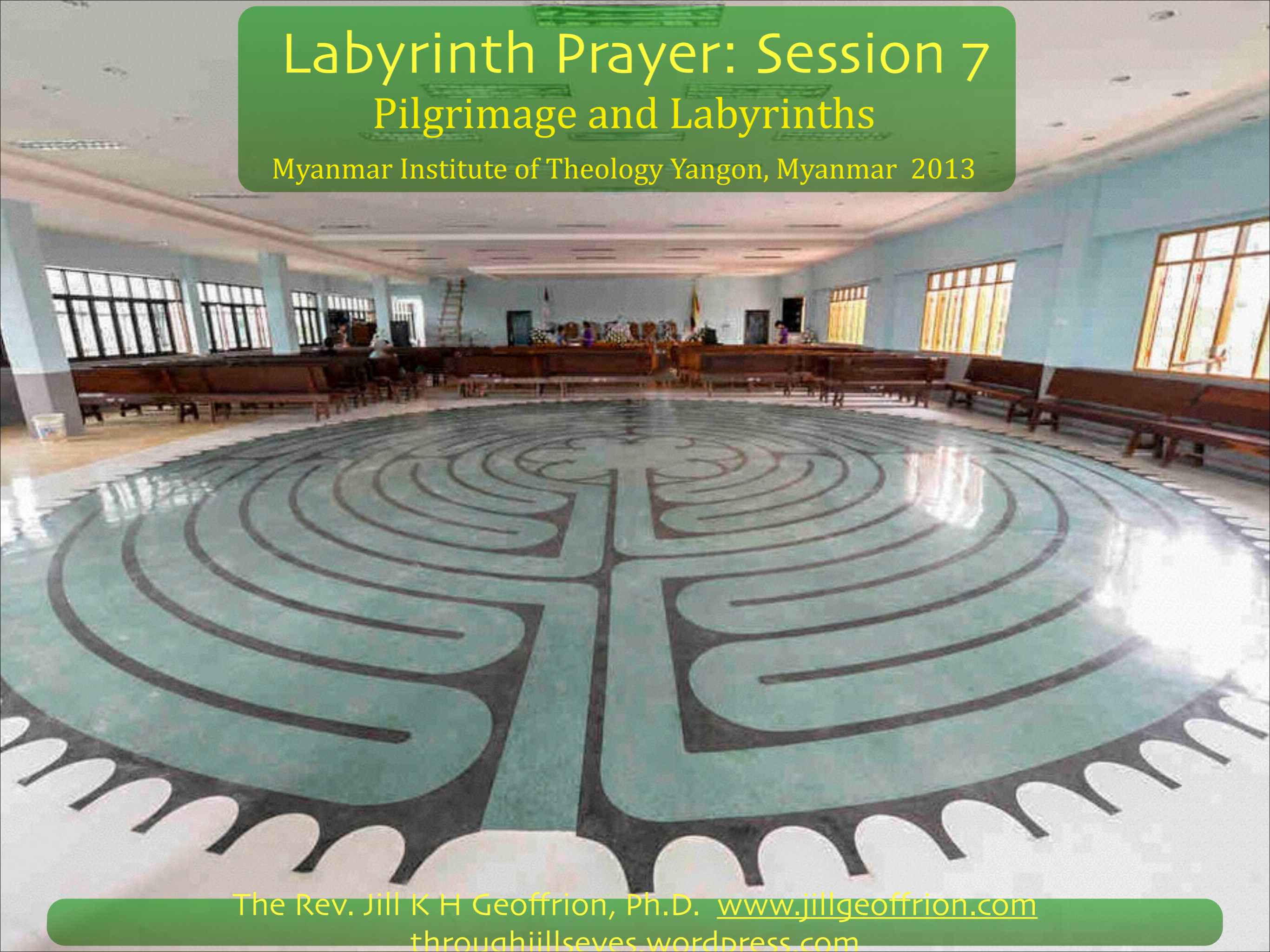


Labyrinth Prayer: Session 7

Pilgrimage and Labyrinths

Myanmar Institute of Theology Yangon, Myanmar 2013



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

What questions do you have about pilgrimage & labyrinths?



One of our guiding questions for this class:
Why is it valuable to link labyrinth experience and pilgrimage?



Step by Step

G D/F# C/E D7 G

O God, you are my God, and I will ev-er praise you. O

G D/F# C/E D7 G

God, you are my God, and I will ev-er praise you. I will

Em C/E D C Am C/D

seek you in the morn-ing, and I will learn to walk in your ways; and

G D/F# Am7 D7 C/D G

step by step you'll lead me, and I will fol-low you all of my days.

O God, You are my God,
 And I will ever praise You
 O God, You are my God,
 And I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning
 And I will learn to walk in Your ways
 And step by step You'll lead me
 And I will follow You all of my days.

And step by step You'll lead me
 And I will follow You all of my days.

Pilgrimage Prayer

Stand.

As we bow our heads, we remember that the first step on the path is humility.

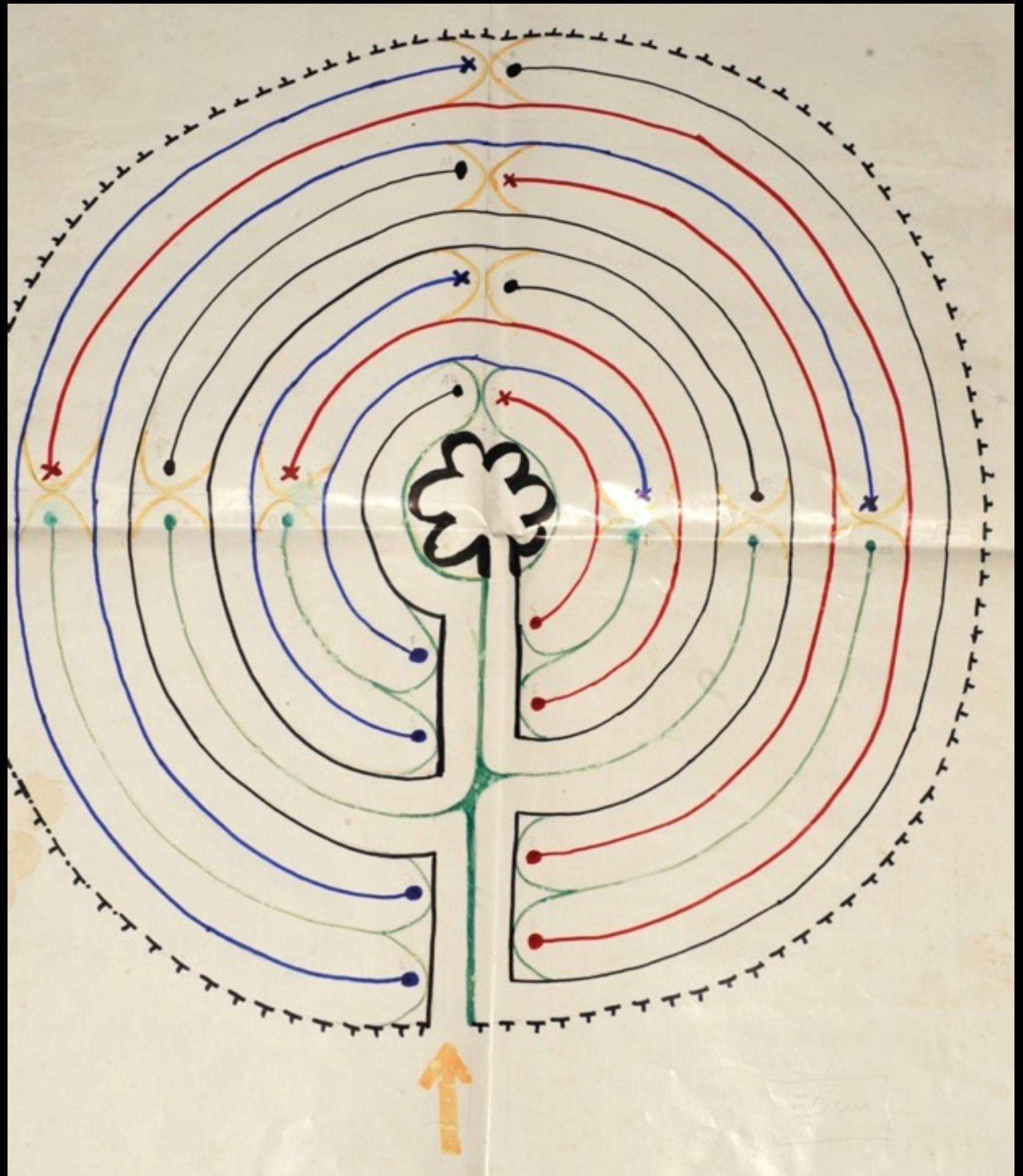
The second step, letting go, is symbolized by holding two fists out in front and opening them downward.

The third step, receiving, is honored by turning the palms up in a gesture of openness.

For the fourth step, both hands are placed over the heart.

Then, all pray, "May the path lead us Home."

Created by: Cielle Tewksbury
ciellet9@gmail.com




Drawing prepared for an installation at a mountainside parish in northern Rwanda

“A pilgrimage is a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage>



pil·grim·age

/ˈpɪlgrəmiːj/ 

noun

1. a pilgrim's journey.

synonyms: religious journey, religious expedition

Pilgrim praying at the site of Jesus' tomb, Jerusalem

Geoffrion Family Pilgrimage 2006

500 miles/800 kilometers
to Santiago de Compostela, Spain
(Tomb of James the Apostle)



Starting in France



Day 37: Santiago, Spain





"A pilgrimage is a voluntary act with a spiritual purpose by which a person leaves his/her familiar surroundings, routines, and community for a sanctuary that s/he has chosen or has been imposed on her/him."

Guide for the pilgrim--1139 CE--in the Codex Calixtinus

One of the three most important Christian pilgrimage sites: Burial place of Peter, Jesus' disciple Rome, Italy



“Pilgrims are persons in motion-
passing through territories not their own-
seeking something we might call completion,
or perhaps the word clarity will do as well,
a goal to which only the spirit’s compass
points the way.”

Richard R. Niebuhr, *Pilgrims and Pioneers*,
Parabola, Fall 1984, pp. 4 & 7

“Pilgrimage is a mindful journey to encounter, explore,
and become aware of the sacred.”

Publisher of Rosanne Keller's *Pilgrim in Time*. (Collgeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006)

Burgos Cathedral, Spain



Pilgrimage is one answer to the question,
“Do you know where I can find God?”

Phil Cousineau *The Art of Pilgrimage. The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred.*
(Berkeley, CA, Conari Press) 1998.



