

Labyrinth Prayer Leadership Development Workshop

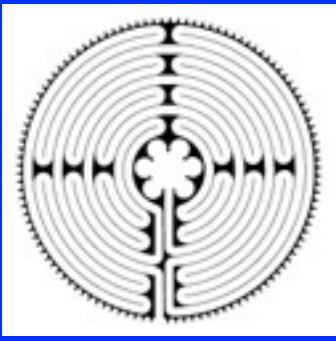
Falam, Myanmar October, 2013



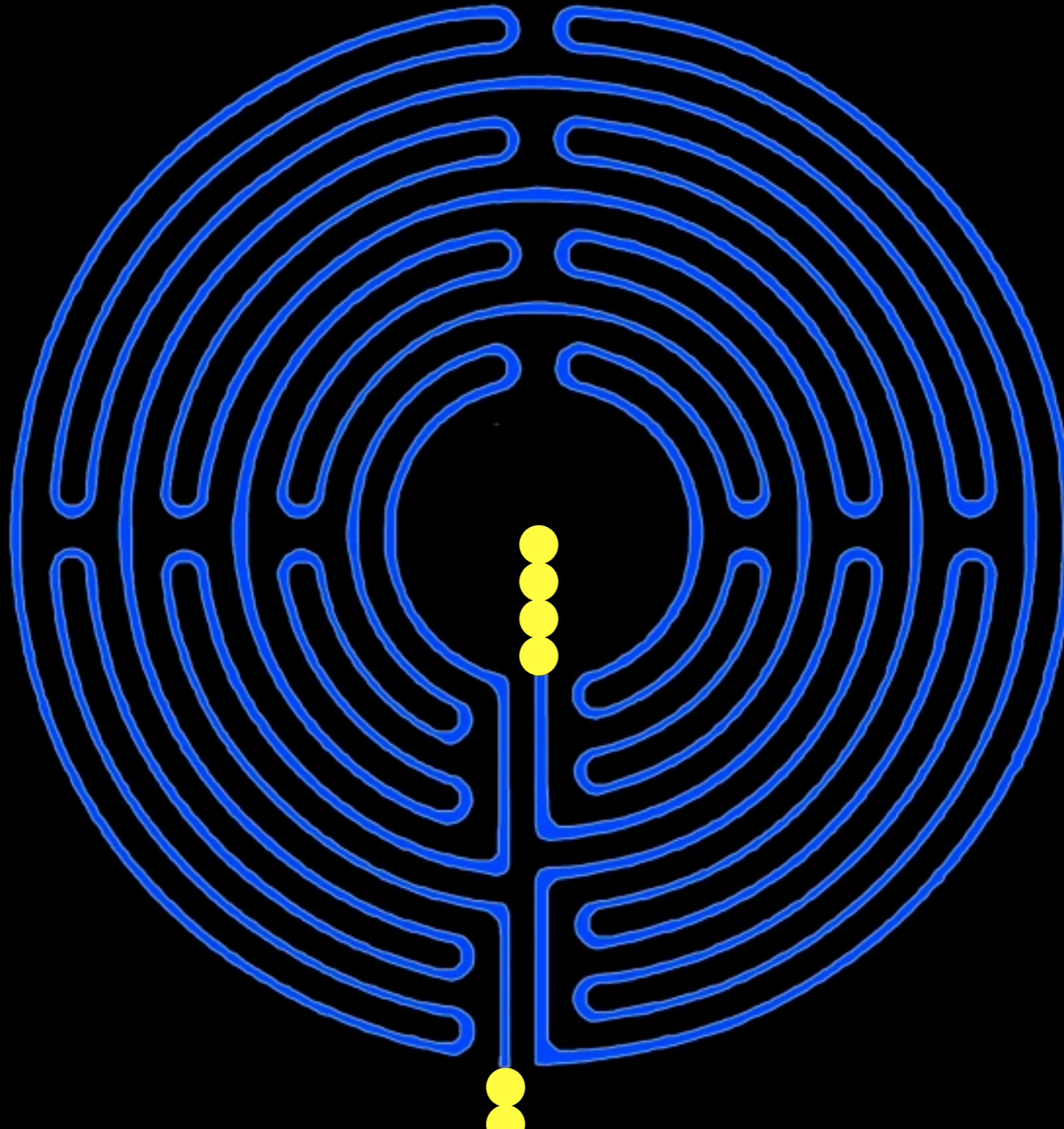
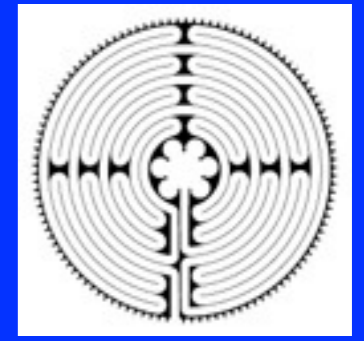
The Rev. Jill K H Geoffrion, Ph.D. www.jillgeoffrion.com jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com




Taking a prayer walk with God.



Labyrinths are designs that consist of a single, winding path that begins at the periphery and leads to a central space. The way out is on the same path, but in the opposite direction.

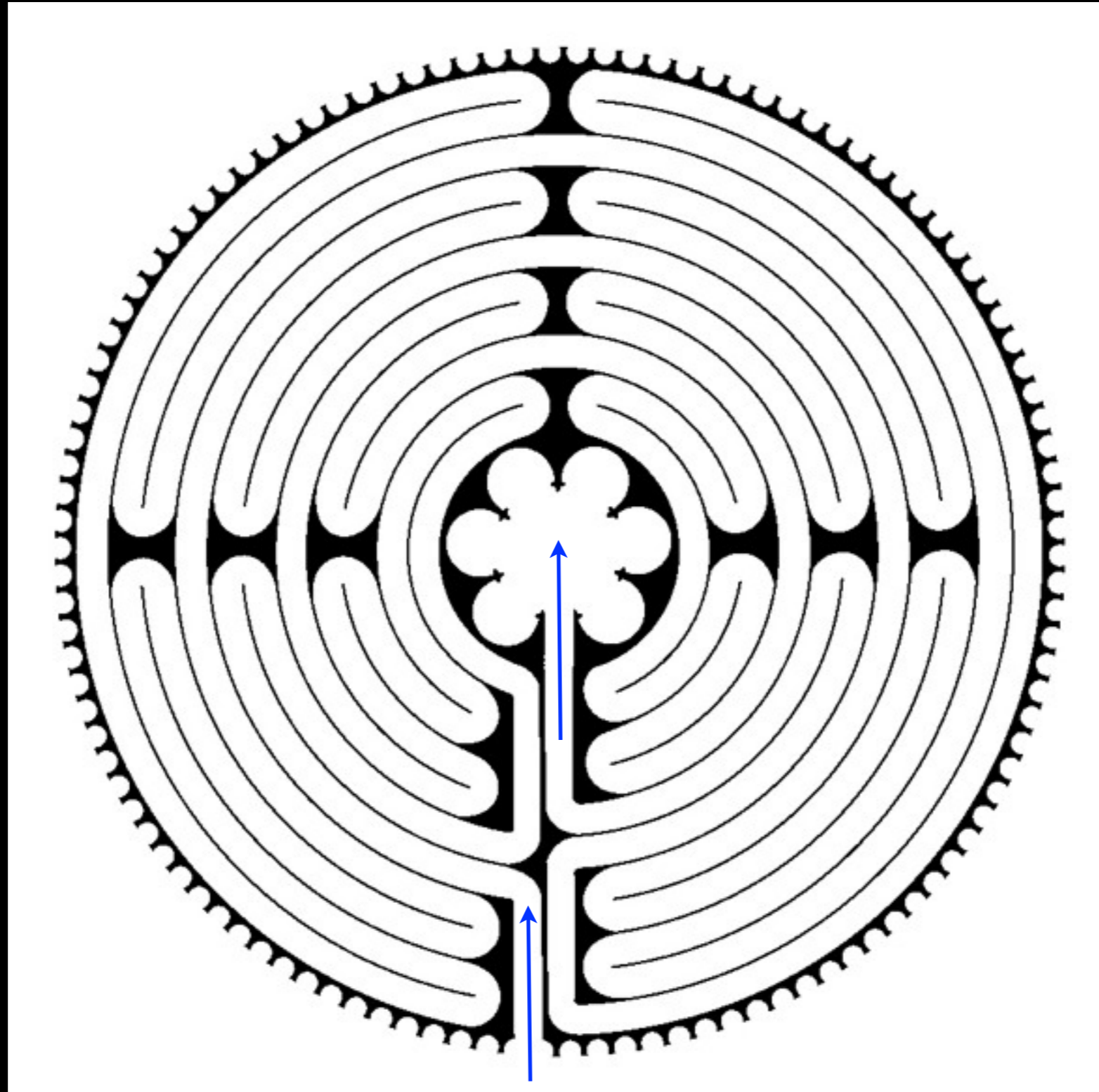




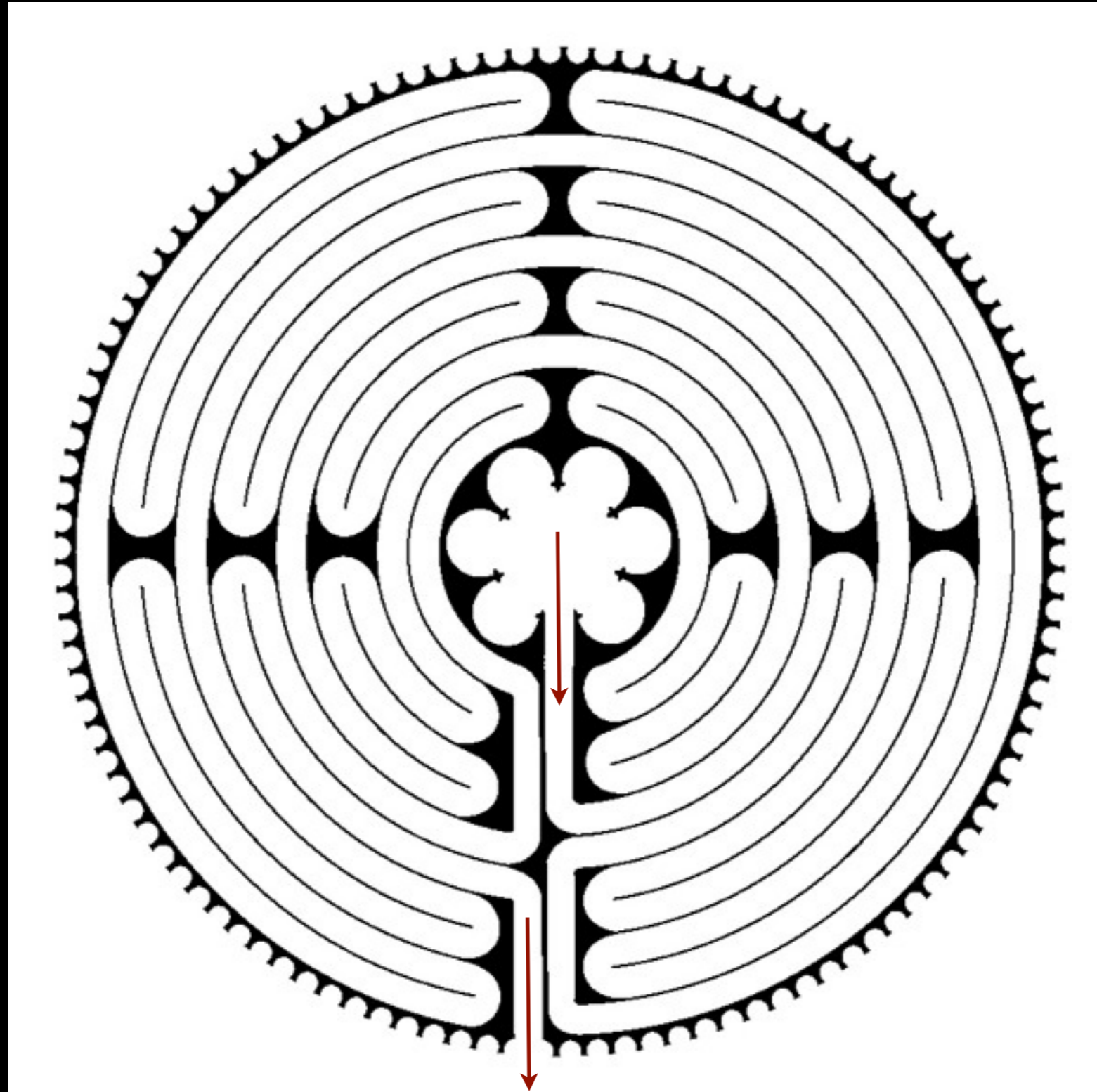
A labyrinth has one--and only one--pathway.
Mazes and wingabas have many.
There are no tricks or dead ends in a labyrinth.
You can't get lost.

Karen Wingaba Maze
at a Buddhist Temple
Yangon, Myanmar

You enter the labyrinth through its “gate” or “door.”
Then, you follow its pathway to the center while you pray.



The same path is used as you continue your prayer
when returning to the single opening in the perimeter.






There is only one pathway.
You can't get lost!



You can get turned around, but it's not a problem. You will end up either in the center or at the gate.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and brown pants, is sitting on a green carpet with a large, stylized bird pattern. She is viewed from behind, looking towards the right. The carpet has a repeating pattern of a bird in flight, rendered in a dark brown or black color. The lighting is soft, and the overall atmosphere is calm and contemplative.

As with any time of prayer, you follow where God leads--literally and figuratively.

Historical labyrinths exist all over the world.
The oldest is approximately 4,000 years old.
It is found in Goa, India.



