

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. 625, footnotes 465: Rev 1:18; 466: St. Gregory of Nyssa, Orat. catech. 16: PG 45, 52D; No.1168, footnote 42: Lk 4:19.

<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

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

APRIL 4, 2021 ~ EASTER 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 Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Responsorial Psalm Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Reading II Col 3:1-4

Gospel Jn 20:1-9

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dear Father, great is Your Mercy.

My true vocation is intimacy with You in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the new model of righteousness Your Son has given me, "as I have done, you should also do," open me more to Your mercy and transform me into Your divine likeness.

Dear Jesus, holy is Your Name.

May your prayer, "that they may be one as you, Father, and I are one," become my own desire. Teach me how to build up the unity of Your Mystical Body by embracing and living out my vocation to authentic holiness and happiness.

Dear Holy Spirit, amazing is Your Grace.

Grant me your gifts in order to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks" the reason for my hope. Thank you that, through You, I can encounter Jesus daily in the Eucharist, the source of my hope, even in the situations of my life that are most difficult to understand.

Dear Mother Mary, source of my joy.

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." As a vessel of the Holy Spirit, teach me to live the Beatitudes of your Son. Wrap me in your mantle, where I can believe in His mercy and fulfill my vocation to be salt of the earth and light of the world.

I 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 2011*

Spiritual Reflection

They both ran, . . . saw the burial cloths there...and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead. Jn 20:4,5,9

It is normal to be fearful of the *descent*, of being fixed on the cross. "Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do'" (Mk 8:32-33).

For natural man, this message is always difficult to hear. However, there is no other way than the path of humility and of sharing in the cross. "Then human pride shall be abased,/ the arrogance of mortals brought low" (Is 2:17).

And how did God abase the pride of men? In terrifying them? In demonstrating to them his power? No. He abased it in lowering himself, in *descending*, in annihilating himself and allowing himself to be nailed to the cross, "taking the form of a slave" (Phil 2:7). He was found not only of low estate, but he became the poorest of us all.

Holiness is impossible without this *descent* into humility, without this annihilation. It is in the very depths of this descent that Jesus cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). How many poor, rejected, mocked, and poorly loved people utter this cry of distress in the depths of abandonment? Jesus suffers in them even though they are sometimes unaware. They are, as Paul VI magnificently said: "These poor blessed lambs that save the world without realizing it." In fact, Christ *descended* and joined all the excluded, the rejected, the cursed ones. He became "a curse for us" (Gal 3:13).

Our wounds and poverty will be transformed one day into a glorious light if we offer them to Divine Mercy. . .

To descend with Christ into the depths of my wounds, to recognize my state of sinfulness, all this will change my distress into joy, and what was my shame will become glory and light. We have never arrived at enough depth that the light cannot reach us in the night.

To join Christ so as to be transformed in him, we therefore need to pass through descent and suffering because Christ wants to relive in us the mystery of his *descent* into the abyss. And it is in the darkness of night that the light of the resurrection can radiate.

The true way of holiness is the narrow door that only the weak, the poor, and the children manage to enter by *descending* again and again into the depths of their woundedness and distress.

The renewal of the Church will be realized through weakness in accepting the evangelical paradox. In the Kingdom of God the law of greatness is the one of smallness – consenting to weakness. Who is presently small in the Church? Who truly *descends* into his own poverty of heart to join hearts with the wounded and the poor? Who follows the recommendation to change his mentality and dares to become small like a child?

Our Church needs apostles, priests, and even bishops with the heart of a child. Indeed, a child reminds us of the fundamental rule of the kingdom, the weakness on which rests the infinite mercy of the Father. Divine power – that loves to be deployed – emanates through this law of weakness in order to transfigure it.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp.36-38

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

625 Christ's stay in the tomb constitutes the real link between his passible state before Easter and his glorious and risen state today. The same person of the "Living One" can say, "I died, and behold I am alive for evermore":⁴⁶⁵

God [the Son] did not impede death from separating his soul from his body according to the necessary order of nature, but has reunited them to one another in the Resurrection, *so that he himself might be, in his person, the meeting point for death and life*, by arresting in himself the decomposition of nature produced by death and so becoming the source of reunion for the separated parts.⁴⁶⁶

1168 Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a "year of the Lord's favor."⁴² The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated "as a foretaste," and the kingdom of God enters into our time.

Questions for Reflection

1. What experience have I had, or am I afraid could be awaiting me, that invites me to descend into humility with Christ?
2. Considering that Christ includes me in His suffering, how does this dispose me to enter again and again into my woundedness and distress, that with Him I may live the glory and light of resurrection?
3. If I listen, what does my Blessed Mama whisper to me when I find myself fearful of the cross?

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.