

## Decalogue for the Sharing Group

1. Meetings are led by the Holy Spirit through Mary.
2. Purpose of the meeting:
  - To become aware of my weaknesses and the truth of being loved by God
  - To respond to the desire to deepen my faith
  - To be open to others (brothers and sisters) in the group
  - To share different experiences of my faith and how God is present in my life
3. When I go to the meeting, I will pray to God for others and myself.
  - Prayer of empty hands or that of the tax collector is recommended.
4. I will remember that I am God's child who has the right to trust and await miracles.
5. As a participant in our meeting I will:
  - Serve others and not count my own merits
  - Create the atmosphere of calm, focus/concentration and openness
  - Not impose on others my ways of thinking, reacting and perceiving
  - Avoid giving advice or solving others' problems
  - Speak from my personal "I" rather than use such terms as "you, we, us, people, we should, others do this."
  - Avoid discussion and criticism
6. By keeping what is shared in the meeting confidential, I will preserve each participant's freedom to share openly and protect their dignity as a child of God.
7. I will not be afraid of moments of silence, since I or somebody else may need time to reflect. Moments of silence provide us with unique opportunities for prayer and entrustment to God.
8. I will remember to attentively listen to what my brother or sister is saying in order to help them in the process of sharing.
9. When I give a witness talk or share my faith, God's grace is not only given to me but it is being multiplied and given to others.
10. Above all, God expects from me humility and openness. Even one person who is humble and open to God can create an appropriate climate during a given meeting that will spread to all participants. The most important and desirable goal is not the format of the meeting, but it is to be open to God's grace and presence.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 164, No. 272, footnotes 111: 1 Cor 1:24-25; 112:*

*Eph 1:19-22; No. 273, footnotes 113: Cf. 2 Cor 12:9; Phl 4:13; 114: Lk 1:37, 49.*

*New American Bible* © USCCB. All rights reserved. <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

Foundation, 2005). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)

Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

FEBRUARY 7, 2021 ~ FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ~ YEAR B  
SPIRITUAL REFLECTION ON SUNDAY'S READINGS

PREPARED BY:  
FAMILIES OF NAZARETH MOVEMENT USA  
COMMUNION OF LIFE WITH CHRIST THROUGH MARY

Opening Prayer  
Read Decalogue  
Read Scripture  
Read Reflection

**Reading I** Jb 7:1-4, 6-7  
**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6  
**Reading II** 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23  
**Gospel** Mk 1:29-39

### Opening or Closing Prayer

#### **Holy Mary, full of God's presence**

during the days of your life, you accepted with full humility the Father's will,  
and the Devil was never capable to tie you around with his confusion.

#### **Once with your Son** you interceded for our difficulties, and, full of kindness and patience,

you gave us the example of how to untie the knots of our life.

And by remaining forever Our Mother, you put in order, and make more clear  
the ties that link us to the Lord.

#### **Holy Mother, Mother of God and our Mother,**

to you, who untie with motherly heart the knots of our life,  
we pray to you to receive in your hands (name), and to free them [him/her]  
of the knots and confusion with which our enemy attacks.

#### **Through your grace, your intercession, and your example,**

deliver us from all evil, Our Lady,  
and untie the knots that prevent us from being united with God,  
so that we, free from sin and error,  
may find Him in all things,  
may have our hearts placed in Him,  
and may serve Him always in our brothers and sisters. Amen

Pope Francis' prayer to *Our Lady, Untier of Knots*

*Families of Nazareth USA  
Summer retreat 2013*

## Spiritual Reflection

*Praise the Lord, Who heals the brokenhearted.* Ps 147: 3

Such difficult trials of faith are made up of new situations in your life – situations in which God expects you to seek His will in darkness. Perhaps one day you will unexpectedly lose your job or your means of survival. Perhaps you will fail an important exam, or someone dear to you will leave you. In such moments, you will feel helpless and will not know what you are supposed to do. All of your self-certainty will disappear. You will not be able to delude yourself into believing that you control everything in your life. You will be afraid, but you will gain the chance to rely on God in your poverty. The Lord expects you to trust Him in such situations and to leap into the abyss of uncertainty. Do not be afraid. He will intervene; He will sustain you and give you everything that you need. Your loving Father, who allows you to experience a trial of faith, never wants to wound you or do something bad to you. He only wants to disturb the satisfied part of your shallow faith, so that a real hunger for His will can be born within you – the hunger of someone who is poor in spirit and sees that the problems in front of him are beyond his power and capabilities to handle.

Whether you see it or not, the line of God's will always exists. Sometimes it may be thin like a strand of hair, giving you the impression that it could instantly break. You may then be afraid of perishing and falling into the abyss after taking the next step. In these situations, God wants to reveal to you that you cannot lean on your own feelings or experiences, your own reason or mind. Through deepened poverty in feeling or understanding what He is doing with you, the Lord wants your hunger to fulfill His will to increase. What if this tightrope seems to be as thin as a thread, and your reason and experience tell you that it cannot withstand the weight of your body? In the end, you still walk without falling. In such moments, God Himself upholds you; His loving hand leads you so that you will experience that your only reliance is in Him and, at the same time, in His will.

When walking on the line of God's will and, with determination, seeking the direction in which He leads you, you must be led **by the spirit** of God's promptings and **not by the letter**. If you are touched by Jesus' words, "If anyone wants to go to the law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well" (Mt 4:40), you are still not always able to literally follow the indication. St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus comments that "It is not always possible in Carmel to practice the words of the Gospel according to the letter. One is obliged at times to refuse a service because of one's duties; but when charity has buried its roots deeply within

the soul, it shows itself externally. There is such a delightful way of refusing what cannot be given that the refusal gives as much pleasure as the gift itself."

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp. 126-128

## References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**164** Now, however, "we walk by faith, not by sight"; we perceive God as "in a mirror, dimly" and only "in part". Even though enlightened by him in whom it believes, faith is often lived in darkness and can be put to the test. The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experiences of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.

**272** Faith in God the Father Almighty can be put to the test by the experience of evil and suffering. God can sometimes seem to be absent and incapable of stopping evil. But in the most mysterious way God the Father has revealed his almighty power in the voluntary humiliation and Resurrection of his Son, by which he conquered evil. Christ crucified is thus "the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."<sup>111</sup> It is in Christ's Resurrection and exaltation that the Father has shown forth "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe".<sup>112</sup>

**273** Only faith can embrace the mysterious ways of God's almighty power. This faith glories in its weaknesses in order to draw to itself Christ's power.<sup>113</sup> The Virgin Mary is the supreme model of this faith, for she believed that "nothing will be impossible with God", and was able to magnify the Lord: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."<sup>114</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. What do I consider 'trials of faith' in my life and how do I perceive them most of the time?
2. To what is God calling me in the midst of difficult situations or people that I encounter?
3. How can Mary, who believed that nothing is impossible with God, help me and support me in my trials of faith?

## Prayer after Sharing

*Thank you, God, for allowing me to see the truth about my weaknesses and how it calls upon the abyss of your merciful Love.*