

## 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 "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. 1432, footnotes 25:* Cf. *Ezek* 36: 26-27; **26:** *Lam* 5:21; **27:** Cf. *Jn* 19:37; *Zech* 12:10. [www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism](http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism)  
*New American Bible* © USCCB. All rights reserved. <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>  
S.C. Biela, *Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock* (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)

MARCH 14, 2021 ~ FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT ~ 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** 2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

**Reading II** Eph 2:4-10

**Gospel** Jn 3:14-21

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**Dearest Father,** Your Son tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I long to be Your smallest child. Help me to rediscover You as the One Who delights in me, Who calls me as His own.

**My Jesus,** You say to us, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." You are the way to heaven. Thank You for saving me and giving me Yourself in the Holy Eucharist. Reactivate the call of my Baptism to serve the Church in childlike humility, "boasting only in God."

**Holy Spirit,** reveal to me my weaknesses that I may seek Jesus' strength. Reveal to me my nothingness, that I may await all things from Him. Convince me of Jesus' words, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

**Blessed Mother,** I entrust my prideful doubt, fear, discouragement and ingratitude to your intercession so that I will believe, as God's beloved child and yours, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

**We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord** who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

*FNM Summer Retreat 2010*  
*Families of Nazareth USA*

## Spiritual Reflection

*But whoever lives the truth comes to the light,  
so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God. Jn 3:21*

Convinced of our own strength and perfection, we do not yet see how much we need God.

God does not want us to remain in a lie. Therefore, the moment will come when His knocking becomes stronger and more persistent. This knocking can come in the form of events that expose our interior hypocrisy and in the form of an extraordinary light of grace that shines on this interior hypocrisy. Then we are exposed to the genuine truth about ourselves. We can say that God, Who is knocking, lifts the lid of the whitewashed tomb and a luminous beam shines into its dark interior...

In one's gradual discovery of the difficult truth about himself, one can see God's great gentleness and love for the soul that could otherwise become terrified and rebel. God trusts that we will not run away from this light, but rather accept it as a gift...difficult to receive, but God must give such a gift in order to rescue the beloved soul from the unconscious lie in which it is living.

When we begin to see the truth about ourselves in the Divine light, we will also begin to understand that the **perfection**, which was the source of our self-satisfaction, was **an illusion**. We removed the dirt from the *outside* of the tomb, but what we find *inside* of the tomb frequently surpasses our imagination.

The old sins that we thought we had overcome can become a real threat to us again. We see that in every moment our old sins can come back in even subtler forms...Maybe we will begin to commit again the sins from which we thought we were totally free...

From this point on, your awareness of your sinfulness will be much deeper than the awareness that you had when you first started to whitewash the tomb. You will begin to realize that by relying on your own strength, you cannot overcome the inherent evil within you. You will see that your only rescue is to surrender your kingdom to the lordship of the One Who does not cease to knock even when you do not hear Him knocking.

During this stage on the path to holiness, it is extremely important that you want to stand in truth before God. Your Lord desires for you to **acknowledge your own misery and simultaneously attempt to trust that He does not stop loving you** in spite of all your evil that horrifies you.

If at least a fissure appears in the armor of your distrust, then God, Who is always fighting for you, will try to take advantage of it. He will use this fissure to build an entryway into your firmly fortified world. Your egotistical reign is closed before

God because you continually fear that He will diminish the reign of your *I* and that He will limit your lordship. That is why even the existence of the smallest Divine fissure is important because it can eventually be enlarged so there will be more and more space in you for the light of Divine grace that saves you...

For the Divine Spouse Who tries hard to conquer the human heart, everything can become a means to make it so that the soul falls in love with Him without reservation...God makes use of a difficult neighbor to gradually reveal the whitewashed tomb in us.

The light of faith is very necessary in order for us to see that the Light of the Lord, Who is knocking, is hidden under the appearance of the most difficult persons around us...This neighbor crucifies your plans so that at last you may begin to perceive, in the light of faith, the painful truth that you, yourself, are a difficult neighbor...

Your astonishment will be wonderful when you see that **He is not disgusted by your uncleanness. You are the one who is so ashamed of your dirt** and you are the one whom He embraces with His love, saying, "Do not worry, I love you just as you are, and I will purify you with great tenderness."

S.C. Biela, *Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock*, pp.8-11,13,16

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

- 1432** The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart.<sup>25</sup> Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him: "Restore us to thyself, O LORD, that we may be restored!"<sup>26</sup> God gives us the strength to begin anew. It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear offending God by sin and being separated from him. The human heart is converted by looking upon him whom our sins have pierced.<sup>27</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. In my daily life, what is my concept of sin? Do I consider its source and my interior attitudes, or do I mainly see a list of transgressions and omissions?
2. When God's light reveals to me more aspects of my self-sufficiency and self-importance what is my reaction or recourse?
3. In my discoveries, how can allow myself to be embraced by my heavenly Mother in a childlike posture?

## 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.*