly affected by the injury. It took serious effort – heroic effort – for Jim to go to God and ask for help in forgiving and in giving up his justified resentments. But living in God's grace, living happy, joyous and free required it. Eventually Jim was able to move on and he's still sober today decades later. But he doesn't need to visit that man in prison. There are plenty of others to visit instead. So let's all give thanks to God for His forgiveness of us. Let's follow his commands and forgive everyone who has sinned against us. Let's not let our anger become bitterness and let's give up all our resentments and move on. There's a lot of living yet to do in God's beautiful world of sobriety!

Paul B.

Immaculée's Forgiveness

A few years ago I went on retreat to Walsh University in Canton, Ohio. A parishioner asked me if I am obsessed with Rwanda. I well may be but that I believe it's a good obsession. It was the book, "Left to Tell" that initially attracted me. It's the story of how a young woman, Immaculée, was able to forgive those who viciously murdered two of her three brothers plus her father and her mother during the Rwandan Genocide. It's awe inspiring. During the retreat, Immaculée returned to the theme of forgiveness and expanded on an account of a particular incident in "Left to Tell". She goes to the prison in the Western Rwanda province of Kibuye, the area she comes from. The man that's now the prison warden, Semana, had been a teacher before the genocide and a good friend of her father: he was like an uncle. He knew why Immaculée was there. Semana goes and gets the man who led the gang who killed her mother and older brother. He pushes the killer into the room roughly and onto his knees. Semana screams at him to explain why he killed Rose and Damascene. Felicien, the killer, is sobbing. Their eyes met for an instant and Immaculée says, "I forgive you." Felicien is dragged back to his cell by two soldiers.

Semana is furious. "How could you forgive the man who killed your family"?

Here Immaculée added to the book's account. She felt embarrassed and weak. Four of Semana's children had been killed in the genocide. To him, forgiving the killers was betraying those who'd been murdered. She had struggled mightily to forgive the killers and at last she was able to surrender them to the justice and mercy of God, yet she apologized to Semana. She felt that in forgiving Felicien, she had disrespected him somehow. She left the prison in emotional turmoil.

About a year later Immaculée was working at the UN in Kagali, the capital of Rwanda Semana saw her at a UN activity and approached her. Once more, she began apologizing to him for what she had done but he interrupted her. "Don't apologize," he said, "you've done me a great favor." Then he explained.

Because the murder of his children was so painful, he took it out on the prisoners. He beat them every day. He tried to relieve the pain by hurting them. Hard as he tried, it didn't work. The pain of his loss and his hatred for the killers was consuming him. He remembered Immaculée's act of forgiveness. He didn't understand it yet it seemed to have given her peace and it was peace he desperately wanted. So he stopped beating the prisoners. He began to teach them. He wanted them to understand and accept responsibility. But most of all he wanted release from pain and hatred. Semana came that day to thank Immaculée for giving him the way out of his own prison: the way to follow Christ's example; the way to move on with his life.

Fr. John McHale

The Blessings of Forgiveness

Recently, I travelled to Nebraska to visit and assist my aging parents as they prepare to transition from their farm to a home in the city of Lincoln. However, as I came closer to the departure date, a series of stressful incidents and ancient regrets popped up, marring what otherwise should have been the start of an enjoyable trip.

On the day of my departure, I tried to relax and forget the thoughts that were plaguing me. However, at the airport, prompted by the all too familiar announcement that passengers in “Zone 3” can now board, I inexplicably could not locate my boarding pass. After searching fruitlessly during the boarding process, I tried to regain my outward composure and approached the airline counter to explain my loss. The employee instantly and cheerfully printed another boarding pass – problem solved. However, the negative emotional surge to my system had already occurred and the damage was done. I was thoroughly frayed, rattled and “off the beam”. Old resentments against others and myself reared their heads, seemingly using my weakened emotional state as an entry point into my head. Layered on top of this emotional milieu was the usual generous dollop of guilt, prompted by demands on myself that I should “feel gratitude” and “don’t let people live rent free in your head”. I needed God’s forgiveness and I needed to forgive others and myself. I also needed the peace that such forgiveness provides . . . a peace that can only come from Christ’s breath of the Holy Spirit upon me.

