

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. 2545, footnotes 335:** Lk 14:33; cf. Mk 8:35; **336:** Cf. Lk 21:4; **No. 2545, footnote 337:** LG 42 § 3.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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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

OCTOBER 17, 2021 ~ 29TH 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 53:10-11

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

Reading II

Heb 4:14-16

Gospel

Mk 10:35-45

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dearest Father, Your Son tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I long to be Your smallest child. Help me to rediscover You as the One Who delights in me, Who calls me as His own.

My Jesus, You say to us, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." You are the way to heaven. Thank You for saving me and giving me Yourself in the Holy Eucharist. Reactivate the call of my Baptism to serve the Church in childlike humility, "boasting only in God."

Holy Spirit, reveal to me my weaknesses that I may seek Jesus' strength. Reveal to me my nothingness, that I may await all things from Him. Convince me of Jesus' words, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

Blessed Mother, I entrust my prideful doubt, fear, discouragement and ingratitude to your intercession so that I will believe, as God's beloved child and yours, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

We 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

*Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;
whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.*
Mk 10:35

The true apostle needs to undergo certain purifications so that Christ may use him, and he may *humbly* become a “servant” of the Gospel, for we can be Pharisees in our apostolate toward the poor and the wounded. For example, one often speaks of becoming poor with the poor – and that is good. But repeatedly, one speaks of it like a rich man leaning over a poor man from the height of his riches. We think instinctively: we on the one side from above; those poor who need us on the other side, at the bottom. We then present ourselves as superior to them.

True conversion is to *become* poor in spirit, vulnerable and fragile, and to finally accept our poverty of heart – the wound which brings us side by side with the poorest and the most wounded of our brothers and sisters. To live the Gospel is to desire to be poor ourselves in order to reach the poor. . .

The Christian will also take this way of *descent* (the kenosis) of Christ. He will need to be *united to his cross* in order to live with Christ in the joy of his resurrection. There is no ascent without descent, no light without darkness, no joy without the cross. One must become like a child again.

Only a child abandons himself totally, only a child can become the Lamb that offers itself. This is why the only way to reach the Kingdom desired by Jesus is the way of childlike spirit, the way of *descent* into weakness, *the little way* of confidence and abandonment.

What are the two main obstacles to faith and holiness? They are *pride* and *the search for human glory*. This is why Saint Ignatius said that we should choose poverty and disgrace, in order to put to death our pride and imitate Christ:

In order to imitate Christ our Lord in a closer way and to resemble him more realistically, I want to choose poverty with the poor Christ, rather than riches; disgrace, instead of honors, with Christ laden with disgrace. I desire to be considered as nothing and to be a fool for Christ – the first to be considered such a fool – rather than to be judged a wise and prudent man in this world (*3rd degree of humility*). . .

The apostle of tomorrow will be *poor*, *crucified*, and a *child*. It is necessary that the Christian and the apostle go through denudation, abandonment, and neglect. He must experience his poverty and nothingness within himself, and his nothingness without God.

The true experience of God impoverishes, detaches, and often crucifies. *My ways are not your ways* the Lord tells us.

Your strength is not in numbers, nor does your might depend upon the powerful. You are God of the lowly, helper of those of little account, supporter of the weak, protector of those in despair, savior of those without hope (Jdt 9:11).

Throughout his life on earth, whichever way it is looked at, the trajectory of Christ is like a great stairway where the Lord *descends* – *descends* day after day into the depth of ignominy...

What the world needs is Christians and priests – poor, helpless, and crucified – who will be united to the wounded Lamb and, in him and with him, will save this world so loved by the Father of mercy.

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*, pp. 73-74, 136-138

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2544 Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that [they have]" for his sake and that of the Gospel.³³⁵ Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on.³³⁶ The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

2545 All Christ's faithful are to "direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty."³³⁷

Questions for Reflection

1. When I serve others or complete a task for them, what is my most usual expectation? What do I seek for myself?
2. How is God present in these circumstances of my life and to what is He calling me?
3. Looking at Mary's hidden life, how can She help me, intercede for me, in order to serve without "cost" and to serve so as not to "conceal Jesus"?

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.