



# the Chalice

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## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN** By Gaylen E.

Greetings, and I hope you and your loved ones are enjoying the blessings of this new year, as well as safely weathering the arctic plunge in temperatures across much of the nation. How appropriate that the theme of this issue of the Chalice is Steps 1 & 2. This weather reminds me that I am powerless over much more than

alcohol and drugs. And that I can put my faith and trust in our Lord to shelter me in the warmth and comfort of his relentlessly enduring love. As my friend Jane B often reminds me, "We are powerless over God's love for us!"

Mark your calendars. The dates and location for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Calix Society National Retreat have been secured. This year's retreat will be held in Washington, D.C. on August 2-4 at the Washington Retreat House. Housing and meals will be provided at the Retreat House. The theme for this year's retreat is "I Shall Take the Chalice of Salvation", taken from Psalm 116.

I'm told that this is very near such national Catholic treasures as the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America and the Saint John Paul II Shrine. If you have any questions about the retreat, please direct your queries to Bruce bgnatowski@yahoo.com, who is leading the local retreat committee this year. (Thanks, Bruce!)

Also, I wrote in the last edition of the Chalice about the Board of Directors' efforts at considering the words that make up our Calix Credo. The Board continues to work on this topic, and we hope to be able to share the outcome in the next edition of the Chalice. We have been entrusting our efforts to the aid of the Holy Spirit, and I ask that you pray for our endeavor too. In the meantime, I wanted to share that one of the outcomes of this work has been the "unearthing" of invaluable pieces of Calix history. We will be sharing some of this history in the Chalice, and this edition of the Chalice begins with a letter from Pope Paul VI, dated May 11, 1974. It's amazing to think about what Calix was like when this letter was written.

May Jesus continue to look upon you with eyes of divine pleasure.

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**The Power Greater Than Ourselves, by Fr. Doug McKay, Calix Chaplain**

An A.A. man once asked me, “What is the most important step?”

“The first step?” I answered.

“No,” he said, “The door step!”

Truly, the addict needs to show up at meetings and admit powerlessness over addiction and that his life is not only unmanageable but unbearable as well. Also, one should realize that God himself is the One who empowers addicts to show up at A.A., N.A., and all other 12-Step programs. As Catholics we already came to believe in Jesus Christ, the Power greater than ourselves, who restores us to Himself. He is the Vine, we are the branches. Apart from Him we can do nothing, and nothing means nothing. He is the One, there is no other, who sets us free from our powerlessness over alcohol, other drugs, and all other addictions. He alone empowers us to conquer all addictions, once we act on His power.

Our First Calix Founder, William J. Montroy, gives his testimony about his own powerlessness over alcohol and about his moment of truth. His defining moment to conquer his alcoholic addiction came through Earl Rooney who was working the 12th Step. It was a cold winter night, after Montroy’s ‘Black Out’ from alcohol, that Rooney confronted this almost hopeless and suicidal man with his knowledge of how he himself stopped drinking. His new found friend speaks about the Power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Holy Communion. He goes on to say to his addicted new friend, “...what really kept me going—was that I humbly and blindly accepted Jesus Christ...”

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And nothing  
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Suddenly, hearing the Holy Name, *Jesus Christ*, Montroy receives his moment of truth with a powerful desire to stop drinking. He believed that the Lord Himself could and would heal and restore him. By acting on grace infusions, he shows up at Church and A.A. meetings to deepen his sobriety, sanity, and sanctity. Empowered by Christ and acting on his faith this recovering alcoholic restores his Catholic life, never drinks again, and goes on to become the Father of our Calix Society to proclaim Jesus Christ, the Power greater than ourselves.

And it was the same Truth, Jesus Christ, who set Venerable Matt Talbot, our Calix patron, free from his alcohol addiction. His defining moment came in 1884 when friends refused to buy him a drink. Crushed in spirit, and perhaps even suicidal, he goes to a nearby bridge and ponders his powerless and unmanageable life. There, he comes to believe in the Power greater than himself. Acting on his faith, that same day, he goes to confession, takes the pledge from his confessor, and becomes a daily communicant. Instead of attending A.A. meetings, which weren’t around at the time, he attends church meetings, becomes a Secular Franciscan, and joins the Pioneers. Never to drink again.

Someday soon, we hope and pray, that our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church will canonize this mystic to become Saint Matt Talbot, patron of addicts, because of his heroic faith.

