



How to Develop a Habit of Prayer

By Jerry Germann



I believe my first experience with developing a habit of prayer was in high school. I went to two boarding schools that were faith based. At both, we had morning and evening prayers together. Over the years, I learned three important aspects concerning the habit of prayer: time, place and repetition. If you are going to make a habit of something, repetition is important; however, that was a given in this case because my presence was part of the overall agreement. Picking a place and a time to pray is very helpful. It prepares you for what you are going to do when you arrive. I always knew that night prayers occurred at a specific place and began at a specific time. So I planned my schedule to be there.

In 1977, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and Jesus became real to me. I began to realize what He had done for me in His life, death, and resurrection. In 1978, our family came to Alleluia Community, and we began to receive teachings about how to respond to God's grace in our lives. Scripture showed us that Jesus spent lots of time in prayer, prayer with the

Father. In fact, Jesus said that "the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing, for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise." (John 5:19)

He also said that He and the Father are one. We began to learn that life with Jesus involved developing a relationship with Jesus. This is something we needed to work at, because Jesus worked at it with His Father. Once Jesus asked His disciples, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does His work." (John 14:10) This prayer relationship between Jesus and the Father is so close that they are one. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing. This is the type of prayer life that Jesus offers to us. He even works in us and pours out His Holy Spirit on us to help us grow and change and come to the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:19) Cathy and I want to be like Jesus; we want to grow in holiness and live eternity with God. The Father wants us to be like Jesus, too.

Leo Suer says, "Habitual prayer comes from persistence and practice." We have to discipline ourselves to be persistent to practice prayer and never quit. Once when St. Paul was preaching to the Corinthians, he used the analogy of athletes who train vigorously to win in competition. They maintain a strict exercise program and discipline themselves to have a chance to win a perishable crown. (1 Cor. 9:25) St. Paul said we should also exercise this type of self-control in all things (and I say especially in our prayer life) to receive the imperishable crown of eternal glory with God.

Let me give you an example. Herschel Walker is one of the University of Georgia's all time running backs. How did he get to this place? As a kid he started doing sit-ups and push-ups every day, as many as 5,000 a day. He still does 750 - 1,500 push-ups and 3,000 sit-ups daily. Herschel mixes in 1,500 pull-ups, 1,000 dips, and 1,000 squats every day. We should have this same attitude and approach toward

(Continued on page 2 - HABIT OF PRAYER)

Developing a Habit of Prayer—Here's What I Do

by Rachel Visintainer

I didn't know how important prayer was until my ninth grade year. I had been praying before, to an extent—prayer time with my family in the morning and occasional chats with the Lord. But a daily, personal prayer time with God was something I knew was good, but I didn't know was essential. I also didn't know the importance of incorporating prayer beyond my bedroom and in my daily life.

Don't get me wrong—often in family prayer time and in those occasional conversations with God is where it all starts. But your relationship with God and the whole of your Christian life is built on your daily personal prayer time. Don't have a daily personal prayer time? Then you don't have a foundation, and that probably means your relationship with Him is suffering, or has barely begun. That isn't to say God can't or hasn't touched you in wonderful

ways, but those experiences, however powerful they may be, are like bricks piled on sand. Unless you are convicted by them, they only stay for a little and very quickly tumble down. I think we very easily forget how important our relationship with God is.

Your eternal future depends on it.

Looking at those words, does anything jump in you a little? For a long time, such words passed under my eyes and through my ears, and I didn't think once about it. But in ninth grade, God shot a spark in me and in some of my friends, and we all began to realize how *real* God is, and everything that comes along with belief in Him—heaven, hell, His miracles, etc. We decided to make a commitment to be *active* parts of Christ's body now, starting with the foundation: a daily prayer time.

If you want to make a daily personal prayer time a habit, you have to 1) ask others to pray for you, 2) get determined to pray daily and know God better, and 3) start experimenting now until you find your fit (that is, a good time and location for your prayer time).

So step 1, I got a lot of prayers; without them, no way would I have achieved step 2. As for step 3, I realized that "my fit" is in the morning at 6:30 a.m., and I have to get out of bed, or I'll fall asleep. A comfortable chair in the corner of my room is my remedy, and it might be yours, too. Even if you have to sit on hardwood floor to stay awake the first few days, do it! After all, your eternal future depends on it!

