



AXIOM

Global Monastic Community



THE INTRODUCTION

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST

ENGAGING CULTURE

EMANCIPATING THE OPPRESSED

CHRISTOURAXIOM.COM



Welcome!

Welcome to Axiom Monastic Community or AMC. We are an international community of friends who are captured by the possibility of finding a love - a way of living, that Jesus translates as an embrace to Him.

The objective of this introduction is to do three things:

1

Set Axiom in its historical and contemporary context - Why a Monastic Community in the twenty first century?

2

Explain what Axiom's primary vision and values are.

3

Invite individuals and communities of Christ-followers to consider if the Axiom Monastic Community is the way God is drawing them to embrace in their journey with Him.

We want traveling companions to accompany us - people from all walks of life, from all nations and of all ages.

Invitation

Dear friends...

Thank you for your interest in Axiom!

I'm excited about the possibility of our global community embarking on a journey with you. For the past twelve years we've been in pursuit of a distinct spirituality that will make Jesus clearly visible to the world. Though our journey has been laden with soul-diminishing successes, and magnificent defeats, we believe that in the here and now something beautiful is emerging of which we would like to invite you to be part.

A DREAM...

We carry a dream that we can learn how to adore and enjoy God together, opening doors to awareness and aliveness for one another, even though we live in different parts of the world. Can we commit to a simple rhythm of life where this could be possible? We're not talking about a spiritually elite group or club, but rather friends who commit to journey together through the years, telling the stories of our God while hiking or motorbiking in the Alps, taking Communion together via Skype, or talking about God around campfires alongside the River Jordan. A community who shares, both in person as well as on an interactive web-based monastery, what books have most impacted us lately, what jokes have made our eyes water and our guts sore, or what trails up the spine of Tibet offer the most majestic views of the roof of the world.

A NEW MONASTICISM...

How can we set our hearts on pilgrimage (Ps. 84:5) while enjoying each other's cultures, be it chocolate, poetry, Bach or burgers? I believe a new monasticism can and does encompass the things that make us come alive!



"The renewal of the church will come from a new type of monasticism, which has only in common with the old an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount. It is high time men and women banded together to do this."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Lately I've been shattered by the implications of what a life with an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount can look like. As Axiom, we have designed a rhythm of formation, 7 distinct ways of living, with the Be-attitudes in mind. These are practices that, in various forms, Jesus embraced and enjoyed in His life, and were at the heart of His existence as the Son of God.

AN INVITATION...

My invitation is for you to begin your journey with us by taking on our first three practices in which this handbook highlights: Daily moments of reflection, Annual Pilgrimage and Retreat, and Weekly Communion. We will help resource you, adding modern spins and creativity to these disciplines, as well



as provide for you a Spiritual Director where desired or needed. (Our seven practices are listed on page 21, some of which may already be part of your rhythm of life.)

I am convinced that as you walk this pathway, not as legalistic acts, but as expressions of an intentional in-loveness with Jesus, there will be personal transformation and wondrous opportunities to surprise our God with joy! As we weave these activities into our lifestyle, they will help us acquire an attitude of heart and mind like the "Blessed are those who. . .," that are mentioned in Matt. 5:3-11.

A CHALLENGE...

Did Jesus exaggerate when He said the words that so appropriately ended the old rendition of "The Little Drummer Boy"? Those words, found in Matt. 6:8, are "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". Romanism trembled when Martin Luther saw God, the world became the stage of one man when John Wesley saw God, thousands of orphaned were saved when George Mueller saw God, and the great awakening sprang into being when Jonathan Edwards saw God. Today we owe the world a fresh encounter with God!

"The main business in this life is to restore to health the eyes of our hearts whereby God can be seen."

- Augustine

Whether we see God through big name influencers or by revolutionary mini-movements imagine what could happen to the world if together we were to see Him! May our relationship with you, the enclosed three practices, and any of our other rhythms of formation you would like to experiment with, help prepare our hearts for such a time as this.

"COME AND SEE . . ." Jesus

Your friend,

Jeff Pratt



Why a Rhythm of Formation?

"...until Christ is formed in you." Galatians 4:19

Faith in Christianity largely has become believing in things to be true or false, and learning how to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead of from the tree of life. The object of our religious faith has become more about ideas or doctrine instead of a Person. Our concentration has been on only what to believe instead of how to believe. Our vision as Axiom is to help provide concrete practices so that we can know how to access faith, hope and love. If we don't move from a belief based religion to a practiced based religion, little change will be produced in us, and nothing beautiful will be done for our God through how we live.

