

## The Labyrinth: Doorway to the Sacred

Read about the origins of the labyrinth in this [\*essay by Robert Barzan\*](#), a novitiate classmate of Fr. Tim, soon to be published in the Journal of Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology.

## The Labyrinth at Our Lady of the Lake

The Chartres-style eleven circuit labyrinth at Our Lady of the Lake was built by parishioners in the summer of 2003 on the hill directly behind our new church Suncrest. It's open to the public during daylight hours. Directions to the property are on Our Lady of the Lake website.



## Spirituality of the Labyrinth

A labyrinth is not a maze. A maze is a puzzle to be solved. It includes high walls, false trails and dead ends. Its complexity is designed to get you lost. A labyrinth on the other hand is a form of prayer. It is a walking meditation, whose twists and turns can frustrate and bewilder, but whose single path leads to the center all who persevere. The labyrinth is a symbol for everyday life. Sometimes we feel so close to our life goal that we can touch it. But when we encounter a bend in the road and the way forward feels more like retreat and failure, we feel that we are losing our way again. However, the labyrinth teaches that if we keep faith, and continue to put one foot in front of the other, that ultimately we will learn our purpose, fulfill our calling, reach the central still point of our existence. The labyrinth is a spiritual tool meant to awaken us to the deep rhythm that

unites us to ourselves and to the Light that calls from within. In surrendering to the winding path, the soul finds healing and wholeness.

## **The Classic Three Stages of Walking the Labyrinth**

- Purgation - The walk in is a form of releasing, of letting go. This is an act of shedding your thoughts and emotions. It quiets the mind.

Illumination - Clarity is found when you reach the center. Stay here as long as you like. It is a place of meditation or prayer. Receive what is there for you to receive.

- Union - The walk out is a form of integrating what has been received in order to return to your life with a renewed vision and refreshed spirit.

-Loren Artress