



the Chalice

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN By Bruce G.

Unity of Hearts Devotion

“You must contemplate the Heart of My Mother, as you contemplate My own; live in that Heart as you wish to live in Mine; give yourself to that Heart as you give yourself to Mine; spread the love of Her Heart which is wholly united to Mine.” – Jesus, to Venerable Bertha Petit, Franciscan Tertiary and Belgian mystic, February 7, 1910

Dear Calix Family,

In the last edition of *The Chalice*, I wrote about meditating on the Sorrowful Mysteries while praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and how this prayer and meditation is an effective means of coming to know the burning love Jesus has for us in His Heart. Following the Lord’s instruction to contemplate the Heart of His Mother, I would like to recommend the devotion of praying the *Rosary of the Seven Sorrows of Mary*. My personal experience has been that this devotion promotes growth in empathy for others, particularly those actively suffering from alcoholism and addiction.

Devotion to the Seven Sorrows of Mary originated in thirteenth century Italy, with the Order of Friar Servants of Mary (OSM), who were founded by seven professional lay men of Florence. During the 14th century, at Our Lady’s request, St. Bridgette of Sweden also promoted this devotion. In recent times, Our Lady appeared to school girls in Kibeho, Rwanda with a message of repentance and conversion. On March 2, 1982, Our Lady appeared to Marie Claire Mukangango, one of those who had showed her unbelief of the original seer. After personally encountering Our Lady, Marie Claire kept saying:

“One must meditate on the Passion of Jesus, and on the deep sorrows of His Mother. One must recite the Rosary every day, and also the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, to obtain the favor of repentance.” In his decree on the apparitions issued on June 29th, 2001, Bishop Augustin Misago of Gikongoro, Rwanda, in part states: *“It was the visionary Marie Claire Mukangango who brought it back again as she received the mission to teach the Rosary of the Seven Sorrows by the Blessed Virgin Mary of Kibeho. After an intensive research the ad hoc commissions have still not found any evidence that Marie Claire knew this rosary before the beginning of the apparitions. This rosary deserves to be renewed and spread in the Church. However, this prayer does not replace the Holy Rosary. It is one among many exercises of piety admitted in the Church.”* Known under the title of Our Lady of Kibeho, this apparition has worldwide approval of the Church.

The Rosary of the Seven Sorrows recalls the sorrows the Virgin Mother of God endured during Her life, particularly Her compassion for the suffering and death of Her Divine Son. The Seven Sorrows themselves are taken from Tradition and from Scripture events. What is true in a general way for the Christian faithful who contemplate the Seven Sorrows of Mary can certainly be true, and perhaps especially so, for those of us who are grateful for the gift of recovery from the codependency of alcoholism, or any of the other codependencies of addiction. We well understand the notion of accompanying a loved one on a painful journey. By contemplating Mary’s Sorrows, we are able to unite our pain and sorrow in a special way with the Heart of our Blessed Mother, furthering our conversion and recovery. For those interested, a “Recovery Mediation on the Seven Sorrows of Mary” is posted on the Calix Society web site at:

<https://www.calixsociety.org/recovery-meditation-on-the-seven-sorrows/>.

As Jesus indicates in the opening quotation, Mary’s Heart is wholly united to His own.

In a similar way, may the hearts of all Calix members be united with one another, and also with the Hearts of Our Lord and Our Lady. Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us!
Pax,
-BG

My Indelible Day In May

It was a sunny day in May, 1959, when a substitute Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister entered our second grade class. With sunshine glittering off her golden Miraculous Medal, hanging over the sash around her waist, she glided to the front of our room. In her sweet voice, the mystery nun commanded, "Clear your desks... Sit up straight... Fold your hands... Pay attention!"

After handing out white envelopes and writing pages, she pointed to the windowsill at the statue of Our Lady of Grace, announcing, "Today, children, we will write a letter to the Blessed Mother. Ask her for whatever you want. Now copy this on your envelopes." Elegantly, she turned around, picked up the white chalk, and wrote on the blackboard.

Whispers circled the room: "I want dolls ... skates ... a scooter ... a bike ..."

"Silence is golden!" Sister said, turning around and facing us. "Now copy," she said again.

