

A Lenten Pilgrimage



Walking the Labyrinth and Praying the Scriptural Stations of the Cross

Introduction

The Stations of the Cross

From early Christianity, when pilgrims came to Jerusalem, they visited sites where Jesus was known to have been. Eventually, following in the footsteps of the Lord, along the way of the cross, became a part of the pilgrimage visit. The traditional stations came about during the crusades, when it was no longer safe to visit the holy sites. In the 1500's, villages in Europe created "replicas" of the way of the cross, commemorating the places along the route in Jerusalem.

The Labyrinth Walk

Historically, the Labyrinth pre-dates the Stations of the Cross by several hundred years. The Chartres Labyrinth was constructed in the stone floor of Chartres Cathedral, France in 1201 AD. Medieval Christians visited Chartres (and other cathedrals) and walked the labyrinth as an alternative to taking a hazardous pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk in the "footsteps of Christ." It is thought that monks of that time entered the labyrinth during Lent on their hands and knees as a sign of penitence. The center of the labyrinth has been referred to as the New Jerusalem. And based on ancient documents and paintings from the Middle Ages, it is thought that pilgrims danced on the labyrinth to celebrate Easter. Modern pilgrims walk the labyrinth as one of many tools to enhance prayer, contemplation, meditation, and/or personal growth.

The Stations AND the Labyrinth are offered together here, at this time, as a pilgrimage, and an opportunity to experience the passion of the Christ on a personal level in an ancient, yet new way. This Stations of the Cross Labyrinth Walk has 15 Stations.

Instructions for the Pilgrimage:

- If you are comfortable doing so, please remove your shoes and walk the path in silence.
- Move at your own pace.
- Remember that there is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth, and that any way you wish to pause or walk is appropriate.
- The 15 Stations are distributed over the labyrinth path and indicated with numbers.
- At each of the 15 stations, pause and read the appropriate scriptural passage. Continue on your pilgrimage when you are ready.
- When you have completed the 14th station in the center, continue with the traditional labyrinth walk, by retracing your path out of the labyrinth, to station 15 near the entrance of the labyrinth.

St. Bonaventure, a 13th century Franciscan mystic and theologian, held that only one who is on a journey to God can really know God. God reveals God's self in our daily experiences. You are invited to walk the labyrinth today with an openness to experience God as you journey.

This Stations of the Cross Labyrinth Walk was adapted and revised based on several previous versions from various places. We are grateful to those who came before us for the guidance in preparing this pamphlet.

Opening Prayer:

God of mercy and humility, send forth your Spirit anew that I might experience your presence here and now. Help me to be transformed by your living Word. Companion me, Jesus, as I begin this pilgrimage. My heart does desire to "see you more clearly, follow you more nearly, and love you more dearly."

The First Station

Jesus prays in the Garden of Olives

Scripture

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." *Matthew 25:36-41*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

(prayer written by St. Francis of Assisi, early 13th century)

The Second Station

Jesus is betrayed by Judas

Scripture

Then, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, “the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. *Mark 14:43-46*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Third Station

Jesus is condemned to death by the Sanhedrin

Scripture

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us,” but he replied to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied to them, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth.” *Luke 22:66-71*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Fourth Station

Jesus is denied by Peter

Scripture

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about!” As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man!” A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.” At that he began to curse and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly.

Matthew 26:69-75

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Fifth Station

Jesus is judged by Pilate

Scripture

The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He said to him in reply, “You say so.” The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.” Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabas...[and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified. *Mark 15:1-5,15*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Sixth Station

Jesus is flogged and crowned with thorns

Scripture

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. *John 19:1-3*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Seventh Station

Jesus carries his cross

Scripture

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." ... They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. *John 19:6, 15-17*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Eighth Station

Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene

Scripture

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. *Mark 15:21*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Ninth Station

Jesus encounters the women of Jerusalem

Scripture

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?" *Luke 23:27-31*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Tenth Station

Jesus is crucified

Scripture

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Luke 23:33-34

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Eleventh Station

Jesus promises to share his reign with the good thief.

