



# the Chalice

Volume 48

November – December 2019

Issue No. 6



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Gaylen E.

Hello again. As I write this, I am sitting at home recovering from a cold, and listening to “A Love Supreme” by John Coltrane. I am a music fan, partial to jazz in general, and Coltrane in particular. John Coltrane was a deeply spiritual man, and legend has it that he felt that if he learned to play his sax well enough, he would be able to talk to God. His album, “A Love Supreme”, was recorded in one session in

1964, and was described as follows: “(It was) a spiritual declaration that his musical devotion was now intertwined with his faith in God. In many ways, the album mirrors Coltrane’s spiritual quest that grew out of his personal troubles, including a long struggle with drug and alcohol addiction.”

Now jazz may not be your cup of tea, but the story of deliverance from our personal hell of struggles with alcoholism and addiction, and salvation by a spiritual awakening through a journey of faith in a *living*, loving, and all-powerful God, is a tune that we are all familiar with. Which brings me to Thanksgiving, and the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Steps.

My first prayer in recovery (that didn’t ask God for help) popped out of my mouth involuntarily, in just two words – “Thank you”. Looking back, it was caused by a glimpse of where I had come from, and how far I had come. And the clear and certain understanding that this million-mile journey was the result of just 12 Steps and the hand of God. I came to believe that His Love, Mercy and Grace took me where I could never have gone on my own, or by the aid of mere human power alone.

I have since learned many ways to pray, and to walk closer to God. As Catholics, we are rich in our prayer traditions. We raise our hearts to God in the celebration of the Liturgy, reception of the Sacraments, and personal prayer and meditations. As Catholics in recovery, we walk up the 12 Steps and knock on God’s door. And He always answers.

I was also taught that gratitude is an action word. And that the best response to God’s love for us is to return His love to Him and share His love with our neighbors. It’s what we are called to do, as children of God, as recovering alcoholics and addicts, and as Catholics.

### In This Issue

page

President’s Column 1

Calix Prayer Books – Available for Free 3

“The Most Holy Rosary” by Fr. McKay 4

“The Importance of Faith in Knowing God’s Will For Me” by Mike M. 6

“The Power to Carry That Out” by Chris B. 8

A New Year – A New Theme for the Chalice 9

How Can We Inspire and Encourage Each Other? 10

Prayer Requests 12

*Continued on next page*

**President's Column, by Gaylen E. (Continued)**

As Calix members, we apply our Catholic faith to our 12 Step programs. We help carry Christ's message of hope to the still sick and suffering. We do this through our participation in our 12 Step fellowships and our Church community. And we do this through participation in the Sacraments and our Calix fellowship. And as in our prayer life, we always strive to do this better.

As a Society, Calix – in particular, the Board of Directors – is committed to improving our effectiveness in developing into the most relevant resource possible for those affected by alcoholism and addiction, and in need our help and support. The Board has spent much time recently in developing our organizational structure to improve our ability to respond to these needs. We have developed a series of committees to increase our effectiveness in specific areas. However, this model can only work through the active participation of individual members.

*We invite you to review these committees, with an eye towards where you may see an opportunity to join us in our common efforts to respond to God's love by helping those alcoholics and addicts in need, and by helping us all to grow closer to God.*

The Calix International Society Board

This is a group of 14 Calix members that collectively governs the overall direction and goals of our Society. We currently have 10 members and are soliciting qualified nominations/volunteers to fill our 4 open seats.

Communications Committee

This group is responsible for the development and maintenance of our website and content; literature and pamphlets; The Chalice (our bi-monthly newsletter); social media; and coordination of other Society communications.

Membership Committee

This group is responsible for developing all necessary support for new unit requests; support for current units; and support for individual membership requests.

Outreach Committee

This group helps promote the increase in awareness of Calix at the individual, parish, diocesan, and national levels. They serve as the liaison between Calix and other Catholic ministries and 12 Step groups. The Calix Online meeting is a part of this effort.

Retreat Committee

This group helps with ongoing support for the Calix Annual Retreat. They offer help in coordination, content, direction and planning with the local Calix host units.

If you find yourself scratching your head and thinking, "Does Calix really do all of this?" ... the answer in some cases is "No, not yet." This is where we need your help! Our Board is comprised of all volunteers who,

*Please contact  
Volunteer@calixsociety.org  
if you are interested in  
participating –  
even if you're not sure how  
you can help.*

**President’s Column, by Gaylen E. (Continued)**

for the most part, have full-time jobs. We *want* to do all of these activities but, again, need members of our Society to raise their hands and offer their participation.