Copying from the blackboard, we addressed our envelopes:

Blessed Mother Mary
Queen of Heaven
City of God

"Now class, please take your paper and write down what you want from Mother Mary. And know that no one, but her, will ever read your letters. I will burn them in the incendiary of the convent yard. Like incense your requests will ascend on angel's wings to the Queen Mother of Heaven."

Rubbing my Miraculous Medal, hanging under my shirt, I wrote my request:

Dear Blessed Mother,
Please ask your son if I can be a priest.

Your loving son,
Douglas

Pilgrimage to our Lady of Kibeho, 2009

July 3 – 4: My son, Stephen, his wife, Kristina and their children, Ajan and John took me to Dulles Airport on Friday morning. It was about 7 AM when they dropped me off. Even though the flight was at 10 AM the airlines want you to be there for an international flight 3 hours early. Kathy Lesnar, who was the contact for arranging the trip, emailed me on Thursday that Immaculée would be on the same flights from Dulles and Addis Ababa. I didn't see her in the waiting area but shortly after boarding she came down the aisle looking straight ahead – thinking, I'm sure, can I find space for my carry-ons? Can I get Nikki and BJ – her children - settled in? "Hi dear," I said quietly. Immaculée looked down, ignited one of those incandescent smiles, bent down and gave me a hug. When we were airborne, I walked to her row and gave her and the children Our Lady of Kibeho key chain lights. Later, she came and sat beside me and we talked for an hour or so about faith, culture, children and my history. She's a wonderful communicator and a gifted listener. We changed planes in Addis Ababa and in the waiting area we met Melissa and her mother, Esperance, who knew Immaculée since her UN days. Esperance is the Head of the UN Population Fund Mission in Liberia. She's just moved from that position in Malawi. We arrived in Kigali and some of our fellow passengers recognized Immaculée. They posed for pictures with her, talked about her books and got autographs. The welcoming party waiting for us included her brother Aimable and his wife, Father Leszek and the other pilgrims, Amy, Kara and Theresa. During the balance of that first day in Rwanda we settled in to our rooms at "Foyer de Charite", the retreat center that hosted our little group then drove over to Aimable's for snacks and conversation and then back to the retreat center for dinner, the rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows and bed.

July 5th: I came down for breakfast at 8:30 AM. Immaculée and I sat outside for a bit waiting for the others. There were none of the "machine noises" I'm used to in "civilization".

She said that as a kid she'd call to Jeanette on the hill a mile away and Jeanette would come out of her house and run over to Immaculée's. At breakfast, she filmed each pilgrims' story – what brought us to Kibeho. Kara Kline said that meeting Immaculée and helping at the Louisiana retreat led her to commit to 5 months in locations in Rwanda with the purpose of discerning her vocation. Kara has experience with the 12 step process. We discussed its value. Amy Hunt attended the Medway, Mass. Retreat and wanted more. She also wants to adopt a child and is hoping to be able to do it in Rwanda. Theresa Finn is on summer vacation from her teaching position. She had seen Immaculée in Chicago and wanted more too. I told of how the local PBS channel was broadcasting a presentation by Wayne Dyer in the Fall of 2006. During the program he introduced Immaculée and she spoke about her suffering during the Rwandan genocide and her gift of forgiveness. I had just begun my first year as a new pastor and my struggles were many. I desperately needed the example of how to forgive. Over the past two years I've read each of Immaculée's three books multiple times and given copies to many people. In January of this year, I attended her talk at the West End Church in Manhattan. In May, my sister Ann, Maria Schneider, my son, Brian, and his wife, Laura, and I saw Immaculée speak at Franklin Marshall University in Lancaster, PA. I was able to concelebrate the Mass preceding her talk. The other concelebrant was Fr. Peter Hahn – a seminary brother of mine that I hadn't seen since his ordination in 2003. During her talk, Fr. Peter whispered to me, "she's a saint". My sister, Ann, went on the Immaculées first Kibeho pilgrimage in March and that gave me great encouragement to come to this one. I added more thoughts about the 12 step process as a powerful program for spiritual development. Fr. Leszek told his story of coming to Rwanda 2 months after ordination and receiving permission to minister in Kibeho. He was sent to Switzerland for study and was there during the genocide. Because of it, he was only able to resume his ministry in Kibeho in 2004.