Scripture

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." *Luke 23:39-43*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Twelfth Station

Jesus is on the cross with his mother and disciple below

Scripture

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. *John 19:25-27*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Thirteenth Station

Jesus dies on the cross

Scripture

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit;" and when he had said this he breathed his last. *Luke 23:44-46*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Fourteenth Station

Jesus is placed in the tomb

Scripture

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. *Matthew 27:57-60*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

The Fifteenth Station

Jesus is raised from the dead

Scripture

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” *Luke 24:5*

reflective pause...

Pray:

I adore you, O Lord, and praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Awaken Me

Risen One,
come, meet me
in the garden of my life.
Lure me into elation.
Revive my silent hope.
Coax my dormant dreams.
Raise up my neglected gratitude.
Entice my tired enthusiasm.
Give life to my faltering relationships.
Roll back the stone of my indifference.
Unwrap the deadness in my spiritual life.
Impart the heartiness in my work.
Risen One,
send me forth as a disciple of your unwavering love,
a messenger
of your unlimited joy.
Resurrected One,
may I become ever more convinced
that your presence lives on,
and on, and on,
and on.
Awaken me!
Awaken me!

(Taken from *Out of the Ordinary* by Joyce Rupp. Used by permission of Ave Maria Press. All rights reserved.)

Symbolism and Meanings found in the Chartres Labyrinth Circles and Spirals

Please note: The Temporary Labyrinth in the Cathedral's South Transept is a Modified Chartres design, therefore not all the characteristics apply.

The circle is the symbol of unity or union, and it is the primary shape of all labyrinths. The circle in sacred geometry represents the incessant movement of the universe (uncomprehensible) as opposed to the square, which represents comprehensible order. The labyrinth is a close cousin to the spiral and it, too, reflects the cyclical element of nature and is regarded as the symbol of eternal life. The labyrinth functions like a spiral, creating a vortex in its center. Upon entering, the path winds in a clockwise pattern. Energy is being drawn out. Upon leaving the center the walker goes in a counter clockwise direction. The unwinding path integrates and empowers us on our walk back out. We are literally ushered back out into the world in a strengthened condition.

The Circuits, or Path

Circuits are the number of times the path goes around the center. Since the labyrinth is not a maze, there is really only one path. The path lies in 11 concentric circles with the 12th being the labyrinth center. The path meanders throughout the whole circle. There are 34 turns on the path going into the center. Six are semi-right turns and 28 are 180° turns. So the 12 rings that form the 11 pathways may symbolically represent, the 12 apostles, 12 tribes of Israel or 12 months of the year. Twelve is a mystical number in Christianity. In sacred geometry three represents heaven and four represents earth. Twelve is the product of 3 x 4 and, therefore, the path which flows through the whole is then representative of all creation. The obvious metaphor for the path is the difficult path to salvation, with its many twists and turns. Since we cannot see a straight path to our destination, the labyrinth can be viewed as a metaphor for our lives. We learn to surrender to the path (Christ) and trust that he will lead us on our journey. The path can also be viewed as grace or the Church guiding us through chaos. In the tradition of pilgrimage, the Path is also described as the "Road to Jerusalem."

The Cruciform and Labrys

The labyrinth is divided equally into four quadrants that make an equal-armed cross or cruciform. The four arms represent in symbol what is thought to be the essential structure of the universe for example, the four spatial directions, the four elements (earth, wind, water and fire), the four seasons and, most important, salvation through the cross.

The four arms of the cross emerging from the center seem to give order to the would-be chaos of the meandering path around it. The Chartres labyrinth cross or cruciform is delineated by the 10 labrys (labyr means to turn and this is the root of the word labyrinth). The labrys are double-ax, or butterfly shaped and visible at the turns and between turns. They are traditionally seen as a symbol of women's power and creativity.