"My central claim is that we become like Christ by doing one thing - by following Him in the overall style of life He chose for Himself. If we have faith in Christ, we must believe that He knew how to live. We can, through faith and grace, become like Christ by practicing the types of activities He engaged in, by arranging our whole lives around the activities He Himself practiced in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of the Father."

- Dallas Willard



Daily Moments of Reflection

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6



"All of us were shocked that she didn't wake up the next morning..."

We had just walked her home from school, as we had done every day during our sophomore year. But there she was the next morning, so very still in her bed. She had died in her sleep. Although we all knew that she had lived with some disease that none of us knew how to pronounce, it was a distant reality that she rarely discussed.

Becky Dwas was one of those people who made you want to gossip less and listen more, to aspire to live and love more selflessly. She carried herself with a warmth and presence that somehow marked our lives. That's why we walked her home everyday. (Maybe the fact that she had beautiful blond hair had something to do with it as well!) Yet even after her passing, for the rest of our school year we continued to take the same pathway by her house, the longer way home, as if she was still with us. Sometimes we'd pause for a moment in front of her bedroom window in silence. Though we never talked about why we did this, I think we did it to somehow honor her, to

reflect and remember, so that the part of her that had become part of us would not be lost."

Somewhere, somehow along life's joyful and turbulent journey, the One who died for the love of us, our Jesus, became part of our hearts and lives. And yet, if you're anything like me, we're so often distracted by the trivial and temporary, so quickly captured by a culture that favors image over reality, and having over being. We end up being too easily satisfied and choosing busyness over knowing our belovedness. Thus, we need daily moments of slowing down to be beside our God, to be reminded of who we really are - and more importantly, who He is.

"Lust and insecurities have always dominated my life, until I finally decided to actually love Jesus and spend time with Him everyday . . . novel thought! Now my mind is in the midst of renewal and I know my true identity, and am finding in God my home."

- Mark Thomas Australia, Axiom Pilgrim

In Daily Moments of Reflection, we take the slightly longer pathway home in a sense, to pause and remember, so that the part of Him that has become part of us will be not be lost.

APPLICATION

"I never saw consistent change in my life until I became consistent in my daily times with God. Nothing else has worked! I wish I had tried this years ago!"

- Birte Hosher Germany Axiom Retreatant

Whilst no overall time frame is given to this, it is expected that the minimum entry level will be 15-30 minutes a day. The objective is to grow as a contemplative, and for Christ to be formed in us. Specific materials have been developed to facilitate a creative and empowering use of this daily time.



Annual Pilgrimage and Retreat

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3



"I could almost hear him breathing beneath the floor boards under the dining room table..."

'Who is he, and what's he doing down there?' I asked my closest childhood friend during a sleepover. 'He is an orphan boy who lives down the street with his only surviving relative, his grandmother, who is both blind and mute. I caught him under our porch last week and asked him what he was doing. He told me he likes to come around our dinner time, lie there in the dry leaves under the floor boards of our dining room and just listen.' 'Listen to what?' I asked, somewhat confused. 'He likes to listen to us laughing and talking, interrupting each other and arguing as we eat. He says he just likes to listen to the sounds of home.'

"Live in Me, and make your home in Me as I have made My home in you."

- John 15: 4 (The Message)

When we practice Silence, Solitude and Prayer in the context of a retreat and/or pilgrimage, we're embarking on a spiritual journey that takes us to a place of heart and spirit that a simple "quiet time" does not. It is a place where we learn how to prostrate ourselves humbly over the rubble of our complex lives and listen for the sounds of home.

Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: *"You are my Beloved, marked by my love, the delight of my life."* Matt. 3:17

During a pilgrim's journey, our prodigal false self, which is enchanted by the affirmation of others and the stimuli of busyness, and our many attachments, are exposed. It is in this state of inner poverty we learn what it means to be "poor in spirit," and to live with an ache that is only meant to be filled by God, or to be left empty until He chooses to come.



hours or a few days. It can be a personal retreat or a guided retreat. Axiom sees these quality times with God as essential to learning how to be contemplatives who live in the heart of the world.

GOD, WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ME?

