

LABYRINTHS

There are several universal shapes of labyrinths throughout our history. Drawings of labyrinths, on caves, walls, rocks and pottery, date back 3500 years in countries around the world and several different historical periods.

They are a universal archetype! An archetype is a symbol that resonates and appeals to us on an unconscious level. Its meaning does not necessarily need to be intellectually understood; but its symbol resonates something ingrained in our common unconsciousness and consciousness. We are moved by it or drawn to it without fully understanding the primal draw.

The Avondale Labyrinth is similar to the Chartres Labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral in France (it is an eleven ring, four-quadrant path). The Cathedral was one of the early centers of Christianity, around the 4th century. Due to wars and fires it has been rebuilt several times and its current structure dates to 1220 CE. The design and geometry hidden within the path holds symbolism and mystery. You are not just walking a path, you are walking within an unconscious pattern that can awaken you spiritually. The Avondale Labyrinth has a few components missing of the original, but the path is identical.

A labyrinth is not a maze; it is a simple path with one entrance that leads to the center. The path out is the same path back to the original entrance. Its design is deliberate and designed for contemplation and transformational experience. The archetype design is a metaphor of life's journey.

Brian Draper "Labyrinth: Illuminating The Inner Path" says, "The Labyrinth is a powerfully evocative spiritual exercise in moving slowly, which is especially apt with

today's fast-forward world. It heightens your senses, stills your mind, and opens your heart."

It is "An allegory of meeting God and experiencing spiritual transformation within "The Labyrinth of World"! When you begin to allow the Holy Spirit as your guide on the labyrinth, then you begin to allow the Spirit to guide you in life.

When walking this simple path, stop and rest and experience presence. Simply noticing how impatient and restless you are can be revealing, a new realization, a little epiphany along the journey. What are you restless about? What is the anxiety that moves you forward so quickly? Are you avoiding something by rushing forward?

There are many books, theories, psychological studies about reasons and ways to walk the labyrinth. I offer this: Yes, there are psychological benefits, studies provide that. Yes, it has meditative qualities, and studies provide that. But what studies cannot provide is the profound encounter with Mystery of God's presence that many walkers experience. If you enter with an open heart and surrender to the path, an unfolding of and a letting go of self can occur. It will bring you back out of the path a slightly different Self.

The labyrinth walk is an unfolding, releasing, surrendering, receiving and connecting experience. One or all of these experiences can come to you on the walk.

If you treat it as sacred space, the space will return to you the same.