Goa, India 2,000-2500 BCE
Pansaimol Labyrinth

©Jeff Seward see [Labyrinths and Mazes](#) & www.labyrinthos.net

— GOVANS —
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

EST. 1844

SUNDAY WORSHIP
9 30AM & 11:00
COME WALK
OUR LABYRINTH

Labyrinths are used by
Christians to deepen their
relationship with God
through
walking prayer.

They are used for ministry in churches, retreat centers, schools, hospitals, and even prisons.



**There are 4,225 labyrinths
in over 77 countries that are currently listed on the
world-wide labyrinth locator at www.labyrinthlocator.org.
The labyrinth from the chapel at MIT in Yangon is there too!**

Organization:

Contact last name:

City:

State: (US and Canada only)

Zip/postal code:

Country: (Only countries in the labyrinth database are listed.)

Search radius: miles (US only — use in conjunction with city and state, or with zip code.)

Categories:

- Artistic Installation
- Camp Grounds and Recreation Facilities
- Church or Place of Worship
- Commercial or Retail
- Farms & Agriculture
- Historic Monument
- Hospital, Hospice, or Healthcare
- Hotel, Guest House or B+B
- Miscellaneous

Availability: Public Private By Appointment Any

Situation: Indoor Outdoor Any

Material:

Type: [> typology of labyrinth types](#)

Wheelchair accessible:

Designer:

Builder:

Show simplified, text-only results:

ID#4993

Myanmar Institute of Theology

Church or Place of Worship; School or Educational Centre By appointment Indoor Permanent

Address: Seminary Hill, Insein
Yangon 11011
Myanmar
[view map](#)

Directions/notes: Located on the seminary campus in Insein Township, about 20 minute taxi ride from downtown

Contact: Dr. Maung Maung Yin Peace Studies Center
Phone: 95-1-643115/640168
Email: m.i.theology@mptmail.net.mm

Web: <http://mitheo.com/index.html>

Private owners: The labyrinth is located in the Faith, Hope and Love Chapel on the 5th floor of the Global Education Building.

Admission: Donation welcome

Type: Medieval
Chartres replica


Material: Terrazzo

Designer: Jill and Tim Geoffrion

Builder: Jade Construction

Size: 36 feet

Date installed: March 2012



Chapel Labyrinth, Global Education Building

A Christian Biblical and Theological Understanding of Labyrinth Prayer



“Follow me...”
“I am the way...”



In the Bible God's People Are Often On Journeys

Abraham as a pilgrim: Genesis 12

Theme of exile as pilgrimage: Exodus

The shepherds visit Jesus: Luke 2:8-20

The wise men travel to meet Jesus: Matthew 2:1-12

The flight of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to Egypt : Matthew 2:13-15

Jesus "on the way" with his disciples--to the villages of Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27), to

Capernaum (Mark 9:33), Jerusalem (Luke 17:11, Matthew 20:16), etc.

Jesus walking with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus Luke 24:13-53

Christians as exiles and strangers (pilgrims KJV) 1 Peter 2:11-12



**“Follow Me.”
Jesus**

**Matt. 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38
16:24, 19:21; Mark 1:17, 2:14,
8:34, 10:21; Luke 5:27, 9:23
9:59, 14:27, 18:22; John 1:43, 10:27,
12:26, 13:36, 21:19, 21:22**

Symbols help us to grasp
and remember what is
most important.

Labyrinths helps us to
understand--with our
bodies as well as our
minds--that God is
faithfully leading us and
that trust is part of faith.

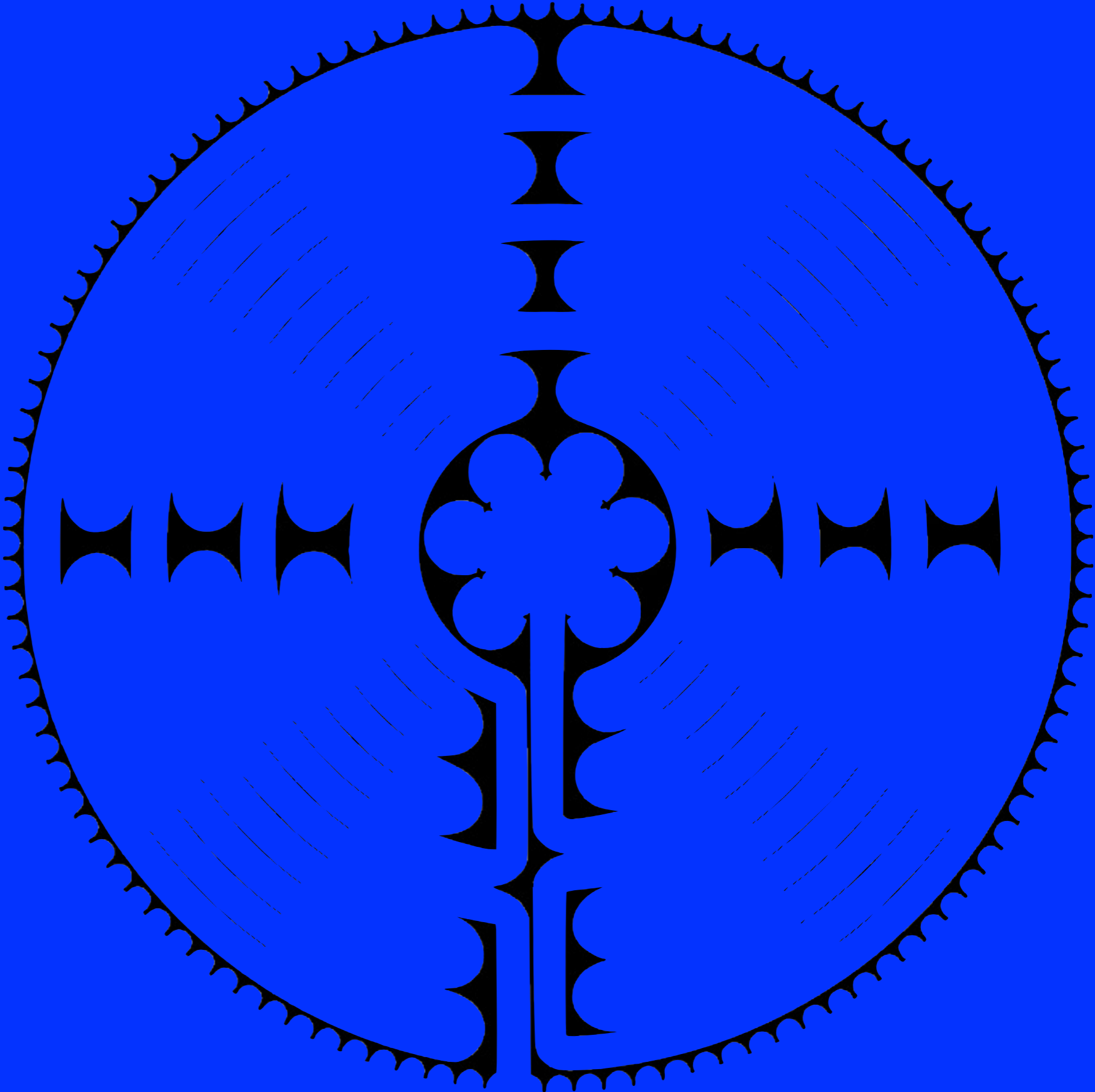


Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, California (USA)

The
underlying
structure
of a
labyrinth
is a cross.



**The cross
defines
how we
move on a
labyrinth.**



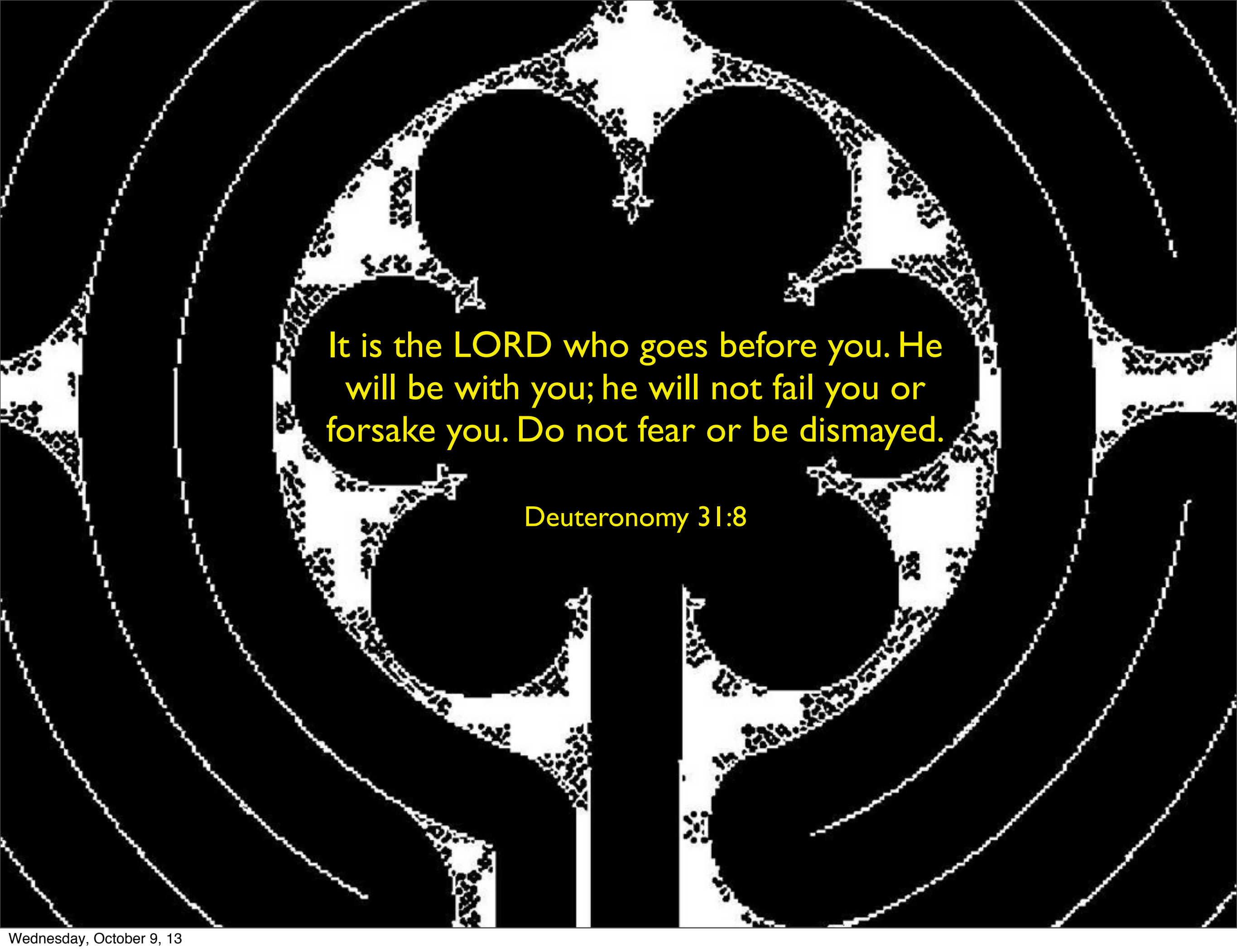
The labyrinth holds no power of its own, and there is nothing magical about it. Rather, it is simply a creative tool that facilitates our thinking about our faith and experiencing God in fresh ways. When we walk, reflect, and pray on a labyrinth, God is likely to use the experience to draw us closer and to help us to see aspects of our lives that we might not be able to see otherwise. Even more, the Holy Spirit can use our labyrinth prayer experience to transform us inwardly in ways that change our lives outwardly.”

Tim Geoffrion,

The Powerful Use of Symbol and Metaphor in the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Rich Symbolism in Labyrinth Prayer.



Ministers pray on a labyrinth Musanze (Northern), Rwanda 2009



It is the LORD who goes before you. He
will be with you; he will not fail you or
forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Deuteronomy 31:8

We come to the labyrinth as Christians.
Christ walks with us as we move on the labyrinth.