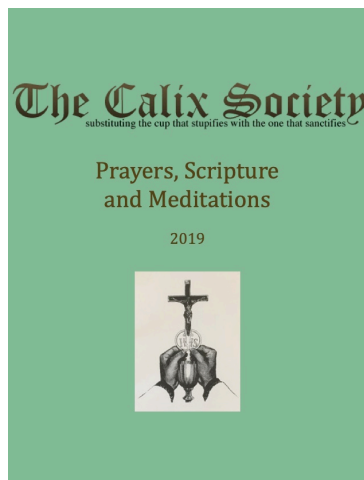
Where might your skills or interests best be applied? Our efforts can only bear fruit through your participation. Whether you have a little or a lot of time to offer, I assure you that your efforts will make a difference. *Please contact Volunteer@calixsociety.org if you are interested in participating in any capacity – even if you’re not sure how you can help.*

“The harvest is plentiful – the laborers are few”. We are all called to action as Catholics and as recovering alcoholics, addicts, and those affected by these diseases. We all owe our personal recovery, in part, to the efforts of the men and women who came before us and answered God’s call to reach out in loving support of those in need.

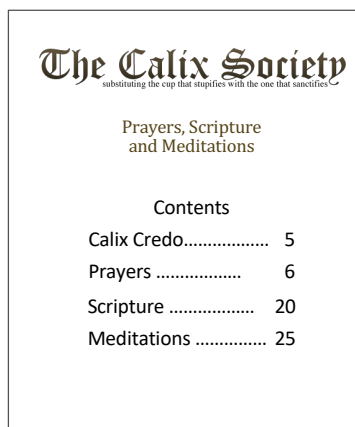
We might not have all been blessed with the musical genius of great artists like John Coltrane. But each of us, in our own way, can all become instruments of God’s peace by offering up our gift of willingness. We are uniquely positioned to offer a helping hand. *We ask that you please consider joining us in responding to God’s call to love.*

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas. May Christ’s Peace be with you all.

**Calix Prayers, Scripture and Meditations Book – Free!**



Look inside ↓



*Contact editor Chris B. at  
christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com  
with your address for a copy.*

**The Most Holy Rosary, by Fr. Doug McKay**

On October 13, 2019, I began writing this article on the Rosary. In 1917—same day, different year—our Blessed Mother appeared for the last time in Fatima, saying, “I am the Lady of the Rosary.... Continue saying the Rosary every day.”

In his Apostolic Letter on the Most Holy Rosary, Pope St. John Paul II proclaimed the year from October 2002 to October 2003 the Year of the Rosary. His intent, of course, was to encourage —like Mary did at Fatima—the faithful to pray the Rosary every day for our contemplative union with God who created us for Himself.

In his document on the Rosary, John Paul quotes Pope Paul VI: “Without contemplation the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas, in violation of the admonition of Christ: ‘In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words’ (Mt 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord’s life...” Easily, one can see here that the words of the Rosary are meant to lead us to ponder the sacred mysteries of the Rosary and then ultimately to bless us with contemplation: our love affair with God.

Therefore, as we come to the 11th and 12th Steps of our Calix recovery program, I came to believe that one of the best ways to improve our conscious contact with God and our spiritual awakening with Him in order to carry out the good news of salvation is to pray and meditate and contemplate the Holy Rosary every day.

However, we must keep in mind the words of Pope Paul VI: “Without contemplation the Rosary is a body without a soul...” In a contemplative Rosary, the sacred words become like soothing music in the background of our minds allowing us to meditate. Pondering the sacred mysteries, more often than not, frees us from worldly distractions and centers us on our ground of being where our lives flow from our beloved Creator. In these deep waters of salvation, we experience peace, joy, and transforming love – making us aware of our conscious contact with God.

*“Without  
contemplation the  
Rosary is a body  
without a soul.”*

Often, after praying my private Rosary, I forget to announce to myself the mysteries. I used to think that I didn’t pray my thumbing beads so well, and that I must go back and announce and pray the mysteries again. Today, after enjoying a contemplative Rosary, I know that by the felt peace, joy, and love that I did pray it very well. No need to go back and pray the mysteries again, but only to be still and relish the fruits of contemplation. The contemplative Rosary always goes beyond words and images to the presence of God Himself who is always beyond words and images.

