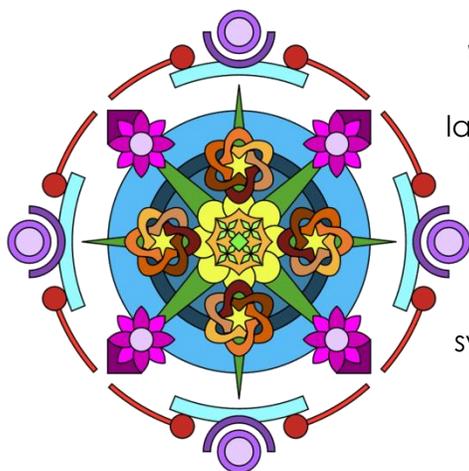


Praying with Mandalas – A Centering Prayer



What is a mandala?

The word “mandala” is from the classical Indian language of Sanskrit. Loosely translated it means circle. However, it is far more than a simple shape and is often thought of as a cosmic diagram that represents wholeness and reminds us of our relation to the infinite or God. Mandalas are complex designs with a circle pattern or motif. They can be other shapes but the design still has a circular focal point and is symmetrical in form.

Cross-cultures

The mandala is used in many religious traditions for meditation and healing. Hildegard von Bingen, a Christian nun in the 12th century used the creation of mandalas to express her visions and beliefs. American Indians as well as Aztecs used mandalas. Both the Navajo Indians and Tibetan monks create sand mandalas to demonstrate the impermanence of life. The Tibetan mandalas are usually intricate illustrations of religious significance that are used for meditation. Buddhists and Hindus use mandalas in religious ceremonies. Carl Jung said that a mandala symbolizes “a safe refuge of inner reconciliation and wholeness.” Labyrinths are a type of mandala used in many cultures for centering.

Using Mandalas

While constructing sand or stone mandalas can take days, the use of paper mandalas that are already made may be a more immediate way to meditate or reduce stress. Many free mandalas can be found on line. Coloring a mandala while praying for someone and then sending them the visible symbol of the prayer is a great use of the mandala. Many who use mandalas for meditation find it best to focus on the outer edge and follow the path to the center. Others focus on the mandala as a whole and let their eyes blur as they feel the power of the mandala. Coloring the mandalas is an easy way to center and pray!

Coloring Mandalas

As you sit to color this mandala be aware that God's colorful light can transform our lives. As you add color to this window hold a concern in your mind. It may be a worry, a hope, a fear, a sorrow, or even a joy – anything that you would like to bring before God. As you work prayerfully let God fill you with love and compassion, hear what God is saying to you about your concern, and be open to your spirit discerning God's Spirit. Let God hear your needs and offer yourself as a way to help God. Let God speak to you in the beauty of God's holiness.