



## Personal Prayer: Person-to-Person

By Bev Firmin



There are things in this world that we make too complicated. We see them as tasks that are too big for our capacities. We feel too inadequate, our minds too scattered. We see things as great goals that we will reach "someday" but for today... well, we have so much to learn before we get there. One of Satan's greatest lies is that prayer is really too above us, too unreachable, and that we never do it "good enough." He makes us feel not quite up to the task, that once we are better, have conquered this or that sin in our lives... then we can pray. He is a liar and the father of lies.

Let's talk about personal prayer. Not liturgical prayer, not communal prayer, not rote prayers, not prayers we read off cards stuck in our Bibles..., but **personal** prayer. God created us as unique human beings. If you look around you in a public place, you must realize that He has had a great time doing it! We are all so different, so unique, not only in our appearance but in our mannerisms, our personalities, our preferences... in every way. He created us so different and, "He delights to be with the

children of men." (Proverbs 8:31)

It is important when we come to pray that we are ourselves, that we come "Just as I Am" as Billy Graham's familiar altar call song beckons us. This is what makes prayer personal. We are what we are or, as a most recent popular saying states, "It is what it is." There are people who complain that they can't come to God in prayer because their life is such a mess, they haven't talked to Him in a long time, and they feel weighed down by sin, failure or suffering. But it is just such people that the Father waits for. He is looking longingly down the road for the return of the well-beloved son. We may be tired, sad, angry, lonely, and feel that we must wait until this state passes before we can pray. On the contrary, our Father longs to hold us close during these times just as we would long to hold our children when they suffer or can't make sense of what is happening to them.

So what is this personal prayer and how do we enter into it? There are many formulas and outlines that people have found work for them. Bob Garrett and Bill Beatty shared two

of these in last week's Dove. These may work for you and you may find the step by step helpful as you begin to pray. Through the years as I have spoken to many women who are struggling with prayer because of the demands of small children and the overall "24/7" of their lives, I have found that simpler is better. In my own life I have clung to this "simple" and when I have remembered it, my prayer life has grown. When I try to control my prayer life, to make it look like someone else's prayer life or some "ideal of a prayer life," I have failed miserably.

It is important to set aside time to converse with God. That said, this time does not always work out. No matter how early we get up, if we have children, they will sense we are up and up they come. Or we start the day with throw up, wet beds and all other sorts of life crises. This is where real connections with Jesus, the Fa-

# Personal Prayer

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ther or the Holy Spirit can happen. St. Teresa of Avila stated that the place in our world where the Trinity is most abandoned and forgotten is the human heart. Hey, we carry that place around all day!!!! **Personal prayer happens when we turn to God in our heart and smile, laugh, weep, or just be still. In the midst of life, personal prayer happens when we are aware of our God present within us and join Him there.**

You see, the truth is that Jesus wants to be with us. He longs for us much more than we long for Him. And he wants to be with ME – that unique person He created – not someone acting like someone else! He desires us with all our idiosyncrasies and weakness. Personal prayer is our relationship to God... not just God as some nebulous figure up in the heavens, but God as Father, God as Son or God as Holy Spirit. Pope Francis says, "We can't pray to the 'divine essence.' This is not prayer. The prayer of a Christian is unavoidably personal. It is person-to-person: we pray to the Father or to the Son or to the Holy Spirit. What is more, each one of the divine Persons relates to us differently when we pray."

And so we begin by just beginning... "Here I am Lord.... No pretenses, just me, looking at You looking at me." Then we love Him, thank Him, sing to Him, give Him all the things that bog us down and when words fail us... we just smile at Him and be with Him. We allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us. We say the Our Father (really pray it line by line) because that is what Jesus gave us when His disciples asked Him to "...teach us to pray." We use the Scriptures to try to see His face, to look up at Him and see how He related to people, to watch Him as He minis-

# All Hallows Eve

From The Elders

We would like to give a brief history of the days and events associated with what is called All Saints Day. All Hallows Eve is the night before All Saints and is known in today's culture as Halloween. Many people are unaware of how this day came about, and we would like to relate the background associated with Halloween.