I do suggest getting another friend, either an experienced friend or a fresh-starter like you, to be a companion for the beginning of your prayer journey. You can even start out by having daily prayer together and

then "part ways," sharing your progress and supporting each other. One thing that encouraged me a lot was seeing the same desires in my friends and sharing how we responded to the struggles of a prayer time—finding time, finding a place, and then the actual *praying* part... It was hard sometimes, and it was very evident that the devil was trying to stop us from building a good foundation in our Lord. But our perseverance and God's grace pulled us through and has brought much fruit. We are now more active members in the Body of Christ, and still strive to be better and better. Plus, there are special benefits that come with each personal prayer time (however, that should probably be reserved for another article).

How do you take prayer beyond your bedroom? What I find is once you've nailed a daily prayer time (which I still miss sometimes, so never be discouraged), try to make a habit of saying a prayer outside of your daily prayer time. For example, at lunch each day, my Catholic friends and I would say the Angelus before we ate. This is a simple thing that brings our minds back to the Lord in the middle of the day. Whether you want to get a buddy or do it on your own, you can find/make a short prayer that you have memorized or will memorize to say at a selected time of day, or when certain things happen. For example, I always try to say a prayer when I hear sirens. Maybe each time you go to your locker you can whisper, "I trust You Jesus." The point of doing these things is to bring your mind back to the Lord. Throughout the hectic and busy day, it is surprisingly refreshing to turn our thoughts to the Lord and accept His

Habit of Prayer

(Continued from page 1 - HABIT OF PRAYER)

developing our prayer relationship with Jesus. The practice to develop a habit of prayer requires that we be persistent and unrelenting in our asking the Holy Spirit to increase in us the courage to do whatever He tells us to do. And as Chuck Hornsby would say, "Don't Stop! Keep Going! Don't Stop!"

Jerry Germann is an Elder and Pastoral Coordinator in Alleluia Community and Head of the Provident and Resourceful Team. He and his wife, Cathy, have been Full Covenant members since 1980. They have six adult children, six grandchildren and attend Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Thomson, Georgia.

(Continued on page 3 - WHAT I DO)

God's Light in the Middle of the Day

From the Elders

Our life is a mixture of different activities, like a mosaic wall, some areas very colorful, some quiet, some even invisible and known only by our Lord. But each area in the mosaic wall, each activity makes us into "a people" that God wants us to be.

One of these areas, or activities, is our gathering of brothers and sisters, from different support groups and different stages of life, just to be God's light in the middle of the day, twice a week. We go there just for one

What I Do

(Continued from page 2 - WHAT I DO)

grace.

He will honor our efforts to think of Him by giving us His power to not only get through the day, but be loving people while we do it! I do want to repeat: do not get discouraged. The devil will do all he can to prevent us from prayer. If you have a day where prayer is out of the picture, relax and do not fear. Jesus still loves you, of course. Before you go to bed, recall all that seemed to prevent you from prayer. Do spiritual warfare, and tell God that you do love Him, or at least desire to love Him (as it was for me in the beginning), and you rely on His graces. The next day, give another swing at it.

As you do these simple prayers, eventually you will begin turning to God even more frequently throughout the day. Not only will you pray, "I trust You," at your locker, but when a classmate or coworker tells you they are having a bad day, you'll think *Maybe I should pray for them.* This, of course, is perfectly normal, and really awesome. That is the Spirit. By letting the Spirit guide you in such

another, and whomever walks in the door. Any day can encounter a surprise meeting, a meeting with somebody we haven't spoken with for a long time or maybe a brother or sister we never met before in a personal conversation.

Our Noon praise and worship is rooted in a deep tradition under the pecan trees in Center Circle. The Lord has always loved it and provided the grace for those who kept it going for many years. Then He announced a new season and a new location, and gave abundant new life and support. This September, at the beginning of our 9th year of opening the Golden Life Center, again a new wave of support appeared to provide the servants and the luncheons to make it all possible. Individual sisters and some brothers, some individual teams and some teams from support groups all volunteered to make sure each Tues-

(Continued on page 7 - GOD'S LIGHT)

simple things as stopping to pray for your friends and their needs, you are letting yourself be an instrument of His grace.

You won't wake up one morning and be perfect in prayer—I definitely didn't and never will, and even the saints didn't. It is a process—at times, a challenging and slow process, but very important and life-giving. Never give up on prayer! Ultimately, your personal prayer time is where your walk with God starts. If we want to live the best life we can possibly live, we need to make a habit of talking personally with God and praying for each other.

Rachel Visintainer is the daughter of John and Becky Visintainer and in the eleventh grade in Alleluia Community School.



