

## 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. 537, footnotes 238 Rom 6:4; 239 St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio 40, 9: PG 36, 369; 240 St. Hilary of Poitiers, In *Matth.* 2, 5: PL 9, 927; No. 606, footnotes 413 Jn 6:38; 414 Heb 10:5-10; 415 Jn 4:34; 416 1 Jn 2:2; 417 Jn 10:17; 14:31. <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)

APRIL 25, 2021 ~ FOURTH 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Acts 4:8-12
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29
<b>Reading II</b>	1 Jn 3:1-2
<b>Gospel</b>	Jn 10:11-18

### Opening or Closing Prayer

Mary, Virgin and Mother,  
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,  
welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith –

as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,  
help us to say our own "yes" to the urgent call,  
as pressing as ever,  
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Obtain for us now a new ardor  
born of the resurrection,  
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life  
which triumphs over death.

Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,  
that the gift of unfading beauty  
may reach every man and woman.

Mother of the living Gospel,  
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,  
pray for us. Amen.

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288 [Abridged]  
*Families of Nazareth USA*  
*Summer Retreat 2014*

## Spiritual Reflection

*I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. Jn 10:18*

For us, there will always be the temptation of *climbing through pride* instead of *descending through humility*, to have the desire of being admired and of seeking a way of power, even under the appearance of the good we want to accomplish.

“Woe to you when the world thinks well of you,” Jesus said to his disciples. Let us be distrustful when we are praised too much for our deeds, especially if they are apostolic deeds.

Baptism associates us with the mystery of Christ:

Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus...[he] must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus, in order to rise with him (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 537).

Life events, trials of all kinds, configure us to Christ in his Passion because we must *die with him* in order to *rise with him*. “Every life is a Mass and every soul is a host,” Marthe Robin has said. The Christian renunciation is not ascetic or voluntarist but *mystical*, since, in Jesus, the Son who “was of divine origin” *descended* and lowered himself to the human condition, excluded and despised in dying crucified like a criminal. Therefore, there is no sanctity possible without abasement and without the cross. To our mind, the mystery of the cross is the summit of the revelation of a disconcerting God. It is in the folly and weakness of the cross that God’s power is exposed. Have we forgotten it? Is this theme of the cross valued enough in the formation of future priests and Christian leaders? As Pope John Paul II said to a group of bishops:

We come to the very heart of the mystery of Christian shepherding, since Christ the Shepherd is also the Lamb. . . No pastor can be a true shepherd of God’s flock unless he is one with the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. We cannot hope to be shepherds conformed to Christ unless we live the mystery of his Cross (cf. Phil 3: 10). . .What is true of the pastors is also true of the whole Church. . .The heart of all pastoral activity and of every form of apostolate is union with Christ’s Paschal Mystery. By becoming one with the crucified and risen Lord through the grace of the Holy Spirit, all the baptized become capable of taking part in the Church’s evangelizing mission. (Address of the Holy Father, John

Paul II, to the bishops of Canada in their “Ad Lumina” visit, September 25, 1999)

Trials, sufferings, failures, and contradictions unite us to Jesus crucified and make our life *fruitful*. We become a lamb offered with the Lamb, and live the mystery of the Cross.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp. 83-84

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

**537** Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus, who in his own baptism anticipates his death and resurrection. The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father's beloved son in the Son and "walk in newness of life":<sup>238</sup>

Let us be buried with Christ by Baptism to rise with him; let us go down with him to be raised with him; and let us rise with him to be glorified with him.<sup>239</sup> Everything that happened to Christ lets us know that, after the bath of water, the Holy Spirit swoops down upon us from high heaven and that, adopted by the Father's voice, we become sons of God.<sup>240</sup>

**606** The Son of God, who came down "from heaven, not to do [his] own will, but the will of him who sent [him]",<sup>413</sup> said on coming into the world, "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God." "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."<sup>414</sup> From the first moment of his Incarnation the Son embraces the Father's plan of divine salvation in his redemptive mission: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work."<sup>415</sup> The sacrifice of Jesus "for the sins of the whole world"<sup>416</sup> expresses his loving communion with the Father. "The Father loves me, because I lay down my life", said the Lord, "[for] I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."<sup>417</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. What recent trial, failure, or suffering has been an abasement “death” experience for me?
2. How is God’s love and his desire for my sanctity expressed in this?
3. In what way does Mary’s view of the Cross encourage me to lay down my life for a truly fruitful one of ministry and evangelization?

## 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.*