## The Power Greater Than Ourselves, by Fr. Doug McKay (Continued)

However, we must always remember that faith isn't magical. It doesn't act on us like 'abracadabra' or 'presto'. No, like Bill and Matt, we must act upon it! "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." Matthew 7:21. And this 'will of the Father' is that we humbly believe and act upon *the Power*, there is no other, greater than ourselves. Then and only then, can we conquer all things in Him who strengthens us, even our addictions.

There is a story about a poor man who subscribed to different magazines about rich and famous people. Daily, he would dream about living a wealthy and extravagant life. Then one day, while digging on his land, the dreamer struck a gushing oil well. Becoming wealthy on the spot, he bought tuxedos, cigars, horses, and a convertible Cadillac. He just couldn't wait to go through the town and show himself off in front of his friends.

Finally, he got his sunny day in his convertible Cadillac. Wearing a tux and puffing a cigar, he stood up on the seat behind the wheel and traveled through the town waving to his friends without watching the road. Safely though he journeyed, without any accidents, because a team of horses pulled the vehicle in the sight of laughing bystanders. For whatever reason, this poor man never realized that a hundred horse power was under the car's hood ready and rearing to go at the turn of a key.

"How dumb!" the spectators gossiped.

Now—let it be known, let it be written—how dumber we are than that poor dreamer and powerless when we don't turn our hearts towards Jesus Christ and believe and act on *the Power greater than ourselves*.

*Then and only  
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## From the Treasurer, Ken G.

It's been a while since I've communicated with the Society. Entering 2019, we are on a good financial footing, and your annual membership dues go a long way to insure that we stay on that good footing. We continue to be asked for literature for prisons and prospective units that we often provide at no cost. It's allowed us to upgrade our website and provide for the day-to-day business of the society. That said, we currently have almost 500 individuals on our rolls and less than half are current on their dues. I will be sending out reminders to all those whose membership has lapsed and encourage them to get current.

I would also like to resume the practice of sending out membership cards. To do that I need good mailing addresses for our members. For those who registered and/or renew online, you will receive an email asking you for your mailing information. Please follow the instructions and reply as soon as possible.

Also, just a reminder to check out the store on the website, especially the t- and polo shirts as we get ready for our annual retreat in August. Apparel sales will help offset some of the expenses of putting on the retreat!

## Meditations on Steps 1 and 2 (compiled by Chris B.)

“Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him” (Mark 11:23)

“And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”  
(2 Cor 12:7-10)

“The everlasting God has, in His wisdom, foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His inmost heart. This cross He now sends you He has considered with His all-knowing eyes, understood with His divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms and weighed with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His Holy Name, anointed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the all-merciful love of God.” - St. Francis de Sales

“I do not know what will happen to me; I only know one thing for certain, that the Lord will never fall short of his promises.”  
- Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

“Not in the amount of money, not in the pride of power, not in the height of glory is victory gained, but the Lord freely gives his help to those who seek him through excessive affliction. Such was Paul, who made his afflictions his boast. Therefore he was able to say, ‘When I am weak, then I am strong.’ Do you see where affliction leads you? To hope that does not disappoint.” - St. Basil the Great

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*

“God never compels anyone by necessity or force but rather desires everyone to be saved. He does not impose any necessity on anyone as the apostle Paul says: ‘He desires everyone to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.’ So how is it that not everyone is saved when God wants everyone to be? The answer is that not everyone chooses to follow His will, and God does not force anyone to do so.” - St. John Chrysostom

“This search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, ‘an upright heart,’ as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God.” - Catechism of the Catholic Church, 30

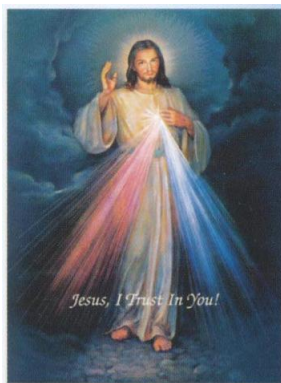
## Calix Prayers

At the weekly Calix meetings in Leesburg, VA, we “set the stage” for the meeting by putting up a Calix sign outside the door, a framed picture of Jesus’ Divine Mercy picture, a Calix banner – “I Thirst” – and a statue of Matt Talbot.

We begin the meeting with the recitation of the Divine Mercy chaplet. Extra rosaries and pamphlets to help newcomers (and regulars!) follow the prayers of the chaplet are placed on the coffee tables.

We then recite the 12 Steps of AA, which are hanging on the wall. The Calix Credo is read, and then the meeting shares begin.