Sabine Ceyskens and Bob Garrett leading praise and worship at Noon Prayers in the Golden Life Center

The "OR" Plan of Prayer

By Buster Eason

I have recently discovered the "OR" method of prayer. After years of frustration with my inability to be consistent with any kind of prayer list or prayer plan, I think I've found the one that works for me. It goes something like this:

1. Use a plan that someone else has come up with OR make up your own.
2. Have a set time OR mix it up.
3. Find some prayers that you like OR just talk to Jesus. Remember...it's a personal relationship.
4. Sit, stand, kneel, run, push the stroller (baby optional) OR lay down (mentioned several times in Psalms).
5. Find a quiet spot at home OR outside OR at General Motors, Toyota, Hyundai, Ford... they make great places to talk to Jesus.

However... wherever... whenever... Just have a little (or BIG) talk with Jesus.

P.S.: Don't forget to listen (Scripture is a great hearing aid).

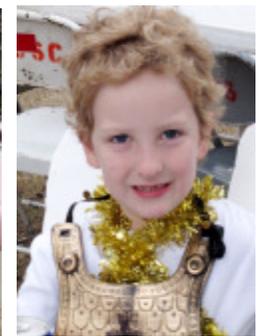
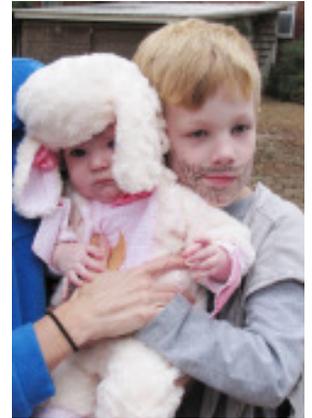
All Saints Block Party Provided Opportunities for Evangelization

By Barbara Harshman
Photos by Anne Seith

October 31 is a wonderful opportunity to evangelize our neighbors as we celebrate godly men and women who have shown us how to live lives of virtue for Christ. Celebrating the eve of the Feast of All Saints is in sharp contrast to our society's celebration of everything ghoulish and twisted.

This year the planning committee provided the opportunity to focus on being saintly with a family centered, door-to-door candy and Bible Super Hero Card giveaway on Norton Drive between Allen Ave. and Ruby Dr. in Faith Village. Not only did our Alleluia families dress up as saints or biblical characters, but invitations were given to area churches and neighbors to come participate in the fun of an "All Saints Block Party."

The celebration was kept simple as the event consisted of eating together as one big family, then going door-to-door begging sweets for the saints. Collecting Super Hero Cards of biblical characters was a nice touch. Good fellowship, greeting our guests, trekking around for sweets and admiring each other's choice of characters and costumes were enough. What a great alternative to Halloween!



Ethics of a Culture of Life vs. the Culture of Death

By Kevin Murrell, M.D.

Last month I attended two Catholic Medical Conferences, one in Orlando and the other in Manila. I have participated in these two organizations for almost 30 years, with the encouragement of the Alleluia Community and by our own means. I have had various roles (CMA President; we hosted the 1994 CMA national conference here in Augusta; North American delegate to FIAMC; and treasurer of FIAMC), and have developed strong friendships with doctors from all over the world.

Christian, and especially Catholic, medical professionals have been on the front lines of many moral issues for many years. Issues of life, of the dignity of the person, of marriage and family, now face significant challenges. The Catholic Medical Association, and other Christian organizations like the Christian Medical and Dental Association, have provided a solid medical-ethical base for Christian physicians and health care professionals. There truly is a conflict in our day between the ethics of a culture of life and those of the culture of death.



Kevin and Karin Murrell at El Nido on the island of Palawan

The topic for the CMA's 600 participants this year was "Courage in Medicine: Defending and Proclaiming the Faith in the New Evangelization". The topic for the International meeting was "The Catholic Doctor in an Era of Secularization and Technology." The presentations ran from Biblical, theological, philosophical, legal issues to personal testimony. Speakers included Raymond Cardinal Burke (Supreme Tribunal, Vatican), Bishop Zygmunt Zimowski (President, Pontifical Council for Health Care) and George Weigel. These talks addressed the challenges coming from a new secular progressivism in politics that is willing to sacrifice the foundational precepts of the U.S. Constitution which declare basic rights of the people to be inalienable. Challenges are also awakening a new fervor in Christians to fight for these rights and are also contributing to a new ecumenism as the Body of Christ realizes its need to come together in its commitment to Christ and the Gospel. One talk strongly encouraged us just to "Be nice!" Sometimes kindness is all the evangelism some people need. We respond to First Amendment challenges through news releases and legal briefs. We contribute to the education of physicians and academic and government agencies in medical ethics. We publish a quarterly journal dealing with medical ethical issues and other articles regarding the Catholic/Christian approach to medical issues and the dignity of the human person. We offer a yearly "Boot Camp" in faith and medical ethics to students. Over 75 attended this conference. And, we have relationships with other Catholic and Christian organizations like the Christian Medical and Dental Association (they provided the educational accredita-

tion for our last conference).

