

# A community of faith

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**An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, “Understanding Faith” in *FIRST SIGHT: The Experience of Faith* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 13-14.**

Merely asserting and defending our beliefs cannot lead to a true community of faith. They make us become sect-members, a fundamentalist cabal. They shut down the mind as an organ of perception and truth. If by confusing faith and belief in this way, we think of faith as bestowing a sense of being superior to others, we end up like the Pharisee who thanked God for making him different from others and found satisfaction in being superior to them. The religious mind in this state can even persuade itself that this is humility. Identifying with belief at the expense of faith, we occupy a private world of our own rather than the kingdom of God or the Christ-realm in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, slave nor free.” [. . .]

Faith is the highway to the spirit. Every act of faith we make is an uncovering of the labyrinth of spirit. Belief, sundered from faith, leads to a maze of mirrors, a series of infinite regressions, the maze of the ego. Mazes lead to dead-ends and the more we get lost the more we panic. Labyrinths only ask us to follow faithfully their strange but ultimately symmetrical loops and bends in order to lead us home

**After meditation: “The Way It Is” by William Stafford in HEALING THE DIVIDE: Poems of Kindness and Connection (Brattleboro, VT: Green Writers Press, 2019), p. 86.**

## **The Way It Is**

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There's a thread you follow. It goes among  
things that change. But it doesn't change.  
People wonder about what you are pursuing.  
You have to explain about the thread.  
But it is hard for others to see.  
While you hold it you can't get lost.  
Tragedies happen; people get hurt  
or die; and you suffer and get old.  
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.  
You don't ever let go of the thread.

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