In John 20:22, Our Lord first appears to the apostles after his glorious resurrection, greeting them with the traditional Hebrew salutation “shalom” or “peace”. This greeting, however, takes on a profound and radical new meaning in light of Christ’s redemptive death and resurrection. Indeed, the new meaning of this greeting is prefigured in John 14:27 where Our Lord directs us, *“let not our hearts be troubled or afraid!”*

As fallen creatures in a fallen world we need to continually seek Christ’s forgiveness and peace to address the out of balance condition that we experience as a result of our first parents’ fall and ejection from Eden. As people in recovery, this peace is of even greater importance to maintain sober thinking and avoid a return to our old, destructive ways. A crucial part of that is forgiveness . . . forgiveness from God and forgiveness of others and ourselves.

In Our Lord’s appearance in the locked room, he breathed new life into the apostles and us. This act mirrors Genesis 2:7 where God breathed life into Adam. Of course, after breathing on the apostles he gave them the power, through himself, to forgive and retain sins. The sacrament is a life-giving tonic available from the spiritual hospital that we call the Church Militant, serving wounded and hurting souls such as myself. Getting back to my Nebraska trip, my week was stressful. I struggled with fears and regrets that didn’t seem to lift. I snapped at my parents, hurting them and dumping a slew of remorse on myself. I’ll need to hit the box this weekend but I already feel Christ’s powerful breath. Further peace awaits.

Mark B.

The blessing of forgiveness.

I was talking with my 45 year old daughter, Roman Catholic in a domestic church of five souls and a community church maybe 1400 souls. She did not know any church being born in the post conciliar church life of the 1970's. We were discussing the more recent changes in the liturgy of the Mass, in particular, going from "Lord I am not worthy to receive you" to "Lord I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof", a small frustrating change for her. I started responding with the recall to biblical references and to poetry.

But later I found myself thinking more deeply about the blessing of forgiveness we are asking for either way. The "as we" of the Our Father. I belong to a Calix Chapter that calls itself the "Tenth Leper" Chapter on a weekly basis we meet for Mass as a group with the intention of thanking God for the gift of recovery in our group and as importantly for the recovery of all those broken on the wheel of addiction in its many forms "trudging the road to happy destiny" in our "blessed hope" of the twelve step spirituality. Whether they understand, deny, or mock and dismiss, we acknowledge the source of these millions as the blessings of forgiveness "through Him, with Him, and in Him".

We pray: "O, Almighty God, during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we pray: "Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give You thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord." We who have borne a cross of addiction know so well how meet and right it is to thank You. Your power, O God, is especially evident to us because we know so well that whenever we chose to act without You, we are powerless over our addiction. Your divine goodness has not only lifted us from this addiction but has also been our abiding source of strength from day to day. For many years, we had forgotten You. And in those dark days when we did suddenly think of turning our thoughts to You, it was only because we were frightened, lonely, or in trouble. But now we who are beneficiaries of Your love and power, turn to You with fondest gratitude, for ourselves and all in recovery whether, or not they either know or acknowledge You as the source of all recovery. We ask that all of us may be ever grateful to You. Amen"

I went back to refresh my recall of the centurion, encounter with Christ as related in Mathew 8:7-9 " ". The centurion is a man "under authority" but Jesus responded as authority without any hesitation - let's go! The centurion demurred, maybe recognizing the position to which he was exposing Jesus, visiting the premises of an occupier.

The centurion's faith, his command experience, tells him that his servant's health is dependent on the word not the presence. The gift of healing springs out of the centurion's faith in *Christ, not on the servant's worthiness. This echoes to us in our experience of twelve step spiritual recovery. We see the power of God's healing word and the blessing of forgiveness at meeting after meeting and yet we do not focus on praise and adoration but the power of his word through our recovery and the recovery of those in our fellowship. Jesus does not pick and choose but dispense his grace to all willing for recovery' Bill W may be our centurion, the salesman of the word of recovery. Jesus does not need naming to be effective we need His word and it is freely flowing throughout the literature and witness of recovery around us.