The international meeting, sponsored by the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC), reflected similar themes and the same understanding that Catholic physicians and health care professionals need to reflect the healing love of Christ, give dignity to the human person as made in the image and likeness of God, and see this as part of evangelization. All must proclaim the Gospel by living it out in the day to day circumstances of life. Although there will be plans for combating the culture of death, "the plan" is not so much a plan as a "person"—the person of Jesus Christ.

Many of the doctors we have come to know are heroic. Dr. Bogdan Chazan, an OB-GYN doctor in Poland, was recently fired from his job as head of a Catholic hospital because he would not do an abortion. He was responsible for the building of this hospital and its great success and reputation. He was fired by the mayor of Warsaw. He had been dismissed 10 years before from a prestigious faculty position for a similar reason. He is essentially restricted from practicing medicine due to his commitment to life.

Dr. John Lee, from Singapore, and his physician wife, have been instrumental in Catholic medical relief efforts in Southeast Asia for many years. Even now, despite having Parkinson's disease, he leads a team of medical students each year to Cambodia to help run clinics and put in water filters and other needed tasks. They are beginning to make some inroads in Myanmar as well. John is the newly elected president of FIAMC. (He recently asked me to chair a committee

(Continued on page 6 - CATHOLIC DOCTORS)

Caring for the Sick in the Way of Christ

(Continued from page 5 - CATHOLIC DOCTORS)

on the formation and evangelization of medical students. The committee consists of doctors from Australia, Singapore, India, Brazil and Croatia.)

Dr. Robert Walley, an OB-GYN from England, left England years ago when he was ostracized for not doing abortions. He moved to Newfoundland and has been practicing there for years. Dr. Walley founded MaterCare, a pro-life organization who works in Africa caring for mothers and obstetrical complications.

There are the Catholic doctors from Indonesia who practice their faith and medicine in a Muslim dominated culture. Also, eastern European doctors are dealing with the "breath of the Russian bear" cold upon them.

The hosts for the 250 participants of the 24th FIAMC World congress were members of the Catholic Physician's Guild of the Philippines. These are doctors who respond to needs all over the islands of the Philippines, recently working in areas of the country affected by recent typhoons and an earthquake. Despite the difficult

challenges they face, they maintain a real joy for life and family and are always finding something to celebrate. In the midst of the conference, they provided lots of opportunities to dance, sing and celebrate. The fellowship night provided each country an opportunity to perform. Our five member USA contingent sang "God Bless America" with the Stars and Stripes waving in the background.

Since we were half way around the world, we decided to take in some natural beauty at El Nido on the island of Palawan. There were gorgeous limestone mountains, lagoons, pristine clear water, native villages on stilts, tropical fish, and VERY adventurous "tricycle" rides. These were motorcycles with covered sidecars complete with open doors and no suspension. We prayed a lot on our rides in the narrow dirt paths which dropped straight down to the beach.

Mass at St. Francis Assisi church had open barred windows, mosquito resistant smoke flowing through, lots of birds flying and singing inside, dogs processing through, and a beau-

tiful choir. On leaving the island, we were so happy to see a lovely crocheted "God Help Us" adorning the windshield of our tricycle. The Lord indeed was present on our entire trip. We felt so lifted up to Him through the prayers of our brothers and sisters back home.

We take away from these gatherings the encouragement of Christian men and women who are practicing medicine in light of the Gospel and the grace of the Holy Spirit, many in very difficult circumstances. And we give to them what we have learned about community, trusting and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, His joy, experience in working through conflict, His enduring hope, perseverance and obedience to the Truth and the command to love one another.

We work to establish a short term community of sorts at these gatherings. We bring the presence of the Christian faith from the United States as well as a clear understanding of the Christian morality that needs to inform the practice of medicine. In this we contribute to the universal fraternity of the Body of Christ, diverse but one in Christ.

Please continue to pray for Christian doctors and health care professionals as we care for the sick in the way of Christ and as we stand in the front ranks of those fighting for our basic inalienable rights among which are freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.