"No one knew she had just come out of a life of prostitution two weeks before. Right after becoming a new Christian, and knowing only two verses out of the Bible, a friend gave to Mona a free ticket to attend a Guided Silence and Solitude Prayer Retreat. She found herself staring blankly at the Retreat Guide as he explained the next spiritual exercise. 'I would like you all to go out on the mountainside alone and find a quiet place to ask God one question: What do you feel about me? We'll reconvene in two hours to share any impressions you may have received.'

After two hours, when everyone had regathered, various individuals shared what they had experienced. Mona nervously made her way to the center of the circle and proceeded to explain, 'I hate talking in front of people, and I wish someone had given me one of those black books to take with me (referring to The Bible), nonetheless I found an alone place to pray. I didn't really think anything was going to happen, when words immediately came to mind that I began to write down. I've never heard words like this before, sounds like a poem. I don't know if this is from your God, but I now know that He is mine.' As tears filled her eyes, and the eyes of her listeners, she proceeded to read.

*"Arise my Love, my lovely one come,
The winter is passed and the rains are gone,
The flowers appear, it's the season of song,
O beautiful one arise and come with me,
Before the dawn breaks, and the shadows flee,
For you ravish my heart with just one look."*

Someone then rose from the crowd and showed her the words out of the book of the Songs of Solomon, a book that she didn't even know existed. In response Mona said, 'I've only been a Christian for just two weeks, right out of a horrible life, and I can't believe I ravish the heart of God with just one look, by merely being with Him.'

"I am my Beloved's, and His desire is for me"

- Songs of Solomon 2:16

WHAT'S A PILGRIMAGE VERSUS A RETREAT?

"A Pilgrimage is a way of praying with your feet. You go on a pilgrimage because you know there's something missing inside your soul, and the only way you can find it is to go to sacred places, where God made Himself know to others. In sacred places, something gets done that you've been unable to do for yourself."

- Ian Morgan Cron

A Pilgrimage is a time set aside to walk, preferably with others, as a symbolic representation of our journey alongside God. Two of the disciples walked with Christ on the road to Emmaus following His resurrection. At the end of that walk, which involved conversation, questions and learning together, the three broke bread, and the disciples received a revelation about who their companion truly was. Pilgrimage sets out in anticipation of revelation, and involves walking, talking and eating together . . . yum yum!

"The teaching at the retreat helped me to see why Jesus went to be alone with His Father for extended periods of time so often. If He needed it, then I need it, or I can't call myself a Christ-follower. This whole experience was life-changing."

- Joseph Thurlow British Axiom Pilgrim

A Retreat is a withdrawal from everyday life to relax, draw breath, examine one's life to date and open oneself to inspirational interaction with the Holy Spirit. It can last for a couple

APPLICATION

Axiom offers retreats during significant seasons in the Christian calendar, Lent and Advent for example, in both North America and Europe. Axiom also hosts retreats in the spring and the fall. Check our website for the specifics on both retreats and pilgrimages.

www.christouraxiom.com

During an Axiom led Pilgrimage, while enjoying history, food, and culture, we may briefly study the life of a Christian leader and God-Chaser who has influenced the world by pointing us to Jesus. One such example would be Francis of Assisi in Italy; however, Pilgrimages don't always mean traveling vast distances to an historic pilgrim's pathway. If due to your schedule and limited finances you are unable to attend one of our Axiom events, we will help you find a place of pilgrimage in your own geographical location, as well as provide resources that will enrich these special quality times with God.

"The greatest journey is the one that leads you Home."

- From Steven Spielberg's "War Horse"

"On the Assisi, Italy Pilgrimage I experienced my own personal Homecoming to God, never being aware that I needed one, and that there was a prodigal in my life that was robbing me of real peace and joy, and having a complete heart for God."

- Sarah Samson Montana, USA Axiom Retreatant



Weekly Eucharist

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5:6



of himself - he had thought of me. He had saved me the pain I deserved for my carelessness, and took it himself.

Months later, Paulo returned to his homeland and I returned to the states. We didn't see each other for a couple of years until there was a special Youth With A Mission gathering in Kona, Hawaii. My heart leapt with joy when I heard his voice behind me say, 'Is that you, Jeff?' After a crushing embrace and a quick catch up, we scampered down to the beach to body surf as we had done in years past. I'll never forget, before racing down to the ocean's edge, the moment I glanced over to Paulo to signal our run together. His shirt had just been taken off and my eyes fell upon the scars on his chest. Suddenly I was reminded of the sacrifice he had made on my behalf a few years before. It all

became fresh, new and real to me again."

