

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. 301, footnote 160: Wis 11:24-26; No. 309.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith, 4th ed.* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

APRIL 18, 20 21 ~ THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER ~ 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 3:13-15, 17-19

Responsorial Psalm Ps 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9

Reading II 1 Jn 2:1-5a

Gospel Lk 24:35-48

Opening or Closing Prayer

Father of Mercy and of Love,

Thank you for the gift of reconciliation through the Redemptive Sacrifice of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your love is more powerful than my sin. There is no evil that surpasses Your infinite mercy.

Send your Holy Spirit to convince me of my weakness so that I may live with a truth of conscience and a certainty of redemption.

Open me, Gracious Father, to the graces of being personally responsible for my sins, longing for forgiveness, and of being obedient to the call to conversion.

When I seek forgiveness, give me the courage to reveal the abyss of my misery and to accept my sins as "happy faults" so that, as Your child, I may run to Your loving embrace.

Through the help and intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, may I learn true contrition for the wounds I have caused Her Son.

And may my continual renewal, through the grace of Your sacraments, work to revitalize the Church, so that, as One Body in Christ, we may proclaim Your dominion over all the earth.

I ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

*Families of Nazareth USA
Summer retreat 2008*

Spiritual Reflection

“Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name.” Lk 24:46-47

Faith enables us to overcome pretenses and to see the primary cause above secondary causes. It allows us to see that all that happens around us does not happen due to man’s power. Faith allows us to discover the traces of God in creation. It gives us the ability to perceive God’s will in phenomena and to see events as signs of God passing by.

Every moment of our lives is permeated with the Presence that loves and bestows. To live in faith means to be able to see this loving and constantly bestowing Presence. . . Time is the Presence written with a capital “P.” It is the presence of Christ in our lives. It is the personal presence of God, revealing Himself as the One who expects something from us. God reveals Himself to us through His will. But what is His will? It is always that which is best for us because God is Love. **Every moment of your life is a moment of meeting with the Presence that is loving you.** Someone has said that time is the sacrament of the meeting between man and God. This means that every moment is an evangelical gift since it is the Presence that calls us to do something. God links grace to each moment, be it an easy or difficult one. St. Paul says that we live, move, and exist in God (cf. Acts 17:28). It is from Him that we therefore receive not only the gift of our existence, but also the gifts of breathing, food, friendship, and the gift of every moment of our lives.

The statement of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus that “everything is grace” (*tout est grace*) means that everything that happens in your life is linked with some kind of grace. God comes to you in the form of a gift, in the form of grace, in the form of a call. In this sense, everything is a grace. God wants everything to become for you a “capital” of good. He even tries to draw good out of evil. Evil cannot be a grace, but God, in His almighty and infinite mercy, can even draw good from it. The consequences of evil can give fruit in the form of a great opportunity to be converted. Therefore, “everything is “grace,” and everything is a “gift,” since always and everywhere God gives you an opportunity. It is extremely important for you to believe in this constant Presence who manifests Himself in various ways. . .

. . . Grace is the expression of love, so every moment is linked to God’s love since it is linked with His grace. Even when you commit a grievous sin Christ is with you and loves you. If you remembered this, if you believed that you are always immersed in the merciful love of God who never abandons you, then it is certain that you would never fall.

Everything that you experience is linked to the love of God who loves you, and to His desire for your good. He is present in your life no matter what you do. Time is a sacrament of your meeting with God and His mercy, with His love for you and His desire that everything work toward your good, Then every fault becomes a “happy fault” (*felix culpa*). If you looked at every moment of your life in this way, then spontaneous prayer would be born within you. It would be a continuous prayer since the Lord is always with you and always loves you. Every moment of your life would be permeated with the love of the Presence that always encompasses you. . .

...He is present everywhere, and everything depends on Him. In His hands lie the destinies of all of us, as well as the destinies of nations and of the world. We come to know this through faith, which brings about inner peace in us.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 5-8

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

301 With creation, God does not abandon his creatures to themselves. He not only gives them being and existence, but also, and at every moment, upholds and sustains them in being, enables them to act and brings them to their final end. Recognizing this utter dependence with respect to the Creator is a source of wisdom and freedom, of joy and confidence:

For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured, if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.¹⁶⁰

309 If God the Father almighty, the Creator of the ordered and good world, cares for all his creatures, why does evil exist? To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice. Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question: the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God who comes to meet man by his covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life to which free creatures are invited to consent in advance, but from which, by a terrible mystery, they can also turn away in advance. *There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.*

Questions for Reflection

1. How has God revealed Himself to me this week, through an event, nature, a moment?
2. In this experience, what was His will that I now see was best for me?
3. With our Blessed Mother why, or why not, am I able to be at peace?

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.