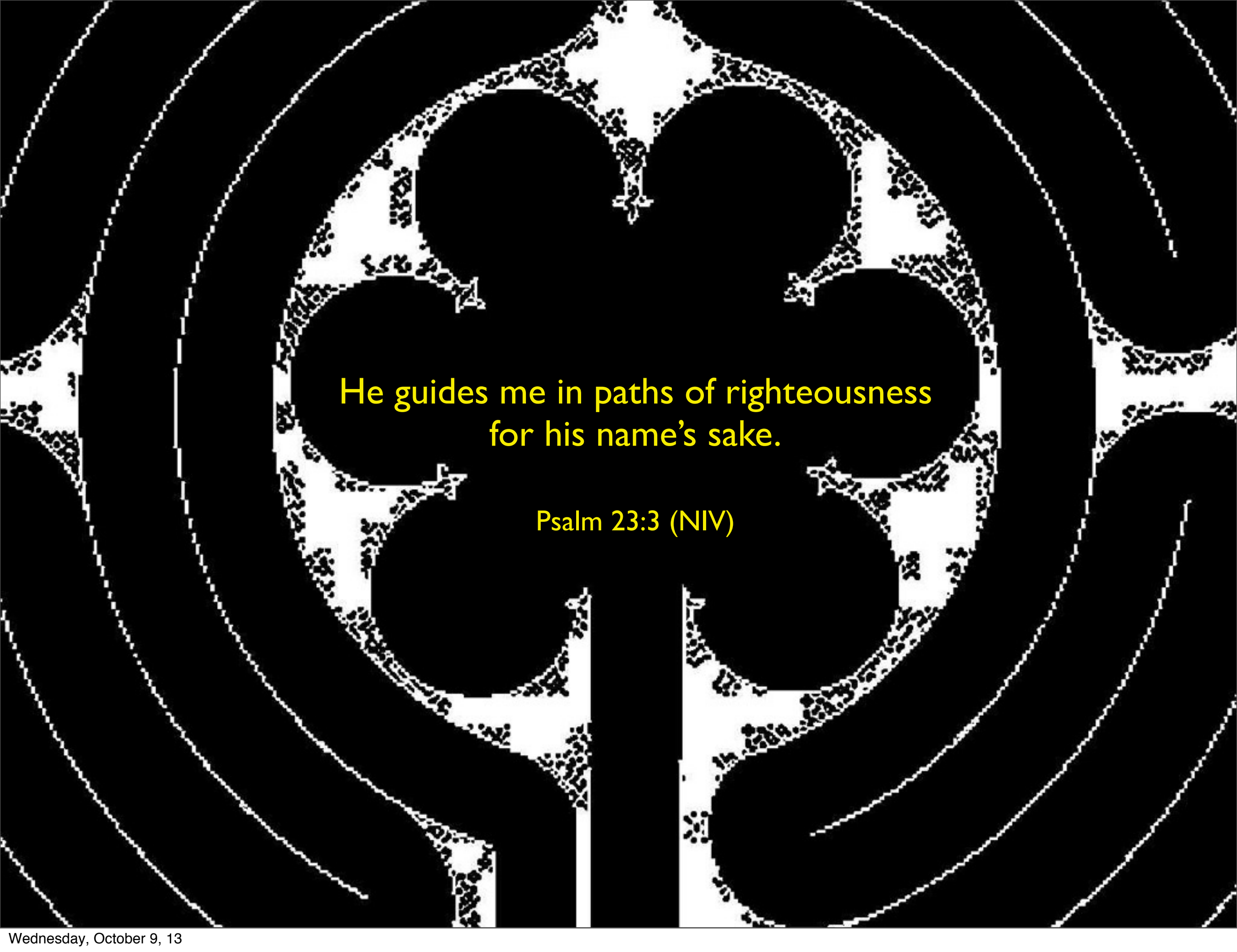


Church Garden Labyrinth, 7 circuit “heart of Chartres”, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

God has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

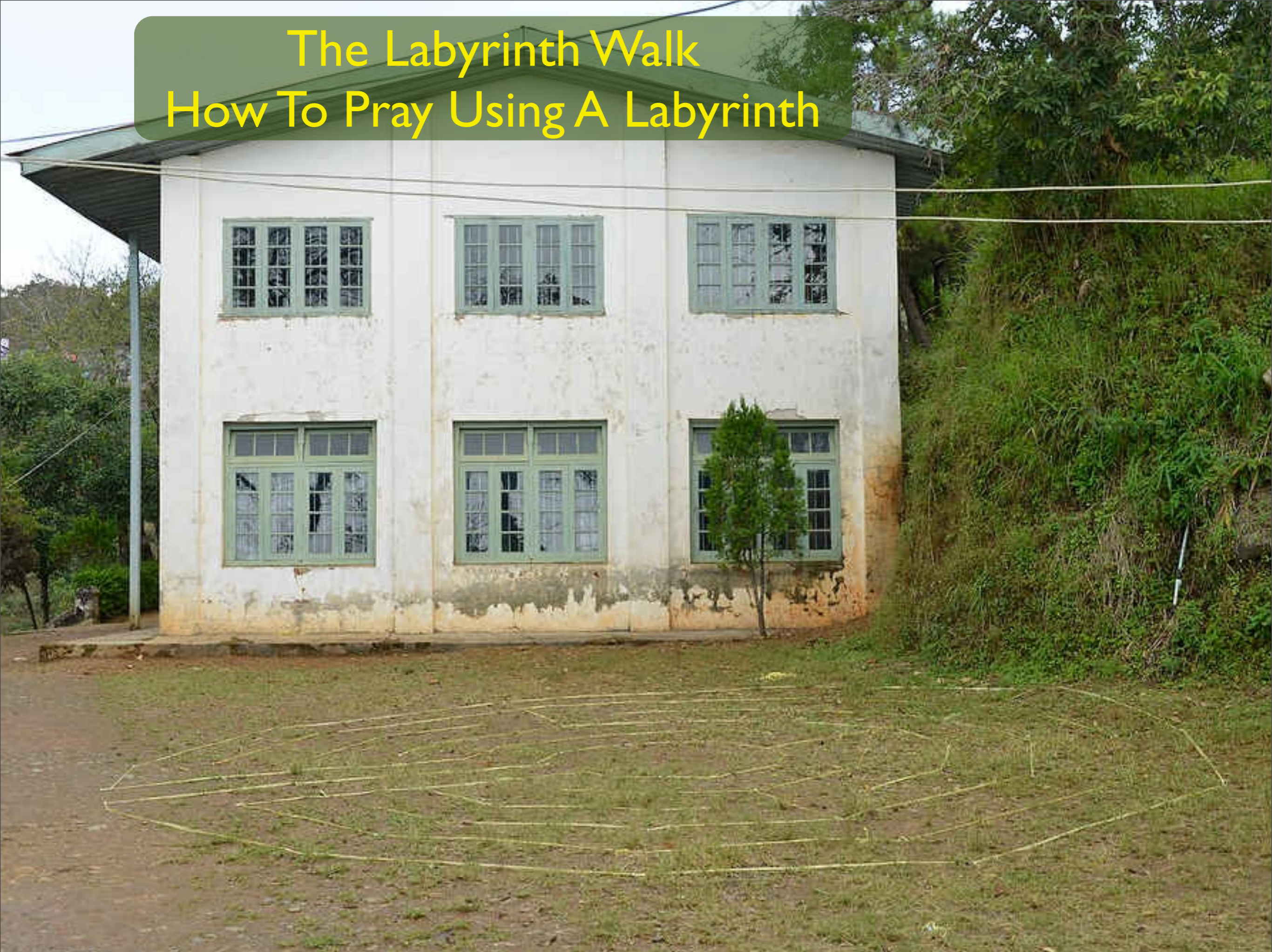




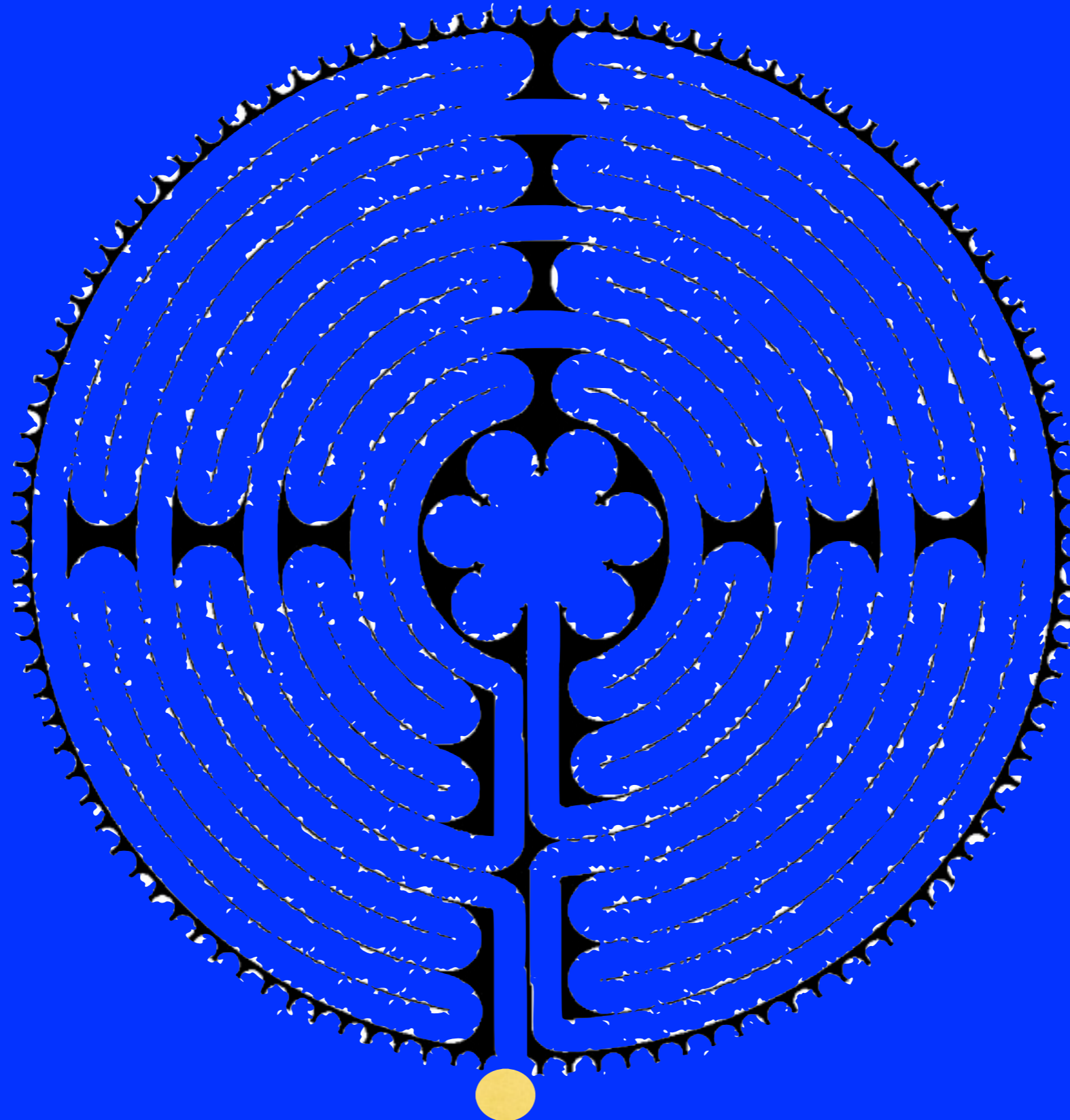
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

Psalm 23:3 (NIV)

The Labyrinth Walk How To Pray Using A Labyrinth



Prepare Yourself.



Before entering:

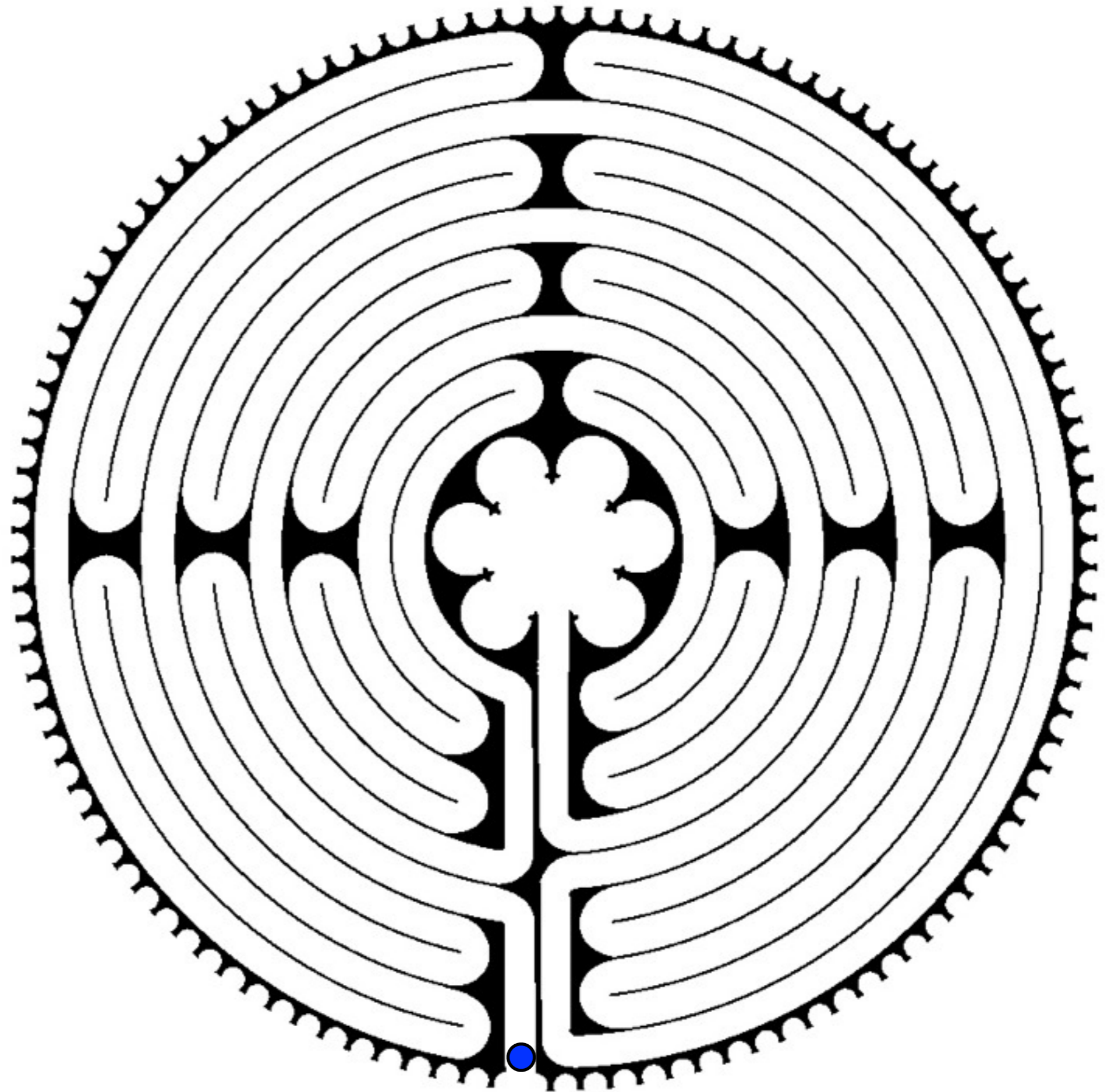


**Ask God to speak to you
as you walk.**

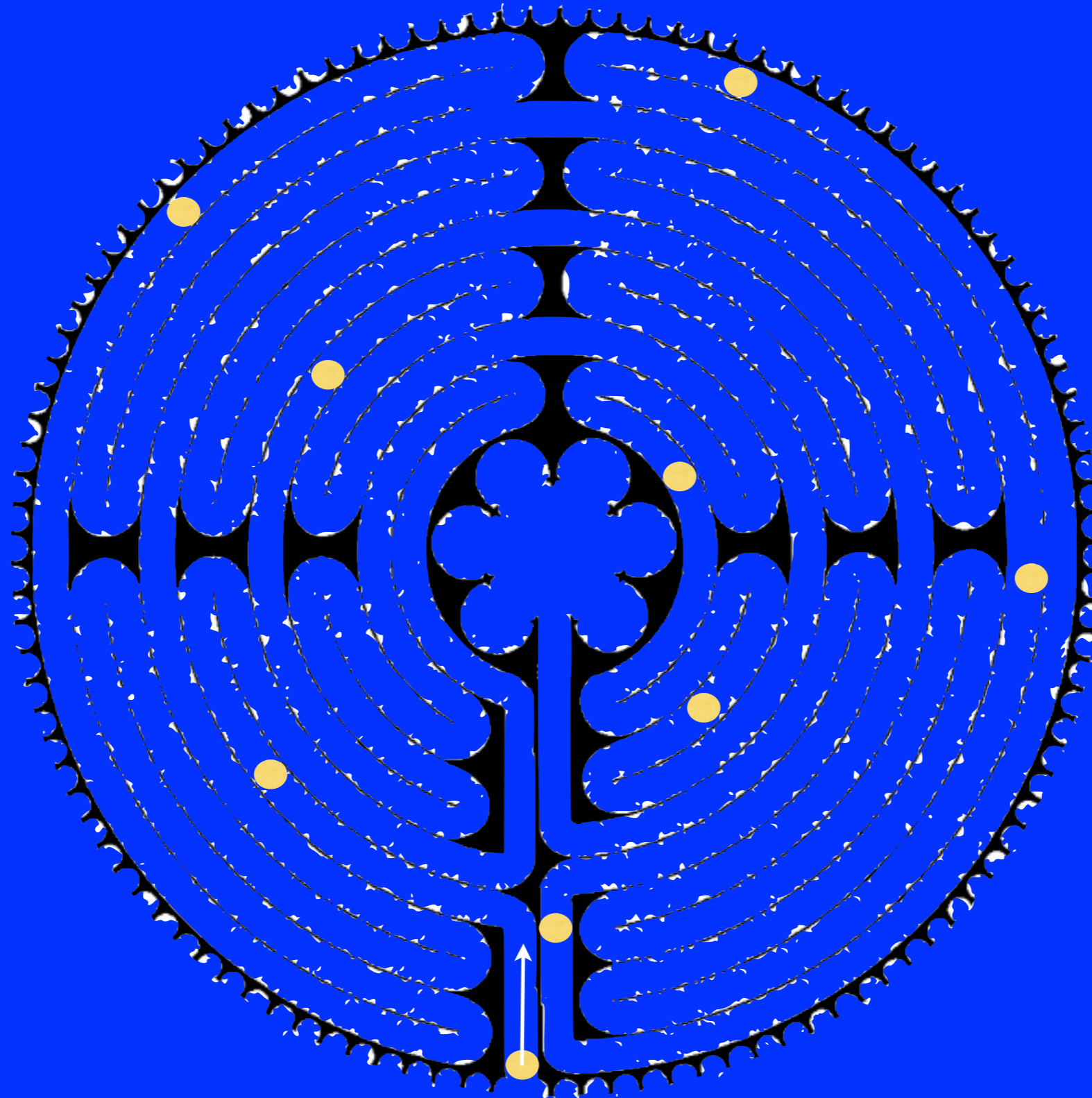
Pause. Take a breath.
Listen with your heart.



Move through
the open
door into the
labyrinth.



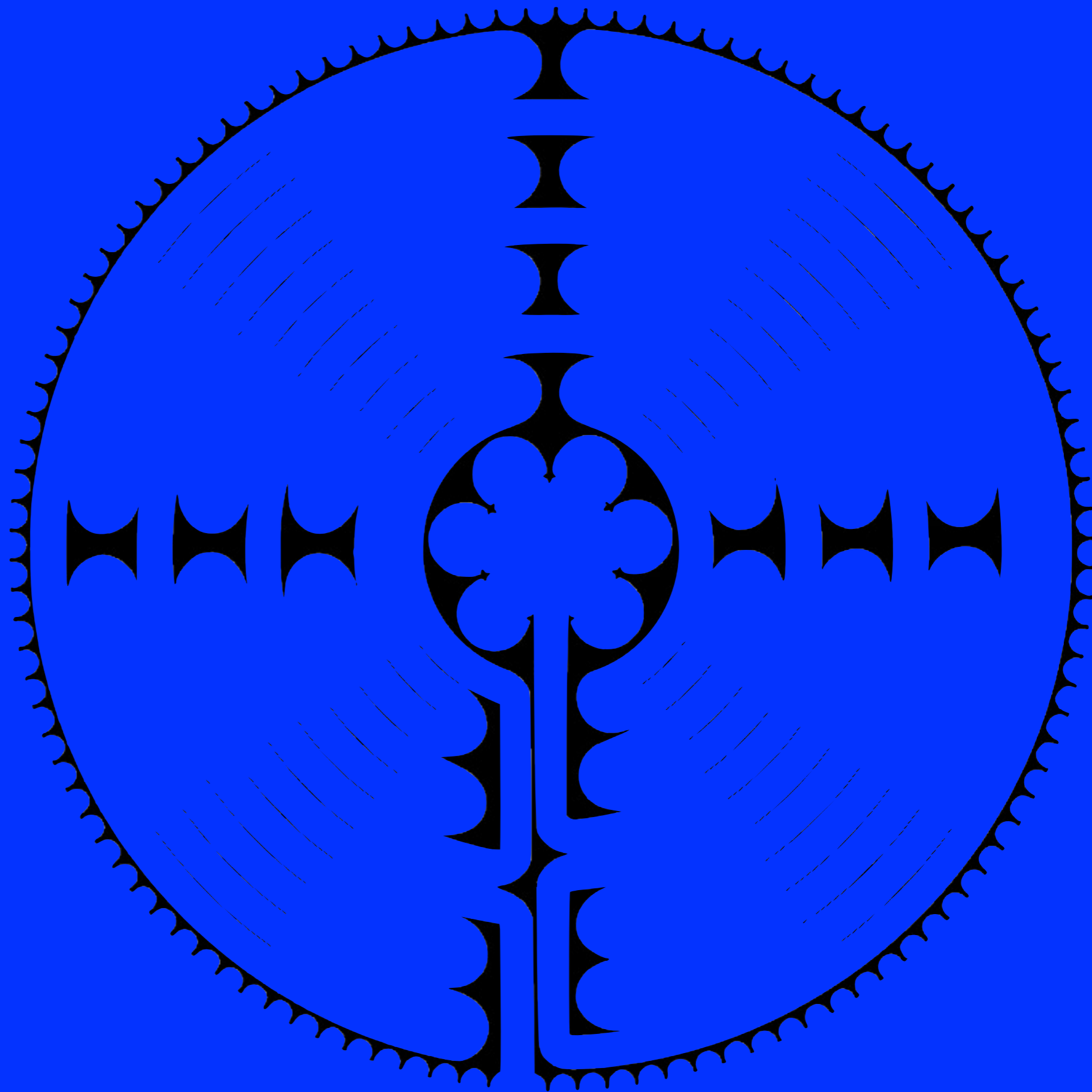
Moving Towards the Center:
(you WILL get there, but it is a journey)!



You are
being led to
the center.

You are
“walking the
cross.”

No matter
how lost or
alone you
feel, God is
with you,
guiding.



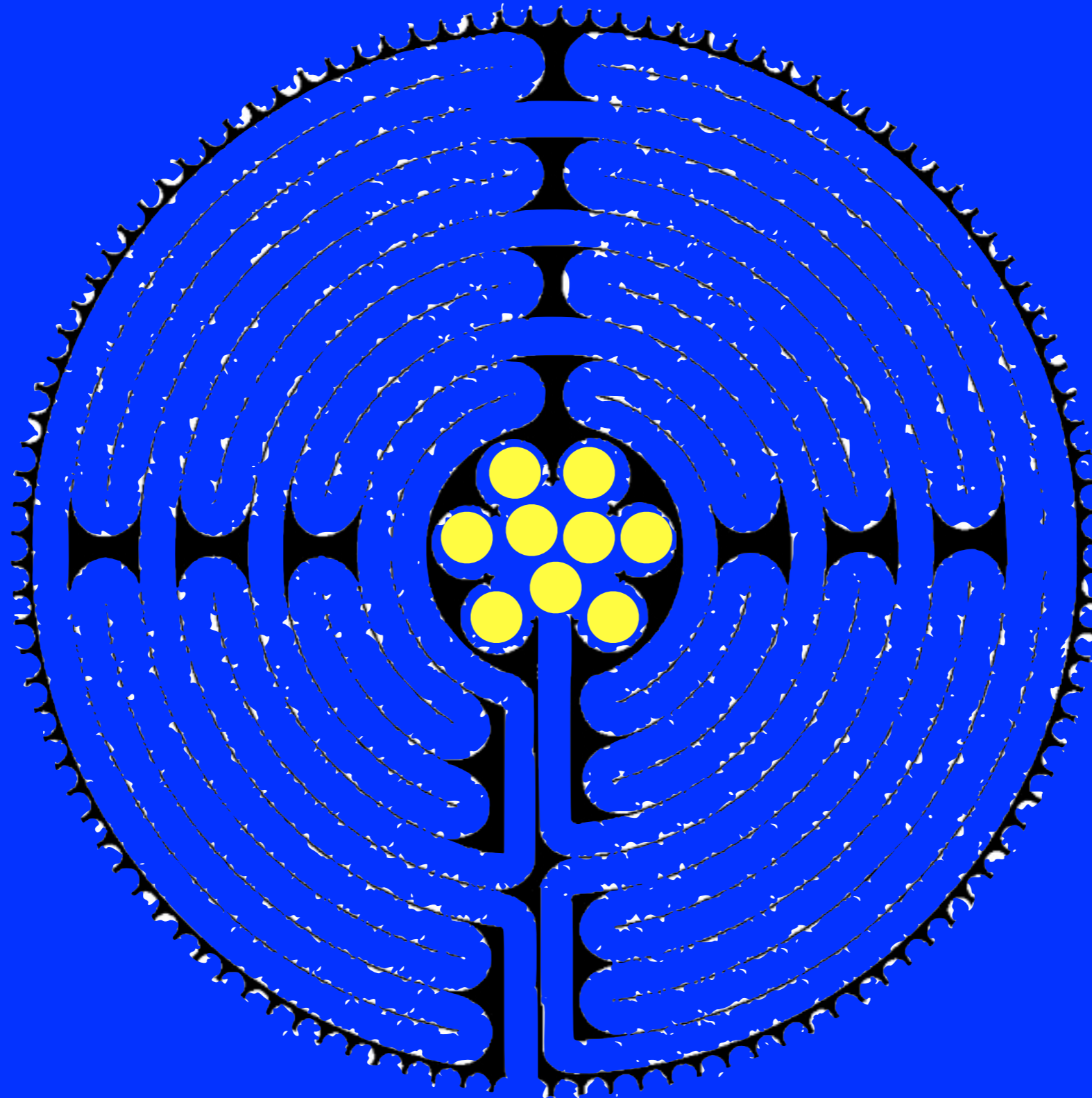
**When you get to the
center:**

**Rest with God.
Listen.
Receive.
Offer thanks.**

**Stay in the center
as long as you would like.**



There is room in the center for many people.

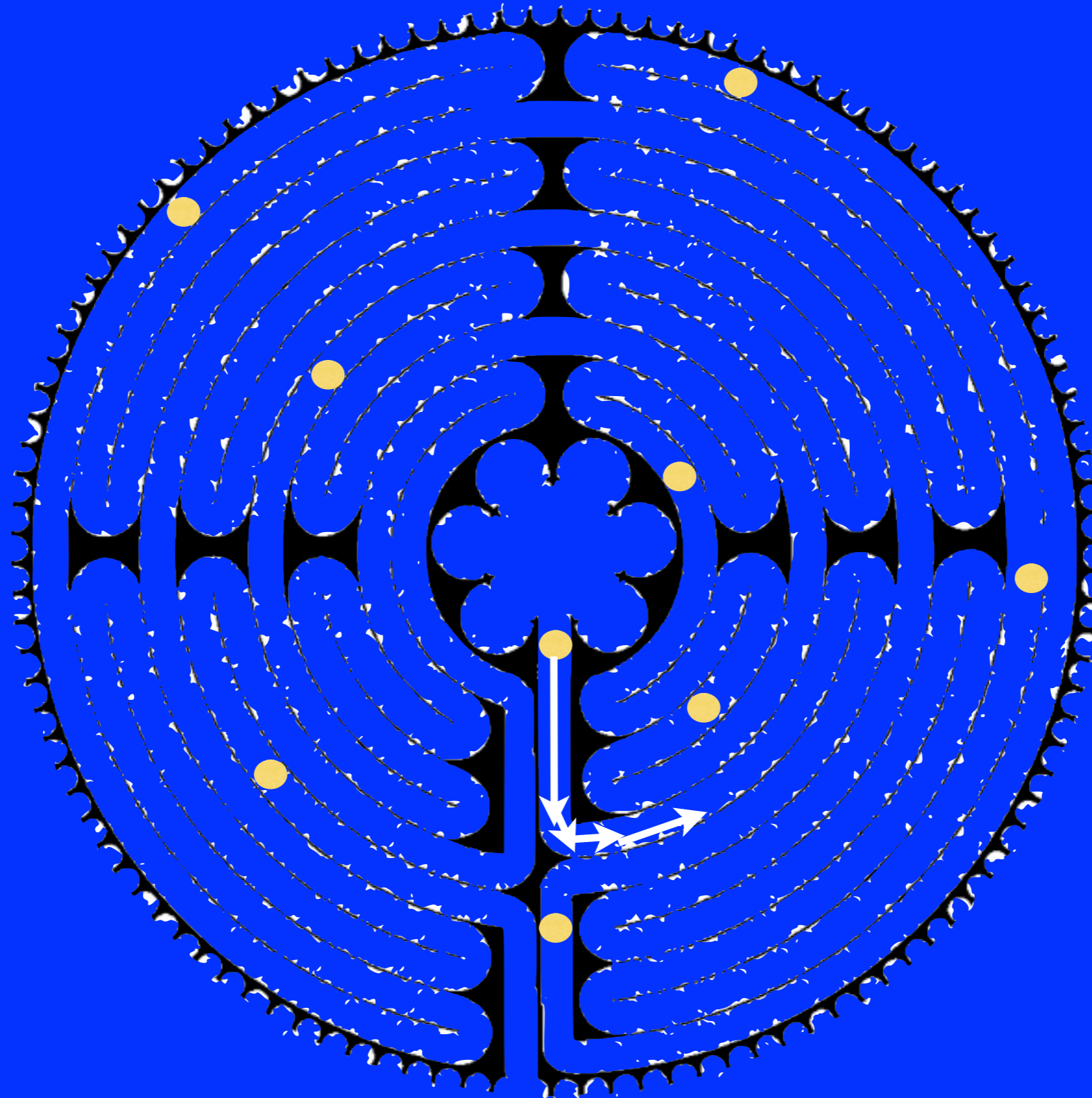




Stay in the center as long as you like.