As addicts we are children of "more and again" whether in a spiral to a bottom or in progressive steps to a new future we measure in either the more oblivion of another drink or the extended sobriety of another day sober. When we came to the twelve step program we, our lifeboat, the fellowship told us that if we kept doing the same things we would get the same results. At some point that became not a threat but a promise, today well lived makes both our history and our destiny brighter. That reflects the blessing of forgiveness. Overcoming the inertia of human concupiscence Grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, poured out on the Cross moves us into a new cycle of recovery based on our surrender and the exposure of our vulnerable hearts to his loving touch. This movement is the blessing of forgiveness, the progress towards a better life. We are opened to the spiritual gifts of faith, hope and love, not just hope is found, but hopeful. We find acceptance that grows out of a mutual vulnerability into love of ourselves and our fellows. Not the adulation we had sought previously but a leveling that lets us be right sized often for the first time. And first and foremost, the faith imparted by Christ's touch, the power of His offering for our justification. We move forward on these gifts to see how we can become the channel of forgiveness of and for others. A share of what we have been given, the finest gift we can give others. Resentments of a lifetime or of just a few moments past. We always speak of progress and as Catholics believe at times in not just in "sanity" but also with the grace of the sacraments in saintliness at times. He touches us and we touch others with clemency, grown from His gifts, of our own.

In the program we often say “Live and Let Live” and while this sounds like a mantra of forgiveness, it is the “Live” that springs out from the act of forgiving another. We come to LIFE not dwelling on how we have been wronged but seeing the possibilities before us. The other is forgiven, we are freed to find clarity of purpose and integrity of action in today. We experience how our self-absorption has choked our vision and with that myopia we lost our ability to see the next right thing. Having been forgiven, and as we forgave, we were able to see the links from the gifts of forgiveness to the clarity of today be experience the full blessing of this progressive cycle. As we reflect on the day, we look forward to the continued presence of Christ’s Words around us. Our souls are healing and our progress is steady.

God has done for me what I could not do for myself, He created me. I spent the first 30 years of my life trying to relegate Him to the pinch hitter and the next 40 negotiating the terms of surrender. And that has always been the point, I am engaged with His grace in His progressive cycle of forgiveness. When we say “through Him, with Him and in Him” I acknowledge the source, action and goal of the life I see now laid out before me.

Jim E.

The Blessing of Forgiveness - Finding Forgiveness to Find Legs to Walk

When many Christians think of the lessons of forgiveness taught by Jesus, they think of the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32). But when I think of the blessing of forgiveness *in recovery*, I think of the paralytic man who came to Jesus for healing (Mt 9:1-7). At this time in Jesus’ public ministry, He had performed many miracles. This time, with the paralytic man, Jesus said, “Your sins are forgiven.” Only after forgiving him did Jesus say, “Rise, take up your bed and go home,” at which point the paralytic was cured.

This man was brought to Jesus to heal his visible wounds, but Jesus began with healing his soul. Only after that did He heal this man’s paralysis. To me, this Scripture illustrates what I experienced in recovery. I came to the program a broken person, who was desperately seeking help to rid myself of physical and mental addiction to alcohol and drugs. I achieved physical sobriety relatively quickly, but physical sobriety was nothing compared to the years of hurt and anguish that I needed to face to become healthy. That’s where the 12 steps (and Jesus!) came in.

Here is how I see the parallel with the paralytic man. Jesus forgave the paralytic man’s sins first. After ripping the guts out of the deepest, darkest holes in my soul in steps 4, 5, 6 and 7 ... I learned about forgiveness in a whole new way with steps 8, 9 and 10. Asking others for forgiveness. Forgiving others. Forgiving *myself*. *Receiving forgiveness from JESUS*. Only after I had gone through those steps and began to feel and understand the liberation of forgiveness did I start to feel like a healthy person. It is through our recovery that we realize what a *blessing* forgiveness is, and how important it is in order to get and stay healthy, which of course includes our sobriety. We find forgiveness in ways we never imagined possible. We learn to accept that we many times will need to wait patiently and pray for others to forgive us. We go to Confession to describe the exact nature of our wrongs. We learn to ask for forgiveness as soon as we can after reflecting on behaviors that were wrong.

I believe that it is going through the steps – *finding Christ’s forgiveness* – that we learn how to live healthy lives – *find legs to walk again*. This is how we find and maintain a lasting sobriety that surpasses any hopes and dreams that we ever thought possible.

I am the paralytic man. It is through those 12 steps and the blessing of my faith that Jesus said to me, “Your sins are forgiven” and *then* said, “Rise, take up your bed and go home.”