Labyrinth in San Vitale Ravenna, Italy

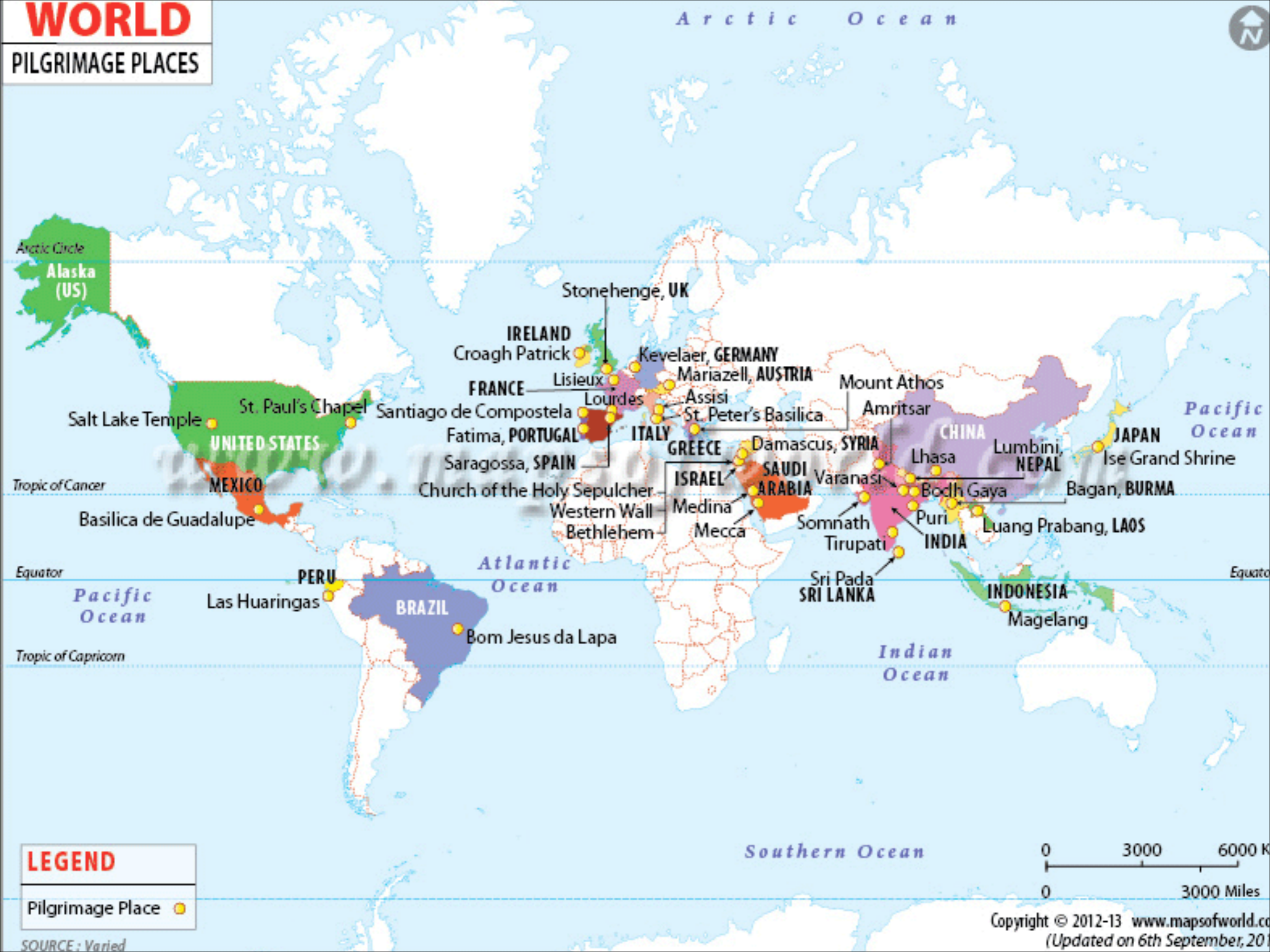
Pilgrimage: An internal and external spiritual journey involving known and unknown destinations.

Pilgrim:
One who is moving
in response to a spiritual
invitation.

Doorway of blessing La Faba, Spain

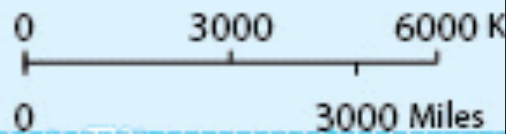
WORLD

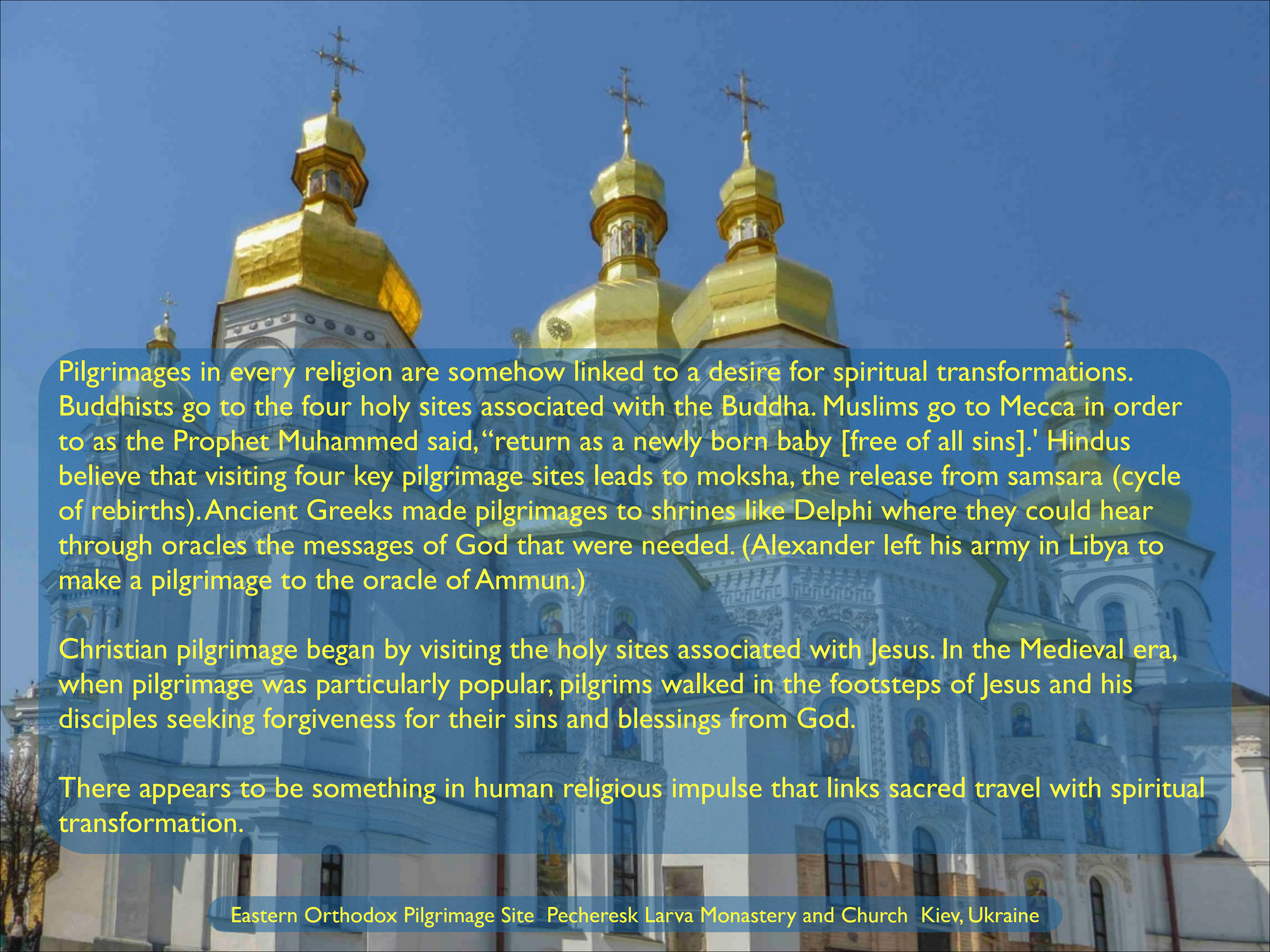
PILGRIMAGE PLACES



LEGEND

Pilgrimage Place ●






Pilgrimages in every religion are somehow linked to a desire for spiritual transformations. Buddhists go to the four holy sites associated with the Buddha. Muslims go to Mecca in order to as the Prophet Muhammed said, “return as a newly born baby [free of all sins].’ Hindus believe that visiting four key pilgrimage sites leads to moksha, the release from samsara (cycle of rebirths). Ancient Greeks made pilgrimages to shrines like Delphi where they could hear through oracles the messages of God that were needed. (Alexander left his army in Libya to make a pilgrimage to the oracle of Ammun.)

Christian pilgrimage began by visiting the holy sites associated with Jesus. In the Medieval era, when pilgrimage was particularly popular, pilgrims walked in the footsteps of Jesus and his disciples seeking forgiveness for their sins and blessings from God.

There appears to be something in human religious impulse that links sacred travel with spiritual transformation.

A man dressed in a black habit, a traditional monastic garment, is sitting on large, light-colored stone steps. He is leaning forward with his hands clasped together in a prayerful or reflective pose. The background shows a rough, textured stone wall. The overall scene is one of quiet contemplation.

These sacred journeys give people space to step aside from the circumstances of their lives in order to reflect upon them.

Sally Welch. *Making a Pilgrimage*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2009. 17.

The Garden of Gethsemane outside Jerusalem

Pilgrimage in Myanmar

ရွှေတိဂုံစေတီတော်

Relics of the past four Buddhas enshrined in Shwedagon Pagoda

1. the staff of Kakusandha,
2. the water filter of Koṇāgamana,
3. a piece of the robe of Kassapa and,
4. eight strands of hair from Gautama, the historical Buddha

Pilgrimage in the Jewish Tradition

The temple in Jerusalem was the focus of Jewish pilgrimages until its destruction in 70 CE. All adult males who were physically able were required to visit the Temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices during Passover (7 or 8 day festival commemorating God's help when fleeing Egypt), Shavuot (celebrating God's gift of the Torah to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai) and Sukkot (8 day festival of booths/tabernacles). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage>

Now every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. Luke 2:41

Wailing (or Western) Wall (of the original Temple) in Jerusalem: A site of modern-day Jewish pilgrimage

A photograph of an ancient olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane, with a stone pillar supporting its trunk. The tree's trunk is thick, gnarled, and covered in a stone pillar. The background shows other olive trees and a dirt path.