Esperance who joined our group for a few days in both Kigali and Kibeho spoke about her call to be of service in the UN. Immaculée inserted that Esperance has been a wonderful agent of human caring. Now, she is trying to discern where God is calling her – to her new position with the UN in Liberia or elsewhere. Ivan spoke of his desire for education and to study at a US university. At lunch we continued to discuss Mary's love for each of us and her messages of prayer and conversion. Mary sent a message to the President of Rwanda through one of the visionaries. She told him to allow the Tutsi refugees to return. He didn't and the stage was set for the civil war and the genocide. In the afternoon we visited Mother Theresa's orphanage to arrange our visit on Monday and we tried to catch up with Immaculée's missing luggage. For dinner, we went to a restaurant that featured "brochettes". Kara decided that beef intestines were a delicacy she could forego.

July 6th: At breakfast, I set the video camera on the table and let it run as we talked. Then we drove over to the Orphanage of the Missionaries of Charity. We started in the nursery. I picked up a little girl who was about a year old and carried her around. When it was time to put her back in the crib, I didn't want to do it and neither did she. It was hard for both of us. There were about fifty 4 and 5 year olds eating lunch – sitting on both sides of two long tables. It was amazing how quiet and focused they were. It was impressive to see how orderly these little children could be. There were some adults there as well. We were told that they had been so traumatized by the genocide that they withdrew from reality. After the orphanage, we drove to Kibeho – I rode with Fr. Richard and it was pretty scary because he drove so fast on marginal roads especially the rutted dirt road between Butare and Kibeho. I celebrated Mass at the church at the Cana center then we ate dinner and watched a documentary on the visionaries. I kept nodding off to sleep during the film. It was a long day.

July 7th: We had breakfast at 8 AM. Then we sat outside and talked about Immaculée's

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experiences immediately after the 91 days in the Pastor's bathroom, hiding from the killers. She told us about the attempt of one of the RPF officers at the refugee camp to pressure her into having sexual relations with him. She was very inventive in diverting his advances – even when it seemed almost impossible. There was always the danger that he'd do away with her so his actions wouldn't be exposed. When he was completely frustrated and told her to leave his house and arranged transportation at night back to the refugee camp, she asked to stay another night! He was amazed that after all his aggressive advances she wanted to stay. But Immaculée had been warned not to leave his place at night because it was very possible that she'd never be seen again. Fortunately, he didn't give her any trouble that evening and she returned to the refugee camp the next day. We walked to the site of Immaculée's future Kibeho home. It's a beautiful location from where you can see the Cana center in one direction and in the distance, in the opposite direction, the buildings of the Shrine of Our Lady of Kibeho. During our walk, Fr. Leszek spoke of the two crosses he has to bear: my lips are sealed! Rather than ride, we decided to walk the mile to the Shrine saying the rosary. The children ran to us as we walked along. They love to have their picture taken and see the image on the camera's screen. At the Shrine Immaculée saw a familiar face. It was a friend from UN days, Immaculée Uwanyiligura- we were told that a third of the girls in Rwanda are given the name Immaculée! She was staying at the guest rooms on the grounds there. Our Immaculée insisted that her friend join us at the Cana center. I was given the wonderful privilege of celebrating Mass in the location where the first apparition took place: that of Alphonsine. The chapel was a cafeteria for the high school then. The petitions from the parishioners of St. Patrick were placed in front of the altar during Mass, requesting that they be

granted by Jesus through Mary. After Mass we visited the high school next to the Shrine. The 700 young ladies there sang and danced for us. After that, Immaculée introduced each of us. The only word of the native language I knew was "amacurue" (sic?). It means "how are you?" So when I was introduced I said it. The 700 girls responded with one voice, "e maise" (sic?) which means, "fine, thank you". Next, we walked back to the Cana Center, ate dinner and watched the movie, "The Song of Bernadette". It was made in the 1930's and it's still very powerful.