- Chris B., Leesburg, VA

Matthew 9:1-7

And getting into a boat, he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – he then said to the paralytic – “Rise, take up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home.

From the Treasurer

We have seen a slight uptick in membership levels of late and want to thank all of you that have taken the time to either send a check or use the website to become members or renew your membership. Your membership dues are used to support Calix nationally and cover expenses such as our PO Box, telephone bills, the online meeting, supplying materials for prospective units and the cost of the website to name just a few. Membership also gives us an idea of how many people attend Calix. Some units will sponsor or scholarship new members who may not be able to afford the \$25. If you are reading this and not sure of your status you can email Ken at treasurer@calixsociety.org or call 215-327-3236.

Notes from the Calix Units**Calix Levittown PA**

Hi Father, Our group is averaging 4 to 12 attendees on the first and third Tuesday's of the month @ 7:00 p.m. @ Queen of the Universe Parish Center in Levittown, Pa. We are following a format of 1 speaker telling their story, talks on various subjects like last week by Father John who spoke on why confess to a priest instead of going directly to God. We also may show a dvd or something appropriate on Formed such as the series The Goose Is Loose about the Holy Spirit. We may institute covering a different bible passage each week to also familiarize many with the Word of God. I hope this is helpful. God bless, **Tom G.**

Calix Grays Ferry, Philadelphia PA**Grays Ferry Calix Has First Monthly Matt Talbot Mass**

On Friday January 5th, after a couple years of saying we wanted to do this, Our House Ministries along with the Grays Ferry Calix unit and the Venerable Matt Talbot Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order finally had their first monthly Matt Talbot Mass followed by Benediction that included intercessory prayers invoking the intercession of Matt Talbot as well as his Litany. Each of the 18 people in attendance than had an opportunity for an individual blessing directly from Jesus Christ through his presence in the Eucharist in the Monstrance.

The plan going forward is to do these monthly on the first Friday of the month at 8:15 PM at St. Gabriel's Church and our goal is to eventually fill the Church each month. So many people are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction and this Mass offers us an opportunity for alcoholics and addicts in recovery as well as all those affected by addiction to come together and pray for each other and all those who either struggle with or have a friend or family member are in the throes of addiction.

Our hope is to eventually offer confession before the Mass. We make a few brief announcements and pray the Prayer for Venerable Matt Talbot's Canonization before Mass begins. Following the Prayer After Communion we begin Benediction with the a hymn and a short scripture reading and reflection. 15 minutes of quiet adoration is followed by the Prayer to Matt Talbot for his intercession for those who struggle with addiction and the Litany For Matt Talbot. After the prayers all in attendance are invited to receive that direct blessing from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and then Benediction is completed in the normal way. Now, more than ever, is this needed and we believe it will be a great way to further spread the word about Calix. Flyers will be created with details about the Philadelphia Calix units and made available at the monthly Mass. Plans are underway to make each parish in the archdiocese aware of the monthly Mass and we are enlisting the help of the clergy, especially those in recovery, to come and hear confessions and celebrate Mass with us. Get in touch with Ken Johnston (ken@philly-calix.com) if you would like to receive a monthly reminder about upcoming Masses.

Calix Cleveland OH

The Cleveland, Ohio Chapter of The Calix Society enjoyed a fruitful and strong year in 2017. Effective leadership continued under President Jane Bennett supported by a strong and committed membership. The monthly meetings consist of a Sunday morning Mass followed by a breakfast and a Calix lead as they have for many years. The Chapter meets at 9 AM once a month on the fourth Sunday at the Chapel at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center located on Sr. Ignatia Way in downtown Cleveland. Our Unit is blessed with an excellent music ministry. Our voluntary contributions have been sufficient to cover our costs and fund a small reserve so we are fiscally sound. All is well in Cleveland Calix!

However, during the year we suffered a very hard and saddening loss with the illness and death of Tom G., our most beloved and revered member. Tom was 77, a retired Cleveland Police Sergeant and a member of AA for some 49 years. Tom was loved and respected by everyone and, along with his wife, Kathleen, was a very important part of Cleveland Calix. It is difficult to think of anyone more universally respected in the recovery community or in the city. He was a member of the Newburgh Group of AA, one of the most longstanding and respected AA groups in Cleveland. Members of Newburgh have been central and steadying supporters of Cleveland Calix for as long as anyone can remember and Tom was the bridge between Newburgh and Calix. When Tom made a comment after a Calix lead it was very unusual for anyone else to talk after that for it seemed that all that needed to be said had been said. We will miss Tom very much.