Christian Pilgrimage

Olive Tree in the Garden of Gethsemane outside Jerusalem, Israel

A circular labyrinth with a central floral design. The labyrinth is composed of multiple concentric rings of paths that spiral inward toward a central point. The central point is a stylized floral or tree-like motif with a vertical stem and several rounded, petal-like shapes at the top. The entire design is rendered in a light gray color against a dark gray background.

**Undertaking
Pilgrimage: Christian
Perspectives**

The Bible is replete with archetypes for pilgrimage: Abram and Sarai left their homeland at God's command. Moses and the Israelites wandered for 40 years following God toward their promised homeland. Jesus was in many ways a pilgrim during his entire three-year ministry constantly moving from place to place. Paul undertook three missionary journeys to far-off lands, and other apostles followed his example. ...And, as the New Testament states repeatedly, followers of Christ are 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

PHILIPPIANS 4.6

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
2 To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters* in Christ in Colossae:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father.
3 In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant.^b He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,^c and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.
9 For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and trans-

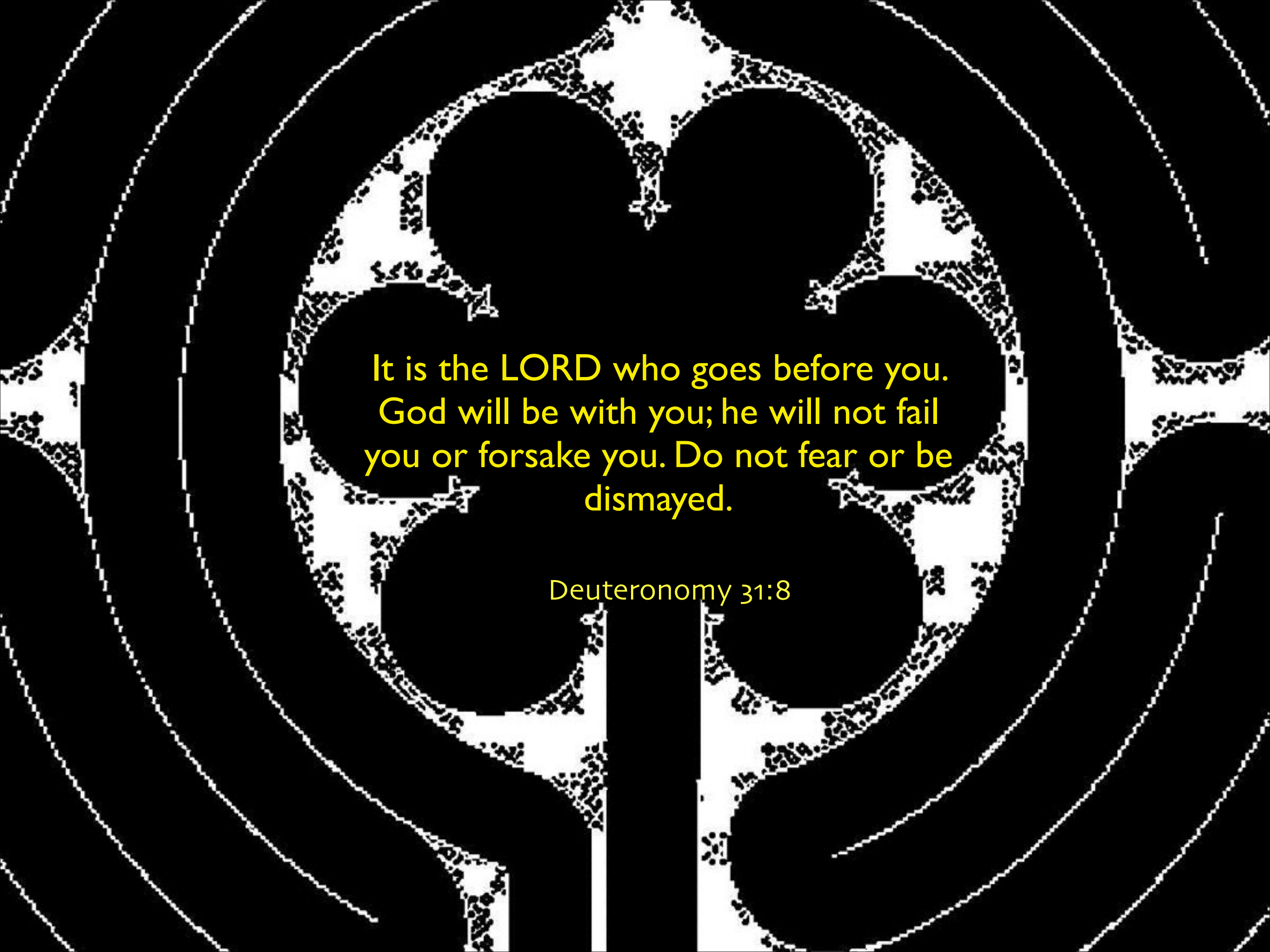
ferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.
21 And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.
24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been

*Or brothers. ^bOr slave. ^cOther ancient authorities read our. ^dOr he. ^eOther ancient authorities read called. ^fOther ancient authorities read us. ^gOther ancient authorities add through his blood. ^hOr by. ⁱOther ancient authorities read you have now been reconciled. ^jOr in the body of his flesh.



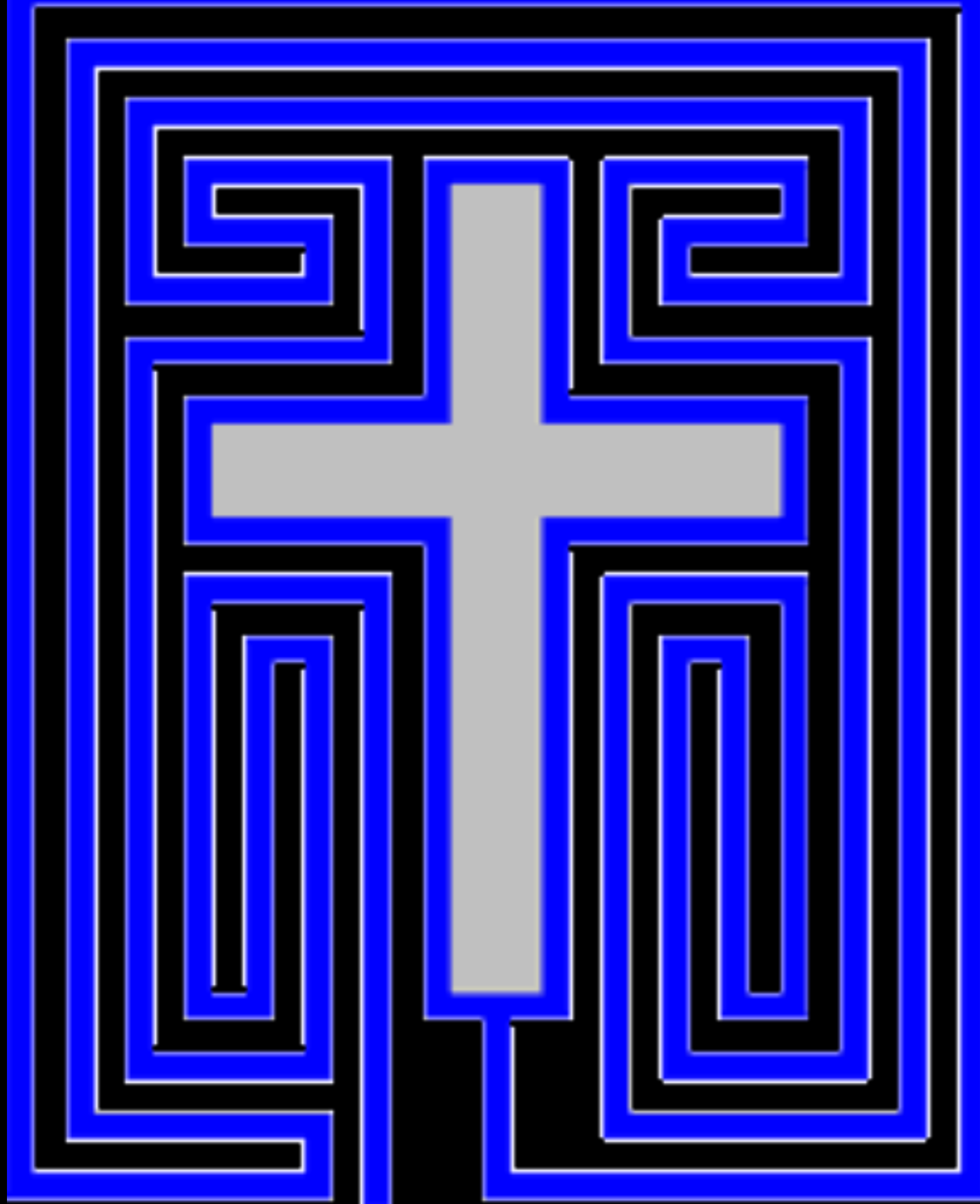
**Dearly beloved,
I beseech you as strangers
and pilgrims...**

1 Peter 2:11 (KJV)



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

Deuteronomy 31:8



Pilgrimage from the 5th to the 15th century (the medieval period) in Western Christianity was tied to the forgiveness of one's sins.

One walked to seek God's forgiveness—sometimes voluntarily, or in the case of prisoners, sometimes in chains.





