

### 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. 670, footnotes 553: 1 Jn 2:18; cf. 1 Pt 4:7, 554: LG 48 § 3; cf. 1 Cor 10:11, 555: Cf. Mk 16:17-18; No. 672, footnotes 561: Cf. Acts 1:6-7, 562: Cf. Isa 11:1-9, 563: Cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 7:26; Eph 5:16; 1 Pt 4:17, 564: Cf. Mt 25:1, 13; Mk 13:33-37; 1 Jn 2:18; 4:3; 1 Tim; No. 965, footnotes 506: LG 69, 507: LG 594:1.**  
<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>

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Tadeusz Dajcer, *The Gift of Faith*, 4th ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2020). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)  
Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

MAY 16, 2021 ~ THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION ~ 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 1:1-11  
**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9  
**Reading II** Eph 1:17-23  
**Gospel** Mk 16:15-20

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**Lord Jesus**, You were sent by the Father to gather together those who are scattered. You came among us, doing good and bringing healing, announcing the Word of salvation and giving the Bread which lasts forever. Be our companion on life's pilgrim way.

**May your Holy Spirit** inflame our hearts, enliven our hope and open our minds, so that together with our sisters and brothers in faith we may recognize you in the Scriptures and in the breaking of bread.

**May your Holy Spirit** transform us into one body and lead us to walk humbly on the earth, in justice and love, as witnesses of your resurrection.

**In communion with Mary**, whom you gave to us as our Mother at the foot of the cross, through you may all praise, honor and blessing be to the Father in the Holy Spirit and in the Church, Now and forever. Amen

*50th International Eucharistic Congress Prayer, Dublin 2012*  
*Families of Nazareth USA*  
*Summer Retreat 2012*

### Spiritual Reflection

*So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven. . . But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs. Mk 16:15-20*

In the lives of the apostles, various stages **of their coming closer to God** can be clearly distinguished. At first, there was a Galilean spring in their lives—joyous and full of dreams. It was not until later that dark clouds began to appear on the horizon. Conflicts with the Pharisees arose, and this gave rise to fear and dread in them. These were the first signs of purgation and the first trials of faith in their lives. Thomas, a witness of the attempts to stone and arrest Jesus, said with resignation and close to despair, “Let us also go to die with him” (Jn 11:16). Then they were no longer the triumphant apostles in their Galilean spring. They started to fear because they were getting closer to a confrontation with the elite of the nation, with the power that, in those times, was wielded by the Pharisees and the Sadducees. . .

Some may say that if you have not gone through a trial of despair then you really do not know anything. The apostles went through this kind of trial of despair on Good Friday. Being Pharisees in spirit, the apostles were then stripped of everything. After the Resurrection, the appearances of the resurrected Christ enlightened that night of purgation. They saw that He was alive and that He was present among them. However, this was a new Presence, a Presence that did not give a feeling of complete security or stability. It was connected with the newly risen humanity of Christ. This humanity was different from the former one; it was glorious and could no longer be confined to earth. His risen body could pass through closed doors, so sometimes the apostles doubted whether it was really their Master that they were seeing.

The trial of the apostles, their night of purgation, was not yet complete. The ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost brought with them trials of faith and further denudation. Then their main support, the humanity of Jesus, was definitely taken away from them. Then they had nothing to rely on. **The young Church being born in the upper room and devoting Herself with one accord to prayer was stripped of everything.**

The second night of purgation, the night of the spirit, is the most difficult one. The theology of spiritual life states that it is then that one encounters Mary who, through her presence, illuminates this night. And after the Ascension, this is what happened to the apostles in the upper room. They were not alone there. Mary, who never succumbed to despair and whose faith never faltered, was with them. She was among them as an example of faith and perseverance in prayer, an example of

looking for the Holy Spirit to come. The apostles being truly poor—owning nothing, unable to see the humanity of Jesus—waited together with Mary. This was when the Holy Spirit, the “Father of the poor,” as it is stated in the liturgy, came down upon the apostles who had been stripped of everything and left in complete emptiness. Then the strength of the Holy Spirit descended upon them. Only when they had been strengthened in this way were they sent to conquer the world for Christ.

Fr. Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.191-193

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

- 670** Since the Ascension God's plan has entered into its fulfilment. We are already at "the last hour".<sup>553</sup> "Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably under way; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is endowed already with a sanctity that is real but imperfect."<sup>554</sup> Christ's kingdom already manifests its presence through the miraculous signs that attend its proclamation by the Church.<sup>555</sup>
- 672** Before his Ascension Christ affirmed that the hour had not yet come for the glorious establishment of the messianic kingdom awaited by Israel<sup>561</sup> which, according to the prophets, was to bring all men the definitive order of justice, love and peace.<sup>562</sup> According to the Lord, the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by "distress" and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church<sup>563</sup> and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching.<sup>564</sup>
- 965** After her Son's Ascension, Mary "aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers."<sup>506</sup> In her association with the apostles and several women, "we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."<sup>507</sup>

### Questions for Reflection

1. What is my experience of trial and purgation when someone who was a main support for me has gone from my life?
2. When or how have I recognized signs that I was not really alone during such a situation?
3. How can Mary, who never succumbed to despair and whose faith never faltered be my guide towards a deeper appreciation of the love God has for me? How can I share this treasure?

### 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.*