"I should have looked both ways more carefully before I stepped off that sidewalk curb in Manila, the Philippines..."

A Jeepney came barreling around the corner as my Samoan friend, Paulo, in an effort to protect me, threw himself between me and that overstuffed means of public transportation. As the vehicle hit him, his body was thrown into a crowd of people across the street. I ran to his side and looked down on his smiling face, and, with a couple of deep, bloody gashes across his chest, he stammered in his familiar accent, 'It's no problem Jeff. A couple of cuts on the belly, but it'll be fine in a moment. How are you?' Then he was carried to a nearby clinic where he received medical attention.

Imprinted forever in my memory are those moments where, over the next few days, I would see him walk by me with his shoulders hunched over so he wouldn't rip open the new stitches. Every time I saw him, I was reminded of his sacrifice. In the moment of crisis on that street corner, he hadn't thought

*"See from His hands, His head, His feet,
sorrow and love flowed mingled down,
Did ere such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?"*

- Isaac Watts

"When I survey the Wondrous Cross"

The Eucharist meal symbolizes the place of healing and recovery for humanity. It is the meal Jesus asked his followers to repeat until his return. It is the place of reflection, confession, restoration, healing and future hope.



"Like love, the Eucharist does not need to be fully understood or explained, it needs only to be touched. In the Eucharist, as in love, the main thing is that we are held."

- Ronald Rolheiser

The scriptural story of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment provides a paradigm for this. That woman, we are told, had been suffering from internal bleeding for many years. During those years she had tried everything within her power to come to healing. Nothing had worked. All her efforts had served only to worsen her state and leave her fatigued and discouraged. Finally, with her own resources spent and all that was humanly in view exhausted, she decided she would sneak up and touch Christ. As she touched Him, she felt power flow into her. She became whole.

True Communion is to touch and be touched by God. There is an embrace that far exceeds what can be explained biologically or psychologically. Power is transmitted through love that goes beyond rational understanding.

That is why, after Jesus spent all His words, He left us the Eucharist. That is why, after we have spent all our words, we

should celebrate the Eucharist. When our words, decisions and actions are inadequate to relieve the aching in our hearts, we need the embrace of our Father, and friend who is God. This happens in Holy Communion.

What a wonderful thought for us to ponder that as a global community, once a week, by gazing upon His scars with the eyes of our hearts, we can comfort Him who mourns on behalf of all the pain and injustices done to His loved ones in the world today.

"... Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my heart, my all."

- Issac Watts

APPLICATION

Axiom endeavors to celebrate the Eucharist once a week, with a recommendation for Wednesday so that there is a sense of global unity throughout the community. There is no prescribed format. Bread, wine, blessing and prayer in whatever form individuals or groups prefer. We have materials to support this weekly Eucharist, and you may want to join us for Skype Communion.



Axiom's Ancient Pathways

(See *Axiom's Rhythm of Formation Booklet 2* for full details)

ax • i • om

n. a self-evident indisputable truth

WHY AXIOM?

An Axiom is a logical statement that is assumed to be true. Members of the global community, led by Jeff Pratt and Micha Jazz, accept that Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, are self-evidently true, and serve as the starting point of all our enquiries and understandings about ourselves, others and the created order in which we live.

CONTEMPLATIVE ACTIVISM

Over a hundred years ago, Theresa of Lisieux meditated on a picture of the suffering Christ. She observed blood flowing across the side of His face and down His side. She sensed through her contemplation that the blood of Jesus was still flowing through suffering humanity and the many injustices inflicted on the innocent. She made a promise to spend her life serving those in need and exposing injustice. While gazing on the picture of Jesus her prayer was this, "I don't want His precious blood to be lost. I shall spend my life gathering it up for the good of souls. For to live from love is to dry His face."

In Axiom we seek to blend contemplation with action. While contemplating the goodness and beauty at the heart of the Trinity and living visibly and tangibly demonstrating the character of our God, we engage in the practical service of others.

WHY MONASTIC?

A Monastic life, above all, is about exploring what it means to live a life of prayer.



"New Monasticism is a growing movement of committed Christians who are recovering a radical discipleship of monasticism and unearthing a fresh expression of Christianity."

- Shane Claiborne

Some words from Friar Micha . . .