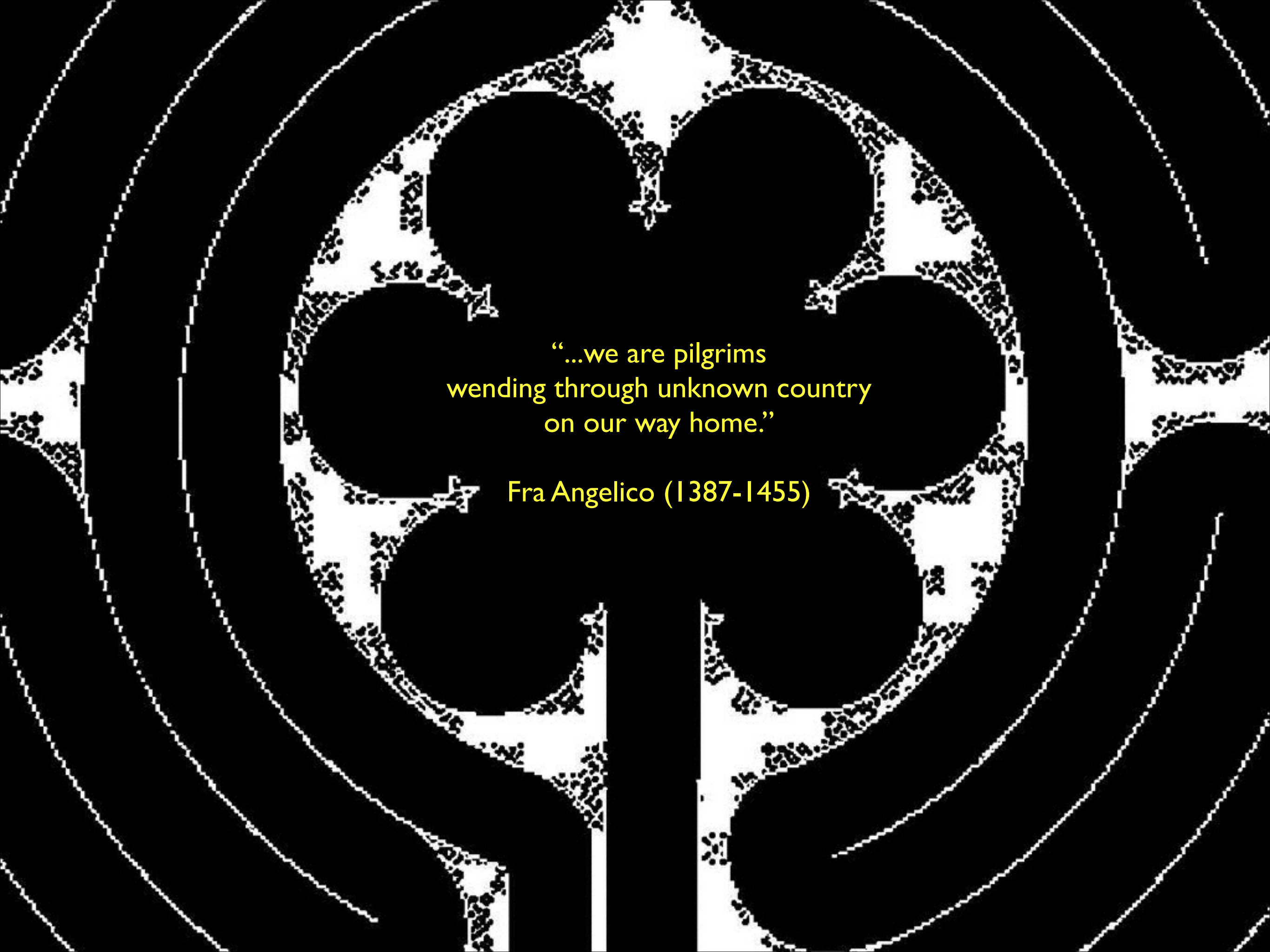
“In the Christian tradition, pilgrimage has always served
to renew one’s faith
as an individual and collective conversion
as a time of prayer and penitence
as a time of fellowship.”

National Association of Diocesan Directors of Pilgrimages, France

What are some of the traditional purposes of pilgrimage?


- Seeking the forgiveness of one's sins (3 most common pilgrimages: Jerusalem, Rome, Compostela)
- Taking time out of regular routines to seek God's blessing, or help
- Seeking healing at a sacred site. A desire to end suffering.
- Fulfilling a vow made to God





“...we are pilgrims
wending through unknown country
on our way home.”

Fra Angelico (1387-1455)



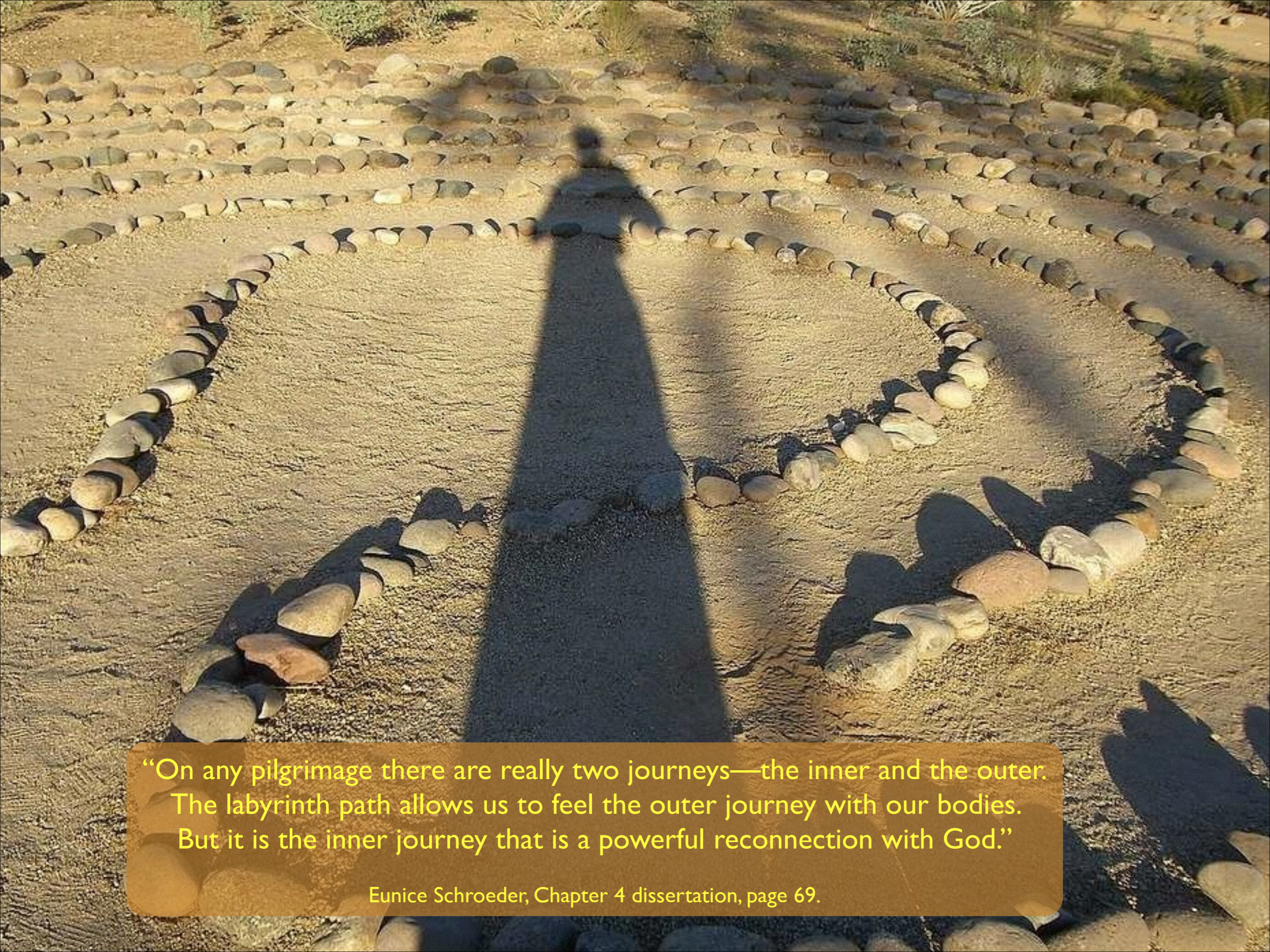
“No one can come to me
unless drawn by the Father who sent me.”

John 6:44



“This journey is sometimes difficult and painful.
God has need of our weakness (poverty)
in order to show us the riches
which he longs to give us.”

Rev. Maurice Gardes, Archbishop of Auch, France
(on the Camino Pilgrimage Route through France and Spain)



“On any pilgrimage there are really two journeys—the inner and the outer. The labyrinth path allows us to feel the outer journey with our bodies. But it is the inner journey that is a powerful reconnection with God.”

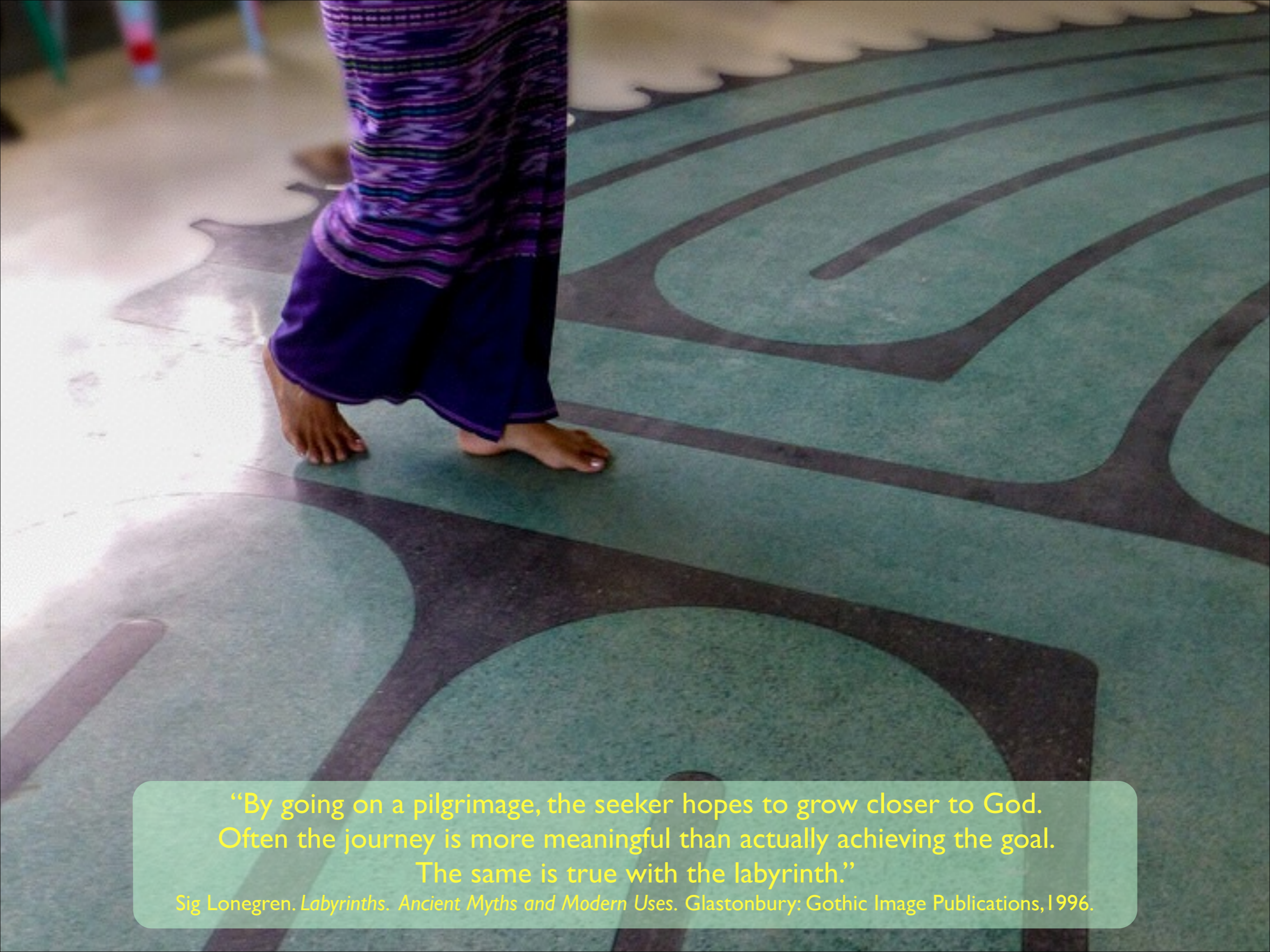
Eunice Schroeder, Chapter 4 dissertation, page 69.