*Continued on next page*

**The Most Holy Rosary, by Fr. Doug McKay (Continued)**

While Chaplain at Holy Family Home in Philadelphia with the Little Sisters of the Poor, an elderly lady once confided in me, saying, “Father, I just can’t seem to pray my Rosary anymore. All I can do is hold it, but it feels like I’m holding our Blessed Mother’s hand.”

“Wow! You’re a contemplative,” I said.

“What’s that?’ she asked.

“You’re praying beyond words and images.”

“How about that!” she exclaimed.



To hold the Blessed Mother’s hand, I know, is holding the hand of God. Her very mission is to lead us into contemplative prayer, our communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the One True God who is extravagantly in love with us and who desires us to be wholeheartedly in love with Him.

On another day at Holy Family Home, I witnessed a happy and peaceful death of one of our residents. Together with the Little Sisters and family members of our dying resident, we prayed the Rosary around Catherine’s death bed for the repose of her soul. As we started the 4th Glorious Mystery, ‘the Assumption’, our beloved resident stopped breathing, and we stopped praying. One by one, her seven children kissed their mother, whispering loving sentiments. Suddenly, after a space in time, Catherine started breathing again.

“Finish the Rosary,” Mother Vincent said.

Just as we finished, while making the sign of the cross, Catherine—with her holy beads in her faithful hands, took her last two breaths and breathed no more.

As I left Catherine’s deceased body, I headed for the chapel to celebrate our community Mass. At the sacred doors and thinking about my homily, it dawned on me that this day, August 8th, was the feast day of Saint Dominic, who instituted the celebrated Rosary. Odd or God?

Therefore, once again I say, I came to believe that one of the best means to improve our conscious contact with God, our spiritual awareness of Him, and to carry out His message of salvation is to pray, meditate, and contemplate every day, the Most Holy Rosary.

Father Douglas McKay O.F.S.  
Calix Chaplain

## The Importance of Faith in Knowing God's Will For Me, by Mike M.

Step 11 in our respective 12 Step recovery programs – “*Sought through prayer and meditations to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out*”, has become an important action step for me, especially since the 58th Calix Retreat at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Since that time, I've repeatedly realized that when I *seek* out the *Truth* of our Lord's Word, striving to understand it, meditating on it with prayer, and aiming to live it; the closer I am with my conscious contact with God.....and, His contact with me.

Some of the “*seeking*” that I pursue today includes the wonderful presentations and classes that are available to us through the *Institute of Catholic Culture* (ICC). Since the early Spring of this year, Father Sebastian Carnazzo, a PhD scholar in Scripture, has led a weekly class on the New Testament. Last week, he covered the epistles of James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter and Jude. The epistle of James consists of five short, but very enlightening, chapters. In Chapter 1, we are told that God will most certainly give us the *knowledge of His Will*, but we *must* ask for it with *faith*. If we don't ask for it with faith, then we cannot expect God to give us a *solid* answer. And without a solid answer, we are like a wandering wave among the shifting winds.

So what is *faith*? Yes, Hebrews 11:1 defines it. For me, it includes *trust* in the Word of our Lord, in the midst of the unseen and the unknown for my life, while knowing that He will provide for me, if I give up my will and control. As heard in a quote, “*Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.*” When I think of this quote, I'm reminded of Step 1 as the first step of the staircase, and the 12 Steps being the rest of the staircase. While staircases go down, they also go up.

For me, Step 1 was the hardest, by far, in my recovery journey. I wasn't ready to give up control, admitting that I was *powerless* over my loved ones' addictions. Yes, I sure knew that my life and my relationships were unmanageable, but I certainly wasn't powerless. Once I accepted that the disease was stronger than my love, I was able to move on to Step 2 and Step 3, with our Lord leading my way. Today, my Faith also believes that His Word IS the foundation for the teachings of the Catholic Church. And yes, ALL of the teachings. As difficult as this is for me at times, I've come to accept that this is the *Truth*. No longer can I be selective in the teachings, like the days of my past. Nor interpret the *Truth* in a manner that justifies the way that I may want to live my life. This latter is my will, not God's Will. And, my will is not the *Truth*. I've come to understand, and accept, that the *Truth* is the *Truth*. It can never, and will never, be changed. Man with his pride and will, and with the influence of the evil one, has tried before, is trying today and will try again to change the *Truth*. Yet the Trinity prevails – always has and always will. History has proven this, time and time again. And the countless martyrs and saints found and knew His *Truth* – along with our Virgin Mary, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Pio of Pietrelcina, St. Edith Stein, Pope St. John Paul II, St. Teresa of Calcutta and so many more. When I deeply reflect that, I think, “*WHO AM I to doubt and question the Truth, other than my will?*”