Few people are aware that monks and friars were originally lay led movements within the church. They simply, yet seriously, committed to live as closely as possible to the Way of Jesus. They were not solemn, but dynamic and creative. Many movements of monks and friars emerged to challenge and reform the church of their day. They were culturally relevant within their time and made a powerful impact in communicating the love of God, in demonstrating the power of creative Christian living, and providing a rich legacy for future generations.

Historically, monks and friars emerged as contemplative missionaries appearing in the deserts of Mesopotamia and Egypt in the early centuries following Jesus and continuing down through the years to our present day. Axiom sees itself as a



fresh expression of this source of life that, somewhat like a river, has flowed from the resurrection to today and will flow on into eternity itself. Axiom is simply women and men joining together and agreeing to live out the gospel of Christ, today!

THE SEVEN PRACTICES

- Daily Moments of Reflection
- Annual Pilgrimage & Retreat
- Weekly Eucharist
- Lifelong Learning
- Weekly Acts of Service
- Examen
- Body Care

TO BE A PILGRIM

*To journey without being changed
is to be a nomad.*

*To change without journeying
is to be a chameleon.*

*To journey and to be transformed
is to be a Pilgrim.*

- Mark Nepo

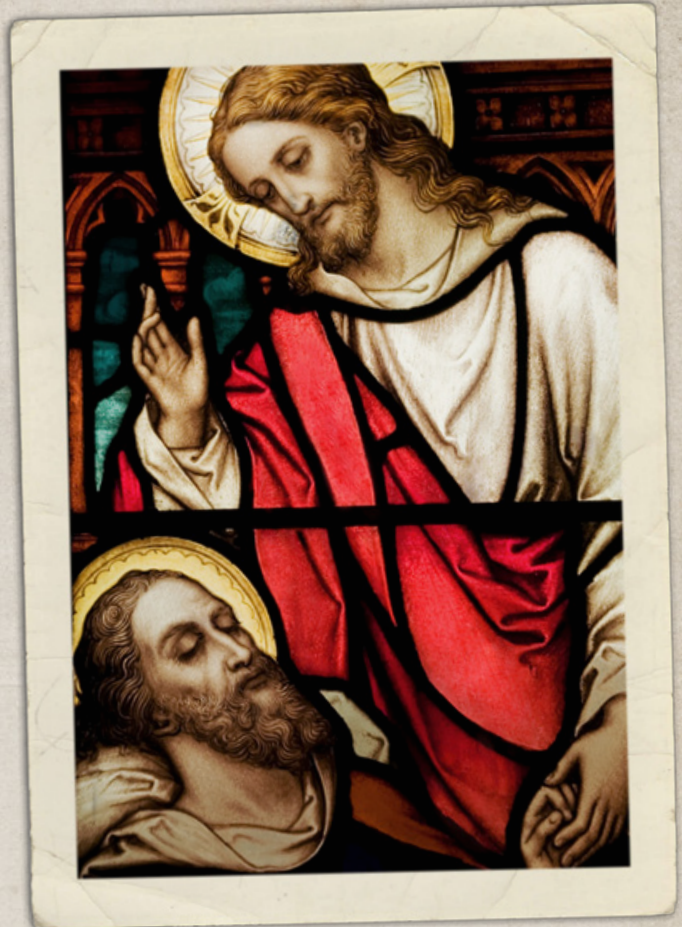
AXIOM'S PURPOSE

Axiom is a global network of friends who seek to:

- Encounter Christ
- Engage culture
- Emancipate those who are oppressed

Axiom Participants connect through a variety of expressions of life, and embrace a common rhythm of formation. Whilst **Axiom Interns** are those with an interest in exploring faith, and related matters, and draw upon Axiom for experience, information, and companionship. **Axiom Associates** celebrate all that Axiom is doing but as yet have not chosen to embrace Axiom's way of formation themselves.

Axiom Monastic Community maintains its connectedness through its shared commitments and rhythms, the stories emerging from such commitments and rhythms published on the website, and in participating in local, regional, national and international activities. The hub at the heart of Axiom is an interactive web based monastery.



The Contemplative Network, an expression of Axiom Monastic Community, is both a virtual and realized community in England. Virtual in that many individual members will primarily connect via the website, www.the-contemplative.com, whilst others are exploring different forms of realized community life in their geographical location. This network is led by Micha Jazz and Greg Valerio.



