



Suggested Format for Prayer and Sharing
after personal prayer and reflection
on materials for the second pathway to union:
Self-Emptying Love

The format below is offered as a guide for sharing and discussion in local communities, in Christian Growth Groups, or in other gatherings you may wish to organize. It would be helpful to identify a facilitator ahead of time to lead the prayer, sharing and discussion.

*A similar format will be used for two Zoom gatherings hosted by the Vitality of Life Committee, where Sisters and Associates can come together to share the fruit of their prayer, thoughts, and insights. These Zoom events will take place on **July 30 from 6:30 to 8:00PM and August 29 from 9:30 to 11:00 AM.***

Take a few quiet moments to enter into this time and space.

Opening Prayer:

Good and Gracious God,
you are the one in whom we live and move and have our being!
We come together now to deepen our experience of *self-emptying love*.
Open our hearts to your never-ending presence within and among us.
Strengthen our commitment as Sisters and Associates to act justly,
love tenderly and walk humbly with you and one another. May your
Liberating Spirit guide us now and in the days to come, as we seek to
live deepening union with you, one another, and all our dear neighbors,
including all creation. **Amen.**

Readings:

▪ *Philippians 2:5-9*

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,
he humbled himself,
and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.
Therefore, God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name . . .

(brief pause)

▪ **Maxim 3**

Empty yourself continually in honor of the Incarnate Word who emptied himself with so much love for you (Phil. 2:7). Make your commitment to live in the practice of the most sincere, true, and profound humility possible to you . . .

Song: *I Give Myself Away*, William McDowell
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJoUa_PKdJY

Sharing the State of the Heart *(Provide an opportunity for sharing while not entering into discussion at this time. Listen attentively to each person.)*

- Which resources touched you most deeply?
 - How/where do you sense God inviting you?
- Where/how do you experience living self-emptying love in daily life as an Associate or as a Sister of Saint Joseph?
 - How does self-emptying love impact your daily choices?
- Where/how do you feel God is inviting you into deepening self-emptying love so that something “more” can come to be?

After having listened attentively to all who have shared, take a few quiet moments to notice how God might be moving in you now.

Discussion: Choose from the questions below to share additional thoughts, insights or questions you might have.

- As you have reflected on the resources for self-emptying love, have you experienced any new or deepening awareness or encouragement for your own living of this pathway to union?
- How does your pondering of self-emptying love shed light on living poverty of spirit (an imperative for all Christians) or on the vow of poverty (for Sisters)?
- What realities in today's world call for living self-emptying love as a pathway to union?
- Did any of the resources or witness talks in the videos prompt any new insight or understanding into your own experience (past or present) of living self-emptying love? If so, in what way?
- What do you find challenging about living with self-emptying love?

Closing:

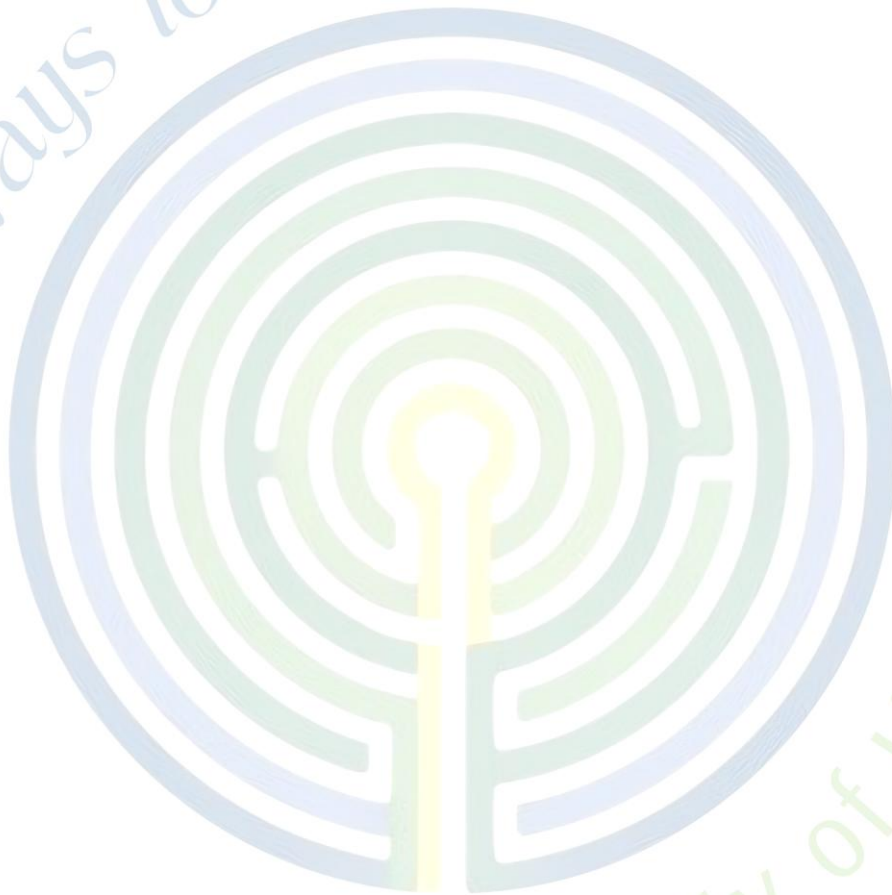
As Sisters and Associates, may we more deeply open ourselves to the humility and self-emptying love of Jesus. Through this deepening communion with Jesus, may we be given the grace to nurture union with God, one another, and every dear neighbor, including all creation.

(all) We commit to walking together with Jesus and one another with self-emptying love, that all may be one!

* Creating God, Source of All That Is,
we are called as Sisters of Saint Joseph and Associates,
to surrender,
to stand open and powerless before you,
completely dependent upon Jesus,
whose spirit liberates us
to a radical call to mission,
through a rhythm of contemplation and courageous action,
to be a healing presence
in any and all situations,
and to this we say, AMEN!

**adapted from statement developed by the U.S Federation of Sisters of Saint Joseph, and adopted by the SSJ of Philadelphia, General Chapter, 1974*

Pathways to Union



Vitality of Life