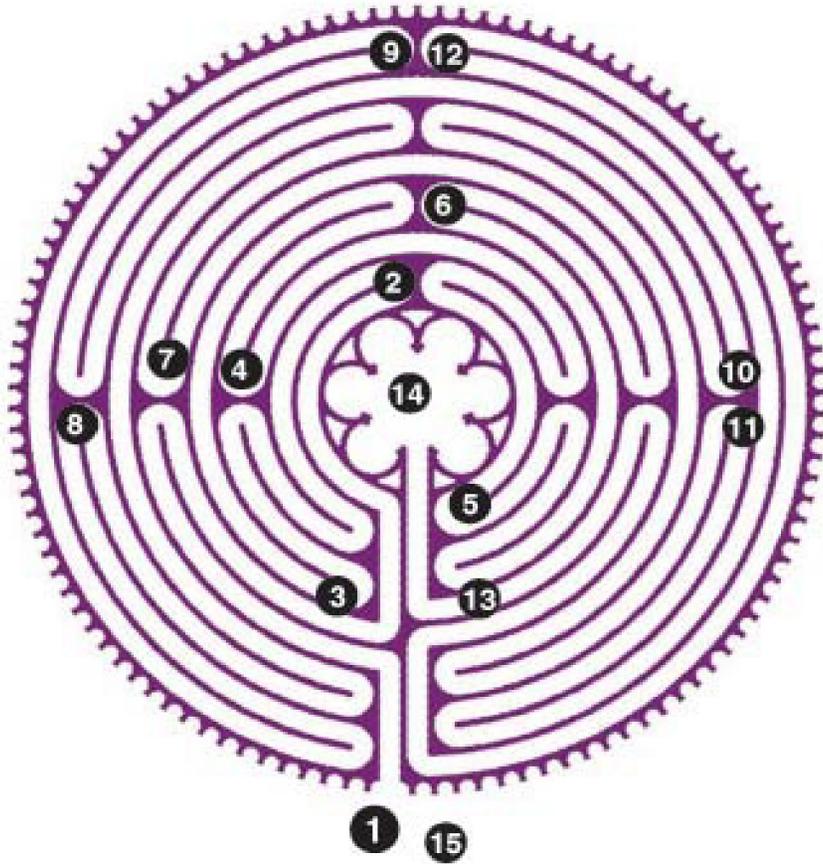
The Center, or Rosette

In the Middle Ages, the rose was regarded as a symbol for the Virgin Mary, and of rebirth. Because of its association with the myths of Percival and the Holy Grail at that time, it also was seen as a sign of beauty and love. The rose becomes symbolic of both human and divine love, of passionate love, but also love beyond passion. The single rose became a symbol of a simple acceptance of God's love for the world. Unlike a normal rose (which has five petals) the rosette has six petals and is steeped in mysticism. Although associated with the Rose of Sharon, which refers to Mary, it may also represent the Holy Spirit (wisdom and enlightenment). The six petals may have corresponded to the story of the six days of creation. In other mystical traditions, the petals can be viewed as the levels of evolution (mineral, plant, animal, humankind, angelic and divine). In the tradition of pilgrimage, the center of the Chartres labyrinth is called the "New Jerusalem."

The Lunations

The lunations are the outer ring of partial circles that complete the outside circle of the labyrinth. They are unique to the Chartres design. They are sometimes called lunations because they are believed to have comprised a lunar calendar. With such a calendar,

one can determine the date for Easter (the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox). There are 114 lunations, or 28 per quadrant, less the one that is missing at the entrance path, or 113.



The Chartres Labyrinth

The numbers of this image mark the location of each of The 15 Stations of the Cross. Please feel free to take this booklet home and use this page as a finger labyrinth to “walk” the Stations of the Cross again.



For more information on our Labyrinth Projects, please contact the Rector: Roger@OurCathedral.ca

Or visit:
OurCathedral.ca/Labyrinth