

# The Road Behind

## Looking Back on the Journey

"LORD, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. You sift through my travels and my rest; with all my ways you are familiar."

-Psalm 139:1-3

It's often helpful to stop and spend time in prayer looking back over the past few months or year to allow our experiences to sink in with greater depth. With all the noise, distractions, and hurried paces of our modern lives, we can easily miss the graces and growth that have occurred in the small and significant moments. Taking time to intentionally gaze prayerfully over the previous months can increase our awareness of what has happened and how God is inviting us now in moving forward. This practice is often called a "review of life" and can be done individually and as a group. The prompt below is one form of this practice.

*Begin by centering yourself--by breathing in and out fully or by imagining yourself at your favorite place. Try to relax and empty your mind. Ask for the light of the Holy Spirit...*

*Let your mind wander freely through your memories of the past few months...inside and outside of the group meetings...Try to recall some key moments or experiences that have touched you...*

*With each moment, ask yourself these questions: "What happened? Who was involved? What struck you? How did you feel? How were you formed?"...*

*Select 5-6 significant events or experiences that surfaced...*

*Using these 5-6 points, choose a journey motif or image that represents your path through the past few months (a bridge, a mountain, a freeway, a river, a movie, etc.)...*

*If you feel moved to do so, express your thoughts creatively on a piece of paper using crayons or markers. Use an image to symbolize each significant event. You can use words to label your images, but do so sparingly. It doesn't matter if you can draw well or not. You may prefer to journal instead about your motif or simply imagine it on the canvas of your mind. Just let your heart lead you and your imagination take over...*

*When you finish, ask yourself these questions:*

- 1. How have I changed through my relationships with others, myself, and God?*
- 2. What gifts have grown / been developed within me during these past months?*
- 3. Where or how am I being led?*
- 4. Where and how might God have been present and inviting me to grow?*
- 5. Is there an apt title to this pictorial description of my time?*

*Have a heart-felt conversation with God. Ask for a deepened awareness of how God loves you and calls you through your experiences of these past months.*