

### 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. 2007; No. 2011, footnote 63:* St. Thérèse of Lisieux, "Act of Offering" in *Story of a Soul*, tr. John Clarke (Washington DC: ICS, 1981), 277.

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>

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

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

Foundation, 2016). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)

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

MARCH 28, 2021 ~ PALM SUNDAY ~ 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** Is 50:4-7

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

**Reading II** Phil 2:6-11

**Gospel** Mk 14:1-15:47

### 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

*Families of Nazareth USA  
Summer retreat 2010*

## Spiritual Reflection

*Christ Jesus, 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, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Phil 2:6-8*

The real spiritual masters speak to us of humility and abasement. The true path of holiness resides in humility and poverty in climbing down the ladder and not climbing up.

Jesus has said, “No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down” (Jn 3:13). To enter the Kingdom one must therefore descend more and more. When the author of the fourth Gospel says, “So must the Son of Man be lifted up” (Jn 3:14), he brings us face to face with the Cross. It is then, in the lowest part of the descent, crucified between two criminals, dying abandoned by all – Why did you abandon me? – that he is raised up. The paradox of Jesus being raised up is that, being first of all, he was abandoned by all and pierced by nails in the most radical descent. “You will leave me alone” (Jn 16:32), he had said. It is then, when he seemed to have lost everything, that Jesus was drawing everything to himself.

The *Ascent of Mount Carmel* of John of the Cross is a *descent* into the night before the climb back to the light. In the depths of the long dark tunnel of descent, there remains only the cry of those shipwrecked at the bottom of the abyss.

Jesus dying on the Cross between two criminals is therefore, according to the Law, cursed by God (Ga 3:13). He is scorned, crushed, esteemed for nothing by man, ridiculed, rejected by the religious authorities and affluent people of his time. He is hung between criminals. It is impossible to descend any lower (Phil 2:8). Nevertheless, in this humiliation and weakness, Jesus shows us the true face of God who is defenseless in His weakness: “He who has seen me has seen the Father.”

In putting himself beside the criminals, in dying outside the walls as one excluded, in making himself the slave of slaves and hanging on the Cross, Jesus joins the lowest, the poorest, the most excluded, the weakest, and the most abandoned of his brothers and sisters. He chose the way of humiliation and, after having taught that anyone who lowers himself will be elevated, he himself descended and “lowered himself becoming obedient unto death on a cross,” an infamous death reserved for slaves and criminals.

After this, how can we look for admiration in desiring to be elevated in others’ esteem? “Do you want to be like me?” Jesus asks Marthe Robin. In the silence of her small room, she remains in obscurity, ignored and suffering the

Passion of Christ every week. It is the way of descent with Christ who alone makes good works fruitful.

Since Jesus descended to the lowest and unto hell, in this kenosis there is no holiness in pretending to possess one’s own virtues that would then give us the illusion of climbing the ladder of pride and human glory under the appearance of virtue. It would be for this reason that Saint John Climacus could say that “the devil of vainglory feels a special joy when he sees virtues multiplied and, as an ant awaits the wheat to mature and the harvest, in this way, vainglory waits for all our spiritual riches to be built up” (L’Echelle, XXI,2).

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.28-30

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

- 2007** With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality, for we have received everything from him, our Creator.
- 2011** *The charity of Christ is the source in us of all our merits* before God. Grace, by uniting us to Christ in active love, ensures the supernatural quality of our acts and consequently their merit before God and before men. The saints have always had a lively awareness that their merits were pure grace.

After earth's exile, I hope to go and enjoy you in the fatherland, but I do not want to lay up merits for heaven. I want to work for your *love alone*. . .In the evening of this life, I shall appear before you with empty hands, for I do not ask you, Lord, to count my works. All our justice is blemished in your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in your own *justice* and to receive from your love the eternal possession of *yourself*.<sup>63</sup>

### Questions for Reflection

1. In pursuing holiness, what is my perception of “merits”? Do I find myself desiring spiritual accomplishments or am I ready to surrender my frailty and weaknesses?
2. “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom” (Lk 23:42). How can this call for Mercy be actualized in my daily life?
3. The words of the Magnificat, “For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness” (Lk 1:48), reveal the mystery of Mary’s extraordinary relationship with God. How can she intercede for me, so that I may desire to become poor and await all things from Him?

### 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.*