

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. 973, No.494, footnotes 139: Lk 1:28-38;cf. Rom 1:5; 140: Cf .LG 56; 141: St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haeres, 3, 22, 4: PG 7/1, 959A; 142: St. Irenaeus, Adv. Haeres 3, 22, 4: PG 7/1, 959A; 143: LG 56; Epiphanius, Haer, 78, 18: PG 42, 728CD-729AB; St. Jerome, Ep. 22, 21: PL. 22, 408.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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

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MARCH 7, 2021 ~ THIRD 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	Ex 20:1-17 or Ex 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11
Reading II	1 Cor 1:22-25
Gospel	Jn 2:13-25

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*

FNM Summer Retreat 2013

Families of Nazareth USA

Spiritual Reflection

"Zeal for your house will consume me." Jn 2:17

Our Lord desires that we try to discern His will by examining the situation, circumstances, and conditions in which we find ourselves. Certainly, when we walk in the darkness of faith, we do not always know what God's will is. Regardless, we should always seek it. . .

If you admit to the state of your spiritual illness, which God's light reveals to you, and if you desire to remain in truth, then you will confess that in every step of your life you forget about the Lord, that you fail to live in His presence, and that your heart continuously turns away from Him. You are in love with yourself and you despise God's love. You think in a human way and pursue your own will. You are not at all interested in fulfilling the will of the Lord. Although it is very painful, this truth can generate an authentic Eucharistic hunger within you. Only a starved spiritual beggar truly awaits the Holy Mass; only a beggar desires to participate in the Banquet during which he knows he will be fed. . .

Christ's extraordinary hunger to do God's will is the ideal example and role model for us to imitate. The person who hungers to fulfill God's will is the one who widely opens the door to the One who is knocking. The more you **empty yourself of your own will** and become poor in spirit, the wider you will open the door. As a result, you will be free for the coming of the Lord and His will, which is love. He desires to heal you and fill you with Himself.

The poorer you are, the hungrier you will be for God's will. The word "hunger" is ideal to use here. Hunger does not place conditions: the hungrier you are, the less picky you are about the food you eat. . .

If a true hunger for God's will existed in us, then we would receive His will with joy and longing. More precisely, the plans and designs of each one of us would be secondary. . . In other words, the less we are attached to our own designs and conceptions, the more we become free to fulfill God's will. Consequently, it is easier for us to renounce everything that is not in accordance with His will.

The poverty of a person's own desires opens his heart to fulfilling God's desires. Such an attitude is salvific. It frees us from excessive self-preoccupation and fear about the future. If we truly believe that God desires that we assume precisely this attitude, then is there anything to fear? Can our merciful Father desire anything other than what is good for His beloved children?

It is necessary for you to hunger for everything that God wants to give to you, regardless of whether it is joy, suffering or even death. Even if God wants to give you success or difficulties, praise or unjust accusations, human friendship or

loneliness and misunderstanding, you should hunger for it, because, if these gains and losses in life are according to His will, then they are salvific. . .

Among all people, Mary most fully lived with a hunger for God's will. She was constantly hungry for God's will. This was her singular desire, the only program of her life. She longs to teach this attitude to every one of her children. She desires that you, too, hunger for God's will as she hungers for it. Moreover, Mary's *fiat*, uttered during the Annunciation, testifies to her desire to fulfill God's will. . . Mary constantly longed for the Lord's Word, for His will.

S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp. 72, 62, 147-151

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

973 By pronouncing her "fiat" at the Annunciation and giving her consent to the Incarnation, Mary was already collaborating with the whole work her Son was to accomplish. She is mother wherever he is Savior and head of the Mystical Body.

494 At the announcement that she would give birth to "the Son of the Most High" without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of faith, certain that "with God nothing will be impossible": "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word."¹³⁹ Thus, giving her consent to God's word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace.¹⁴⁰

As St. Irenaeus says, "Being obedient she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race."¹⁴¹ Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert. . .: "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience: what the virgin Eve bound through her disbelief, Mary loosened by her faith."¹⁴² Comparing her with Eve, they call Mary "the Mother of the living" and frequently claim: "Death through Eve, life through Mary."¹⁴³

Questions for Reflection

1. In examining the situations and circumstances of my present life, how do I see myself thinking in a human way and pursuing my own will?
2. What is my usual reaction to whatever joys or sufferings God gives me? How does this reveal my hunger for everything that God wants for me?
3. As I ponder how Mary most fully lived with a hunger for God's will, how can I ask her to teach me to trust in God's loving mercy?

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.