Axiom: Support & Opportunities

SPIRITUAL COMPANIONSHIP:

Spiritual Companionship, sometimes called Spiritual Direction, is a time honored term for our conversation, ordinarily between two persons, in which one person talks with another, more spiritually experienced person about the ways in which God may be touching her or his life, directly and indirectly. Axiom has available Spiritual Directors where desired or needed, and enjoys facilitating the coaching and care of each individual in reaching one's full potential and formation.

PUBLICATIONS:

Axiom is exploring developing a publications schedule to encourage spiritual growth, to provide spiritual stimulus, to offer challenge, to provide a rich reservoir of stories and to both publicize and serve the needs of the oppressed.

RETREATS:

We believe that hearing God's voice clearly and pressing close to His heart is facilitated by silence, solitude and prayer. Axiom organizes a number of directed and formally led retreats each year. Axiom also helps fellow pilgrims find retreat facilities in their own geographical location and provides resources for personal renewal.



PILGRIMAGES:

Axiom organizes a number of pilgrimages, often located along the ancient tracks of former Christ-Followers. Pilgrimage offers the opportunity to discover new vistas, which themselves serve as a metaphor for the inner exploration of the human spirit and our spiritual hunger for fulness.

INCUBATE:

Incubation offers an opportunity for individuals to learn together. The word 'incubate' means, "to grow under conditions that promote development." This is the foundation for these learning adventures in personal growth and development individually and collaboratively.

EMANCIPATING THE OPPRESSED:

Axiom resources those interested in opportunities to serve amongst orphaned and sexually exploited children, as well as widows, embracing James 1:27, "Pure and undefiled religion is this, to look after widows and orphans in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

"We are just visitors to this time, this place. Our purpose is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love, and then we return home."

- Australian Aboriginal song (Earthschool Harmony)



Conclusion

Globally, there is a wave emerging on the horizon. It is a wave of revolutionary mini-movements in pursuit of an authentic Christianity that may give birth to another world. Axiom Monastic Community is one of these movements.

Over the past decade we have learned that we grow the most when we honor what's most honorable, and when we ascribe worth to what's most worthy of our time, attention and lives.

In the same spirit that encompasses the Sermon on the Mount, can we become the blessed ones who hunger and thirst after righteousness together, ushering in renewal within our own hearts that will lead to an awakening in the world?

— NEXT STEPS: —

1

If you are considering becoming an Axiom Participant with AMC then you can start by embracing the three rhythms of formation outlined in this handbook.

2

If you embark on this suggested pathway please let us know. We'd love to welcome you and provide for you any needed resources and prayer support.

3

If you want to email questions, thoughts, or concerns please do so to either:

jpattmail@gmail.com

OR

friarmike@btinternet.com



Axiom Prayer of Dedication

This is often included as the concluding prayer for the weekly Eucharist. Axiom Participants are encouraged to speak it out loud once a week.

“Oh Lord, ever ancient, ever new, today as a community of friends, we come together to commit to a pilgrimage of the heart; a communal search for the face of our God. Our journey, Father, is to find the home of Jesus within us, the birthplace of Life. Therefore, we willingly embrace five ways of living to better equip us for this quest:

We commit to drink the cup of Life together instead of alone. We desire to make our sorrows and our joys visible to one another, celebrating the truth that the wounds of our lives can be sources of healing when we live them as part of a loving fellowship.

We commit to be a people who find their souls among the little ones; walking justly, not just piously. We want to touch Jesus, who is often disguised in the ragged apparel of the poor, the oppressed, and the orphaned.

We commit to give attention to our Lord’s divine whisper, in our primary pursuit of knowing Him. We know that daily we can choose either busyness or belovedness. Therefore, we forsake the trivial and the temporary to recover the ancient wonder of astonishment and gratefulness.

We commit to walk this path together with the scars and wounds of our Lord forever before our eyes. His marks are visible to us through the redemptive power of Holy Communion.

We commit to be a community of Truth tellers, forever conveying the story of our lives -- to live only to love; spending our hours and days carrying people to the Christ.

Come, Lord Jesus, come -- for this end and purpose we dedicate our lives; both to you, our God of covenant, and to each other. In Jesus name...”

Amen

CONTACT DETAILS:

www.christouraxiom.com
www.the-contemplative.com

UNITED STATES:

P.O. Box 6343
Hamden,
CT 06517

UNITED KINGDOM

The Friary
Southsea
PO5 2PR





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CHRISTOURAXIOM.COM