St. Norbert's
Abbey
Green Bay,
Wisconsin USA

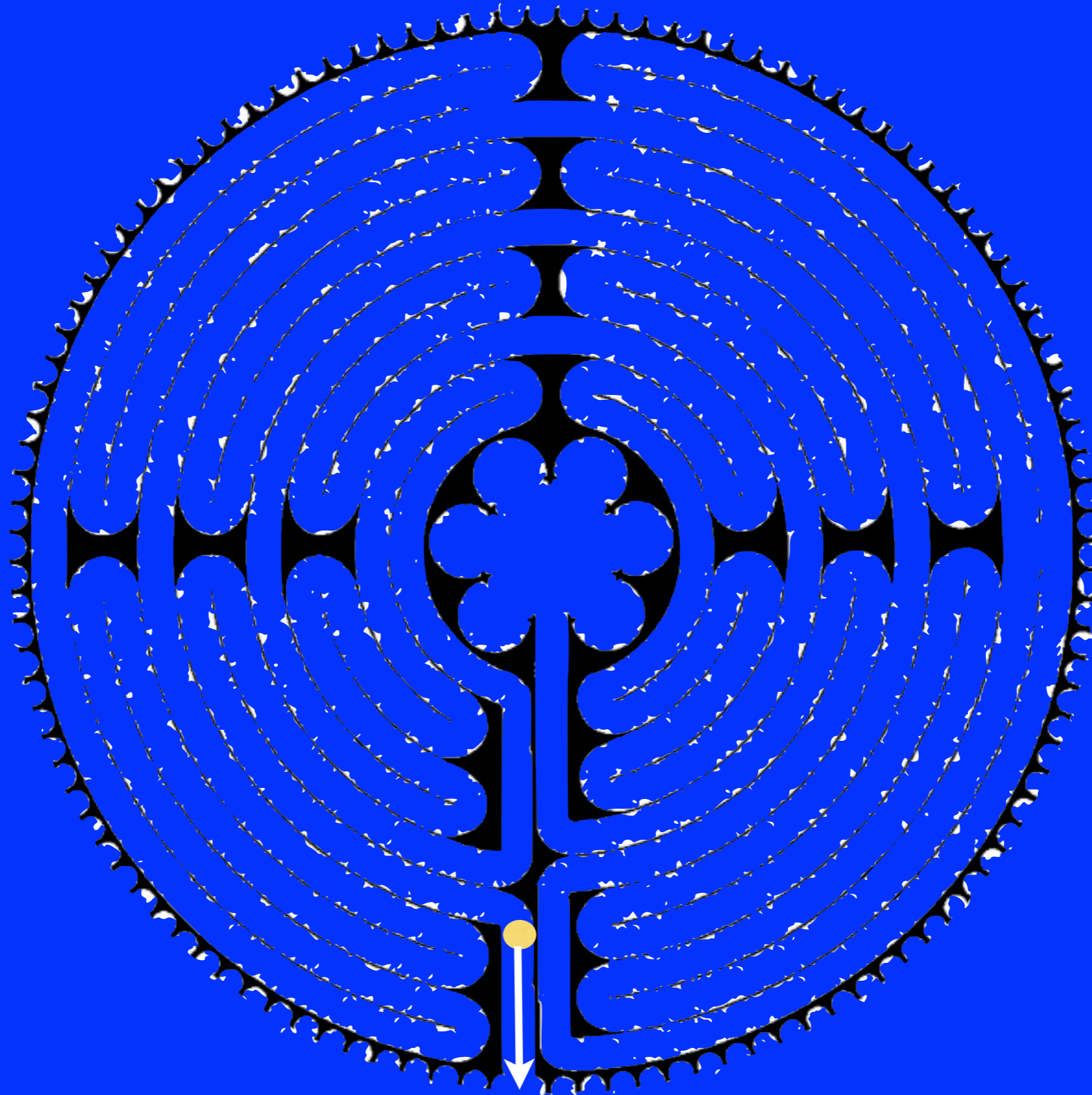
On the way back from the center
continue to pray.



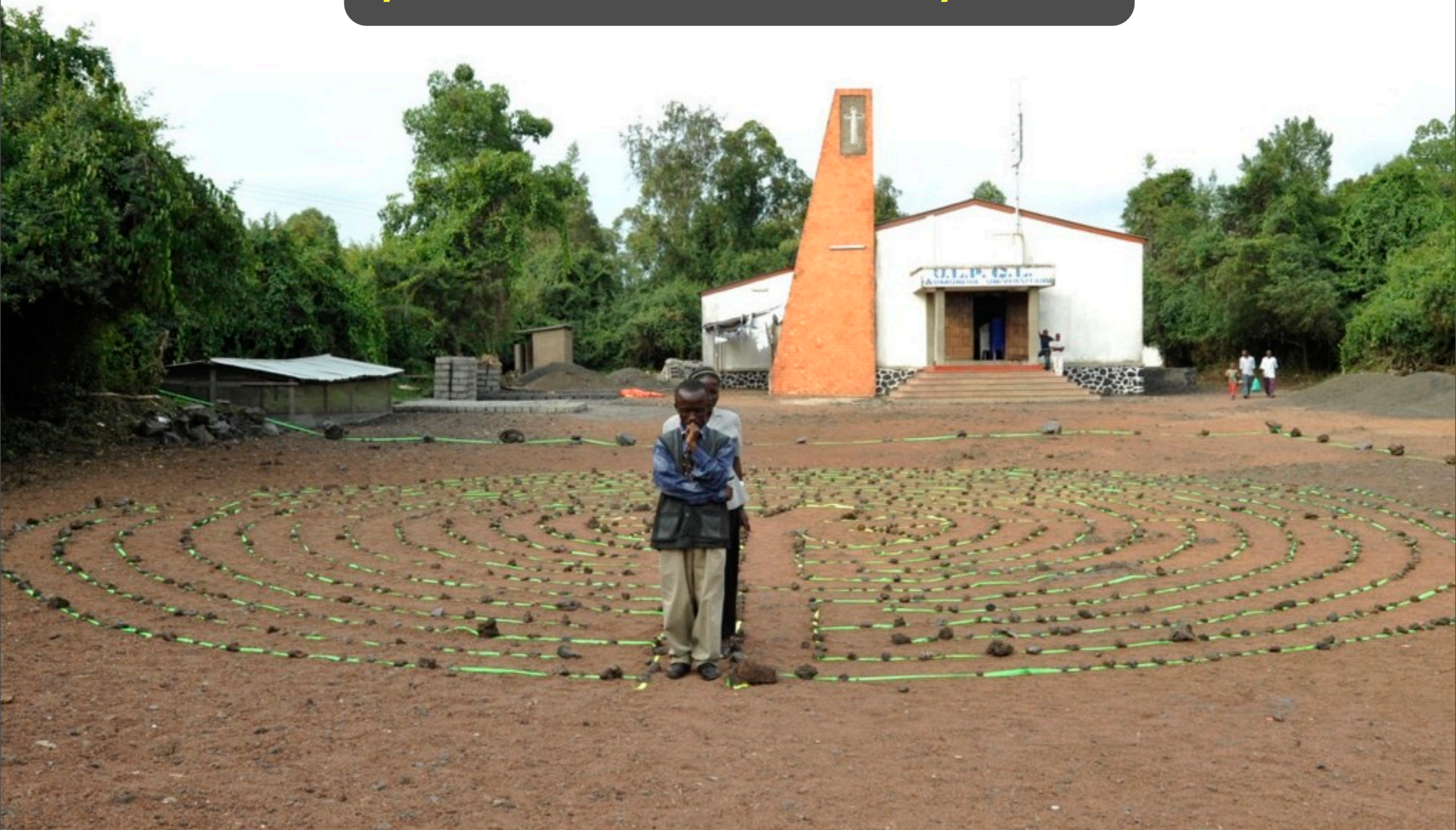


You return to the door
of the labyrinth
by following the
pathway
in the opposite
direction.

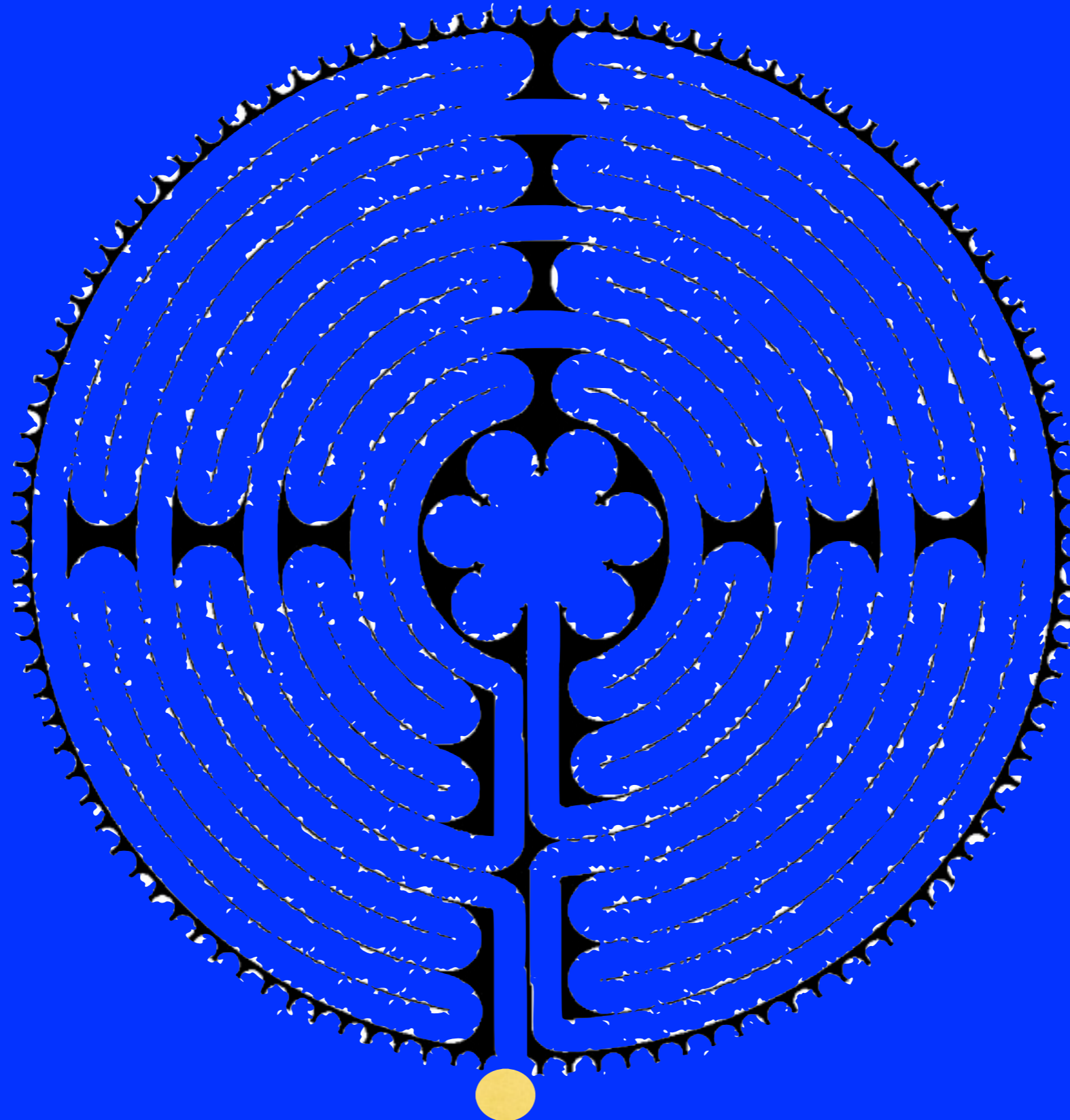
Nearing the doorway:
A time to stop and give thanks.



Prepare yourself to leave.
Stop and thank God before
you walk out of the labyrinth.