“Walking a labyrinth has much in common with the ancient practice of making a spiritual pilgrimage. In both experiences, we are encouraged to leave behind our customary activities and preoccupations, to cultivate a sense of expectancy, to be open to a possibly transforming encounter with “the holy,” and to bring the blessings of that experience back to our everyday lives.”

Otto Zingg. “Prayer in Motion: Walking the Labyrinth.” Office of the Spiritual Formation Program of the Presbyterian Church. *Hungryhearts* 8, no. 2 (2000): 11.



To walk the labyrinth is to make a pilgrimage,
as we walk we discover more
about ourselves and God.



“By going on a pilgrimage, the seeker hopes to grow closer to God. Often the journey is more meaningful than actually achieving the goal. The same is true with the labyrinth.”

Sig Lonegren. *Labyrinths. Ancient Myths and Modern Uses*. Glastonbury: Gothic Image Publications, 1996.

19th century sketch
of clerics moving
through a turf labyrinth
in England



“...the [labyrinth] had been the site of a substitute pilgrimage during the eighteenth century. ...At Arras (France) the pious recited prayers on their knees as they made their way around [the labyrinth], and here the full pilgrimage was said to require an hour.

Craig Wright. *The Maze and the Warrior*.
(Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2001) 210.

There are some fundamental differences between religious pilgrimages and labyrinth experiences. Historically, pilgrimages usually began at the home of the pilgrim and were extended journeys to far away destinations. They usually involved lengthy walks during which time the pilgrim prepared herself or himself for the sacred encounter that was the “goal.”



Community blessing of pilgrims ^

Throughout history (although not as much today) pilgrimages have been carried out in the context of one's spiritual community. They often have involved promises made by the pilgrim and blessings bestowed by the community.

Having completed a pilgrimage was often seen as a central part of the pilgrim's new identity and has been celebrated and honored by those who were left at home.

Pilgrimage preparation >



Extended journey ^

Similarities in the Processes of Pilgrimage & Labyrinth Journeys



Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
an initial call. "Why go?"




Falam, Myanmar

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the usefulness of preparation and intention.



Northwest Health Sciences Campus Bloomington, MN USA



Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...a threshold moment.

First stone Chartres Cathedral labyrinth, France

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share the physical nature of the journey.

“The body and the sensations it opens the pilgrim up to become a new unexplored territory.”

Frey, Nancy. *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off The Road to Santiago*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 112.



Rwandan Women walking in Kigali

Pilgrimages and labyrinth walks can be personal or communal events.
While one may feel alone, in truth one is sharing the path

“The path itself forms the basis for a community,
stretching back through time and across the globe.”
Sally Welch. *Making a Pilgrimage*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2009. 20.



Pentecost student pilgrimage (4,000 young people) from Chartres to Paris (2011)

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
overlapping of the personal and the communal.




Canvas labyrinth Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey USA

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...a beginning, a middle and an end.



Melting snow and ice labyrinths Wayzata, Minnesota USA

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a person walking on a dirt path. The person is wearing a green quilted jacket, orange shorts, and brown sandals. They are holding a green apple in their right hand and a wooden walking stick in their left. A black bag is slung over their shoulder. The path is marked with a red and white striped line. The person's shadow is cast on the ground to the left.

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...the journey to and from...

Labyrinth Bukavu, D R Congo



Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the need to find one's own pace,
even if it is the same pace as others you are with.

HEAL Africa labyrinth
Goma, D. R. Congo

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the relationship of the outer and inner journeys.

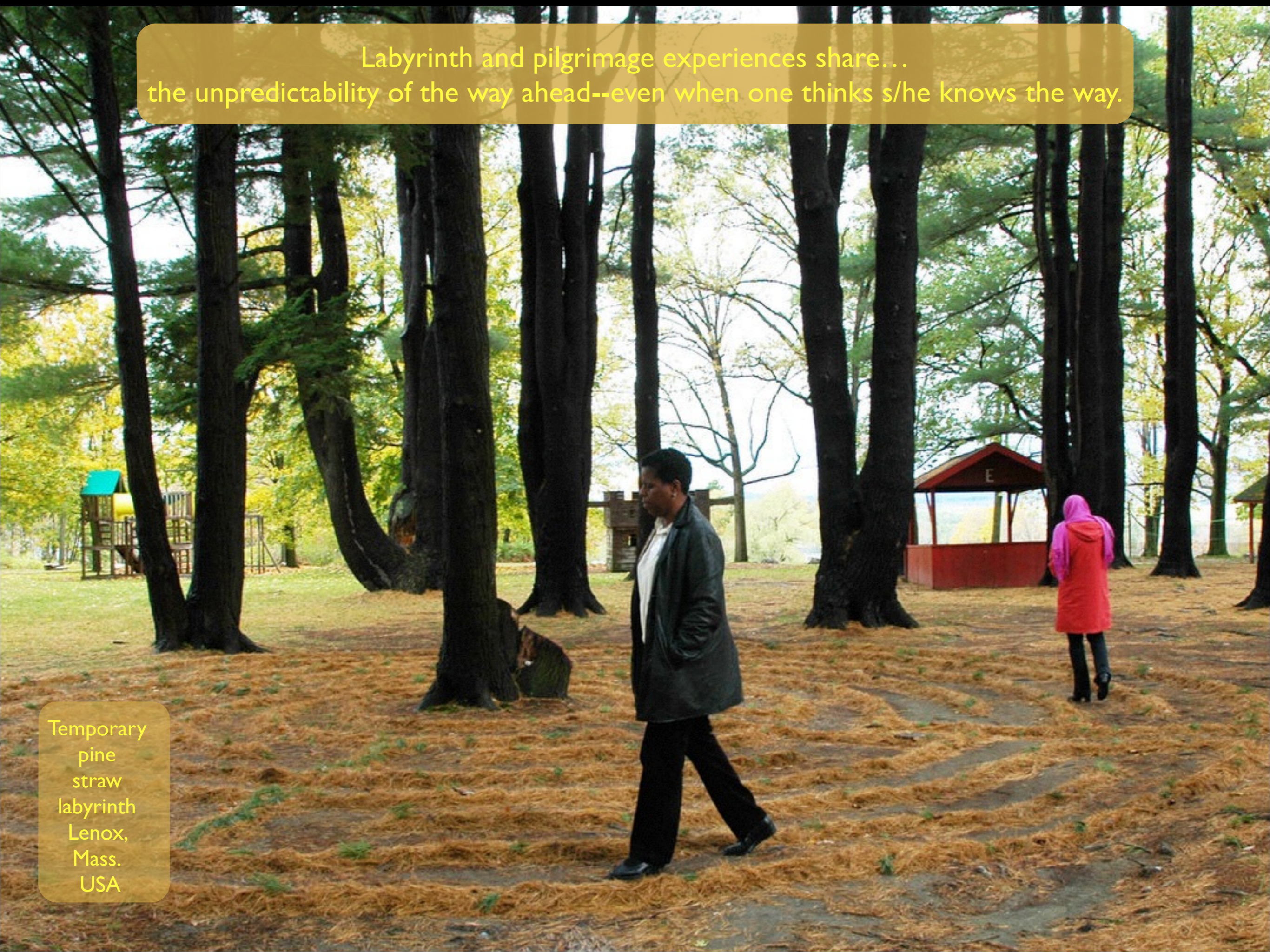
“The bona fide soul journey echoes John Muir’s realization at Yosemite a century ago, “I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found out I was really going in.”

Grace
Cathedral, San
Francisco, CA
(USA)

Phil Cousineau in *Pilgrimage*,
edited by Sean O’Reilly and
James O’Reilly (San Francisco:
Travelers’ Tales, 2000) xvi.

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the unpredictability of the way ahead--even when one thinks s/he knows the way.

Temporary
pine
straw
labyrinth
Lenox,
Mass.
USA



Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share... a relentless invitation to take the next step.

Grass and Brick Labyrinth, Minnesota (USA)

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the surprise of how long they can sometimes take!
Patience may be needed.



Pastors wait to walk the labyrinth Musanze, Rwanda

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the opportunity to get lost/
turned around—
and to continue on.



Gill's Rock, Wisconsin (USA) Private Home

**“After a while I know neither how far I have to go, nor how far I’ve gone.
I begin to concentrate on the path, not on the distance.”**

Candolini, Gernot. *Labyrinths: Walking toward the Center*. (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2001) 61.



Episcopal Cathedral Atlanta, Georgia (USA)

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the need to integrate what has been
experienced.



“Most pilgrims, however, find that deep personal transformation occurs over time through action and reflection.... In a sense one chooses to be changed.”
Pilgrim Stories: On and Off The Road to Santiago



Labyrinths and pilgrimages share...
that one of the hardest things is to leave the experience
and reenter one's life.

Comment by Zara Renander at TLS Annual Gathering, 2012.

“When I’m done walking, is this the end of the pilgrimage?

What should I do now?

If I was ‘playing at’ being a pilgrim, the game ends here.
But if I have become a pilgrim, it’s for life--for a transformed life.”

