



WALKING THE LABYRINTH: A CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNEY

Welcome to our labyrinth at Benet Pines.

Our labyrinth is a conduit for prayer based on the ancient, yet contemporary Chartres labyrinth design found in the Cathedral in Chartres, France.

As you experience prayer through walking the labyrinth, we hope you are blessed as you take advantage of this opportunity for silent meditation and contemplation.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MAZE AND A LABYRINTH:

The **Maze** is multicursal. It offers a choice of paths, some with exits and some dead end. A maze challenges the choice-making, logical part of ourselves.

The **Labyrinth** is unicursal. It invites our intuitive, pattern-seeking, symbolic mind to come forth. To enter the labyrinth is to choose to walk a spiritual path.

WALKING THE LABYRINTH:

There are as many ways to walking the Labyrinth as there are walkers. Here are a few suggestions:

Gracious Attention: Let all thoughts go. Allow a sense of attention to flow through you.

Ask a Question: Focus on a question. Walk with a listening heart.

Use Repetition: Repeat a word, mantra or phrase over and over.

Offer Petitions: Bring to mind persons or issues for which you wish to pray.

Honor a Benchmark: A birthday, a lifestyle change, an anniversary, a memorial can be the focus of your walk.

Body Prayer: Move spontaneously as your body wishes. Dance the path. Move your arms, legs, bend and sway.

THE LABYRINTH WALK:

The Labyrinth walk is a process meditation that seems to suspend time as well as judgment. Images may abound as they do in dreamtime and whatever arises within is part of this process. The three parts of the walk are parallel to the threefold mystical path: Purgation, Illumination and Union.

Purgation: The walk from the entrance to the center represents the letting go of what blocks the Divine.

Illumination: The center is where the walker is invited to be fully present to the moment and to pause open to receive from the Divine.

Union: As the walker leaves the center and begins the journey back out the same path, the gift or insight gained is integrated for use on the journey beyond the labyrinth.

USE OF THIS LABYRINTH:

If others are walking the labyrinth with you, there will be times when you are in close proximity or must pass one another on the path. The labyrinth walk is a mini-life journey, so the meeting of others along the way is part of the experience.

PRAYING WITH THE LABYRINTH

“Wayfarer there is no way, there is only the going!”



Trust the guidance of the Divine through the sacred form and holy pattern of the labyrinth. We are all pilgrims walking on a path deeper into the new millennium and while we are walking forward we are

also walking backwards, far back into our beginnings some 15 billion years ago through scientific discovery. Today we walk the labyrinth path as a species in search of ways to restore balance to our earth.

What wisdom do we find to guide us?

Embedded in the labyrinth are the three Wisdom impulses of purgation, illumination and union, found in the traditional Christian mystical path. These are the guides that can transform the soul of our species from within...and when this happens we will know ourselves as full human.

Purgation, the way into the labyrinth from its entrance to its center, represents the **purgative** way. We enter this path to achieve the freedom of the wider life. There is a loosening of attachments as the web of illusion begins to crumble. We begin to let go of obsessions that alienate us from reality. The mind becomes oriented towards truth and we discover the Divine in creatures; The infinite expressing itself in finite form. The earth becomes the musical manifestation of God's creative joy!

Illumination, the second stage of the mystical path is found in the center of the labyrinth. Here there is a harmonization of the self's life with the greater rhythms of existence. In this stage we drink the wine of absolute like which runs through the arteries of the world. The doors of our perceptions are cleansed. The place of illumination is a resting space where the self turns and sees all about it a transfigured universe, radiant with Divine light.

Union begins as we leave the center of the labyrinth, following the same path out that brought us in. The self becomes wholly penetrated by the ocean of life and love. One realizes that the only

way to live is to live in a world charged with the Presence and Reality of the Divine.

The soul in union equals a life that is fertile and creative, one which brings the fresh outburst of spiritual vitality into the world. From the place of union one moves back out into the world, focused and replenished.

This is our challenge; to return the Earth Community in a spirit of humility, to ask pardon for our gross offenses to the planet and its' members and to recognize the Divine manifesting itself in all creation.

How do we do this?

The path is made by walking!

The experience:

All living creation is based on pattern and organization. Geese fly in formation, fish swim in schools, even plants grow in logical progression. There is a deep human need to seek order from chaos. The path here is one symbol of this longing.

As you trace this pattern with your steps, you are purposefully entering a space where there is order and reason. As you take time to do this, you may feel some positive stirring from your spirit and/or soul. Perhaps the image of how pilgrims feel as they finish their journey for God – the ending is a beginning – can apply in some measure to you through this gentle experience. You will notice that there are no deceptions with this path, no tricks or dead ends.

The deeper level of this single path labyrinth is to give you the opportunity to look within as you follow the path to the center and retrace your way to the beginning, completing the journey. “Tracing or walking a labyrinth is your time to be with God, to listen for the divine in whatever way the divine comes to you.

