

How the Labyrinth of the Heart came to be.

I was inspired, after years of processing in the journey of the Chartres Labyrinth, to give a retreat entitled "Enter the Labyrinth of the Heart". How, I wondered, could I help others to envision that we were all walking in the labyrinth of God's heart? What would that feel like? Where would I be in this journey within God's heart?

Shortly after, John and I were at Gethsemane, the Trappist Monastery in Kentucky. As we were walking the path of the monks into the woods, we came upon a large statue of Mary. I happened to glance down at the foot of the statue and observed, in tiny pebbles,(Story Continues Here) the same heart labyrinth that I had just fashioned on top of the balsa wood. I was deeply affected by this imagery and the synchronicity of this event. Upon further prayer and reflection I realized that we needed to construct the Labyrinth of the Heart™ upon the earth.

The process of creating this labyrinth required that I be open to the impulses I was receiving. I could not ignore the impact this labyrinth would have on those who would come to walk it.

In the beginning, I did not know the full implication of creating this labyrinth. I only knew the type of materials that would be used. Most importantly, I knew that lava rock must be in the labyrinth in some form.

It was also important that the lava rock be authentic, not fabricated or made in imitation of. We thought we would use crushed lava rock to create the paths, but we soon discovered that using this media would be too costly.

We agreed on red mulch with walking pavers. I was, however, still convinced that there would be lava in this labyrinth.

Nearing the end of construction, Darlene, a neighbor of over 30 years approached to see what we were now adding to the retreat space. When I shared the story of the Labyrinth of the Heart she asked, "Is it finished?". "No", I responded. "There is still one piece missing". When I shared with her that I was looking for a real lava rock for the center she asked why. I shared with her a few of the many symbolic associations with lava. Lava is spewed up from deep within. It is fired and then it is transformed. It has many crevices, openings where new beginnings can emerge. It is likened to our own hearts that cry for wholeness and transformation.

I said that we had been searching for this final piece to the labyrinth without success. She looked astonished and replied, "We have lava rock". "How big of a piece do you need?" It so happened that in the 1960's there was a restaurant in Cleveland, OH called the Kon-Tiki. Huge lava rock, to recreate an atmosphere like Hawaii, was imported to be used in the interior. When it was torn down, Gary, her husband was on the crew to dismantle the restaurant. They were told they could have as much of the lava rock as they wanted. I believe this was in the late 1970's early 80's. He brought home enough to build a fireplace and bar and had four pieces left over that they used in their landscaping. "Perhaps there will be a piece that you might use." I didn't have to wonder if there would be a lava rock that would be perfect for the center of the labyrinth. I knew it was no coincidence that this rock was there all along.

The next day I went to see the rocks. Gary wanted me to see all four rocks. He showed me the first rock, then the second. I stopped, amazed at what I was seeing. I immediately told him that this was the rock, if he were willing to part with it. "Don't you want to see the others?" "How do you know that this is the one?" I replied, "Because it is in the shape of a human heart."

WITHIN THE LABYRINTH OF THE HEART™, THE HUMAN HEART AND THE CREATORS HEART BECOME ONE.

It was only after the labyrinth was completed that I was inspired with the symbolism for each of the paths as you have read in the above illustrations.

While many come to walk the Chartres, many more are drawn to this Labyrinth of the Heart™. The simplicity of design and the impact of the imagery deeply affect those who have walked its path.

John and I had no idea when we first began to process our own grief how our lives and property would be transformed. We only had to say yes to the journey.

We invite you to visit the website of the Foundation for a deeper understanding of the evolution of these grounds into a sacred retreat space.