*“I've come to  
understand, and accept,  
that the  
Truth is the Truth.”*

*Continued on next page*



**The Importance of Faith in Knowing God's Will For Me, by Mike M.**

In addition to understanding and accepting His Word, I ask (seek) and pray for the *power* to carry it out. But it isn't easy. I'm human, a sinner from Original Sin. But this can't be an '*excuse*' or a pass for me. In addition to God's love, mercy and forgiveness for my sins, He provides me the strength and a gateway for purposeful *change* through His Graces with the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Yes, I'm forgiven, but He wants me to *change*. God gives me the free will to change, but I must be willing to allow Him to lead my life. As noted in the 3rd Step Prayer,

*"Relieve me of the bondage of self, That I may better do Thy Will."*

With Faith and Grace, change is possible. As Mother Teresa wrote, on behalf of our Lord to mankind, in her beautiful prayer, 'I Thirst for You':

*"If you only ask me with Faith,  
my Grace will touch all that needs changing in your life, and  
I will give you the strength to free yourself from sin and  
from all that binds and burdens you, and  
from all that takes you away from me."*

And with our faith, we are called to help our fellow man. We are not meant to live by faith alone. Another "*seeking*" action that I cherish is Eucharistic Adoration. I only recently "*discovered*" the spiritual power of Adoration, and its improving conscious contact with God for me, in the Chapel at Capuchin College last December, 2018. I was moved.

Today, Adoration is a regular part of my prayer and meditation life. And during Adoration, He continues to let me know His presence in my life, helping me to better understand His calling for me. For this, I have tremendous gratitude.

We ALL have a calling in this life. May we discover His calling for us, and may we all have the *Faith, Knowledge and the Power to carry it out*. And may we be blessed to experience His *Spiritual Awakening* in us, to go and help our fellow man.

Mike M.  
Calix member –  
Arlington and Leesburg, VA; York, PA Calix Units

## The Power to Carry That Out, by Chris B.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will and *the power to carry that out.*"

Do you meditate on specific words in the 12 steps? Well, I do. Probably obsessively. The power to carry that out. Power. I think to myself – do we really need power to carry out His will? Does the word “power” incorporate words like

strength ..... desire ..... courage .....ACTION!

The reason I try to meditate on “the power to carry that out” is because for a long time, I found myself getting hung up on the first part – “praying only for knowledge of His will for us”. After all, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Step, we committed to turning not just our lives, but our *will* to His care. That’s a massive commitment. Is there anyone on earth that we would even think to turn our *will* to?

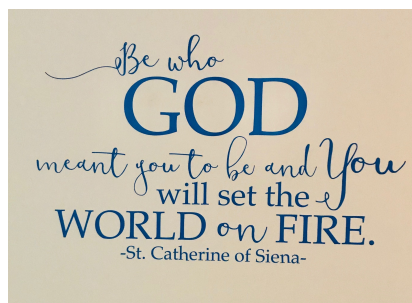
So we’ve already committed our will to His care. Now, in Step 11, we say “OK God, show me what Your Will is for my life. Tell me what you want me to do. Where you want me to go.”

But do we always carry out His will for us? Remember, He has big plans for our lives. We know that, in addition, it was following *our* will that got us into trouble. So, when we finally turn our will over to Him, do we seek that small voice, that little nudge and actually *do* something about it?

Do we muster the strength, the courage, the desire to put into ACTION what He wants us to do? Sometimes, it’s a tall order! One that seems insurmountable. But ... the MIRACLES HAPPEN!!! As Christians, we’re called to have faith and hope. And, if God is asking us to do the insurmountable, we’ve got to muster the courage to pray for the “power” to carry it out. My dad says that when you have to eat an elephant, the best way to do it is one bite at a time. (Gross analogy but it works.) Ask God – what “power” do I need to do this? Show me how to do this.

He will show you. He will guide you. He will understand when you’re facing doubt or discouragement. Because He’s God, and He NEVER FAILS.

Listen to St. Catherine of Siena: “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”





**A New Year – A New Theme for the Chalice**

In 2019, each edition of The Chalice focused on the 12 Steps. Next year, we will focus on the Sacraments, starting with Baptism.