Representatives of the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC)

Kevin Murrell is an original Elder and Pastoral Coordinator of the Alleluia Community and is responsible for the Pastoral Training Institute. He is a past-president of the National Catholic Medical Assn. and a delegate to the International Catholic Medical Assn. He and his wife Karen were two of the original signers of the Alleluia Covenant in 1973. They have five children and 16 grandchildren with two on the way and attend the Catholic Church of the Most Holy Trinity in Augusta, Georgia.

God's Light

(Continued from page 3 - GOD'S LIGHT)

day and Friday anybody can go have a cup of coffee, play some games, praise and pray, receive some insight from Bob Garrett, have a light luncheon, and be God's light for another person, younger or older, whom ever walks through the door.

We want to thank the Lord for the many blessings He has provided us over and over again at the Golden Life Center, and thank all those who have supported it over the last 8 years. From the beginning the Golden Life Center has been God's gift to our life in Faith Village. From the beginning He has made it a grass roots activity, supported by individual donors and volunteers. No corporate funding from ACSC is provided to operate this "point of light" of our community. For over 8 years, God has knocked on individual hearts to set aside some extra to keep the light shining, and the air conditioning going. Please prayerfully consider giving a one time or monthly donation to the Golden Life Center to keep it going. Golden Life is a 501c (3), not for profit, corporation and donations are tax deductible. The Lord in His infinite wisdom, knows what to give us. He also knows who to give to and who to ask from. Thank you Jesus for this abundant life.



Fellowship and praying for one another at Golden Life Center

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ACS Students Collect for Veterans



Mrs. Judy Hartney and Mr. Bob Garrett accompany Ethan Balducci, Senior Class President, in presenting collected items to Robert Welton and Courtney Deese, Voluntary Service Specialists from VASH

To show their appreciation for veterans' service to our country, ACS students, under the direction of Mrs. Judy Hartney, collected new and gently used kitchen items for the Augusta HUD-VASH Program for homeless veterans (men and women, single or with families) who enroll in the proper treatment programs and go from being homeless with nothing to maintaining a home. Robert Welton and Courtney Deese, Voluntary Service Specialists from VASH, received the collection from senior class president Ethan Balducci on behalf of the entire school. Program case managers are involved in educating veterans in how to manage their finances, pay their bills on time, shop for groceries and even how to cook if needed, as well as providing transportation and assistance in job training. VASH stands for Veterans Affairs Sustainable Housing. The collection will go into the program's storeroom to help furnish needed items for a veteran's new home.



Alleluia Community School Salutes Our Veterans

By Barbara Harshman
Photos by Anne Seith

The Alleluia Community School students went out of their way to honor many of their grandparents, aunts, uncles and guests on Veterans Day, November 11. ACS Alumni Blaise Dresser, former U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, and Lieutenant of the Violent Crimes Section of the Richmond County Sheriff's Department, did a wonderful job as guest speaker, relating how serving our country in the Marines had such a good impact on his life and naturally led into continuing that service to his country in law enforcement in Richmond County so that the students could live and play in a more protected environment.

Mr. Frank Densmore, former Spec. 5, U.S. Army and current educator in the high school, acted as emcee. Boys from Troop 17 presented the colors, followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and the high school chorus singing the National Anthem.

The elementary school under the direction of Mrs. Judy Hartney and Mrs. Lisa Harmon, enthusiastically sang a Patriotic medley, followed by the Veterans Day Address by Lt. Dresser.

The various anthems of each branch of the Armed Forces were then sung by the middle school students directed by Mrs. Judy Hartney and accompanied by Mrs. Sue Hymel, Mrs. Sabine Ceyskens and senior Andrew Fowler. The veterans present were asked to stand and be recognized as their anthem was sung. Then Mr. Chuck Hornsby, School Superintendent, humbly reflected upon the many experiences the veterans had of which he had no understanding since he had not served his country in that way, and called upon Mr. Bob Garrett, Overall Coordinator of Alleluia Community, to lead prayers for the

veterans as the students came forward to lay their hands on those standing.

Retired Sgt. FC James Abram, a neighborhood resident, asked to address the assembly with a few comments acknowledging his appreciation for the honoring by the students over the years. This was followed by singing the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

After retiring the colors, the veterans and their families and guests were invited to a reception in the ACS Auditorium following the program. A big thank you is extended to the music teachers for their hard work in making this celebration such a big success. And thank you, veterans, for your service to our country, which enables all of us to enjoy the freedom to worship God and build His kingdom on earth.



High School Chorus



Elementary (above); Middle (below)



Guest speaker Lt. Blaise Dresser, RCSD



Bob Garrett



Chuck Hornsby



Praying over the veterans



Retiring the Colors



Sgt. FC James Abram