

# PRAYER

Communication with  
Abba Father



## BROTHER LAWRENCE

There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God; those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it.

# 4 WEEK PLAN

Week 1: Introduction to Prayer

Week 2: Discipline of Prayer

Week 3: Practice of Prayer

Week 4: Prayer and Continuing Spiritual Formation

# DESIRED COURSE OUTCOMES

- What the Bible says about prayer
- What Jesus says about prayer
- How to pray (private or public)
- Knowledge of different forms of prayer
- Greater experience of the Holy Spirit
- Continual spiritual formation

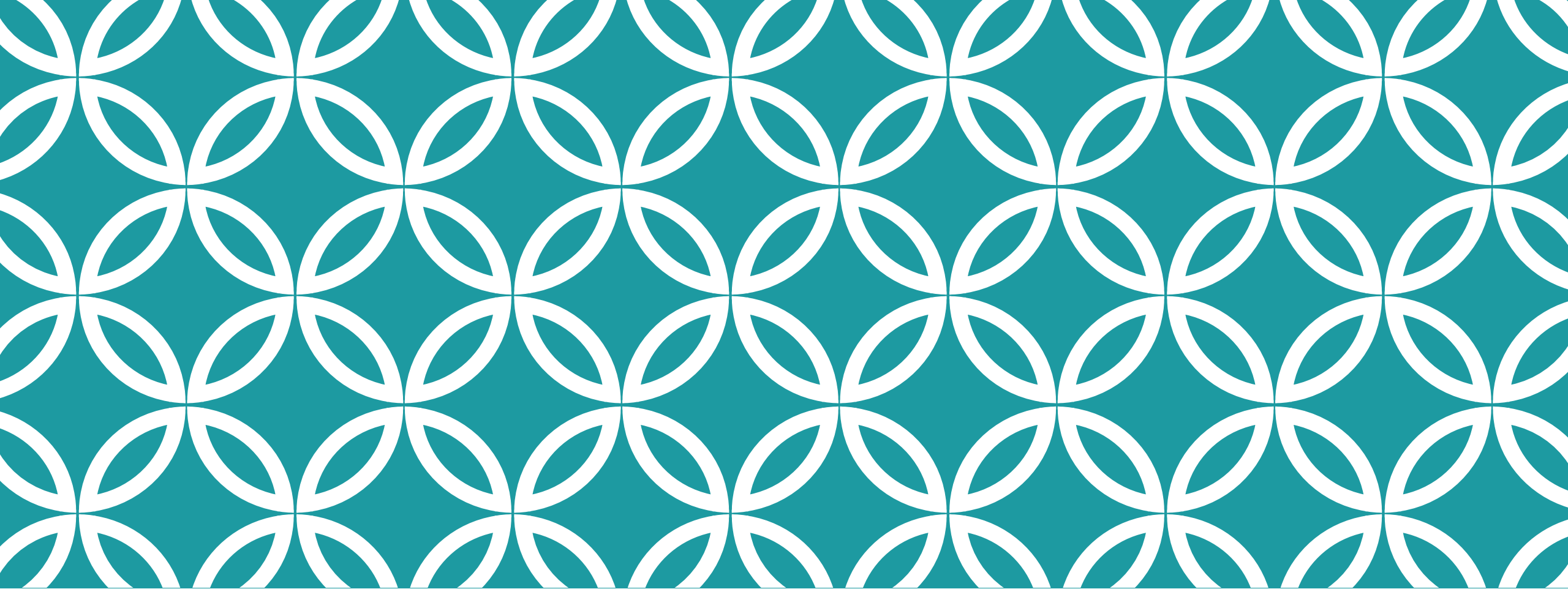
# HOW WE KNOW ABOUT PRAYER

- Practice
- Study & reading
- From spiritual guides



# COURSE NOTES

- interactive
- praxis



# INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER

Week 1



# RICHARD FOSTER

Celebration of Discipline (1998)

To pray to change: Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ.



## ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX

For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.

