

Praying with the Labyrinth

- ❖ The Labyrinth is a spiritual tool serving as a walk-centering activity for the human heart, mind and soul. Plan at least 20-30 minutes, or longer if desired.
- ❖ Begin to prepare yourself as you walk toward the Labyrinth. Walk in calm silence, focusing on your intention for walking and praying the Labyrinth.
- ❖ A Labyrinth has a single, purposeful path that winds from the edge into the center. The same path leads back out to the edges again. Thus, it resembles the indirect path of our lives, which leads us sometimes into the center of the human condition, sometimes into the heart and mind of God, sometimes into the very core of illness or pain, sometimes into the focal point of enlightenment or understanding.

Instructions for Walking the Labyrinth:

- ❖ Pause at the threshold of the Labyrinth.
- ❖ Allow about one minute between people as you enter the labyrinth.
- ❖ Let go of the details of your life as you step into the path of the Labyrinth and move toward the center.
- ❖ Become aware of opening your heart and quieting your mind, preparing to listen for God.
- ❖ Let your body assume the pace it wants. As you walk, breathe naturally; become aware of your breathing.
- ❖ If other people are also walking the Labyrinth, those going in will meet those coming out. You may “pass” people going in or coming out, or let them step around you in prayerful silence. Become aware of the path itself, because it is your path – a mirror for where you are in life.
- ❖ Some people do not really get a feel for the labyrinth experience until they have walked it at least three times.
- ❖ The center is a place and a time for illumination, meditation and prayer. Stay in the center as long as you like. Allow yourself to receive guidance and insights. “Be still and know that I am God.” Ps. 46
- ❖ The process of retracing one’s steps to exit the Labyrinth provides an opportunity to integrate your insights into your daily life.
- ❖ There can be a sense of union, clarity, strengthening, and healing in your relationship with God, self and others ... or just a sense of peace or joy.

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- ❖ Prayers and mantras may be helpful before, during or following your walk.
 - Come Holy Spirit, Come
 - Teach me your paths, Oh Lord
 - Show me your path
 - Lord, hear my prayer
 - When I call, please answer me

- ❖ **Prayer of Thomas Merton:**
 - “My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself; and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.” (Thoughts in Solitude, 1954)

- ❖ **Why Walk the Labyrinth?**
 - Walking into a Labyrinth is a symbol of entering into something, learning what there is to learn, and then moving on with life.
 - A Labyrinth walk can represent a life journey, a pilgrimage to a sacred place, or a prayer that brings us to God.
 - It can be a way of intentionally and reflectively facing a problem or issue.
 - Sometimes you may walk the Labyrinth looking for an answer.
 - You may simply walk to be open to what comes.
 - A Labyrinth walk is a spiritual and personal journey, and therefore it is a sacred path.