2017 was a year of much activity for us. The Opioid crises is, of course, central to those of us in the recovery community and we have been much involved in both prayer and ministry. We have many members who are recovering from these malicious drugs, and we hope are holding our own. Rarely have we seen anyone fail who has thoroughly followed the path and we believe this to be true in opioid addiction as well as alcoholism. Conflicts with family vacations and reunions on the first weekend of August made attendance at the Calix Convention impossible for many of us, and we were very sorry to miss it. We are hoping that those conflicts won't exist in 2018 as we very much want to attend and support the Convention in Philadelphia. In the meantime, we are glad that Gaylen Emond has become a member of the Board of Directors and is keeping us up to date on are committed to continuing and increasing that involvement. We are in the process of forming an executive committee to focus on our Chapter's involvement with the Calix Society and to support *The Chalice* among other things.

We are all looking forward to continued growth and strength in 2018 and remain willing to do whatever we can to support The Calix Society.

Paul B.

Calix Falls Church, Virginia

Before starting this unit in Falls Church, I attended several Calix meetings at Loudoun Club 12 in Leesburg, Virginia. I immediately felt this was the missing link in my recovery program, finding persons in recovery with whom I could passionately share my Catholic faith and belief in Christ, the one true God and man who "restores us to sanity" through his sacrificial love.

Before I describe our new unit, I want to again thank Bruce G., Ken, Jim and the Leesburg unit members for their prayers and guidance during this initial startup period of the Falls Church unit. Their actions greatly assisted us in carrying the Calix message to others.

Our meeting generally is as follows: After the reading of the Calix credo, we recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy (a fine tradition copied from the Leesburg group). Currently, our group is reading *A 12-Step Approach to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. We take turns reading from this book, written by Jim Harbaugh, S.J. and discuss the readings in light of our own recovery. Following our group readings and discussion, we allow time for sharing on any recovery-related issues. Attendees sometimes also announce pray requests. We always end our meetings with the Prayer of St. Michael and then ask the Venerable Matt Talbot and several saints to pray for us.

Although our meeting size is still small (we normally have 4-6 attendees) we have plenty of spirited discussions on our faith, recovery and all things Catholic. Frequently, our meetings run past the allotted ending time of 9:30 PM and our discussions then move out of the Unity Club and into the parking lot! As with all Calix meetings, I believe our gathering is a powerful tonic for the temptations and struggles that lie ahead but also a genuine springboard into the true joys of recovery.

We invite you to attend our Falls Church meeting and hope to see you if you're in the area. Meetings are held Thursdays at the Unity Club in Falls Church, Virginia (8:30 PM in Room 4).

Although we are pretty diligent about meeting every Thursday we may from time to time be tied up and a meeting may not be possible, so it's probably best to contact me just to confirm at 301-461-4643.

God bless you all and thanks for being a part of our wonderful Calix group that is yet another sublime treasure of our Holy Mother Church.

Mark B.

Calix Charlton MA

Our group is not doing real well. We started out with about 6-8 people showing up, now we are down to 3 semi-regulars, and sometimes have no meeting because I or someone else is the only one who shows up. We have tried to "market" to different parishes in our area, but could be doing more. I think we need to rethink the time frame we have the meeting, where we have it, and why we are doing it. A lot of prayers are needed.

Kyle

Return address:
The Calix Society
PO Box 26,
Glenside, PA 19038
phone: 800.398.0524

Notes from the Editor

Annual Retreat

The Annual Calix Retreat will be returning to Philadelphia in 2018! Plan to join us August 3-5, 2018 at [St. Joseph's in the Hills Retreat House in Malvern](#), PA. Fr. Emmerich Vogt ([12-Step Review](#)) will lead us on retreat and [Marty Rotella](#) will lead us in song (and entertainment!).

For the Chalice, March – April

The theme is: The Pascal Mystery. Articles should be on the full mystery or on some portion of it.

Please submit articles and Calix Unit updates by March 1st to Fr. McHale at buzzmch@hotmail.com