July 8th: Immaculée headed out to the Divine Mercy plaza by the church before breakfast so I tag along. We talk about the condescension of God; how God has such humility that he made himself humble before his creature – man. Despite God's incomprehensibility, He makes himself approachable. God is always reaching out for us. We talked about the 12 step process. She attended an open meeting of AA and was amazed at the willingness of people to describe their own sinfulness. She described the process as "so pure". I told her that I tried to make the February retreat at the Wilson House in Vermont each year. I'd love to see her ministry include participation in AA retreats. Members would be most open to her inspiring message. I didn't want to stop our conversation– it was rich and consoling - but it was past time for breakfast so I reluctantly suggested we head back. After breakfast we went off to the Shrine and met with Fr. Paul, the rector and a Pallatine priest. The Pallatine Fathers were invited to Rwanda in 1973 by the local bishop. It's amazing to think about how the Church of Poland and the Church of Rwanda are "joined at the hip". I told Fr. Leszek that the meals at the Cana Center were like the ones my mother-in-law, Viola, prepared. Many times during the trip I thought of how much Diane would have loved the people of Rwanda – open, loving, joyful – just like her. Today, there are 7 religious orders with various charisms connected to the Shrine. Fr. Paul gave an excellent summary of the history of Marian apparitions and a description of the financial needs of the Shrine. Next, we met with the visionary, Anathalie, for about 2 hours. With Immaculée translating, each of us introduced ourselves.

I told her I wanted to understand Our Lady of Kibeho in light of her love of the gift of life and to learn her messages that oppose the tragedy of abortion – a tragedy victimizing millions of children and their families each year in the United States. I asked, “what is your mission, your vocation?” She said that Our Lady had told her to remain at Kibeho and to give witness about her apparitions. Anathalie said that she would remain in Kibeho unless Our Lady directed her to leave. I asked, “What are the consequences of the world’s rebellion against God.” She said that we are falling into the abyss. I understand that to mean that the wars, the economic turmoil, the moral degradation – abortion being a prime example – we now experience are all parts of the abyss we have fallen into.

July 9th: We rose early to go to the 6:30 AM Mass at the Shrine that the high school students attend. I was invited to concelebrate the Mass and to sign the Shrine log in that role. Fr. Paul was very welcoming. Immaculée told us that Fr. Paul speaks excellent Kinyarwanda. He makes effective use of traditional proverbs in his homilies. The young ladies from the high school sang and danced. Amy, Immaculée and Kara joined in the dancing. I stuck to taking videos. A man in a uniform stood in front of the congregation and seemed to be directing the responses. It took me a while to figure out that he wasn’t official! He has a mental disability. I had the privilege of distributing communion during Mass. Later, we returned to the Cana Center for breakfast and then returned by foot to the Shrine and beyond it, up the hill to the Church of the Parish of Kibeho. On April 14, 1994, 5000 people were in the church taking sanctuary from the killers. But the killers violated the church and murdered those inside. We later learned that the visionary, Agnes, was one of those inside and one of the very few to escape. On the left side of the road to the church there’s a low slung shed. It look like one of those chicken sheds you see on the eastern shore of Maryland. The gate to the fence around the shed was locked but we could see that on tables inside there were many, many skulls and bones. It’s a memorial to those who died there.

On the side of the church there were large, circular areas of blue paint. These marked the places where the killers had broken through the walls to get at their victims. Further up the hill is a school for blind children. I took a series of video clips as we walked through the school. About the time the school opened in this past January, the water supply equipment failed. It was supposed to take 3 weeks to fix the problem but it actually took 6 months. During that time, 8 people worked all day each day carrying water from the valley below up to the school. A Polish Order of Nuns operates the school. The Order was founded by a blind woman. Their charism is teaching the blind and they do it with great joy. After lunch back at the Cana Center, Immaculée Uwanyiligura, Esperance, Fr. Leszek and I went to look at land that the two ladies wanted to buy. It’s a lovely dome of grass just down the hill from Immaculée’s plot. It has wonderful views that include the Shrine. We returned to the plaza of Divine Mercy and said the chaplet, then headed back to the Shrine once more; this time by Fr. Leszek’s SUV. Down the hill from the Shrine is a small pipe protruding from its base with water trickling out. It’s called the Spring of Mary. We hung around the spring for a while, talking and taking pictures. I got nervous as the Sun went down. The trail going up was steep and it could be dangerous without sufficient light. We began the trek saying a rosary and stopping at the plaques of the mysteries of Our Lady of Sorrows along the way. It got darker and I stumbled more. Just as darkness completely enveloped us we came to the top of the trail behind the high school. The girls must have wondered what we were doing traipsing across their courtyard in the dark. Back at Cana Center after dinner we watched the 1952 film, Our Lady of Fatima. I vaguely remember seeing it when I was 11 or 12.