National Association of Diocesan Directors of Pilgrimages, France



Finisterre, the end of our family pilgrimage



Spiritual Growth During Pilgrimage & Labyrinth Journeys

Altar in the center of a labyrinth St Edwards Episcopal Church Orono, Minnesota USA

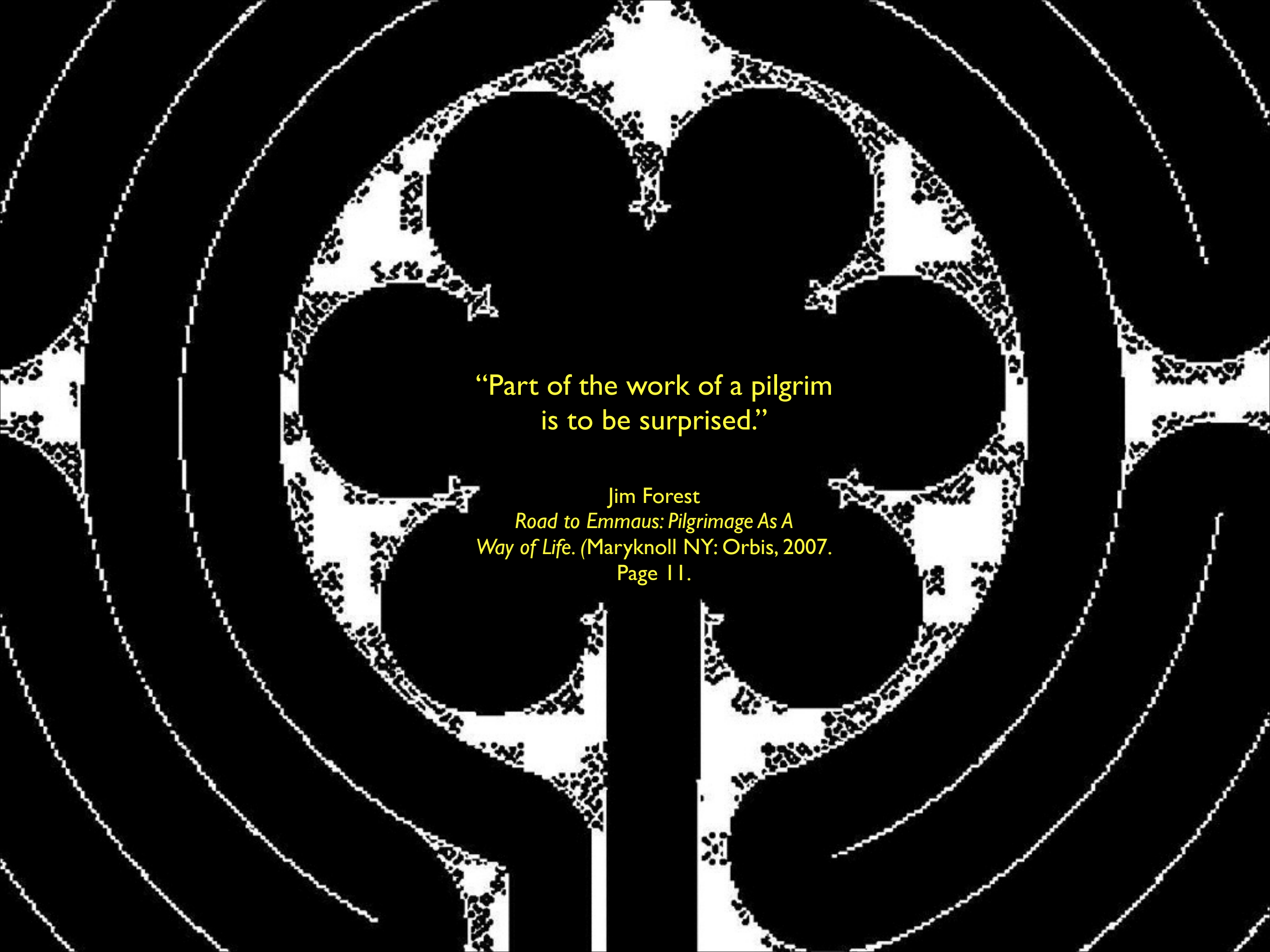


“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Laozi (604-531 BCE) Tao Te Ching, chapter 64.

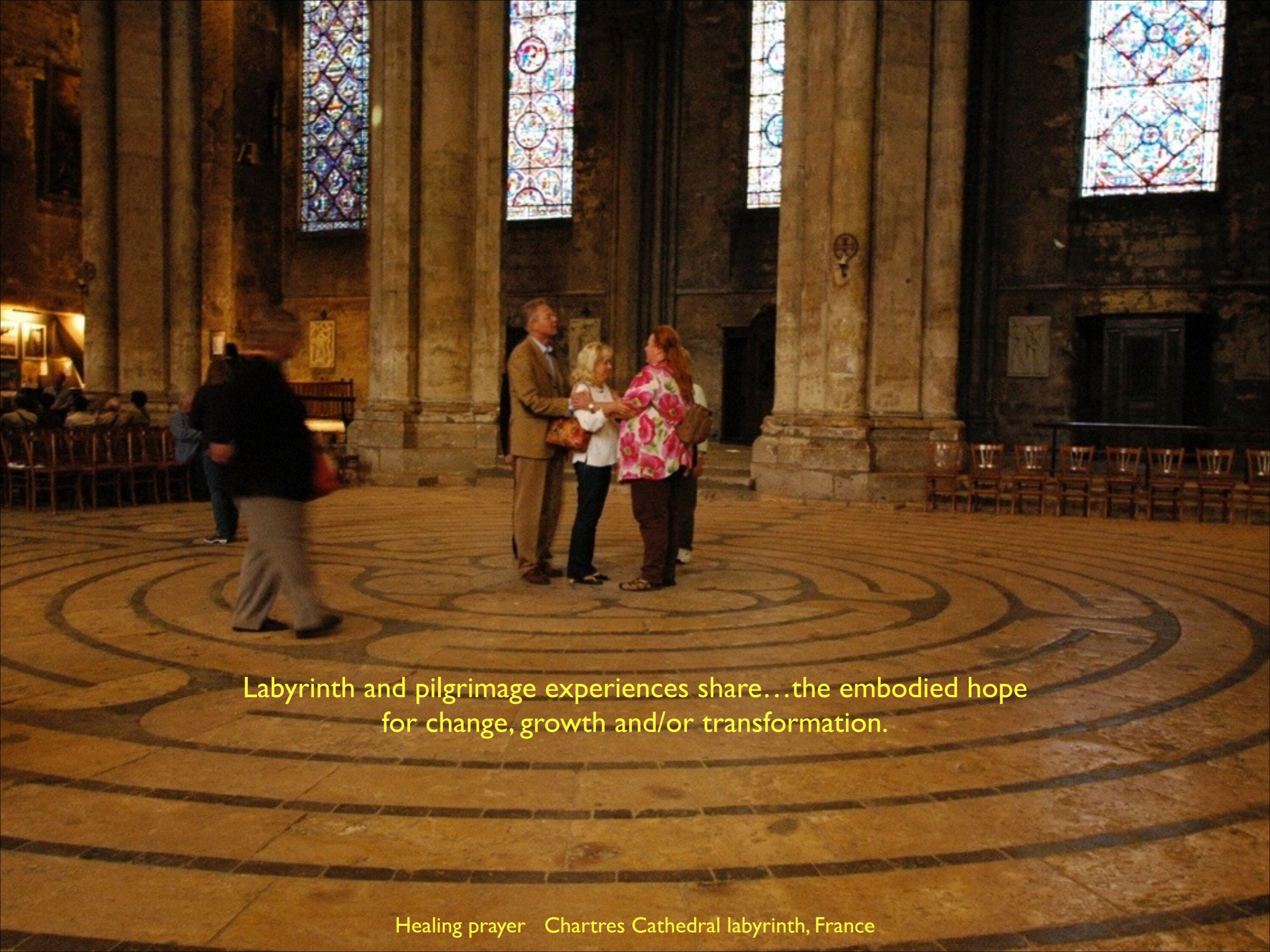
Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...that each person walks in her or his own way.





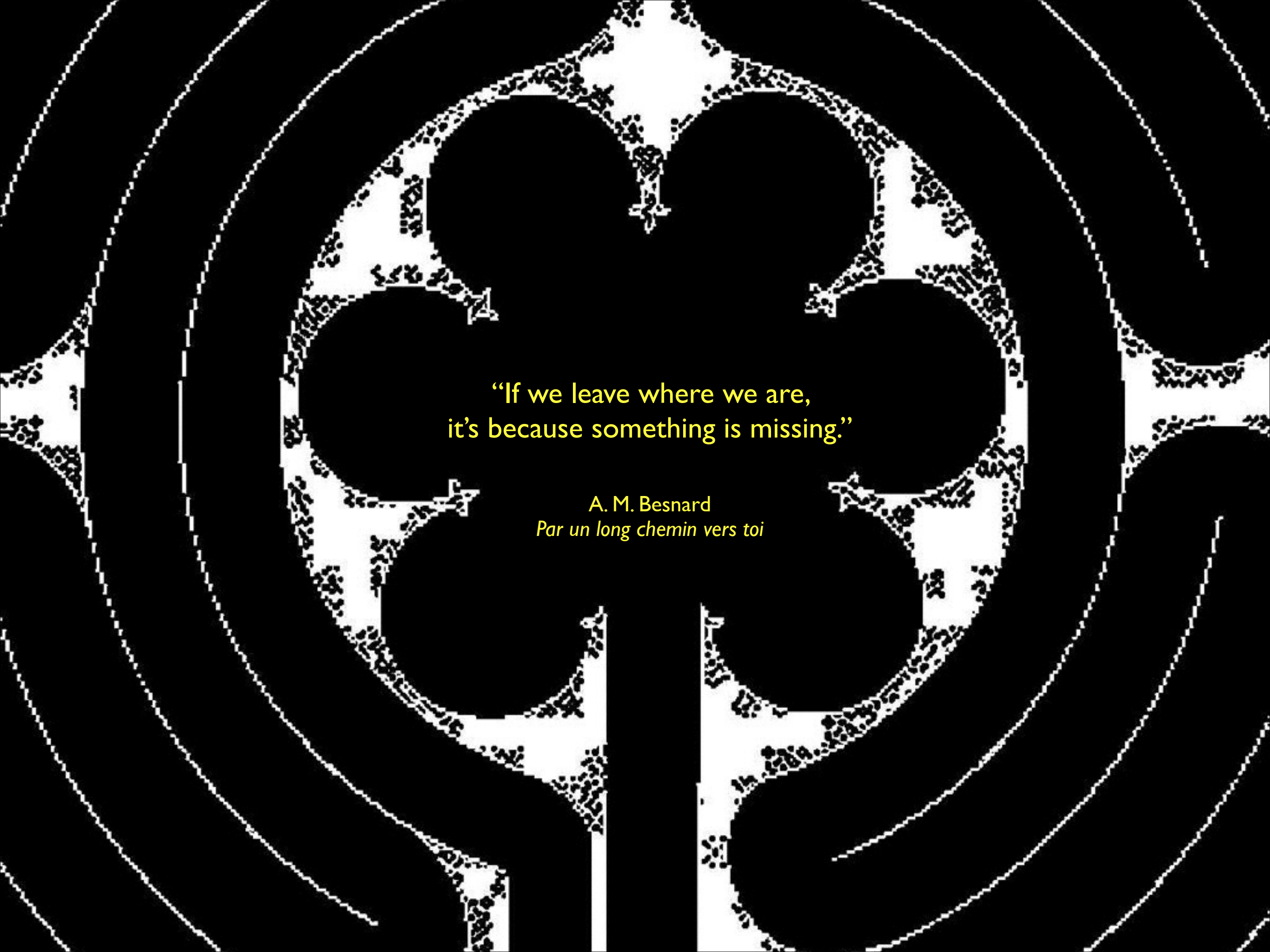
“Part of the work of a pilgrim
is to be surprised.”