# WHY DON'T PEOPLE PRAY

1. Were never taught
2. Think it is only for *holy* people
3. Told they're praying "wrong"
4. Turned off by religion
5. Feel like failure at prayer
6. Miss what we already do as prayer
7. "Why bother, God knows"
8. Too busy, too lazy
9. Fear of change

# MISCONCEPTIONS

- Asking God for things
  - Answered prayers are wonderful but are secondary to the main function
- Prayer must be a struggle
- We live in a closed universe: Why pray?
  - 1 Corinthians 3:9 “We are fellow workers with God – an open universe
- Fear that our faith will crumble if our prayers are not answered first time, every time
- Pray Once: Does praying more often reflect lack of faith?

# WHAT IS PRAYER?

## Purpose

- Growing perpetual communion — a radiant reality with God
- Our heavenly master — discover God in all moments of our lives
- A personal relationship with God
  - Do I need God? James ch 4

# PRAYING, WITHOUT KNOWING

1. Asking God for help
2. Thinking about something that inspires you
3. Feeling compassion
4. Wonder about God
5. Gratefulness
6. Meaning of life



RICHARD FOSTER

*Celebration of Discipline*

Occasional joggers do not suddenly enter an Olympic marathon. They prepare and train themselves over a period of time, and so should we.



# JOHN PAUL II

*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*

Man achieves the fullness of prayer not when he expresses himself, but when he lets God be most fully present in prayer.

# WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT PRAYER

II Chronicles 7:14

Matthew 6: 5-14

James 5:16

The prayer of the righteous person is powerful in what it can achieve.



# JESUS PRAYING

Jesus never concluded by saying “If it be thy will.”

Nor did the apostles or prophets.

They believed they knew the will of God before they prayed

# DAILY SCRIPTURE READING

Sunday: The pattern of prayer / Matthew 6:5–15.

Monday: The prayer of worship / Psalm 103.

Tuesday: The prayer of repentance / Psalm 51.

Wednesday: The prayer of thanksgiving / Psalm 150.

Thursday: The prayer of guidance / Matthew 26:36–46.

Friday: The prayer of faith / James 5:13–18.

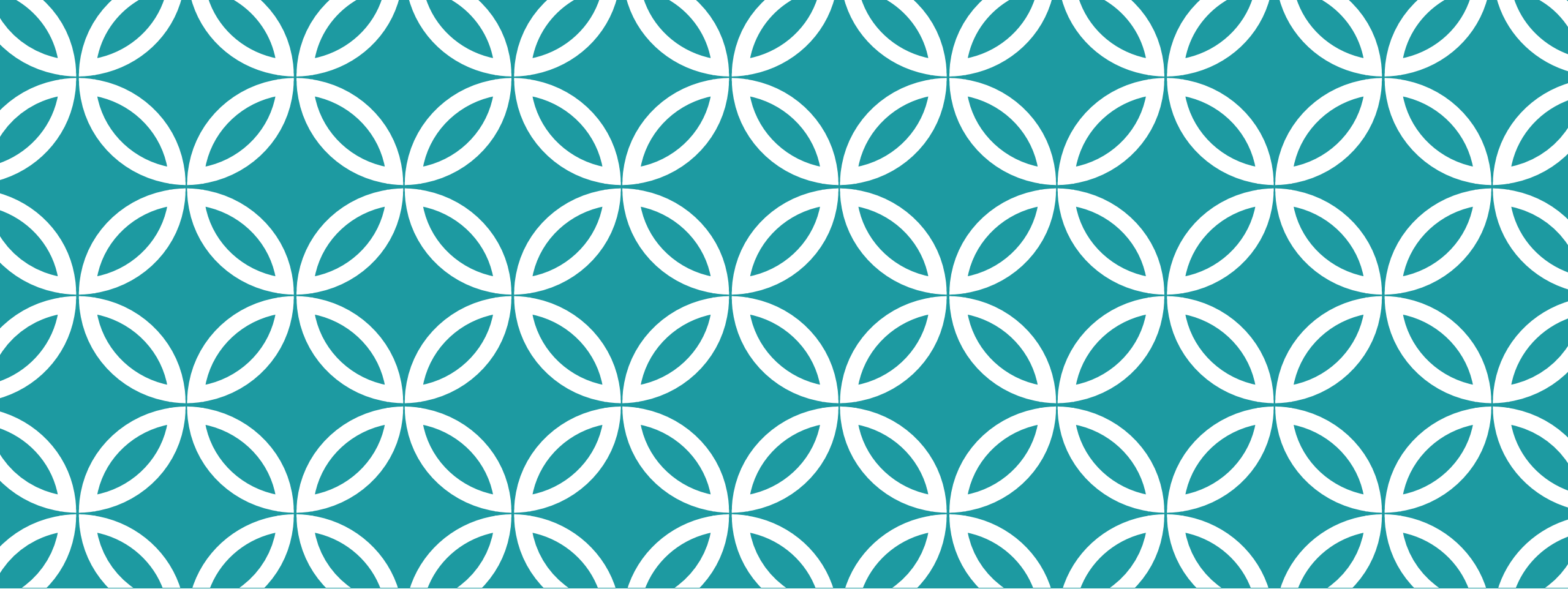
Saturday: The prayer of command / Mark 9:14–29.