July 10th: We said goodbye to Immaculée Uwanyiligura and Esperance who were going to a wedding in Kigali. Then we headed off “ostensibly” to see the National Cultural Museum in Butare. When we reached Butare, Immaculée grabbed Fr. Leszek’s cell phone and made a call. Then she called out to passers-by asking if they knew where the visionary Agnes lives!

We turned off the paved road on to a dirt path and then a narrower dirt path. As we crept along, Immaculée heard a familiar voice. We stopped, hopped out and were greeted by Agnes. Immaculée hadn't shared her plan with Fr. Leszek. She didn't want to "worry" him with the many contingencies involved – like trying to figure out how to get to Agnes' home without an address – just her name! She lives in Butare and has 3 children: the youngest is a boy less than a year old. We spoke to her through Immaculée for about an hour and a half and she allowed us to film the conversation. I asked about the consequences of the world rebelling against God. She told us that Jesus revealed that the victims of abortion are crying out to him for justice and that if his justice prevailed, mankind would be destroyed. He said that people need to pray and suffer for him so that his mercy will withhold his justice. Back at Cana Center in the afternoon, Fr. Leszek celebrated Mass for a troop of singers who came to perform for us. I concelebrated the Mass and at the beginning, I blessed the statue of Our Lady of Kibeho that I was bringing back to St. Patrick's. After dinner we returned to the Shrine once more for prayer.

July 11th: I was the celebrant at 7:45 AM Mass. We ate, completed packing and headed off to Immaculée's village, Mataba. I didn't know what to expect but I didn't expect the dark aura that seemed to hang over it. As we arrived, there seemed to be an attitude from those who stood with their hands folded across their chests of "what is she doing here with these people?" It reminded me of the scene in Matthew's Gospel when Jesus comes upon two men possessed by demons. One of the demons says, "Son of God what have you to do with us? Have you come to torment us?" Our visit must be a reminder to the villagers that they failed Immaculée's family. This family that had done so much for so many was brutally torn to shreds by "friends and neighbors" – the father, the mother and two brothers were murdered. And only through God's grace did Immaculée survive. We walked through the family home that's being rebuilt just as it was. We pilgrims said that we hoped it would be used as a memorial to the family and to those who died in the genocide.

Immaculée approached several of the villagers. She had her picture taken with two men who had spent 12 years in prison for their roles in the tragedy. She reached out to her neighbors with friendship and forgiveness. However, there was a sense that it was hard for them to reach back. As we drove from Mataba toward Kigali we said the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and the 4 mysteries of the Rosary. It seemed we were praying to lift the cloak of desolation that hung over the village and the residual of that cloak we carried off with us. It was a vivid illustration of how evil operates. It lures and seduces us. Then it traps and enslaves us. Then it shames and mocks us. It whispers that there is no way out. It encourages us to embrace despair. That's the abyss Anathalie pointed out. It seemed that's what the people of Mataba are experiencing. When Immaculée offers a hand to help them out of the abyss, it's difficult to grasp it. It's difficult to believe that one who has lost so much can reach out in forgiveness to those who were the agents of evil. In America, there's a sense of falling into the abyss along with a sense of denial. We want to be constantly entertained. We want others to do the work to solve the country's problems. We want to live our lives according to our appetites rather than by what God wants. And we fall deeper and deeper into the abyss. We sacrifice 1.2 million children a year on the altar of our false gods.

July 12th: I was the celebrant at 8 AM Mass. In the homily, I reflected on our experience in Mataba and I prayed that each of us would be true apostles bringing the message of Our Lady of Kibeho to our part of the world. After breakfast, we visited the Genocide Memorial. It's heavily guarded and there's tight security. Later we learned that as late as 2007 it was attacked when a grenade was thrown into the courtyard. We then drove back to the "Foyer de Charite" for lunch. Fr. Leszek and Immaculée were kind enough to record a video message for me to take back to the people of St. Patrick's in White Haven. Now it was time to finish packing and head to the airport for the trip back to the US. With the help of Fr. Leszek and Brother Luke I was able to purchase that exact replica of the statue of Our Lady of Kibeho at the gift shop near the Shrine. It's very beautiful and – thankfully – very light, just 30 lbs in the protective packing. I brought it back, checked as luggage. The people of St. Patrick's have a deep devotion to Our Lady and they're delighted to have this beautiful image of her.

Fr. John McHale

Hail, Holy Queen!

