

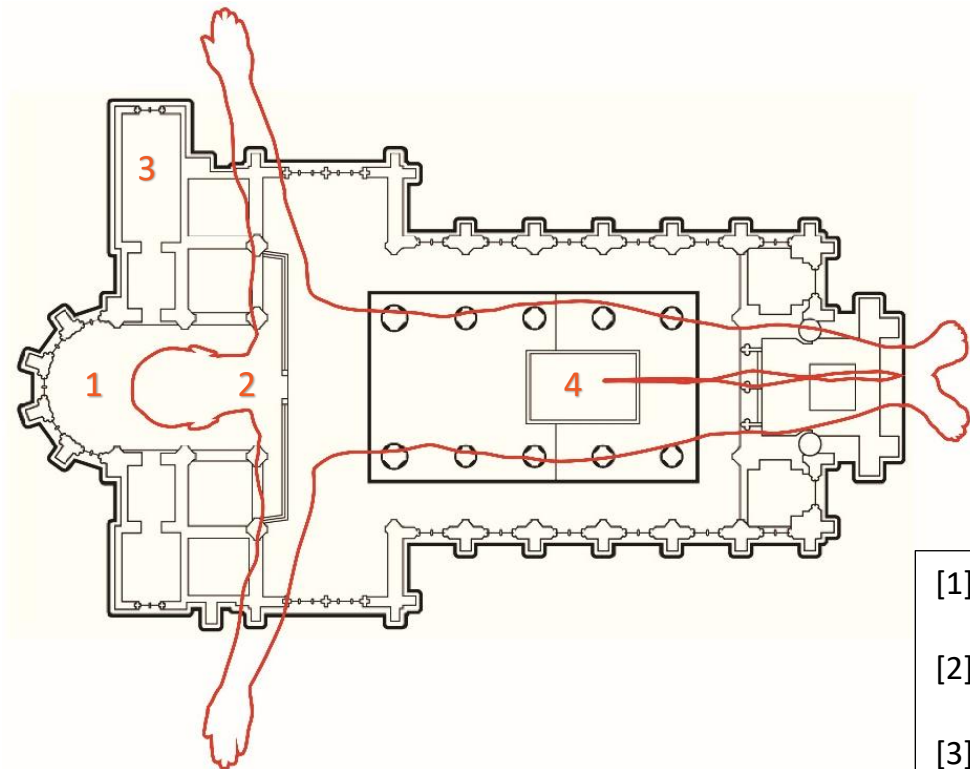
WELCOME TO THE MAGDALENE CHURCH!

We are today afforded new perspectives on viewing clerical space as a meaningful zone of rediscovery and experience. The organization YOT uses the MAGDA - *in Flemish literally: may we do this?* - project to experiment on what is possible in this church. How can this place be of benefit to the community?

Church buildings were created in the context of a deeply ingrained vision of humanity and existence. The church building was the base for the care for the inhabitants of the town or village. They regularly congregated in the church and met there to celebrate and mourn. The heritage of this public space demonstrates that a real society is formed through the care for one another.

That care included and still includes the whole person, both physically/bodily and psycho-spiritually. The psycho-spiritual dimension appears self-evident in a church building but the bodily and physical are catered for in the church.

By the way, did you know that the floor plan of this church is the human form?



- [1] Share a story
- [2] The navel of Christ
- [3] The Tree of Life
- [4] Omphalos / child –
Jan De Wachter

We wear our skin
as an empty room
with shards of past dreams.

Life leisurely slashes
scars of a past era.
The wounds remain as insignia
of an imperfect yesteryear.

We are marked by
memories that only we
recognize and that affect us
in who we are.

Ann Dewulf

MARKED

Scars as a sign of life

Life leaves traces. You cannot get through life unscathed, it 'marks' you.

On top of that not a single scar is precisely identical. No matter what they look like, all scars tell a story, the story of your life. **In the chancel [1]** we invite you to share your story with the other visitors of this church.

THE NAVEL AS UNIVERSAL SCAR

Even so there is a scar that all humans have in common: the navel, the scar at the center of our stomach, resulting from the umbilical cord.

On **icons of the crucified Christ [2]** the lines of the stomach, the abdomen, are clearly drawn with the navel central. Jezus having been born just like us.

Unified in being

Just like a fingerprint the navel also has in its universality, a unique character. No two navels are the same. Man, women, black, white, homo, hetero, everyone has a navel and even so no two navels are alike. Although we are unique we are still a continuation of previous generations, of genes, of a just as unique father and mother. A new navel endowed person, connected with a family, a culture, a language, ... but also with the possibility of putting a spin on all of this since the navel is only a scar of divided existence.

Seal a covenant

The navel conjures up the umbilical cord, the life-giving connection between mother and child. Every person receives life and is born. Life is presented as a gift. Nevertheless the cord is cut since despite life being given to them, people have to make something of their lives, follow their own path and do their best. The umbilical cord is cut to only enable life.

TELL US A STORY FROM BEFORE WE CAN REMEMBER

The navel also summons up our origin and what precedes that. The youngest son in the film 'The tree of life' (2011, T. Malick) asks his mother to "tell us a story from before we can remember". **The film maker in his on-screen answer [3]**, calls attention to the wonder and the mystery of our own life. Does our origin allude to our destiny?

SEARCHING FOR THE WORLD'S NAVEL

"Since prehistoric times people have attempted to locate the focal point of the material world. A centre was determined by simply positioning a random boulder somewhere. Subsequently a city or land developed from there. Following on from the material structures a cosmic arrangement always resulted. A stone denoting aforementioned focal point is called an omphalos and is encountered as a fundamental design in many cultures."

text: Stef Van Bellingen

Jan De Wachter, contemporary artist – Omphalos [4]

Biblical spirituality places another image opposite that fixed anchor point: the concept that man is a pilgrim and foreigner on earth. Humanity really means leaving the umbilical-position behind to journey forward. The way, the truth and the life then concur.



MARKED – scars as a sign of life is an initiative of the charity YOT, an experiment in the philosophy of life, in association with the Holy Magdalene Church in Bruges. This project came about from help from Folio Atelier and Sign-it. Thanks to the volunteers.

A voluntary contribution?

If every one of the 22.000 visitors this summer were to donate 1 euro (in the collection box at the entrance) then YOT's work in this church would be significantly boosted.

Gifts of 40 € are tax exempt for all those liable to pay Belgian income tax. Please contact us at info@yot.be for more information. The orange pamphlet also covers this option.

Heartfelt thanks, you've earned a little piece of heaven!

MARKED
Scars as a sign of life

Holy Magdalene Church – Bruges

from July 1st to September 30th inclusive
every day from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m.
free admission

Supported by Bruges city council

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