Your Next Step: Personal Reflection and Growth and Integration.



**After you walk
the labyrinth:**

Become aware of
your feelings
and thoughts.

Take time to journal,
draw,
or reflect--
or continue praying
and listening.





A person with short dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a blue pen and writing in an open notebook. On the desk, there is a stack of books, including one with a pink cover and a yellow logo, a brown book, and a black wallet. The desk is placed on a patterned rug with red and yellow stripes. The background shows a blue and white patterned surface.

**What
images,
and/or
experiences
were important?**

A person with short dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a blue pen and writing in an open notebook. On the desk, there is a stack of books, including a Bible with a red cover and a black leather-bound Bible. The desk is placed on a patterned rug with red and beige stripes. The background shows a blue and white patterned surface.

What did God communicate?

What images, and/or experiences were important?

A person with short dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a blue pen and writing in an open notebook. On the desk, there is a stack of books, including a Bible with a red cover and a black leather-bound Bible. The desk is placed on a patterned rug with red and beige stripes. The background shows a blue and white patterned surface.


What did God communicate?

What images, and/or experiences were important?

What do I want to remember?



Helpful things to know before your labyrinth walk.

A group of approximately 15 people, including men and women of various ages, are walking a large circular labyrinth drawn on the ground in an outdoor courtyard. The labyrinth is composed of concentric circles and radial paths. The people are dressed in simple, casual clothing, including white shirts, dark trousers, and saris. The courtyard is enclosed by a white wall, and there are trees and a paved area visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

We need
safe, sacred places
where in God's presence
and the presence of our Christian
brothers and sisters
we can be truthful
about our lives.



External movement on labyrinths
invites internal shifts.
Do you feel stuck?
You can pray your way forward.

Cultivating one's
inner life is
helped by
non-verbal
experiences.



Minister, D. R. Congo

At first the pattern may seem confusing.



It's okay to watch others walk the labyrinth,
but look with the eyes of a witness ("God is at work"),
not a judge ("What is s/he doing?") Pray for those who you see.





Curiosity is helpful when trying something new.
The more open you are, the more God can communicate.

The spiritual practice of walking (praying on) a labyrinth can serve to remind you, body and mind, that God is guiding you faithfully-- especially when you are not at all sure of it!



You can pray in a way that is natural for you.
There is no one “right way” to pray the labyrinth.
This is *your* time with God.

Praying for others
Resting in center
Praying for self

Open to God’s leading

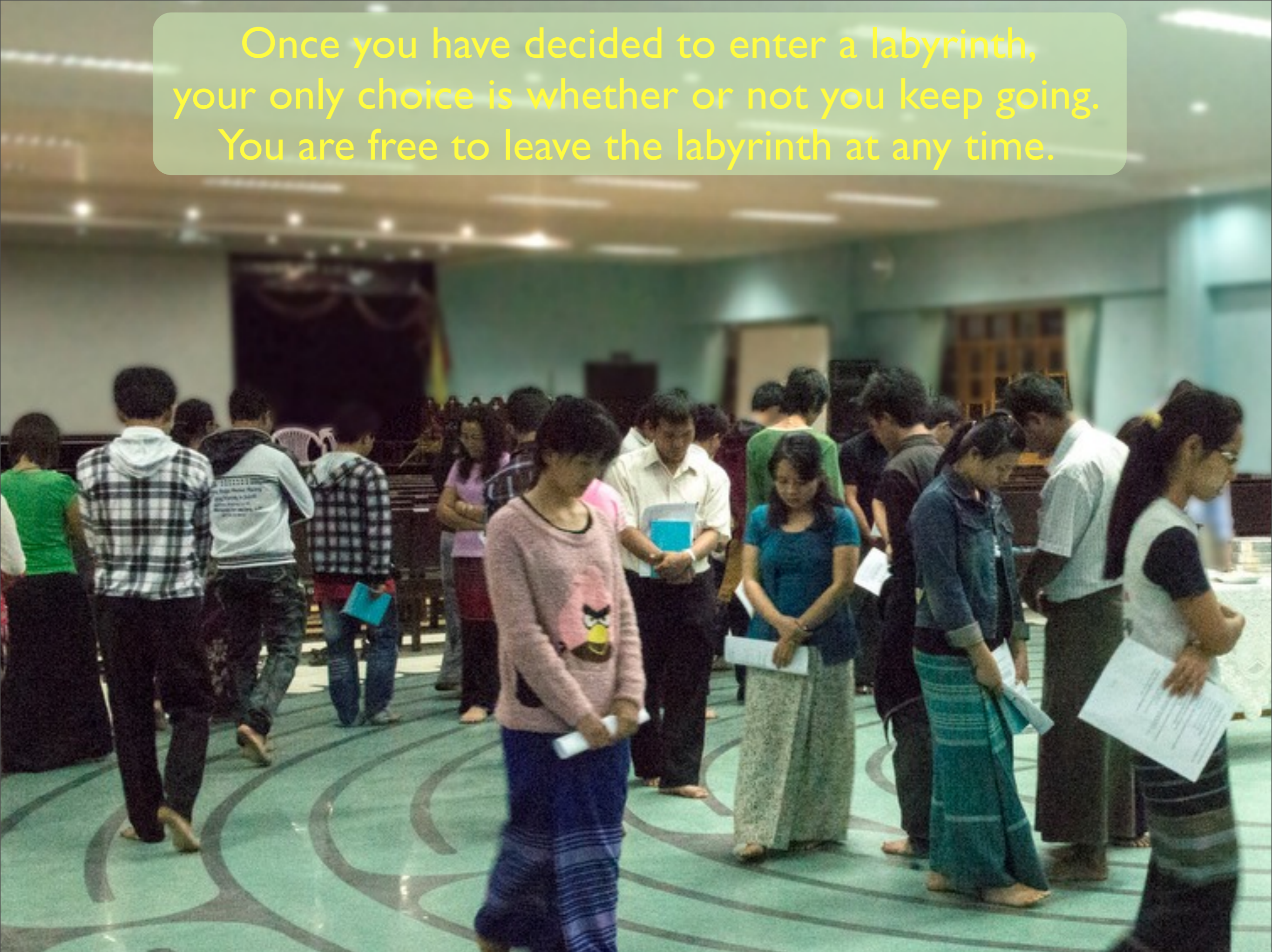
Reciting Scripture

Praying a question

Singing a spiritual song

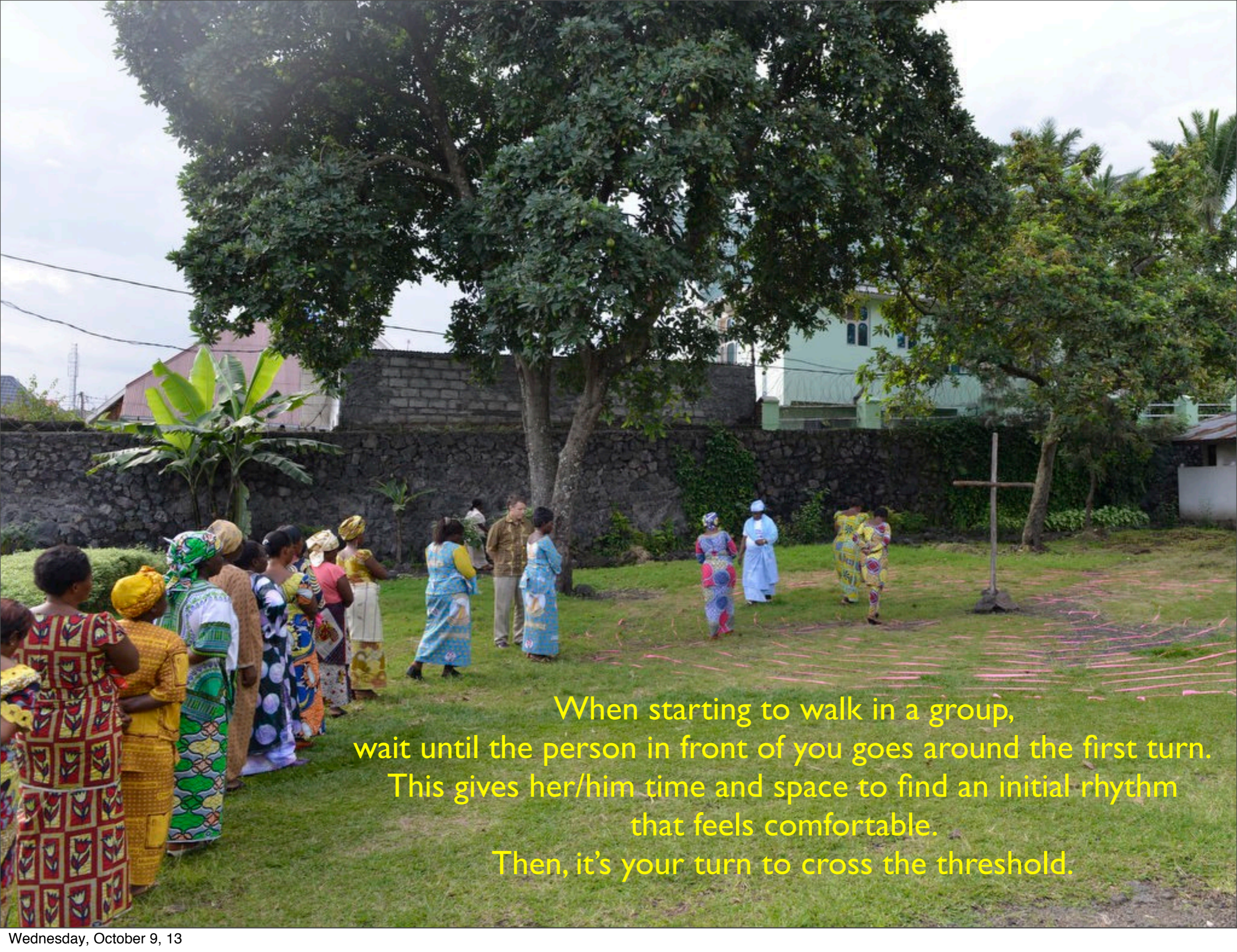
Cingpikot Photo: Lun Man Hau

Once you have decided to enter a labyrinth, your only choice is whether or not you keep going. You are free to leave the labyrinth at any time.



When walking the labyrinth you can move around another person, or let someone “pass” you.



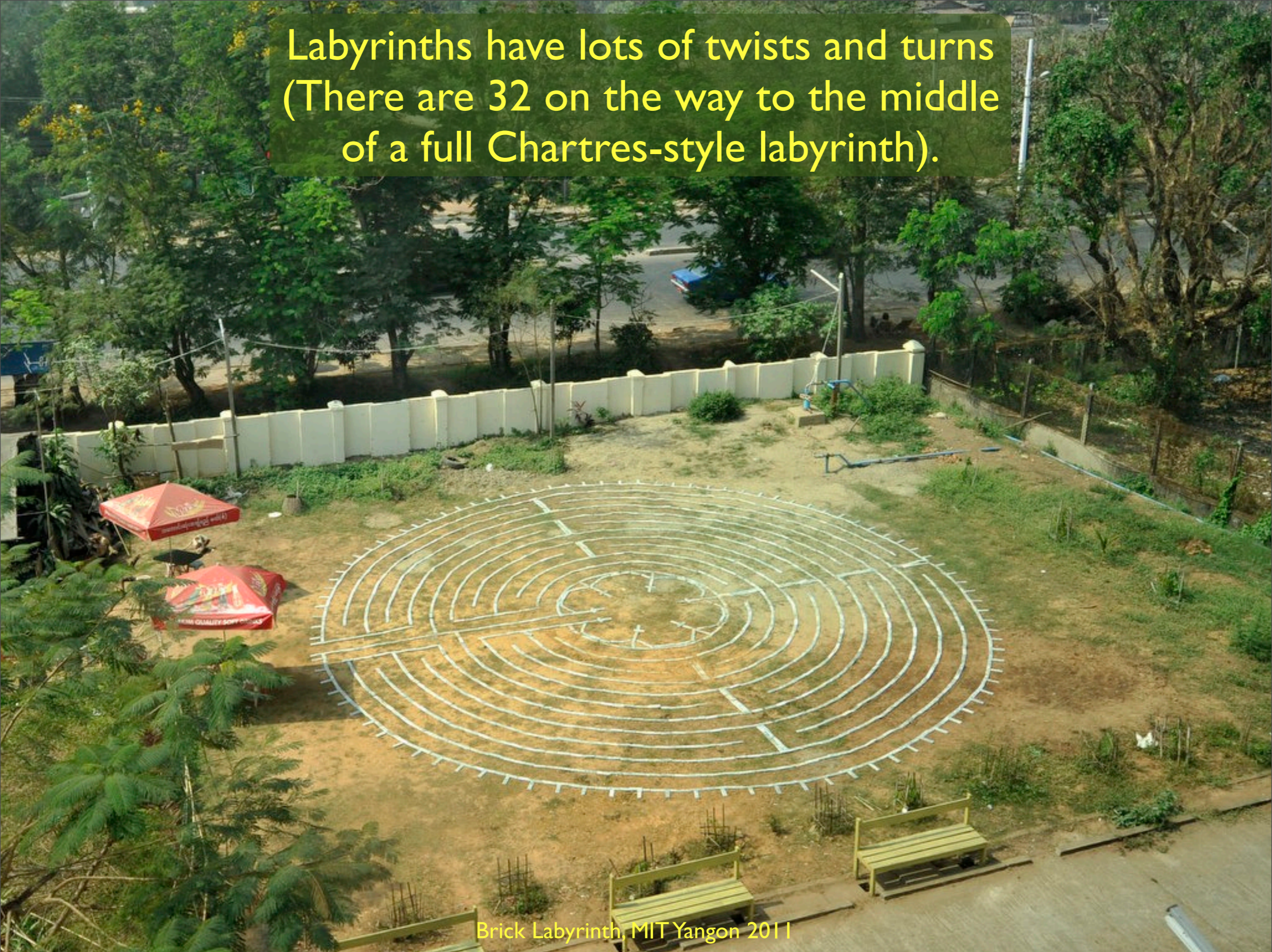


When starting to walk in a group,
wait until the person in front of you goes around the first turn.
This gives her/him time and space to find an initial rhythm
that feels comfortable.
Then, it's your turn to cross the threshold.

