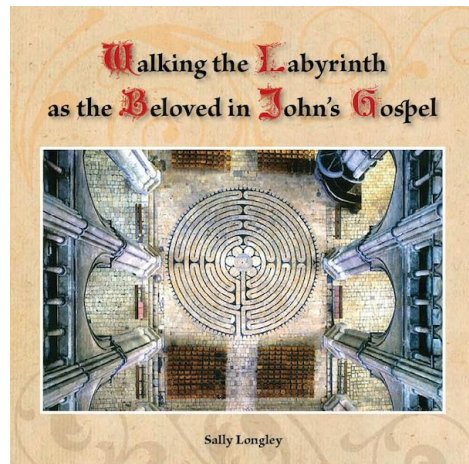


## Book Review

*“Walking the Labyrinth as the Beloved in John’s Gospel”* by Sally Longley

Reviewed by Marie O’Shea sgs : Port Pirie, South Australia

This is a beautifully presented book of 160 pages. This square shaped and weighty hard covered book is now a prized prize for me. In regards to the cover my eye is drawn into the middle of the Labyrinth which is also the middle of the page and to the title with beautiful calligraphy in red for the initial letters of Walking, Labyrinth, Beloved, John’s and Gospel. Such letters are used throughout the book in Preface, Contents, Introduction and the headings of the 21 Chapters, Postscript and Appendix. The script is complemented with photographs of varying size. Being a visual person, I am drawn to them. They are a wonderful resource for Visio Divina. Sally explains Lectio Divina in Appendix B.



In her preface Sally says “this book was born as a way to provide guidelines and suggestions for labyrinth walks. Each type of labyrinth has its own gift. For those that do not have ready access to a labyrinth, the book is written in such a way that the approach is adaptable to any pattern, or a local walk through the streets around one’s home, or the finger labyrinth that accompanies this book.” Sally goes on to say, “The affirmation of each person’s belovedness to God is the unifying theme of the walks in this book.” Sally uses personal stories, images, words, symbols and metaphors to open up for us the central concept of John’s gospel, belovedness. Sally has a chapter on each chapter of John’s Gospel. Here is a sample of chapters. 1. Beginnings: Being deeply Known, 5. What is Between Me and Healing? 7. Deep calls to Deep, 11. If only...! 15. The Sap of Life, 19. In God’s Loving Gaze and 21 Into New Life.

In her Introduction Sally explains how John’s gospel is like a labyrinth journey. I found this very helpful as while I have seen a number of labyrinths I never really understood their purpose. I have not had it explained to me or read about it before. I appreciate the clear way Sally provides many suggestions of ways to walk the labyrinth with the themes from John’s Gospel. She suggests ways to walk into the labyrinth, ideas for when you reach the centre and for when you are walking out of it. Towards the end of each chapter there is a **Breath Prayer Walk** which is often a very short scripture passage or quote from a Christian writer. The last is **Journal Encouraging** the journaling of one’s reflections on their experience.

I like how Sally says, “there is no right way to walk the labyrinth. Walk and pray in whatever way suits you best.” What an aid to slow oneself down, become more centred and be present to ourselves and to God! *Walking the Labyrinth as the Beloved in John’s Gospel* is a valuable resource for Spiritual Directors.