

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. 1394, footnote 231: Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1638; **232:** St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Contra Fab.* 28, 16-19; CCL 19A, 813-814.

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>

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S.C.Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2002). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org

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September 5, 2021 ~ 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ 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	Is 35:4-7a
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10
Reading II	Jas 2:1-5
Gospel	Mk 7:31-37

Opening or Closing Prayer

My Lord Jesus,

Thank you for Your gift of the Eucharist in which You desire to meet with me, accept me, and love me just as I am.

Forgive me for constantly submerging myself in the world, seeking its innumerable temporal treasures, proving that You are not my one true treasure.

O my Lord, during Holy Mass, and during every moment of this day, I entrust to You all my affairs, fears, uncertainties and distractions, and I beg You to...

Open my soul to ever deeper contrition for wasting so many graces, and to gratefulness for Your constant bestowals.

Help me to have the attitude of a helpless child and a contrite sinner in need of Your Mercy.

Heal me of my spiritual leprosy.

Help me to discover You in the Eucharist and to desire You as my only true treasure – my only Love.

Transform me that I may decrease and You may increase.

Unite me to You, my Eucharistic Savior.

May our Blessed Mother await and receive in me and through me Your kenosis – Eucharist – and may she always be grateful within me for Your Sacrament of Love.

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

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2010

Spiritual Reflection

“Did not God choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him?” Jas 2:5

If we treat people as a support in themselves then our relationships with them become false and filled with illusions. If God wants to lead us into a spiritual desert and attempt to make even a part of these illusions evaporate, we will undergo deep frustrations.

During this time of denudation, we frequently will experience a sense of loneliness and rejection from other people; in fact everybody can let us down. And so, we might feel cheated, hurt and betrayed when we begin to lose the support of persons who had previously shown us kindness and in whom we had previously trusted.

During this process of purification God simultaneously might allow those who relied on us also to be disappointed with us. In this way we can experience a **double purification** – first in relation with those on whom we relied and second with those who relied on us.

All these experiences will be very difficult to handle, especially when we realize that by our own efforts we are incapable of always relying on others in the way that God wants us to. Our Merciful Father does not want us to be sad and full of bitterness. What He truly desires is that we admit to the truth about ourselves and that we bring this truth to Him...

How can we avoid our interpersonal relationships from becoming a hindrance in our union with God? First of all our loving God wants us to admit that we are enslaved to our human desires, to kindness, to remembrance, and to acceptance. God wants us to see this problem within ourselves and to admit it before Him.

Undoubtedly what is also needed is our effort to take steps in this process of not making attachments, to avoid occasions that will awaken attachments in ourselves or others. What is essential here is some effort of the heart. We must diligently try to avoid all kinds of attachments so that we will be freed from them...

We should not deceive ourselves by thinking that merely theoretical knowledge about human attachments is sufficient enough for us to live it. Therefore we should not forget that our Redeemer does not come to the healthy

ones but rather to the sick, to those who need a physician. Being the Divine Physician, our Redeemer alone can heal us from our sins. If, full of hope, we continue to persevere in bringing to Him all the different aspects of our misery, then one day the moment will arrive when He will bend over us in response to our trustful begging for healing, finally uniting with us completely.

S.C. Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp.68-71

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1394 As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity *wipes away venial sins*.²³¹ By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him:

Since Christ died for us out of love, when we celebrate the memorial of his death, at the moment of sacrifice we ask that love may be granted to us by the coming of the Holy Spirit. We humbly pray that in the strength of this love by which Christ willed to die for us, we, by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, may be able to consider the world as crucified for us, and to be ourselves as crucified to the world. . . Having received the gift of love, let us die to sin and live for God.²³²

Questions for Reflection

1. How have I experienced counting on someone and being disappointed, or myself disappointing a loved one or friend in my life? What was my reaction?
2. When I have lost relationships through my dependence on them or been afraid to “put too much pressure” on them, what does this say to me in the light of faith?
3. Our Blessed Mother lost everything, yet she still trusted. How am I to understand that I need healing from dependence on people and things and how can I abandon myself to God in the same way that Blessed Mother did from the very beginning?

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.