

**Sister Ellen Maroney: “Sister Elizabeth, what do you ask of God, of this congregation and of the Church?
(Response)**

“My deepest desire and longing is to grow in union with God. In total surrender, with an open heart and mind, I long to co-create with Trinity. I commit myself to an ever-evolving relationship with God. Through a well nurtured relationship with God, I am able to keep an open heart to all and give unconditional love to all of creation more abundantly. My quest for God is each day. I desire to find God in all things, everything, and everyone in the Universe. In my being and my doing, I have found the most meaning in life being attached to God and a mission. The mission of bringing the redeeming love of Jesus into the world is what I am called to do, my purpose. And so, I ask (with Mary, by my side); **Loving God, may I find you each day, in the brokenness and the beauty of our world. Guide me, show me the path to life, all I need is your love and grace.**

In a Church I love so much and yet disappoints me in many ways, I do not simply want a seat at the table. I wish to join with others to help rearrange the seats at the table. As Pope Francis states “We Are Not Living an Era of Change but a Change of Era”. I ask the Church to be open to new understandings, to embrace women as equal partners in Church and society. I ask the Church to join in solidarity with immigrants, refugees, migrants, and victims of human trafficking, seeking with them a more just and inclusive world. I ask the Church to strive to bring the love of God to all, be a Church that honors love in all forms, love is love. May the Church continue to engage in contemplative dialogue. And for all of us gathered here today, as the Church, the body of Christ, I ask that we strive for a deeper union with each other and earth. As we cross borders and break down walls in our own neighborhoods, towns, cities, and around the world let us do so with an ear to our heart.

I bring with me an energy and passion for religious life although I am aware the scenery around is ever changing. While I feel a deep sense of belonging here with the Sisters, Servants of The Immaculate Heart of Mary I also feel called to be with all religious sisters in this life. We each live out the Gospel message in varying ways and the mission of Jesus unites us all. I understand, our institutions will look vastly different in the near future. I am here with a vibrant spirit and wish to be part of this transformation. I ask you my IHM community-- and all the sisters present with me today to stand with me as we search for prophetic ways to live our vowed life in a world hungering for justice and meaning¹. As we move boldly into the future together let us lead paths of non-violence and work for systemic change. I ask all sisters here, be willing to be a bridge from the lived structures of the past into the new, our emerging future. Choose to be inclusive of one another, expand your group, your circles and join me, as we actively join with others. Let us embrace our vulnerability and step into communal discernment. Together, lets risk everything for God’s Dream.²”

¹ Sisters, Servants of Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton PA Direction Statement 2019-2022

² I noticed the phrase “Risk everything for God’s Dream” on framed art at the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia’s retreat house in Sea Isle City, Saint Joseph by-the-Sea. On my thirty-day retreat, this phrase spoke volumes. Father Jean-Pierre Médaille, SJ, founder of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, composed 100 short wisdom sayings. Translated and later revised to *Simple Maxims* by Win Grelis, SSJ and completed by Rita Woehlcke, SSJ. This is Maxim 13.