The meeting closes with the group forming a circle, joining hands, and reciting the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, St. Michael prayer, the Miraculous Medal prayer, and the words “Standing By, Standing Ready, Standing Tall!” which was introduced to us by a previous spiritual director.



### Miraculous Medal Prayer

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. Amen.

### Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

### Closing Prayer of Divine Mercy Chaplet

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.

## A Piece of Calix History...

Did you know that, in 1974, to celebrate Calix' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, members of the Calix Society took a pilgrimage to Rome? During that trip, they were incredibly blessed to have an audience with Pope Paul VI, who spoke directly to them. Below are the words of congratulations and encouragement spoken from the Holy Father to our beloved Calix Society.



### **ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CALIX SOCIETY** *Saturday, 11 May 1974*

We are happy to greet members of the Calix Society on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their foundation. As we welcome you on your pilgrimage to the See of Peter, we express our appreciation of your earnest commitment to working for the elimination of alcoholic abuse, including alcoholism itself.

In our apostolic ministry we are deeply aware of the gravity of this problem and how it is closely linked to the overall problem of drug abuse. We see the disastrous effects that these disorders have on so many people throughout the world: the effects on the individual, on families, on communities.

We know moreover the effects on society as a whole.

We see how widespread alcoholic abuse is and how it causes great human suffering, anguish and deterioration - even death. It produces marked disorientation of the whole person, especially when accompanied by grave lack of personal responsibility and by serious sin. To be properly confronted, alcoholic abuse and, in particular, alcoholism must be fully understood with all their various implications: physical, psychological, moral and religious. In this way, rehabilitation can be effectively undertaken. We know that this rehabilitation of those in need calls for fraternal interest and professional help on the part of others, together with strict personal discipline and repeated and sustained effort.

We are greatly pleased, therefore, to express our sincere and lively commendation of the valued efforts that are being made by many through the application of the appropriate natural means. We are even more pleased when efforts, like your own, take into account supernatural reality and admit the impact that must come from Christian principles and from the exercise of the Catholic faith. In recognizing a dimension-beyond natural forces-needed for the cure of alcoholism and for the Christian reconciliation of persons afflicted thereby, you are in effect finding yet another application of the broad and time-proven principle enunciated by Saint Thomas- a principle expressing an immutable relationship between nature and grace: *gratia perficit naturam* (Cfr. S. TH. I, q. 1. a. 8 ad 2).

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**A Piece of Calix History... (Continued)**

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI  
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CALIX SOCIETY**  
*Saturday, 11 May 1974*

We rejoice to see how many people esteem recourse to a higher power in overcoming the problems related to alcoholic abuse. And worthy of special mention is the fact that you identify this higher power as the supernatural grace of Jesus Christ, the healing power of his word and of his sacraments. In this latter regard we are happy to encourage you to draw special attention to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the Eucharist. We are confident moreover that your efforts, motivated as they are by authentic Christian concern for your fellowmen in need, will be effective in helping them to undergo the genuine *metanoia* of true renewal and reconciliation.

We express our double insistence on the need of taking into account both nature and grace for the benefit of the unified whole which is the new man in Jesus Christ.

You have chosen to look upon Matt Talbot as an admirable exemplar of discipline and supernatural virtue. It is our hope that his success will encourage countless men and women throughout the world to realize the need for conversion, the possibility of real rehabilitation, the serenity of Christian reconciliation, and the peace and joy of helping others to overcome abuses, disorders and sin.

May your efforts and those of all men endeavouring to assist in such an important work be blessed by God, "in whom we live and move and have our being" (Cfr. Act. 17, 28), and without whose help we are incapable of supernatural conversion.

And with the expression of our hope goes our Apostolic Blessing.

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**Editor’s Note**

- **Unit Prayers:** Does your unit have special prayers that you open or close with during the Calix meeting?
- **Unit Updates:** Have there been changes in your unit that you’d like to share?

**> Do You Want to Write for the Chalice?**

For 2019, our theme for Chalice submissions is the Steps and how your Catholic faith influences your recovery program. Please send submissions to [christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com](mailto:christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com)

Edition	Topic	Deadline for Submission
March/April	Step 3	March 1
May/June	Steps 4, 5, 6 & 7	May 1
July/August	Steps 8 & 9	July 1
September/October	Step 10	September 1
November/December	Steps 11 & 12	November 1

**> Have Something To Say, Share or Discuss?**

If so, please contact Chris B at [christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com](mailto:christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com)

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