

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ug9diWb_fU

Commitment Sunday: September 19th 2021

Exploration of prayer

How to draw and use a labyrinth

ON ZOOM: If you click on the link above you will be shown how to draw a labyrinth in quick, simple steps.

So, even if you can't come and be with us outside, you are welcome to join in the prayer experience in the comfort of your home. You will only need paper and pens. Remember to make it big enough to use your finger to trace around the lines/ paths. You could even make a simple garden labyrinth with stones, bird seed or anything else you have to hand.

Why is a labyrinth used in prayer?

Praying with a labyrinth is a form of walking meditation, **a physical expression of the interior journey towards Christ** that characterizes all Christian meditation. Like a pilgrimage, forms of walking meditation evoke our earthly journey towards heaven while simultaneously **giving us time and space to listen and respond to the Lord.**

The origins of the prayer labyrinth

The earliest examples of labyrinths go back nearly 5,000 years, but the use of labyrinths in Christian prayer emerged during the Middle Ages. The most famous example of a Christian labyrinth intended for prayer is the stone labyrinth inlaid on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. However, you can find prayer labyrinths in most areas of the country, from abbeys and monasteries to the campuses of Catholic parishes and colleges.

"Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to hear and respond to what the Lord is asking." - Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2705

Why you might pray with a labyrinth

Where we pray affects how we pray. Most of the time, we seek to pray in places of quiet and stillness. At other times, taking a walk or simply being outside helps us pray. Although we can embark on a walking meditation nearly anywhere, the predictable and concentrated route of **a labyrinth frees us from the distractions that come with being out on a walk** (like recalling directions or wondering when to turn back). If being outdoors makes you feel closer to God or if pilgrimage has been influential in your spiritual life, then praying with a labyrinth might be a helpful practice.

How to pray with a labyrinth

Find a labyrinth

Look for a prayer labyrinth in your area. If you can't find one nearby, you still have options. You can make a basic one in your backyard (some paving stones will do the

trick) or you can use the perimeter of your backyard to similar effect. If you live near a park, you can walk along a predetermined path or trace some other feature of the landscape. The key is finding a place where you will be relatively undisturbed either by other people or the need to make decisions about the direction you are heading.

Scriptural preparation

Whatever form your labyrinth takes, consider reading a passage from Scripture to set your mind on God's accompaniment with you during this short pilgrimage of prayer. There are many possibilities, but here are a few to get you started: I Corinthians 12: 4-6, 12-20 (the Body of Christ the reading in church today); Matthew 5: 13-16 (salt and light, the Gospel reading in church today); others might be [Deuteronomy 1:31](#), [Exodus 13:21-22](#), [Isaiah 42:1-9](#), [Luke 24:13-35](#).

Steps of praying with a Labyrinth

Once you have found a labyrinth or other suitable place to pray, you can begin your walking meditation with the following steps.

1. Name your intention

Since we embark on a walking meditation in order to hear and respond to the Lord, **invite God to walk with you** during this prayer period. Ask for the grace to hear and respond to him. If you have any particular intentions on your heart, name them to God at this time and tell him that you will carry these intentions with you during the walk.

2. Walk the path

Enter and follow the path of the labyrinth, knowing that God is with you. Go at a pace that feels natural. As you move along the path, notice what is happening in your mind and heart. There is no agenda to this prayer.

Rather, **let your prayer unfold as you go and trust in God's guidance**. If your mind wanders to thoughts that seem like distractions, name the distraction, lift it up to God and ask God to guide your mind and heart back to him. If the distraction returns, explore it with God.

3. Give thanks

When you reach the centre of the labyrinth, thank God for having walked with you along the way.

4. Reflect

Afterwards, **take time to reflect on your walking meditation**. Write down your thoughts, feelings or anything else that you experienced. If something from these recollections stands out to you, consider exploring it at another time in prayer or in spiritual direction.