If you stay on the path,
you will discover it can be trusted to lead you to the center.



Labyrinths have lots of twists and turns
(There are 32 on the way to the middle
of a full Chartres-style labyrinth).



Brick Labyrinth, MIT Yangon 2011



Between the frequent turns are stretches of the path of various lengths, some short and some longer.

HEAL Africa, Goma, D. R. Congo

You can learn to look at a situation from different perspectives and angles as you circle back and forth, moving closer, farther away, then closer again.



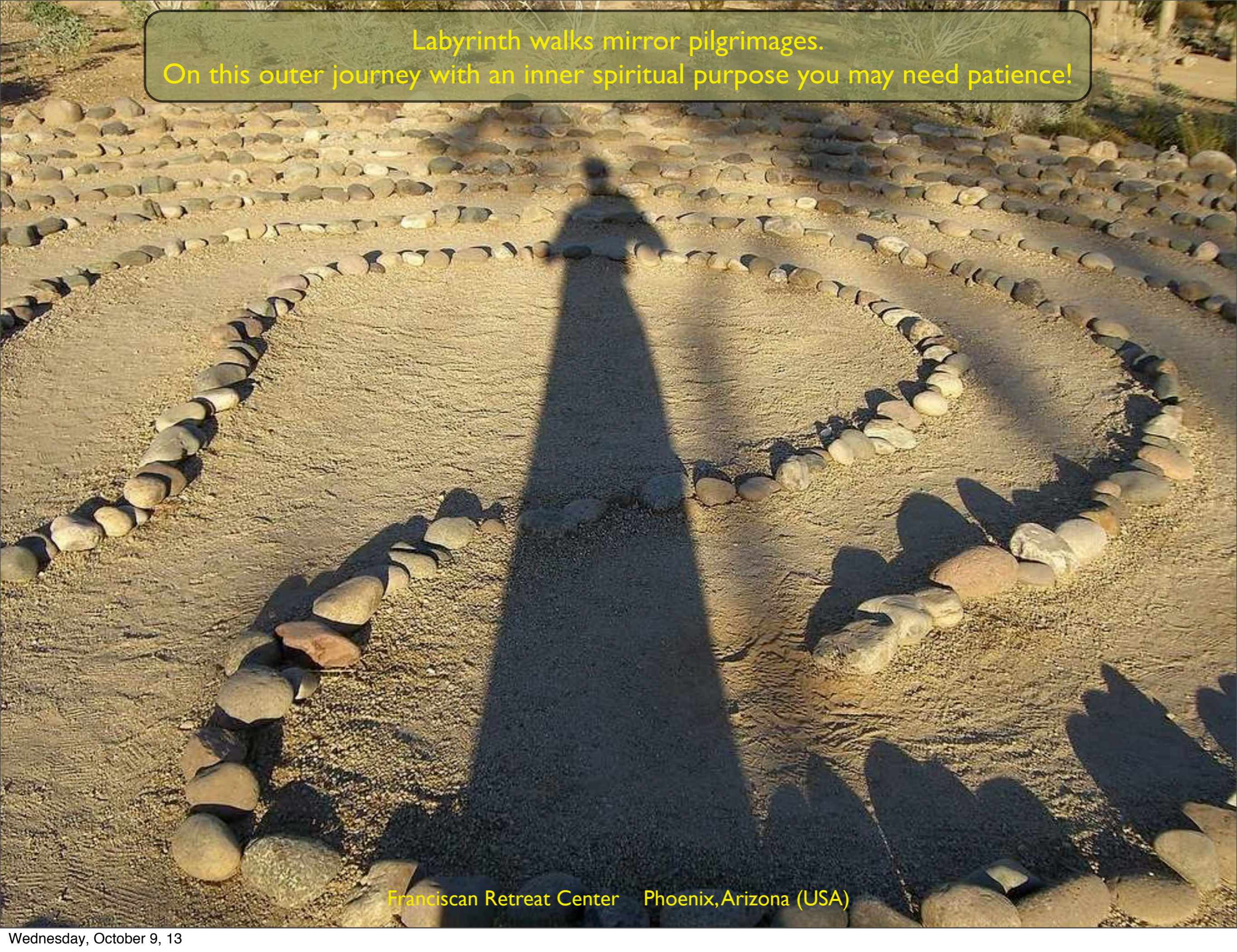
Youth who live on the street Goma, D. R. Congo



Labyrinth experiences
are a mirror of one's life.

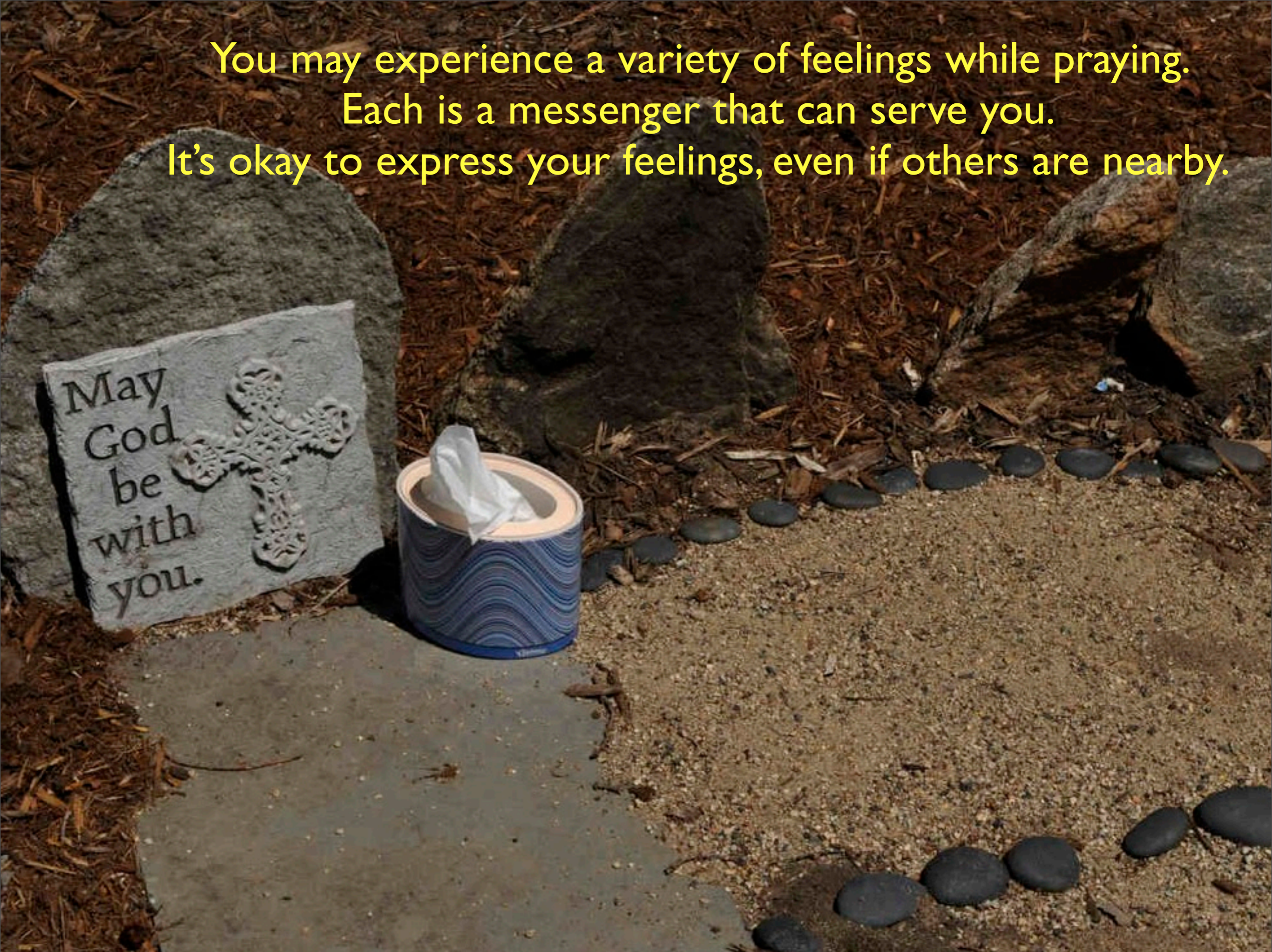
Pay attention to what you are
“seeing” while you pray.

Labyrinth walks mirror pilgrimages.
On this outer journey with an inner spiritual purpose you may need patience!



Franciscan Retreat Center Phoenix, Arizona (USA)

You may experience a variety of feelings while praying.
Each is a messenger that can serve you.
It's okay to express your feelings, even if others are nearby.



Since you are praying a body-prayer, don't be afraid to use your body to pray!



“...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you? 1 Cor. 6:19



As with all spiritual practices (Bible reading, prayer for others, etc.), the more you “practice” using a labyrinth, the more natural it will become.



“With a hammer, we can build a house. The hammer is important and extremely helpful, but the objective is the house. The same is true with the labyrinth. We should not confuse the tool with the purpose. Our goal is not a labyrinth experience, but a [prayer] experience. The labyrinth has shown itself to be a very efficient spiritual aid. Ultimately, of course, the result depends on the user and not the tool.”

Robert Ferré, *12 Reasons To Have A Church Labyrinth.*

Labyrinth Prayer: Your Turn



Experiencing Labyrinth Prayer

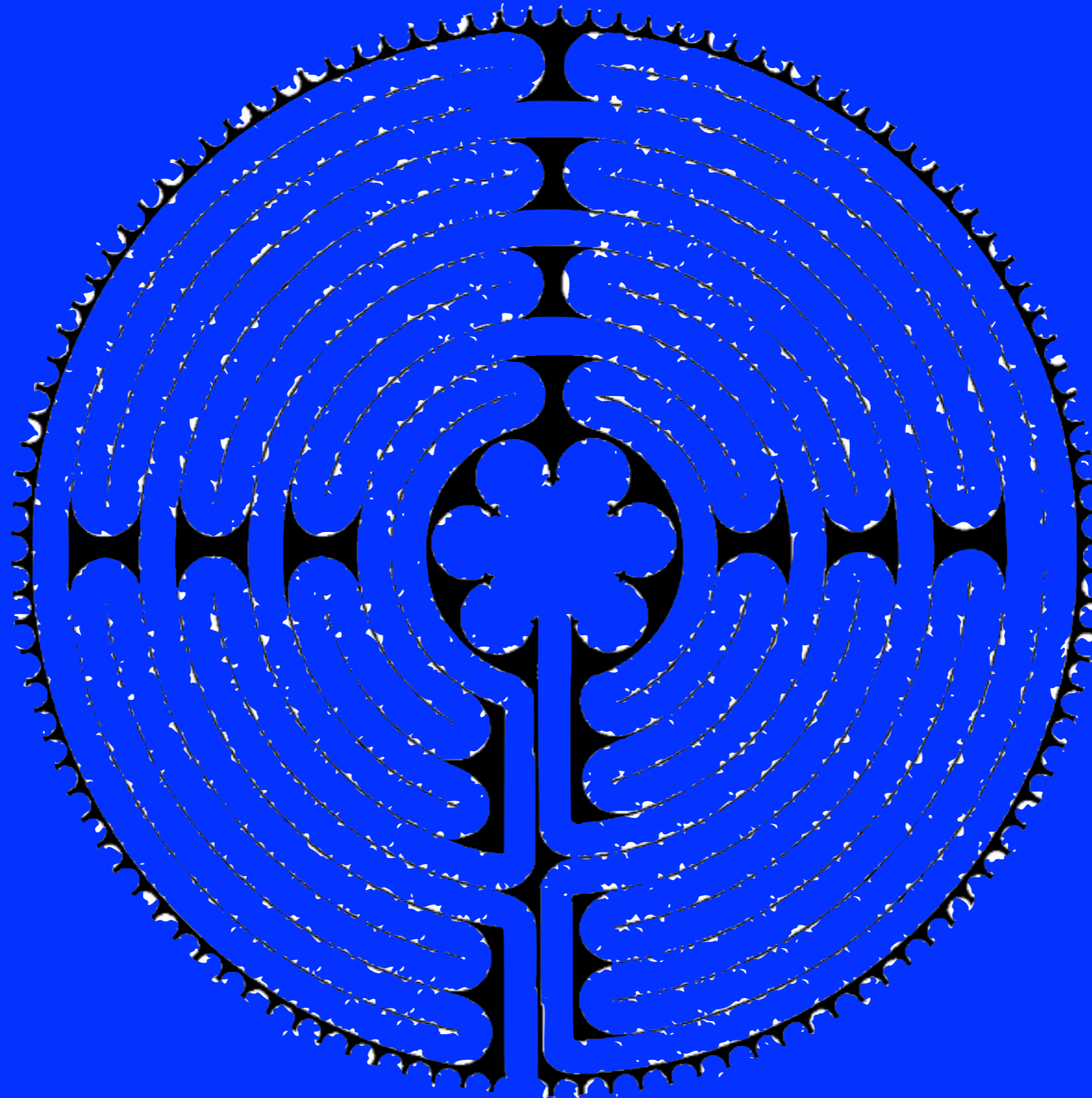


Right now
I am feeling...



