

On the Spiritual Side

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Stations of the Cross

The St. Robert Bellarmine Parish Youth Ministry Program in Warrington on Good Friday, April 19, enacts a living presentation of St. Alphonsus Ligouri's Stations of the Cross, titled: "How Could You Say No?" Shown are the Living Stations of the Cross cast and production staff.



St. Philip's Episcopal observes World Labyrinth Day

St. Philip's Episcopal Church invites the public to observe World Labyrinth Day May 4, with a prayerful walk of its labyrinth, located on the church lawn at 10 Chapel Road, New Hope.

No specific events are planned, as labyrinth-walking is ideally a contemplative and silent act.

The Labyrinth Society (labyrinth.society.org), an international organization headquartered in New York State, has called for people around the world to "Walk as One at 1" p.m. that day for peace and reconciliation.

"Of course, people are invited to walk our labyrinth every day," the Rev. Michael R. Ruk, rector of St. Philip's, said, noting that the church's labyrinth is "open" 24 hours a day, 365 days a week. "But on May 4th, they can do so in communion with people all across the globe. Silence in community is powerful," he added.

Labyrinths are spiritual aids that have been around since antiquity. Churches have had labyrinths in their floors since medieval times. One of the most famous labyrinths, at Chartres Cathedral in France, dates from the 13th century.

As early as the 8th century, Christian writers like Boethius saw in the labyrinth a symbol of life itself: a path of light and darkness, confusion and guidance. Pilgrims were encouraged to walk or crawl the path of a labyrinth as a meditative, prayerful search for

direction and enlightenment.

The labyrinth at St. Philip's is a 7-circuit design modeled on the one at St. Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, which dates from the 16th century. It is made of brick pavers with a center cross. So central has its labyrinth become to St. Philip's, the church has adopted it as its symbol.

Participation on May 4 is simple. "Simply show up - at 1 p.m. or another time that suits you and open yourself to the possibilities," Ruk said.

He noted that St. Philip's has created a brochure on the use of its labyrinth, which includes the following instructions:

"Stand at the outermost ring, become still and center yourself. Try to clear your mind. Begin slowly, prayerfully walking the paths of the labyrinth. Notice how you get close to the center at times, then move away as you proceed. It is not a maze, but a guided route leading to a goal that is not the center, but to return to the place where you began, changed by the experience.

The church hopes to add to the ranks of those who already walk its labyrinth and are changed by the experience. To share insights with the St. Philip's community from your walk, write to info@stphilipsnewhope.org.

For information about St. Philip's, contact Ruk at 215-862-5782 or michael@stphilipsnewhope.org.

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Philadelphia synagogues explored

From his newly published book, "Synagogues of Philadelphia," author Ira A. Poliakoﬀ will present an interactive account of Philadelphia-area synagogues using many rare photographs.



IRA A. POLIAKOFF

Poliakoﬀ's presentation will take place from noon to 1 p.m. Sunday, May 5, at Kehilat Ha-Nahar, New Hope. Bagels, cream cheese and coffee will be provided. The event is free and open to the public. Poliakoﬀ is also the author of "Synagogues of Long Island." He is a husband, father, grandfather and businessman who has always been active in synagogue activities. His illustrated talk traces the history of the Jewish people in Philadelphia through the eyes of more than 500 synagogue communities that have existed in the five-county Philadelphia region.



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