# READINESS / ASSESSMENT OF PRAYER

*Sacred Pathways assessment*

*Rule of Life Worksheet*

[axiomchurchaz.com](http://axiomchurchaz.com)



# DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Week 2



DALLAS WILLARD

The more we pray, the more we think to pray, and as we see the results of prayer — the responses of our Father to our requests — our confidence in God's power spills over into other areas of our life.

# DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

## What is Prayer?

Communication with the father.

“I am the ground of thy beseeching; first, it is my will thou shalt have it; after; I make thee to will it; and after I make thee to beseech it and thou beseechest it. How should it then be that thou shouldest not have thy beseeching? - Juliana of Norwich p. 42

Prayer is the most central of all the other spiritual disciplines because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the father

Sincere prayer is life creating and life changing

# THE LORDS PRAYER

## MATHEW 6:9-13

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

# MEANING OF THE LORDS PRAYER

The Disciple's Prayer

“Teach us to pray.”



# FORMS OF PRAYER I

**Blessing:** The prayer of blessing is mans response to Gods gifts: we bless the Almighty who first blesses us and fills us with his gifts.

**Adoration:** An attitude that acknowledges we are creatures in the presence of our Creator. It is an act by which we glorify the God who made us.

**Petition:** To ask, to implore, to plead, to cry out. In each situation, it acknowledges how much we depend on God for our needs, including forgiveness and persistence in seeking him. Note that according to the Lords prayer, the first thing to ask for is the coming of the Kingdom. Matthew 6: 9-13.

# FORMS OF PRAYER II

**Intercession:** Consists in asking on behalf of another. It conforms us and unites us to the prayer of Jesus who intercedes with the Father for all. Intercession prayer should extend to ones enemies.

**Thanksgiving:** Flows from the Church's greatest prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist. Every moment of ever can become a thanksgiving offering. We are called to thank God for all of the gifts we have received, including our joys and sorrows.

**Praise:** The form of prayer which immediately recognizes God as God. It is singing Gods praise for His own sake and giving Him glory simply because he is!



# FORMS OF PRAYER III

**Healing**

**Commissioning/Sending**

**Joining**

**Grieving**

**Deliverance**

**Walking**



RICHARD J. FOSTER

Richard J. Foster. *Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into Meditative Prayer*

The best  
contemplative  
tradition is often  
inclined to pass on  
from listening to a  
tranquil beholding.

# EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER

**Meditation:** is a prayerful reflection that begins above all in the Word of God. Engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire to deepen our faith, convert our heart and fortify our will to follow Christ. First step toward the union of love with our Lord

**Contemplation:** Contemplative prayer is a gift to which we dispose ourselves by resting attentively before Christ. It involves hearing God. It is a time of silent listening and love.

