

## ***Rediscover your spiritual being by walking a sacred path...***

All of the larger than life questions about our presence here on earth and what gifts we have to offer are spiritual questions. To see the answers to these questions is to seek a sacred path. The labyrinth offers a sacred and stable space for us to focus and listen to the longing of our soul.

Most of us find ourselves consumed with hectic schedules, with little or no time to discover our authentic self. We need to take time to balance and reflect on all facets of life—family, education, play, work and spirituality. The time spent walking this spiritual path will allow you the opportunity to center yourself and reflect on who you are and where you are going.

The labyrinth offers a means to regain balance. The walk clears the mind and gives insight into your spiritual journey. Through proportion, placement and position of brick, using a complementary system of numbers, angles and designs—the mind can find rest, comfort and harmony. Using an equal number of left and right turns, which is ancient sacred geometry, is thought to balance the two spheres of the brain. Sacred geometry was once considered a divine art and master builders and masons were held in high esteem.

The walk to the center (purgation) is to surrender daily concerns. The center represents illumination (the Divine). As you reach the center the answers to your questions may become clearer; you may feel energized and feel you know yourself a little better. Union begins when you leave the center, returning on the same path in which you entered. This walk helps you identify the paths you can take and choose one that is appropriate for you.

The labyrinth can offer the sacred space where healing through forgiveness may occur. It awaits your discovery; for it will guide you through the troubles or questions of your life, to the grand mysterious patterns that shapes the web of creation. It will lead you toward the Source and eventually guide you home.

## ***Where did the labyrinth originate...***

Evidence of the use of labyrinths can be traced back four thousand years or more. Labyrinths are found at some of the earliest Christian sites such as the Basilica of the Reparation at Orleansville, Algeria. During the Middle Ages there was a great flowering of labyrinths in the Cathedrals then being built through out Europe. One of these labyrinths still exists at the Cathedral of Chartres in France. Christians interpreted the sacred path of the labyrinth as a re-tracing of the steps of Jesus through his passion, death and resurrection.

*“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which he also went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the day of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which is pre-figured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone to heaven and is at the right hand of God...” (1 Peter 3:18-22) (NRSV)*

For Christians, the, the sacred path of the labyrinth is not the journey to the earthly Jerusalem, but the journey to the new heavenly Jerusalem, the sacred path of baptism.

*“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized to his death? Therefore we have been buried by baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3-4)*

In 1986 Dr. Lauren Artress began to search for answers to the longing within the human heart to love and nurture, to create and to discover the mystery we live with and that lives within us. Through her initiative, research and authoring the book, *“Walking A Sacred Path”* labyrinths began springing up all over the United States.

## ***Walking The Labyrinth***

Take a moment before entering to pause, perhaps to ask, “What am I seeking?” Focus your attention on your breath and enter the labyrinth allowing your body to set its own pace. Give yourself and others permission to experience the labyrinth in the manner that is right for you/them.

There are three (3) phases to the labyrinth walk:

- ***Entering*** - enter and open oneself, release, purge, shed, let go, walk until you come to the center. You may stop or pause anywhere along the way.
- ***Centering*** - once you've reached the center pause, receive what is there for you. You may choose to sit, stand, kneel.
- ***Exiting*** - walk out the same path you entered, integrating, communing, connecting and empowered, or walk beyond the path.

## ***Type of Walk***

*Asking a question*

*Praying*

*Using a mantra or sacred word*

*Meditating*

*Gracious Attention*

*Honoring a benchmark in time*

*Working with dreams*

*Pilgrimage*

*Awareness of images, metaphors*

You may pass others, or be passed. You greet others, or stay in your own silence. You will experience the walk in the manner that is uniquely yours, your walk, your spiritual journey, your connection within and with the Divine.

## **This What Some Have Experienced...**

### **After attending one of Dr. Artress' workshops, a man expressed these thoughts:**

*"When I said, at the start of the day that I was looking for something to invigorate my arid prayer life, I had no idea how helpful walking the labyrinth would be. I came away with a renewed appreciation for the ordinariness of my life. I have a much better understanding of what the sacred path is; literally and figuratively, a pedestrian path, complete with all the jerky start and unexpected bumps that occur in our daily lives."*

**Along with others who experienced the labyrinth, this woman feels more grounded and alive in her body. This is what she said:**

*"I am so much more aware of the importance of body as well as mind and spirit in maintaining a healthy balance in all areas of our life. Including all three aspects of ourselves in prayer is so powerful."*

### **Another woman's experience after walking the labyrinth:**

*"I was still grieving the loss of my son when I first walked the labyrinth, still wondering what I could have done to have prevented his untimely death. On the way in I sobbed, releasing the deep grief I felt. Once in the center I felt he was there with me. On my journey out, a sense of peace came over me."*

### **Sources for this pamphlet include:**

Barron, Robert, *Heaven in Stone and Glass: Experiencing the Spirituality of the Great Cathedrals*. New York: Crossroads, 2000

Kern, Hermann, *Through the Labyrinth: Designs and Meanings over 5,000 Years*. Munich: Prestel 2000

Wright, Craig. *The Maze and the Warrior: Symbols in architecture, Theology and Music*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001

Some of the text in this pamphlet was taken from *Walking a Sacred Path*, by Dr. Lauren Artress, and was used with her permission.

# The Labyrinth

Providing A Path For The  
Nourishment Of The Soul



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