It was through the “Hail, Holy Queen” prayer that my relationship with Mary quietly moved from my head to my heart. Before, I knew Our Lady as the Mother of Jesus. Mary, the *theotokos*, or Mother of God. Mary, Queen of heaven, of the angels, of the saints.

When I started meditating on the exquisite words of “Hail, Holy Queen”, I began to feel the tenderness that Mary felt *for me*. The words of the prayer, in their intensity and passion, almost sound like a poem. Three words have revealed Mary to me in a most beautiful way:

(1) **Tears** – Never before had I considered bringing my tears to Mary. And, yet, this prayer speaks of our cry, mourning and weeping. “Our valley of tears” does not describe a couple of tears falling down our face. Our valley of tears speaks of those moments when our bodies shake with the sorrow in our souls.

Could it be that our heavenly mother waits for me with open arms like those of my own mom? Can I really ask her to wrap me in her bright blue cloak, holding me oh so close to her? Yes! Actually, she not only embraces my tears, she also weeps with me.

(2) **Sweetness** – When praying about what Mary’s sweetness is like, I keep coming back to a childlike sweetness. I think of my daughter, who is three and could be made of candy, she is so sweet. Every day, she looks at me with these eyes full of wonder and a heart full of love. Her little naïve acts of kindness ... her full-on gusto for life is the epitome of sweetness to me. To me, Mary’s sweetness is somehow like the pure sweetness I see in my daughter.

(3) **Mercy** – There exists a beautiful mystery in Mary’s mercy. After all, Mary does not need to forgive us, and we don’t need to ask for her mercy, right? A look at Mary as Our Lady of Recovery answers that question. Under her mantle, she protects us with her mercy – the addicts, the alcoholics, the sick in heart, mind and body. She intercedes to her Son on our behalf whether we realize that we need to beg for mercy.

I think, how many times did Mary intercede to allow me to survive a brush with death? Another incident that should have been my rock bottom? I never asked her for mercy; yet I do believe she interceded on my behalf more than once.

Our tears. Her sweetness. Her mercy. This prayer, “Hail, Holy Queen”, was written a thousand years ago by a severely crippled and blind monk, Blessed Hermann, who was abandoned by his parents at age seven in present-day Germany. Out of a deprived and deformed man came this prayer echoed millions of times throughout the world and the centuries. What an incredibly close relationship he must have had with Mary!

Whether suffering in or out of the rooms, I pray that all of God’s children find Mary in their hearts, bring their tears to her, bask in the glow of her sweetness and take refuge in her mercy.

Hail, Holy Queen!

*Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of **mercy***

*Hail, our life, our **sweetness**, and our hope.*

*To you do we **cry**, poor banished children of Eve*

*To you do we send our sighs, mourning and **weeping**
In this **valley of tears**.*

Turn then, most gracious advocate,

*Thine eyes of **mercy** towards us*

And, after this, our exile

Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus

*O **clement**, O loving, O **sweet**, Virgin Mary!*

Pray for us, holy Mother of God,

That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

Amen.

Christina B

Our Blessed Mother Mary**Mark B - Falls Church VA Calix**

One of the truths that keeps my faith strong and sustains me (providing a powerful tonic against taking that drink) is the knowledge that many events in the New Testament were foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Of course, the events in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection are prefigured in the Old Testament. However, the critical role that Mary serves in our salvation is also heralded in many ways. Some of these, such as her role as the New Eve, seem apparent. After all, it only seems logical that as Christ is the second Adam, so Mary would be the second Eve. Other such glimmers of her role are subtler but compelling nevertheless.

One such event involving Our Lady, rich in meaning and profoundly mirroring earlier events in the Old Testament, is the Visitation. Recall that upon Mary’s appearance to Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb (John the Baptist) leaps for joy at the sound of Mary’s voice. This event is vividly described in Chapter 1 of the Gospel of Luke:

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leapt in her womb . . .

The event is presaged in the Old Testament in 2 Samuel, Chapter 6:

David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the City of David amid festivities. As soon as the bearers of the ark of the Lord had advanced six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. Then David danced before the Lord with abandon . . .

What is occurring at the visitation? John is dancing (in Elizabeth's womb) before the ark (Mary) just as David danced before the ark. This is a truly wonderful and amazing parallel!

There are many other wonderful occurrences connecting these two biblical events but time and space prevent us from delving deeper. Suffice it to say that Mary, our mother, is truly the ark of God. Having a deeper understanding of this ancient truth has greatly aided me in understanding certain other teachings such as her Assumption and perpetual virginity.