**Centering Prayer:** Meditative prayer, focus attention on verse or word or phrase

**Kenosis:** Personal self-emptying. A non-clinging, non-grasping, letting go.

# LECTIO DIVINA

Latin for *sacred reading*

**1. Read**

**2. Listen**

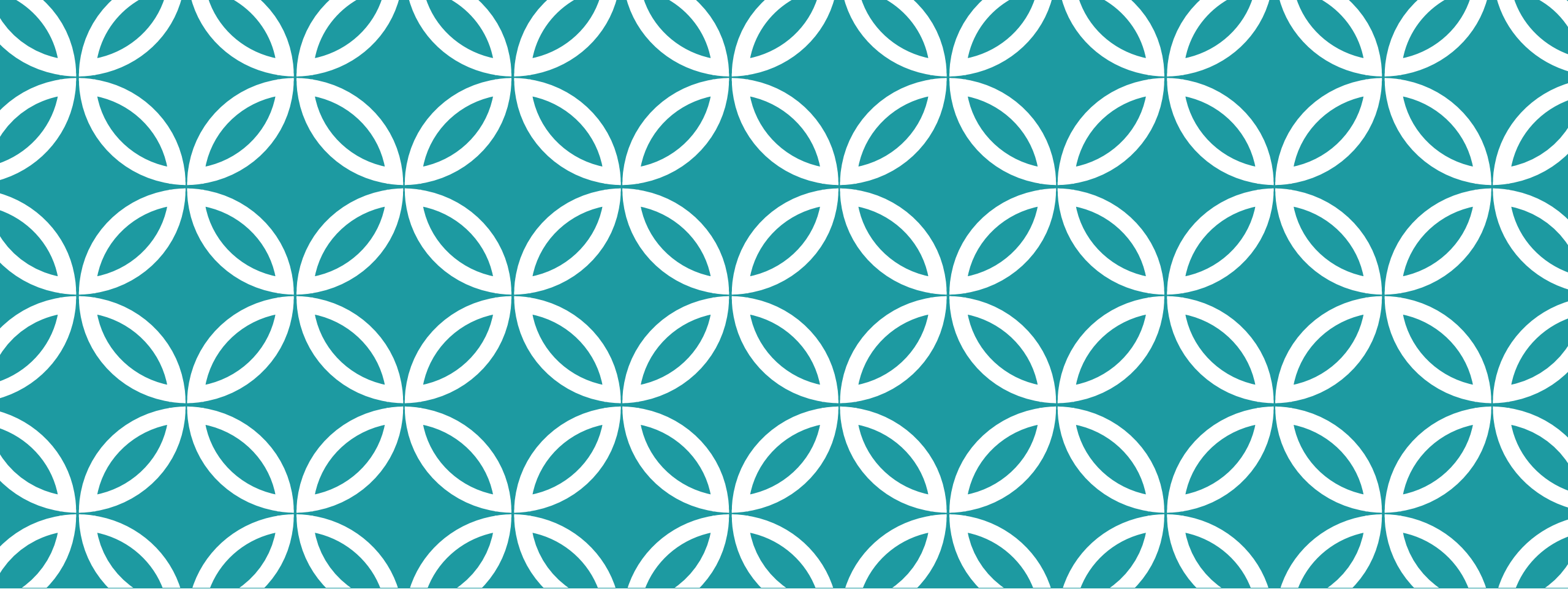
**3. Reflect**

**4. Respond**

*Lectio Divina has been likened to "feasting on the Word": first, the taking of a bite (lectio); then chewing on it (meditatio); savoring its essence (oratio) and, finally, "digesting" it and making it a part of the body (contemplatio). ~*[wikipedia.org/Lectio\\_Divina](https://wikipedia.org/Lectio_Divina)

# STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why do I say, “To pray is to change”? Have you ever experienced that in your own life?
2. How can we keep from being discouraged by the example of the “giants of the faith”?
3. What difference does it make in our praying if we believe that we live in an “open universe”?  
A “closed universe”?
4. Why is it important to view prayer as a learning process?
5. Distinguish between the prayer of faith and the prayer of guidance.
6. Frank Laubach said, “I want to learn how to live so that to see someone is to pray for them.” Experiment with that approach to life for one whole day and record what you learn from the experience.
7. What is your response to the idea of using the imagination in the work of prayer?
8. Look at someone today and imagine what they could be if they received a double portion of the light of Christ. By faith, give that portion to them and record what you learn from the experience.
9. What should we do when we don’t feel like praying?



