

The Mystical Power of the Labyrinth

The labyrinth is an ancient, sacred symbol found in many religious traditions throughout the world. During the Middle Ages, labyrinths were prominent in numerous cathedrals in Europe, where Christians walked floor labyrinths or traced their fingers along the carved ridges of wall labyrinths.

The best known of these Christian labyrinths is in Chartres Cathedral, France, and was built during the twelfth century. For medieval Christians, the labyrinth was a symbolic pilgrimage.

Today modern pilgrims walk the labyrinth a one of many ways to pray and meditate. The winding path into the center and back out again is a metaphor for the journeys of life and faith.

Unlike a maze, which has many paths and is a puzzle to solve, the labyrinth is single path in and out and is designed to quiet the mind for prayer and meditation.

The labyrinth is a spiritual practice, a tool for prayer, meditation and reflection.

Allow about 30 minutes for your walk. Children are welcome to walk the labyrinth, but parents are asked to supervise so that other walkers are not disturbed.

Opportunities

Labyrinth Prayer Walks: The outdoor Labyrinths is open to the public every day of the week.

Special Events: Throughout the year, we offer workshops and retreats exploring the labyrinth as a spiritual practice.

Finger Labyrinth is available for individual use and is located in the lobby of the Visitation Chapel.

The Labyrinth

How strange
at the beginning
to shed the day
and come so close
to the center
only to turn away
and return
to the outer edge
then weave again
the path in close
but not quite there
until a final turn
bring you to
the center
to learn
how long you must stay.
There is only one path
It is the path there
It is the path away.

Pat Janus
Rochester, N.Y.

Guidelines for Using the Labyrinth

The guidelines below refer to floor labyrinths.

- Step into the labyrinth at the entrance. Before starting, pause a moment to clear your mind and become aware of your breathing.
- Allow about a minute before entering the path behind another walker. Your pace will change throughout the walk. You may pass others or let them step around you.
- Remain in the center for as long as you like, using the moment for prayer or reflection.
- The same path leads both in and out. You may pass others on your way.

Prayer In Motion

There are many ways to use the labyrinth. Feel free to do what is comfortable and to experiment.

Ways to walk the labyrinth:

In silent reflection

Accompanied by music

Considering a problem, joy or question in your life

Meditating on a particular subject, verse of Scripture, or hymn

Repeating a meaningful phrase or word

As an embodied act of thanks-giving and praise

"The labyrinth awaits our discovery for it will guide us through the troubles of our lives to the grand mysterious patterns that shape the web of creation. It will lead us toward the Source and eventually guide us home."

Lauren Artess, Walking a Sacred Path

