

*This labyrinth* is dedicated to the memory of Sister Ann E. (Mary Aquin) Chester, IHM (1901- 1999). It also remembers all IHM Sisters and Associates whose lives have been an evolving God-quest and who now enjoy the fullness of union with God, the Source of all Life.

Sister Ann's years of experience with the House of Prayer movement eloquently expressed her adventuresome way. She continually sought to accompany others on their journeys, journeys to the Divine Source of all Life. She, above all, would recognize that this journey is for each of us.

*Welcome to the journey!*

The IHM labyrinth is located in a spacious natural setting on the west side of the Motherhouse. A pavilion provides a reflective gathering spot for use before or after your labyrinth journey. The west parking lot is a short walk away.

*Architectural design provided by*  
**Babcock Design Studio**  
Saline, Mich.

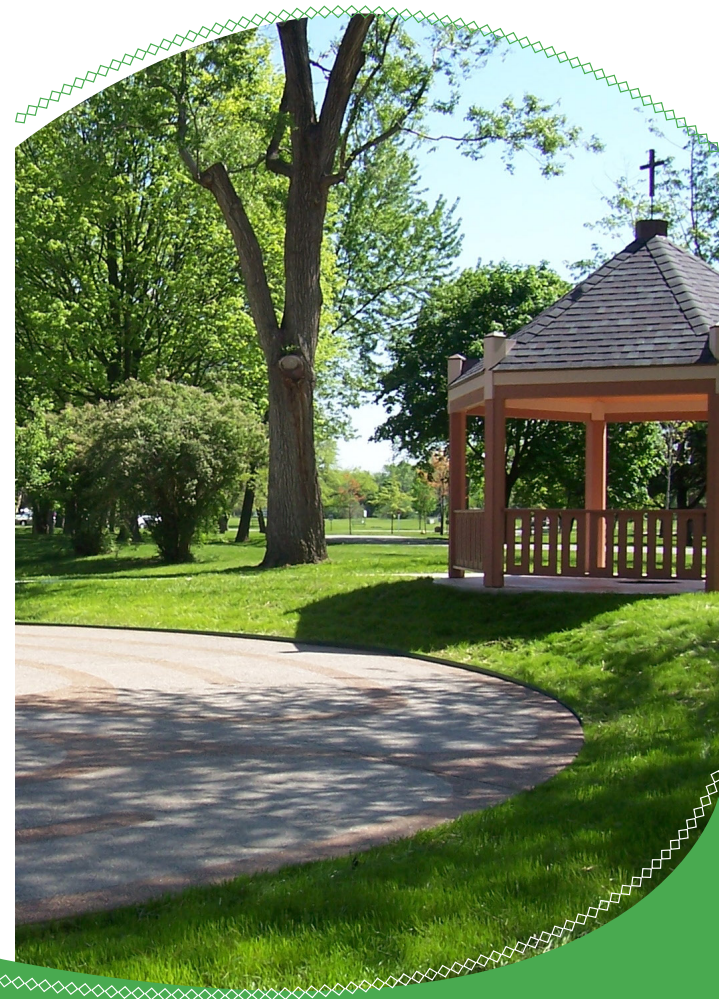
*Photographs by Barbara Childress*  
and Jeff Coffey



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# IHM Labyrinth



PRAYING  
YOUR WAY

# *What is a labyrinth?*

The labyrinth is an archetype, a divine imprint in religious traditions throughout the world. Labyrinths have been found in places as varied as the Andes Mountains, in Ireland, Island of Wier in Finland, England and in the nave of Chartres Cathedral in France. Greek, Hindu and Celtic spiritual seekers, all from differing religious paths, have intuitively made forms of the labyrinth. Labyrinths were placed in the floor of many early Christian churches.

Many contemporary churches use the pattern of one of the best remaining labyrinth examples which is found in Chartres Cathedral. However, there are many different patterns and there is no one "Christian" labyrinth pattern. Labyrinths of various dimensions, materials, colors and shapes have been used by faith communities throughout the ages.

The IHM labyrinth is a circle with divisions into thirds, borrowing from the Christian tradition of the Trinity. The center pattern has its origins from features found in the Faience tile in the main entrance of the Motherhouse and the pavilion in front of the labyrinth replicates the St. Mary Center tower. The labyrinth is designed for those in wheelchairs and those with devices to assist them in walking.

Quite simply, a labyrinth is a path for prayer. Journeying on a labyrinth can be used for personal exploration and also invites communal participation.



## *A Three-Fold Path of Prayer*

### **ENTERING**

Stepping (entering) onto the labyrinth, we enter into a sacred space with a willingness to let go of what needs to be released.

### **CENTERING**

Arriving at the sacred destination where all things originate.

### **RETURNING**

Integrating what is awakened in our hearts, we bring this experience back into the world.

A "typical" labyrinth experience involves preparing yourself at the threshold, journeying the single path to the center, following the same path out from the center and crossing the threshold as you exit. There is no "right" way to pray the labyrinth . . . praying whatever way helps you connect with God while experiencing a labyrinth is your "right" way.

A few suggestions for praying on a labyrinth include: have a conversation with God about the things that matter most; repeat the words of a favorite prayer, make gestures of praise, recite scriptural phrases such as, "Thy will be done," or present prayer requests. Another simple way is to pray for yourself while returning to the threshold.

The labyrinth is a single path leading to the center and back. By taking the journey at your own pace, we may pass others, or allow others to pass us.

*Be aware of your  
own breathing.*

*Travel with an open heart.*