# PRACTICE OF PRAYER

Week 3



ARCHBISHOP TAIT

I want a life of  
greater,  
deeper, truer  
prayer.

# LEARNING TO PRAY FOR OTHERS

1. Get in contact with God
2. Listen to God for guidance
3. Frequently, our lack is not faith but compassion
4. Love



# PRAY TOGETHER

/\* Let us pray together \*/

# PRAYER EXERCISE I

1. Pair up with partners.
2. Pick a scripture passage or choose silence, pray alone for ~5 minutes. (Some suggested verses on next page.)
3. Meet back up with partner, share & listen to each other (~15 minutes). Pray over each other.
4. Return back to class & share the experience.

# PRAYER EXERCISE I SCRIPTURE

## **Health**

Proverbs 16:24; 1 Timothy 4:8; 3 John 1:2; Revelation 14:12

## **Peace**

Psalms 4:8; 1 Peter 3:11; Philippians 4:6-7; Galatians 5:22

## **Fear**

Isaiah 43:1; John 14:27; Romans 8:38-39; Hebrews 13:5-6

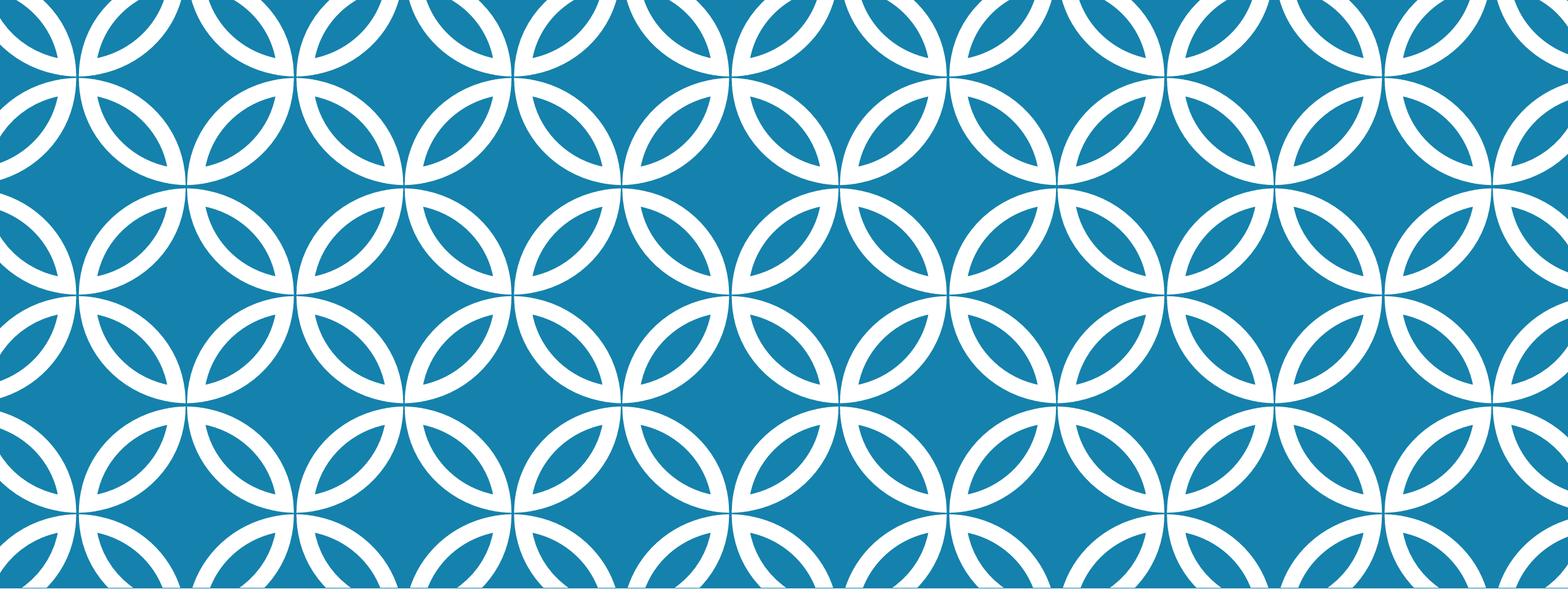
## **Encouragement**

Psalms 23:4; 1 Matthew 11:28; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:11



# PRAYER EXERCISE II

Pray intercessory prayer, together as a group.