Let us never forget that we always have access to Mary and that she will always pray for us if we ask her. We have a powerful ally in our battles against temptation, starting with the idolatry of alcohol, which for me had become an all-consuming false god. Enjoy your spring, and the month of May; Mary's month. Mary is our powerful and spiritual mother, interceding for us and leading us to her Son. May God continue to bless and protect our wonderful Calix group. Hail Mary, pray for us!

"Blessed Humility: Mother Mary"

For those of us familiar with the 12-Steps, we are no strangers to the importance of the virtue *humility*. In the center of the steps we see step 7 state, "Humbly ask Him to Remove Our Shortcomings." While this is the only step in which the word humility is directly used, we know that all the steps require this virtue (morally good habit) on some level. The Gospel reading for April 12, 2018 reminded me of this, and I was stirred to put this into words and share it. Upon my novitiate level examination of it, I noticed how "Blessed" our Queen Mother Mary really is. On a basic level she is similar to the rest of us in our natural humanity, but on a higher level, she clearly is not. Take a look at this passage with me for a moment: Gospel [Lk 1:26-38](#)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph,

of the house of David,
and the virgin's name was Mary.
And coming to her, he said,
"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."
But she was greatly troubled at what was said
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
Then the angel said to her,
"Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.
Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.
He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his Kingdom there will be no end."
But Mary said to the angel,
"How can this be,
since I have no relations with a man?"
And the angel said to her in reply,
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,
has also conceived a son in her old age,
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God."
Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word."
Then the angel departed from her.

How would we react if an angel of God appeared to us? Like Mary, I think we would be rather "troubled" also? We might "ponder" briefly as well in our utter amazement, shock, perhaps unbelief? After the angel tells her not to be afraid and explains to her the future events that will take place, Mary on a scientific level, and a rather human one at that, questions how it would be possible for her to give birth when she has never had relations with a man? That is a valid question no doubt! Most of us would have logically asked the same question, "if" our faith in the extraordinary was strong enough to begin with. Would we have thought we were dreaming, seeing a mirage, hallucinating? Let's give ourselves the benefit of the doubt shall we, and act as if we could have gotten this far?

The angel Gabriel is very persuasive. He explains the “super” natural manner in which this new child shall come into being, but most likely being aware of her humanity, he goes on to cunningly give her a current realistic truth in addition to it, to prove that nothing is impossible with God (namely, explaining how her old/barren cousin will also be conceiving). What is truly amazing, and beyond the natural inclinations of our “humanness” is what comes after.

For those of us who are alcoholic, and even for most people without the disease, we would most likely need much more “convincing” from the angel. Why? The answer could be rather simple: in our prideful instinct as human beings, we cling tight to our own agendas, and we want nothing to do with anything that takes us away from what we mistakenly believe to be our path to personal Happiness. Our *pride* is our first natural reaction to a potential discomfort, not humility. Tell any using alcohol they don’t need that next drink to be happy and how far will that get you?

Look at Mary’s response however, her humility is immediately forthcoming, and she looks not at her own agenda (to get married to Joseph, be respected in the community, have children, and live happily ever after), but she willingly accepts the Will of Almighty God! It doesn’t take God Himself to stand before her, only the angel’s “word.” Could our faith ever be this strong? I think at some point in our lives, like the saints before us and those to be that are among us, we could get close. This is why Mary is the perfect role model for us. She exemplifies on a supernatural level, the truth that Humility is THE essential virtue for Happiness and Salvation.

The greatness of Mary when the angel of the Lord appeared to her is reminiscent of Mt 18:3-4 when her son tells us, “Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” WOW! Have we “Turned” from our own pride and agendas to accept the Will of God? For whoever humbles himself will be exalted, and whoever exalts himself will be humbled. Mary chose to humble herself for the sake all of humanity, and that is why she is the most exalted of all us mere mortals.

Kyle McDonald

“I was elected President of our "A New Hope" unit, and I look forward to getting it back on track with guidance from the Holy Spirit.”