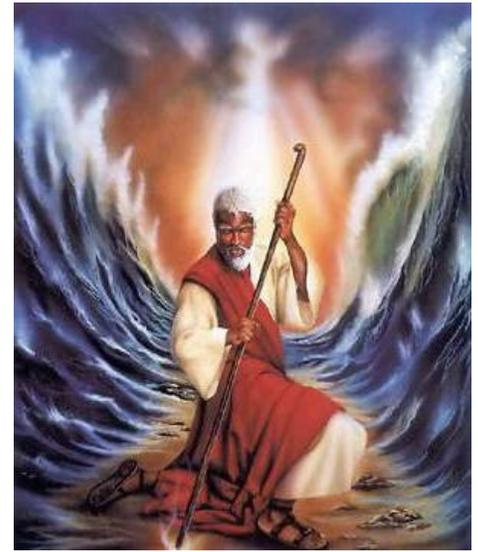
A celebration much like our Halloween, with bonfires, feasting on apples, nuts and fruits, was part of pagan worship for centuries. The Britons celebrated this day in honor of their sun god, a tribute to the light that brought in the harvest. The Romans did the same thing and honored their god Pomona, a patroness of fruits and gardens. The Britons also used this time of year to celebrate the "lord of death," which took the souls of the departed who had been sent into animals in punishment of their sins.

It was in the eighth century that the church appointed a special date for all of the holy men and women

tered to those around because we long to "know" Him, and then we open our hearts and ask Him to change us... to make us like Himself.

Personal prayer is not some unreachable goal. We CAN pray always, and that prayer can be very personal. Asking the Holy Spirit to show you times in the day when you can connect is a very sure way of staying in His presence and moving in Him. Knowing that He longs to be with me, drawing me with cords of love back to Him again and again. Be yourself. Keep it simple. Be with Him.

1. How are you doing in your time



Moses

who had died and the day after to honor her soon-to-be saints. This time of the year was chosen, it is supposed, because in that part of the world the earth was barren and bleak, brown and drab. Snow had not yet fallen and it took little effort to look at leafless trees and blackened fields and meditate on death and the hereafter.

How you celebrated the day before All Saints depended on where you lived, and if you lived in Briton, you believed that the poor souls of the departed roamed the earth and were free to visit their old homes. British families prayed by their be-

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with the Lord?

2. Looking back, have you grown deeper in your relationship with God?
3. How can you do better in giving yourself to the Lord?

Bev Firmin is a former Handmaid for the Alleluia Community. She is a Social Worker who has devoted her life to serving the poor, first in Louisiana and now in Augusta, Georgia. She and her husband, Mike, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia since 1983. They are the parents of seven adult children, and six grandchildren and attend Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Augusta.

# Lady Angels Win Varsity Volleyball Region Tournament

By Coach Meghan Janik

On Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, Alleluia volleyball hosted the region tournament for the GICAA sports league. Our first game was against Covenant Christian Academy, during which Alleluia solidly won three matches. This ensured our position in the championship game later that day.

After John Hancock Academy defeated Peachtree Academy, they joined our team in the final game of the day to determine the GICAA North Region Champions. In the first match, Alleluia easily defeated John Hancock led by seniors Tessa Visintainer with 7 points from serving and Theresa Almeter with 11 completed hits. In the second match, John Hancock battled more intensely but we still won 25 to 20 due in large part to Bernadette Hartney's consistent defensive play as our Varsity Libero player. Our final match ended with the third Alleluia victory 25 to 21.

The team is led this year by four energetic and encouraging seniors who have stepped into a natural leadership position for the rest of the team; Bernadette and Tessa are this



**Pictured L-R — Halle Janik, coaches Meghan Janik and Rachel French with Theresa Almeter, Ania Hatfield, Bernadette Hartney, Julia Hazlewood, Deanna Doughty, Tessa Visintainer, Celine Sterett, Lauren Hazlewood, Celeste Thompson, Michaela Milligan, Jenna Suarez and Rachel Visintainer.**

year's co-captains. All Tournament awards went to Tessa, Bernadette, Theresa, Celine Sterett and Michaela Milligan. They also were named to the All Region team.