# CONTINUED SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Week 4



# JEAN VANIER

Founder of the L'Arche communities

To wash the feet of a brother or sister in Christ, to allow someone to wash our feet, is a sign that together we want to follow Jesus, to take the downward path, to find Jesus' presence in the poor and the weak. Is it not a sign that we too want to live a heart-to-heart relationship with others, to meet them as a person and a friend, and to live in communion with them? Is it not a sign that we yearn to be men and women of forgiveness, to be healed and cleansed and to heal and cleanse others and thus to live more fully in communion with Jesus?



# READINESS / ASSESSMENT OF PRAYER

*Sacred Pathways assessment*

*Rule of Life Worksheet*

**Goal:** With the guidance of the Spirit, to provide a self-developed and self-lead template or plan for personal spiritual health that leads to an intimate and regular interactive relationship with Jesus.

[axiomchurchaz.com](http://axiomchurchaz.com)

# AXIOM PRAYER MODEL

This is a model based on a series of simple questions to follow to help guide us as we pray for others. It helps us to determine next steps while allowing the person space to receive prayer and perhaps go deeper as the spirit guides. The most important thing we can do when praying for others is to be prayed up ourselves and to ask God to fill us with more spirit so that the spirit can give us eyes to see and ears to hear so that we can be used by Him to serve our brothers and sisters. Pray for an increase in the gifts of discernment, exhortation/encouragement. Remember: It is not about us. It is about allowing the Holy Spirit room to move in their lives and ours as we minister in the spirit of love.

# AXIOM PRAYER MODEL STEPS

1. Introduction
2. Interview
3. Pray
4. Assessment
5. Follow-up

# APM STEP 1: INTRODUCTION

Ask for person's name if you do not know each other.

Respect the person's physical space.

# APM STEP 2: INTERVIEW

## Matthew 20:32

Ask the person how you can pray for them today. Ask them their need, whether it be physical, emotional, or relational.

Ask for permission to lay hands (shoulders, hands, head if spirit led and permission is given)

Listen to the Holy Spirit.

Foster an environment for trust, confession and transparency.

# APM STEP 3: PRAY (MARK 7:32)

Invite the Holy Spirit openly.

Petition to God on behalf of the person.

Speak healing and restoration over the pain and/or the condition the person is in.

Be open to the moving of the Holy Spirit during prayer.

# APM STEP 4: ASSESSMENT

**Mark 8:22**

Observe.

Are they receiving anything from the Lord? Are they experiencing a physical response? Have they received a word from God? Are you receiving insight from the Holy Spirit on what is transpiring?

If necessary, followup but be sensitive to person and context situation.

# APM STEP 5: FOLLOW-UP

## **John 5:14**

Has the person indicated prayer is over or have you discerned it is time to wrap up?

Conclude prayer session.

Do they need extended prayer? If so, find a quiet place to continue to minister

Have a member of the prayer team set up a time for additional extended prayer off-site if necessary.

Thank the person for vulnerability and transparency in coming forward for prayer.

If possible, connect them with an Axiom Community, other Axiom service group and/or forward a report to a staff pastor.

Encourage them that God is pleased when we share our burdens with one another and that they are greatly loved by Him.



# TERESA OF ÁVILA

Let nothing disturb you.

Let nothing upset you.