Aggressive	Agonized	Anxious	Apologetic	Arrogant	Bashful	Blissful
Bored	Cautious	Cold	Concentrating	Confident	Curious	Demure
Determined	Dissappointed	Dissaproving	Disbelieving	Disgusted	Distasteful	Eavesdropping
Ecstatic	Enraged	Envious	Exasperated	Exhausted	Frightened	Frustrated
Grieving	Guilty	Happy	Horrified	Hot	Hungover	Hurt
Hysterical	Indifferent	Idiotic	Innocent	Interested	Jealous	Joyful
Loaded	Lonely	Lovestruck	Meditative	Mischievous	Miserable	Negative
Obstinate	Optimistic	Pained	Paranoid	Perplexed	Prudish	Puzzled
Regretful	Relieved	Sad	Satisfied	Shocked	Sheepish	Smug
Surly	Surprised	Suspicious	Sympathetic	Thoughtful	Undecided	Withdrawn

What did I experience?



The background is a close-up, top-down view of a cobblestone path. The stones are irregular in shape and size, ranging from light grey to dark grey. A prominent feature is a large, circular pattern of stones in the center, which is slightly darker and more uniform in color than the surrounding stones. The overall texture is rough and uneven.

How was what I experienced like something else in my life?

A top-down view of a cobblestone path. The path is composed of irregular, greyish-brown stones. In the center, there is a circular pattern of stones, possibly a manhole cover or a decorative feature. The text "How was what I experienced like something else in my life?" is overlaid in the center in a bright yellow font.

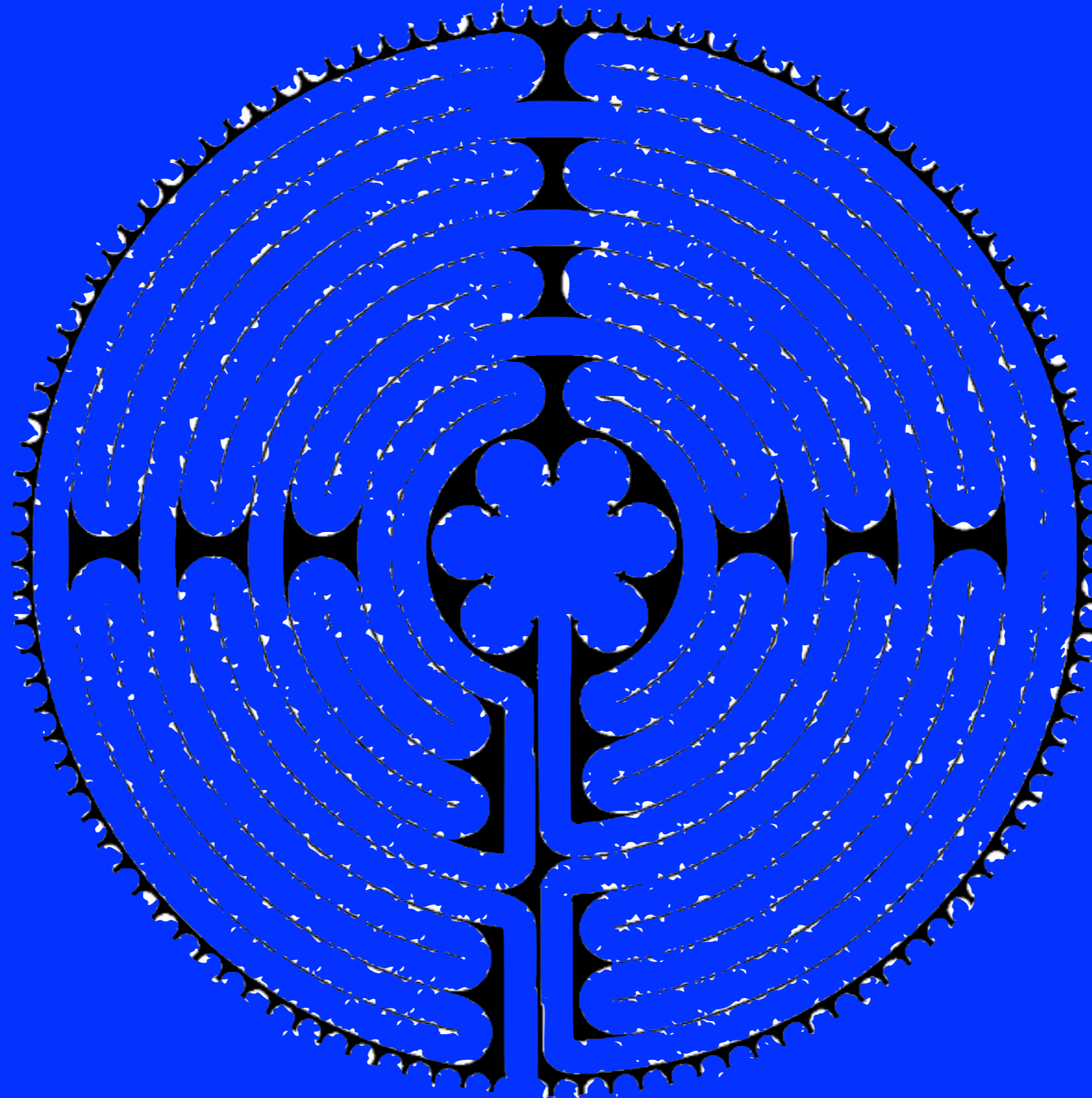
How was what I experienced like something else in my life?

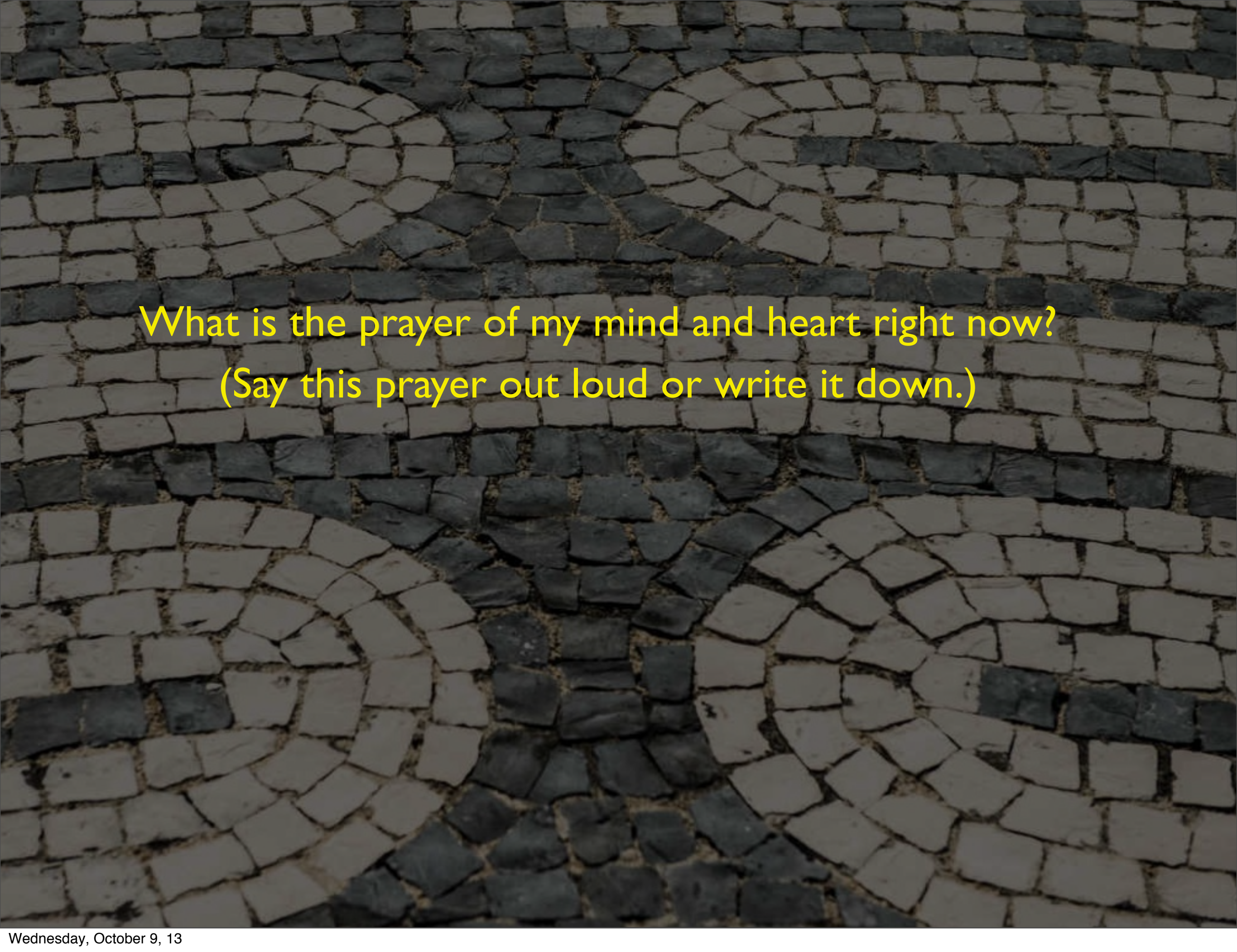


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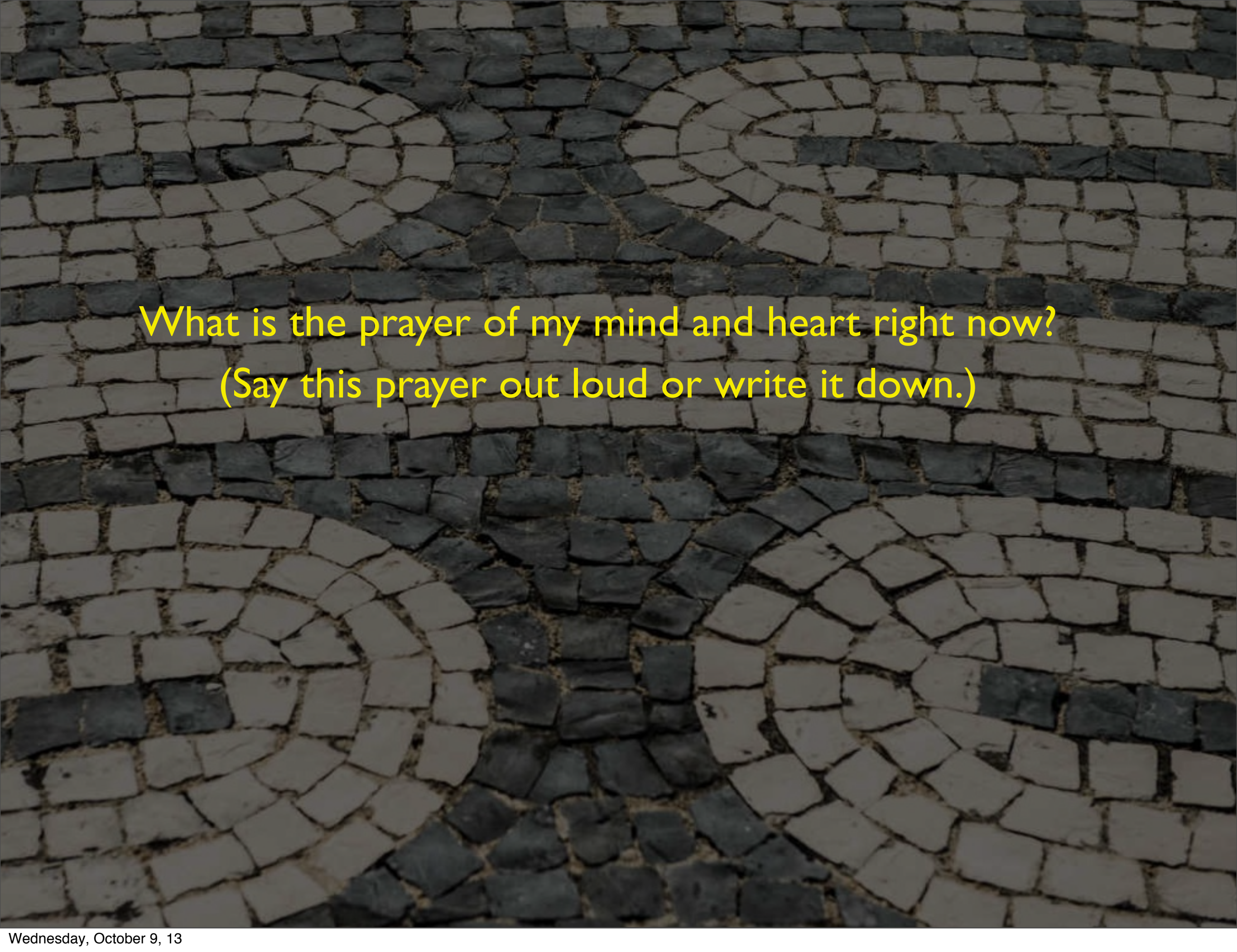
Ask yourself, “Where else in my life do I have the same feelings or experiences?”

What do I want to remember about this experience?



The background of the image is a close-up, top-down view of a cobblestone path. The stones are irregular in shape and size, ranging from light grey to dark grey. A prominent feature is a large, circular pattern of stones in the center, which appears to be a decorative or functional element of the pavement. The overall texture is rough and uneven.

What is the prayer of my mind and heart right now?
(Say this prayer out loud or write it down.)

The background of the image is a close-up, top-down view of a cobblestone path. The stones are irregular in shape and size, ranging from light grey to dark grey. A prominent feature is a large, circular pattern of stones in the center, which is slightly darker and more uniform in color than the surrounding path. The overall texture is rough and uneven.

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(Say this prayer out loud or write it down.)



Ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

Labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

Journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Articles by Tim: www.spiritledleader.wordpress.com



Jill's email: jill.geoffrion@fhlglobal.org