Jim Forest
*Road to Emmaus: Pilgrimage As A
Way of Life.* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 2007.
Page 11.



Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...the embodied hope for change, growth and/or transformation.

Healing prayer Chartres Cathedral labyrinth, France



“If we leave where we are,
it’s because something is missing.”

A. M. Besnard
Par un long chemin vers toi

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...a desire for spiritual help.



Reconciliation Labyrinth
designed by Rev. Cheryl Felicia Dudley

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the experience of liminality (“in between-ness”).



Building a labyrinth
Navisha, Kenya

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
an atypical relationship to time.



Highlands Ranch, Colorado

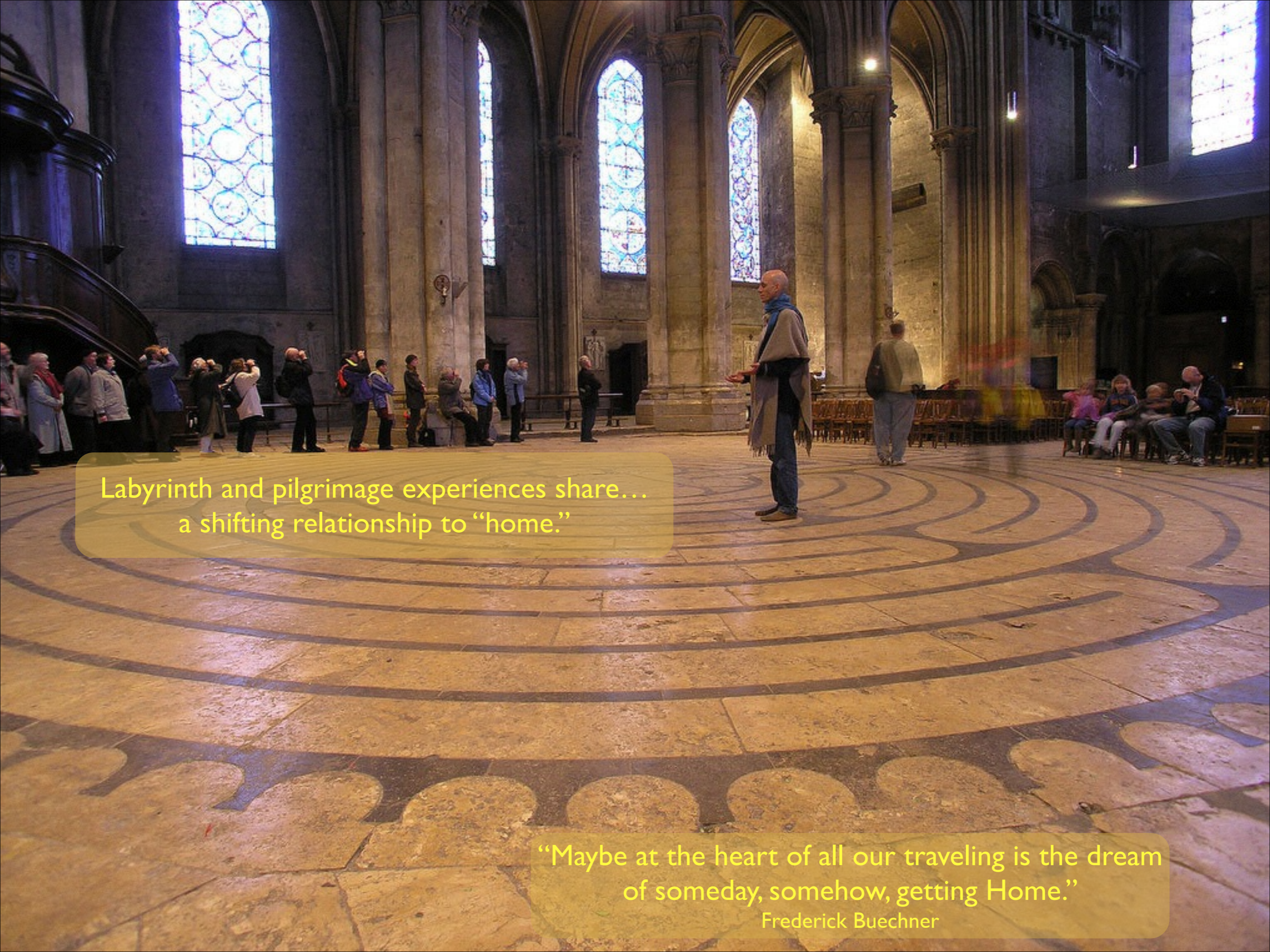
Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
times of feeling lost and times of being found.



Minneapolis Institute of Art
Minnesota (USA)

Labyrinth and pilgrimage share...
the search for "center."

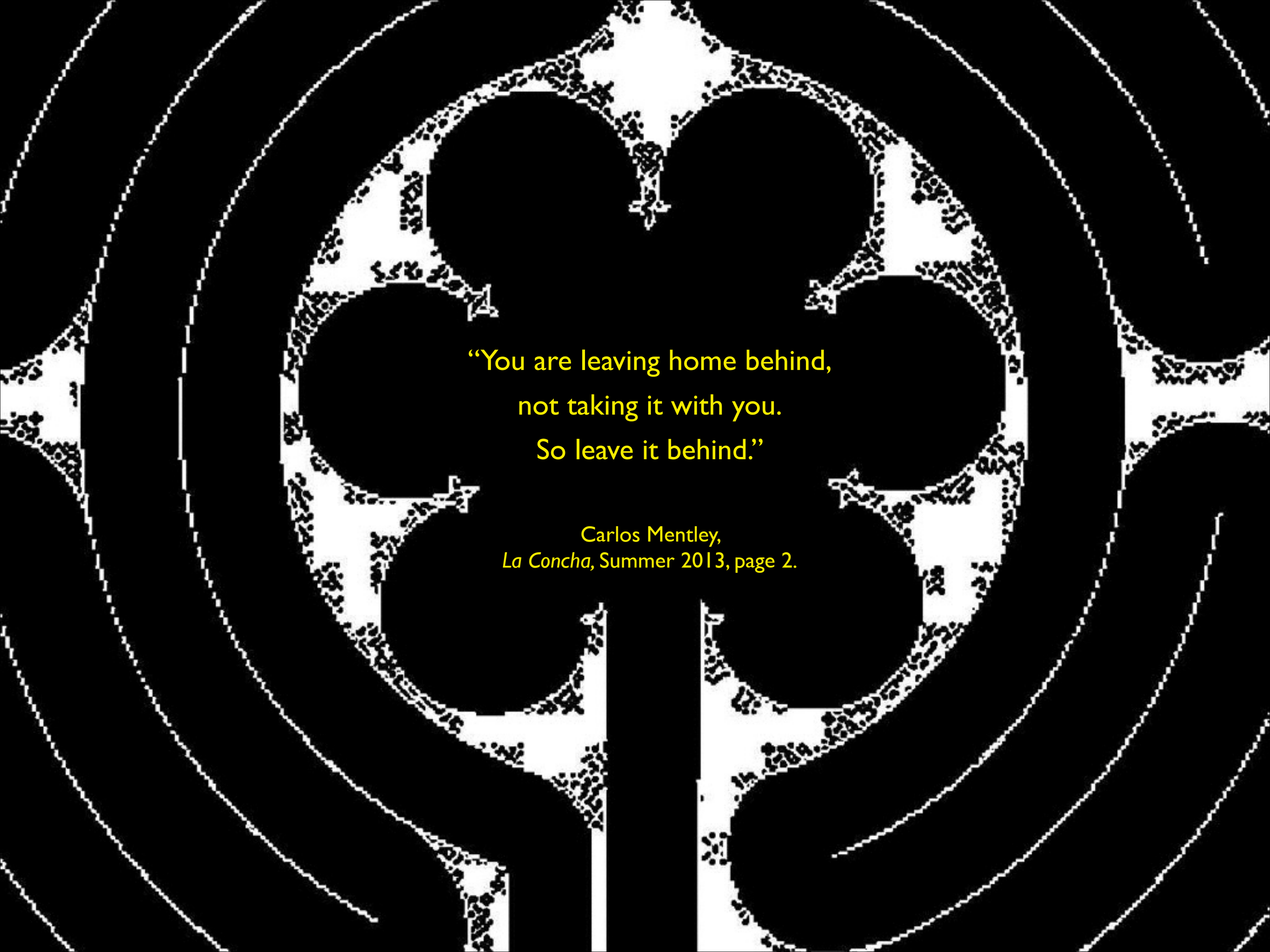




Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
a shifting relationship to “home.”

“Maybe at the heart of all our traveling is the dream
of someday, somehow, getting Home.”

Frederick Buechner



“You are leaving home behind,
not taking it with you.
So leave it behind.”

Carlos Mentley,
La Concha, Summer 2013, page 2.

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the presence of gifts and challenges
we may not be prepared for.



Govan Presbyterian Church Baltimore, Maryland USA

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the possibility of practicing
what it would be like to be different.



Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality
St. Paul, Minnesota (USA)

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
cleansing and balancing
movements.



Welcome Labyrinth, Minnesota

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the possibility of opening oneself in new or more profound ways.



Center of meadow labyrinth Northfield, Minnesota USA



Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
times of forgetting (letting go)
and times of remembering (re-calling).

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share... potential distractions—and the need to keep one's internal focus.



Riverside Church labyrinth New York City, New York USA

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the opportunity to meet one's best and worst selves.



University of the Great Lakes Region Goma, D R Congo




Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share... unlimited opportunities to feel and express gratitude.

Carleton College Labyrinth
Northfield, Minnesota USA

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
the importance of the experience, not just the destination.