Our Blessed Mother Mary

Mary is so misunderstood, not only by people outside of the Church, but Catholics too. How often have you heard: “I don’t pray to Mary, I go directly to Jesus.” This comment despite Jesus saying while dying on the Cross, Woman here is your son (John) and to John the disciple saying “here is your mother.” Once you understand how Jesus felt about his Mother and the power he bestowed on her, you start to change your tune. Aren’t we all trying to be disciples of Christ? So by his own words, doesn’t that make Mary our Mother? We don’t pray to Mary, but we ask Mary to please intercede for us to Jesus and the Father. It is like we don’t have the correct words to say to the Father exactly, but we know Mary will know what to say and we plead for our assistance.

Mary knows our pain. Can you imagine what it must have felt like to lose your child for 3 days in a large city knowing that this was the Son of God? No I can’t imagine, but I am sure the pain, confusion, and a number of other emotions, must have been unbearable. She probably felt emotions she had never had before. Just like when we put down our drug of choice and started to feel emotions for the first time in a long time.

What about Mary’s pain when Jesus was nailed to the cross, knowing full well that He was the Son of God. How could anyone handle such pain? For those that have lost a child, you might have a taste of what that pain was like. My heart filled prayers go out to you.

And to close with the miracles of the children of Medjugorje, the dancing sun and the Rosary. All gifts to us, that without Mary would not be possible.

- Amen

Michael Kern

Clevelanders visit Calix in London

Paul and I are members of the Cleveland, Ohio Calix Unit. We had the blessed opportunity to travel to Europe recently. While we were in London we attended the weekly Calix meeting on Thursday, March 15, 2018. I had been in touch with the London contact person, Adrian D, by email to verify the location and time. We arrived at The Church of Our Lady, St. John of the Wood, by taxi, it was nighttime, therefore dark outside, and as we exited the car,

Adrian was waiting for us, near the entrance, greeting us by name. We were so touched that he took the time to greet and welcome us even before we entered the church. As we found out, that was just one of many thoughtful considerations their unit offered us as we joined them.

The format that evening was: Doors open at 6:30, for visiting and fellowship. Mass was celebrated by their Chaplain, Fr Jeff, at 7:00. Fr. Jeff is from the US—Florida actually! Then the meeting followed in a nearby room with tea, coffee and biscuits. In case you don't know, biscuits really mean cookies! Fr. Jeff began the meeting by speaking about the Scripture readings and their impact and importance in our lives, particularly as people in recovery. When he finished, each member was invited to comment, with a 3 minute limit, which was enforced!!!

As they introduced themselves, they would mention whether they were in A.A, as well as mentioning their religious affiliation. That evening, there were about 15 people total, 14 were Catholic, and one woman introduced herself as Christian. All were members of Alcoholics Anonymous, including some long-time sobriety and some very new members. It was very nice to be part of that discussion. Fr Jeff stayed for the entire meeting and therefore was available for members to ask him questions about our faith, during their comments. Everyone welcomed Paul and me very warmly. We had a chance to talk afterwards with some of the members who were able to stay around a bit longer. There were some laughs and fellowship and some discussion of what happens in Cleveland Calix! As we were all heading home, Paul and I mentioned we would be getting a taxi, and someone suggested we ask Clive for a ride in his taxi. Clive is a London Calix member, who happens to be a taxi driver! That worked out perfectly. We continued our spiritual fellowship and conversation all the way back to our flat near Vauxhall Bridge.

While we were in Europe, we had such a powerful sense of the “goodness of humanity,” and of the presence and history of the Church. We encountered kindness and helpfulness every day we were there. At the Calix meeting, we were additionally blessed by the bond that unites Calix members so profoundly, our recovery from alcoholism which, through God's grace, has lead us to an amazing life of purpose and usefulness within the loving and merciful arms of our Lord and His Church on earth. Thank you,

Jane Bennett

Falls Church VA Calix Unit

Contact: Mark B. 301-461-4643

We're getting closer to completing our group reading of *A 12-Step Approach to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* written by Jim Harbaugh, S.J. We continue to discuss the readings in light of our own recovery.

Our group size is holding steady at 4-6 attendees. We've added a new part to our meeting during which we invite attendees to offer any prayer requests. We then recite a Hail Mary for our intentions.

As always, 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!

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, July – August 2018:

The theme is: **Improving our conscious contact with God**

As we prepare for the Annual Calix Retreat, let's reflect on what we do and what we need to do in the future and then write an article about improving our conscious contact with God

Please submit articles and Calix Unit updates by June 15th to Fr. McHale:
at buzzmch@hotmail.com

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