Please! Consider submitting an article about how the sacraments have been instrumental in your recovery. After all, the reception of the Sacraments is part of the third stated objective of our Credo:

*Our participation in all other spiritual activities of Calix, such as the frequent celebration of the Liturgy, **reception of the Sacraments**, personal prayer and meditation, Holy Hours, Days of Recollection and retreats, aids us in our third objective, namely, **to strive for the sanctification of the whole personality of each member.***

Contact editor Chris B. at [christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com](mailto:christinabongiovanni@hotmail.com) with questions or to submit an article. Since writing is not everyone’s favorite thing to do, if you’d like help, writing assistance is available. 😊

Edition	Topic	Deadline for Submission
January / February	Baptism	December 15
March/April	Penance	February 15
May / June	Holy Communion	April 15 (tax day – yee haw!)
July / August	Confirmation	June 15
September / October	Marriage / Holy Orders	August 15
November / December	Anointing of the Sick	October 15

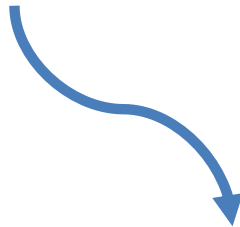
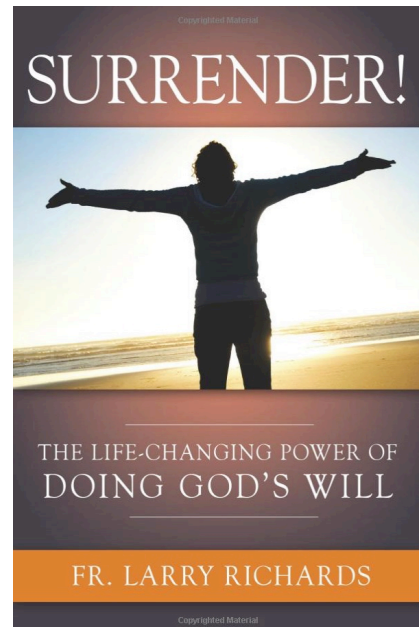
**How Can We Inspire and Encourage Each Other?**

Did you go to the retreat and notice this book in your “goodie bag” / “spiritual swag” bag? Do you have a copy of it in your pile of books that you’ve been intending to read? If so, please consider dusting it off in the new year.

Each edition of the Chalice in 2020 will have reflections from how this book relates to our recovery within the 12 Steps and our Catholic faith.

Please – if you received this book, consider either submitting a reflection (ie short article), or do a Q&A with Chris B. (editor) so that we can get your thoughts. Don’t forget ... what you say matters and can help someone else!

This is a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the second stated objective of our beloved Calix Society.



*“Our association together should be a source of inspiration and encouragement to each other, geared to our growth toward spiritual maturity.”*

- *Second Purpose of The Calix Society,  
as stated in the Calix Credo*

**WHY NOT LEARN  
TO ENJOY  
THE LITTLE THINGS?**

**THERE ARE  
SO MANY OF THEM.**

**- St. John Chrysostom**



## Prayer Requests

Leslie K.: I am a member of AA, a third Order Dominican and sober 27 years. Thank you for this site. Please pray that my nephew Ryan S finds a lovely Catholic woman to love him.

Christina B.: Please pray for my dear friend, Brian, who is struggling with an alcohol addiction.

Katie G.: Please pray for my husband, Shanti. He is struggling terribly. I believe he is an addict, even though he doesn't use alcohol much, he has all of the typical alcoholic behaviors. His anger is so bad, combined with verbal abuse and silent treatments. I am about to let him know he HAS to seek help. Please, please pray for him. I am so worn down from his treatments it is hard for me to fast at all. If you have someone who would be willing to pray and fast for him, I would really appreciate it. I believe there is a spiritual component.

Erika K.: I'd like to ask for prayers for my friend Glen Wohlgermuth who has struggled with alcohol for over 10 years. Went through detox last December, but has since then started drinking a bit again. I ask for prayers for him for a full and honest recovery and strength to overcome his struggle with alcohol. That he may find the comfort and truth he seeks, not in the bottle, but in God alone. That all the hurt and trauma that have led him to start drinking be healed by Christ's truth.

***Lord, hear our prayer!***

---

The Calix Society  
PO Box 26  
Glenside, PA 19038  
800.398.0524