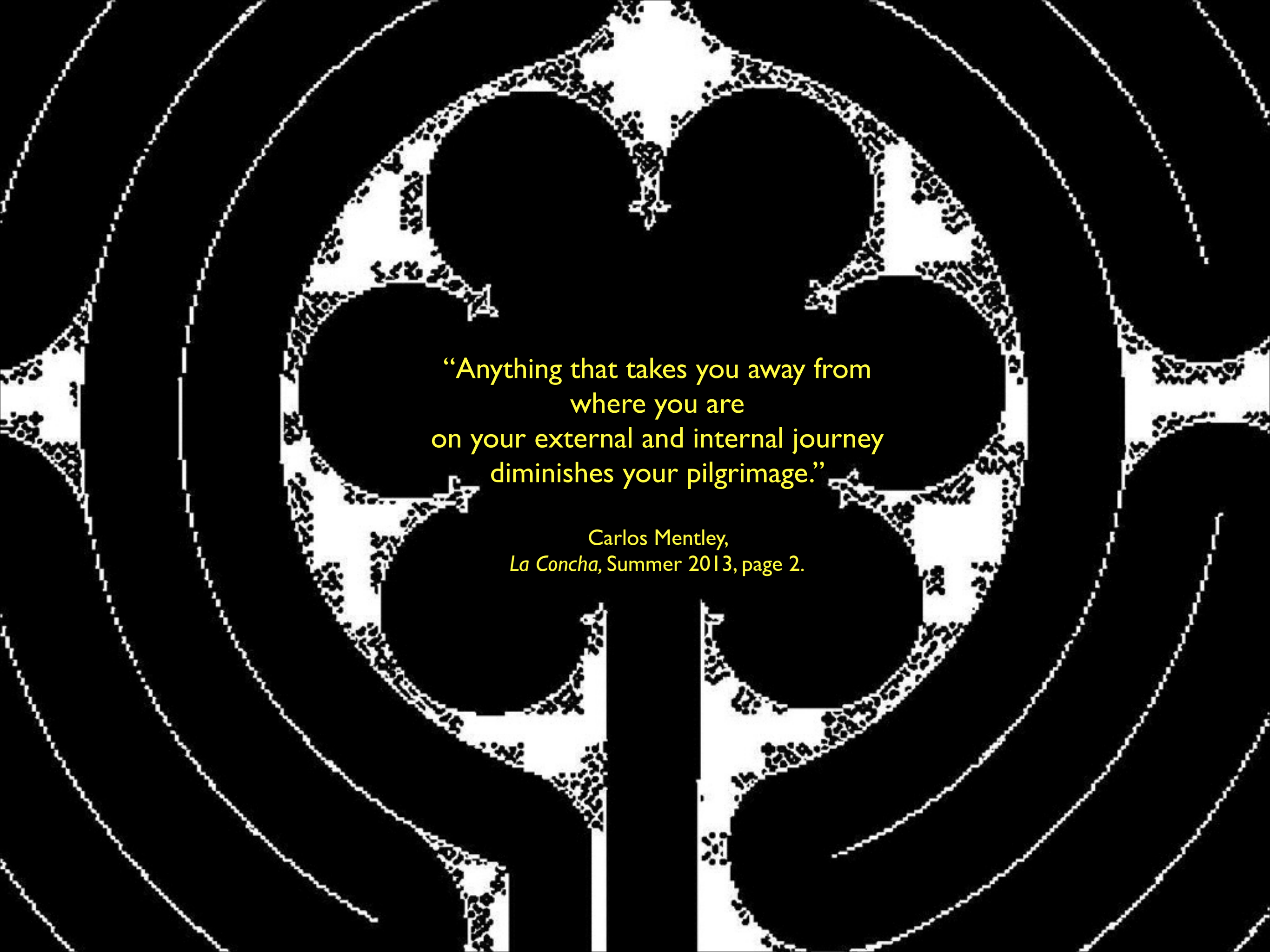


Appleton Labyrinth
Dance, Oregon

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a white cardigan, a black top, and khaki pants, stands barefoot on a stone labyrinth in a grassy yard. The labyrinth is a circular path made of flat stones set into the grass. In the background, there is a yellow house with white trim and several windows. A stone wall and some potted plants are also visible. The scene is bright and sunny.

Labyrinth and pilgrimage experiences share...
a call to be consciously present where one is.

Dragonfly labyrinth
Deephaven,
Minnesota USA



“Anything that takes you away from
where you are
on your external and internal journey
diminishes your pilgrimage.”

Carlos Mentley,
La Concha, Summer 2013, page 2.



Our guiding question:

Why is it valuable to link
labyrinth experience and
pilgrimage?

San Francisco
Seminary Labyrinth,
California USA



Pilgrimage Labyrinth Experience: Scriptural Stations of the Cross

“From early Christian [times], when pilgrims went to Jerusalem, they visited sites where Jesus was known to have been. Eventually, following in the footsteps of Jesus, 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. Eventually, the traditional set of 14 stations was placed in almost every Catholic Church in the world.

These ‘Scriptural’ Stations are presented here as an alternative to the traditional stations and as a way of reflecting on the Scriptural accounts of Christ's passion.” The Rev. Warren Lynn

http://web.me.com/ispiritual/spirituality_pages/labyrinths_files/stationguide.pdf

Pilgrimage Labyrinth Experience: Scriptural Stations of the Cross



God of power and mercy,
in love you sent your Son
that we might be cleansed of sin
and live with you forever.
Bless us as we reflect on Jesus'
suffering and death
that we may learn from his example
the way we should go.
Help us to follow You each step of
our lives.
We ask this through that same
Christ, our Lord. Amen.

This Stations of the Cross has been adapted from a version that was developed by the Church of the Nativity, Indianapolis, 2004
The painting is a part of the Stations of the Cross in the Kibeho Genocide Memorial, Rwanda

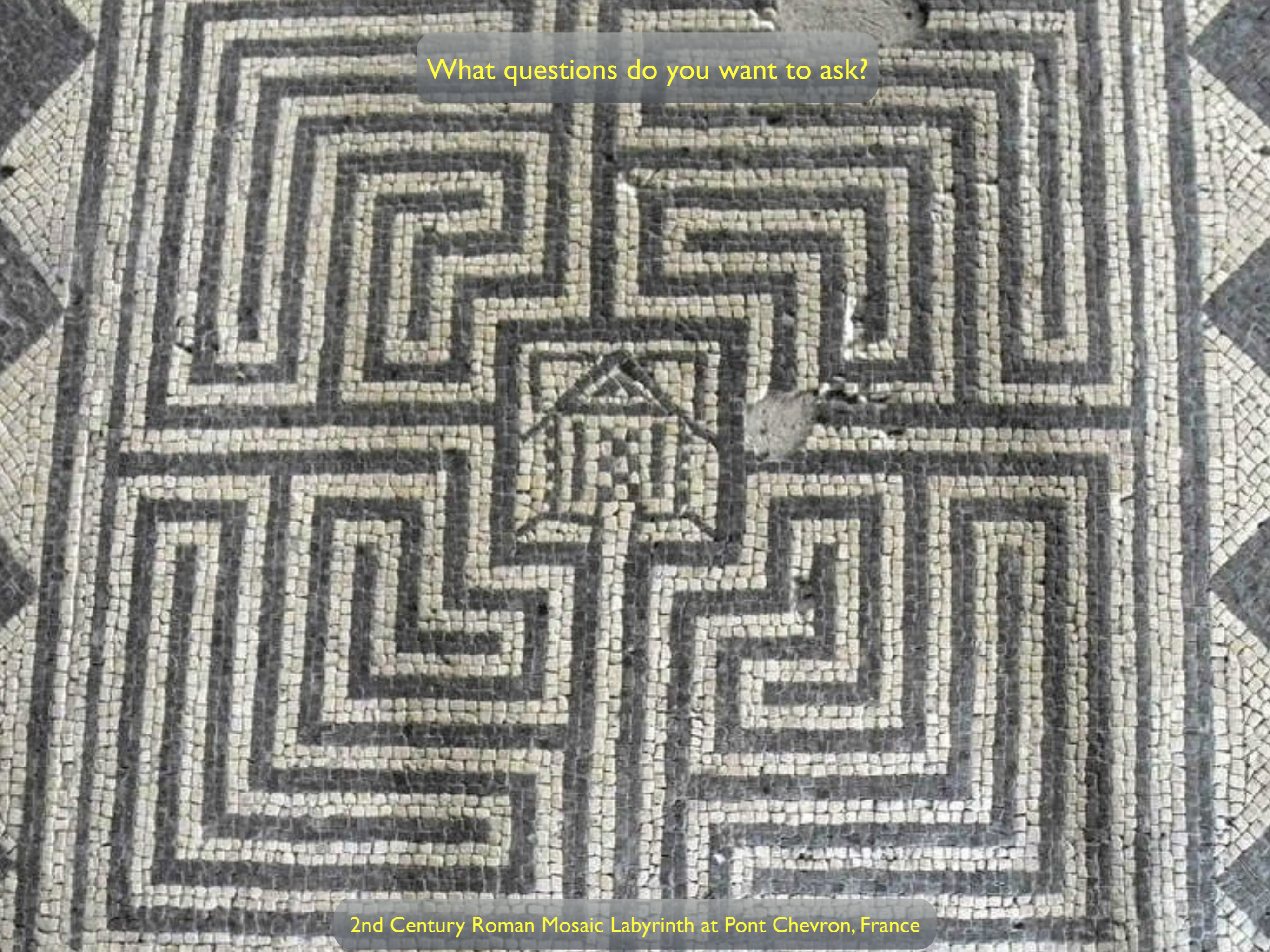
Use your labyrinth prayer journal to reflect on your labyrinth experience.



Image painted by Lea Goode-Harris

What questions do you want to ask?

2nd Century Roman Mosaic Labyrinth at Pont Chevron, France



Assignment for next session: Week 8 (after break)

Preparation for session 7: Personal Growth on the Path

1. Read pages for Session 8: 3 pages
2. Pray the labyrinth at least once (hopefully more!) before our next class and reflect on your walk using the labyrinth journal page.
3. Project proposal due on January 13th at the beginning of class. One page typed.
4. Also be thinking about your five minute labyrinth introduction. You will sign up for a time on January 6th. (Who will you present to? What do you want to say? What is the most effective way of getting the message across?)



I would like to express
my gratitude
to God
for this ministry of
healing,
to all the donors of
Faith, Hope and Love
Global Ministries,
and to all those
who use the labyrinth
as we seek the healing
that is needed in our lives
and in the world.



Be Safe and Well
Peace,
Love,
(Wisdom),
and
Courage

Egyptian blessing
for those leaving on pilgrimage

Ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

Labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

Photo travel blog by jill www.throughjillseyes.wordpress.com

Journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