When this is read, Alleluia will have already played in the State tournament in Suwanee, Georgia on October 25. I, along with Coach Rachel French, am extremely proud of the

girls this season and am confident we will enter the State tournament with as much zeal and energy as we ended the Region tournament, hoping for another first place trophy. Thank you for your support for these girls as we push ourselves every practice and every game to play our hardest and win with integrity. As we like to say before every game, WORK HARD, PLAY HARD!



## Upcoming Events

Veterans Day Salute  
Tuesday, November 11, 2014

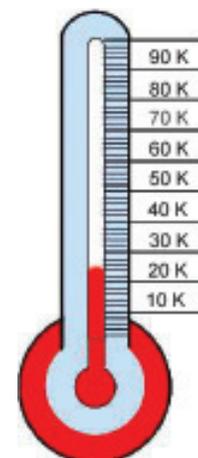
2nd Annual

Alleluia Community Fall Fare  
Saturday, November 15, 2014



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Air Conditioning



# All Hallows Eve Became a Time of Prayer and Merriment

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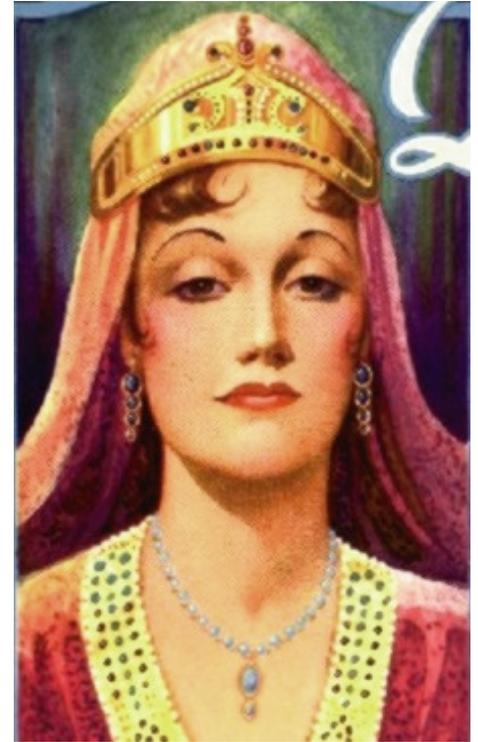
loved's grave during the day and went to church in the evening. They sang hymns and asked all Christians to pray for their loved ones who had died. Late in the evening after church, they set out pancakes, curds and cider and set chairs round the table for their returning loved ones. The family would then recite together Psalm 130 and go to bed. During the night, a townsman would go through the streets ringing a bell to warn people that it was unwise to roam about at the time of returning souls.

In the British Isles, All Hallows Eve became a time of prayer and merriment. Begging at the door, an old English custom, for a "soul cake" which was given in return for a promise to pray for the dead of that household. Soon the soul cakes became more important than the prayers as people went begging from door-to-door. Legend has it that a zealous cook wanted to invent a soul cake to remind people of eternity at every bite. Thus, she cut a hole in the middle making a circular cake, dropped it in hot fat and lo — the doughnut was invented.

All of these customs and many

more that came from various other countries have come into our present day celebration of Halloween. Indeed, this day has become only second in its popularity to Christmas here in the US. For all of us Christians, we want to make this a time of celebrating the holy men and women who have gone before us to be with the Lord as a truly joyous event. We want to celebrate a life well lived, and there are many saints both Protestant and Catholic alike who we hold in common. John Paul II stated that all those who at the end of a life of grace were faithful, are now in full communion with Christ in glory.

Our celebration is somewhat different as we focus so strongly on our call to evangelism. We are opening our party to those who live in the 30906 area as well as inviting those churches who participate with us in such events as our Cross Walk. This year's event, called the All-Saints Assemble Block Party, will be great fun for us all. Start thinking of what you want to dress up as, and young and old alike will be a part of the festivities.



Esther



Samson



Mary, Joseph and Jesus

## All Saints Celebration

Friday,  
October 31, 2014  
5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

TRUE Super Heroes!

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