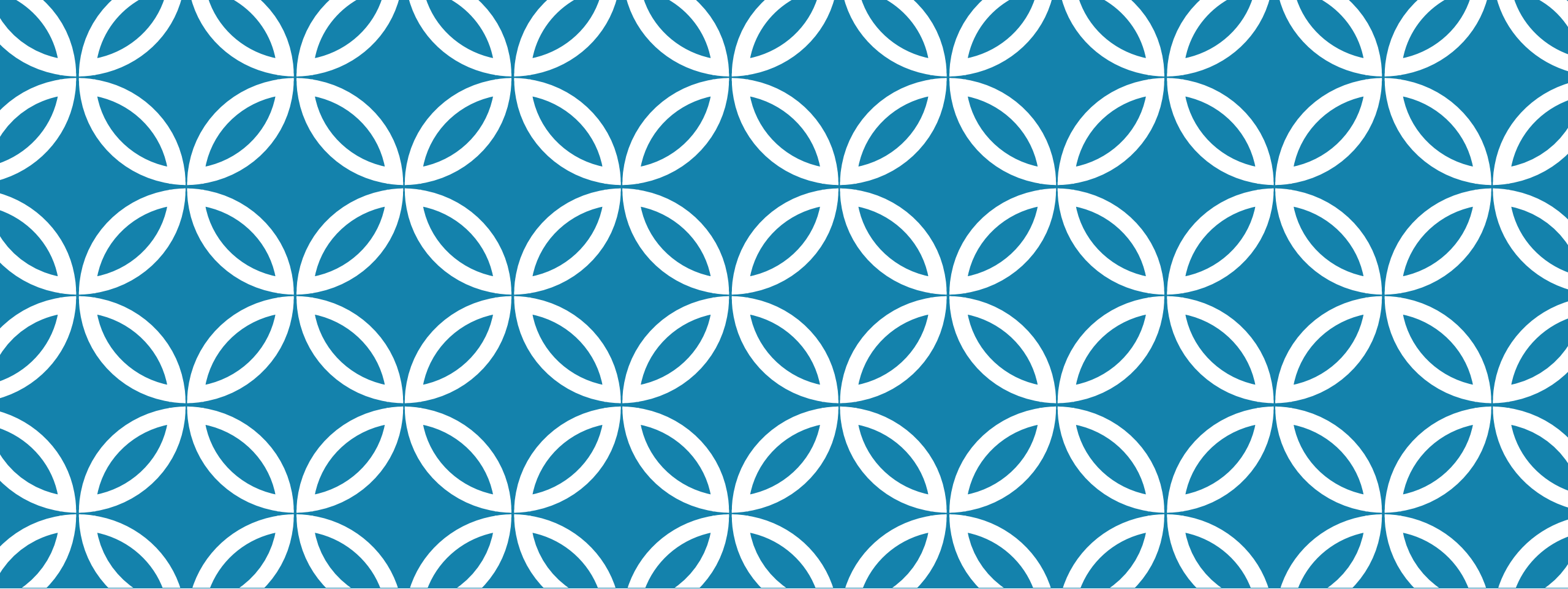
Everything changes.

God alone is unchanging.

With patience all things are possible.

Whoever has God lacks nothing.

God alone is enough.



# APPENDIX

Afterword



# JAMES FINLEY

May each of us be so fortunate as to be overtaken by God in the midst of little things. May we each be so blessed as to be finished off by God, swooping down from above or welling up from beneath, to extinguish the illusion of separateness that perpetuates our fears. May we, in having our illusory, separate self slain by God, be born into a new and true awareness of who we really are: one with God forever. May we continue on in this true awareness, seeing in each and every little thing we see the fullness of God's presence in our lives. May we also be someone in whose presence others are better able to recognize God's presence in their lives, so that they, too, might know the freedom of the children of God.

# PRAYERS

Apostles Creed

Philippians 2:5-11

Prayer of Examen

Prayer of St. Francis

Prayer of St. Patrick

Psalms 23

The Beatitudes

# REFERENCES

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Martin, James (2021). *Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone*

Paintner, Christine Valters (2015). *The Lectio Divina-The Sacred Art: Transforming Words & Images Into Heart-Centered Prayer*

*The Didache*

# RESOURCES

[axiomchurchaz.com/prayer](http://axiomchurchaz.com/prayer)

[cac.org/category/daily-meditations/](http://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/)

[commonprayer.net](http://commonprayer.net)

[plough.com/en/search-results?keyword=prayer](http://plough.com/en/search-results?keyword=prayer)

[prayer.nauminous.net](http://prayer.nauminous.net)