

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. 675, footnotes 573: Cf. Lk 18:8; 574: Cf. Lk 21:12; Jn 15:19-20; 575: Cf. 2 Thess 2:4-12; 1 Thess 5:2-3; 2 Jn 7; 1 Jn 2:1 8, 22..

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, 3rd ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2012). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

November 28, 2021 ~ 1st Sunday of Advent ~ Year C 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	Jer 33:14-16
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14
Reading II	1 Thes 3:12-4:2
Gospel	Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

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 2010*

Spiritual Reflection

*Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior,
and for you I wait all the day. Ps. 25:4-5*

Storms in our Lives

An especially privileged time for the development of our faith is when we experience storms in our lives. The storm at sea described in the Gospel is a certain symbol for our situation. During difficult trails of faith, in the times of lesser or greater storms, it seems to us that Jesus has abandoned us, that He is not there. There can be various storms: the storms of temptations, storms of scruples, storms of worrying about the future, about health, about work, and storms involving discord in marriage. In the face of a storm, two types of attitudes can be observed: fear, as in the case of the terrified apostles, and peace, symbolized by Jesus sleeping in the boat. Jesus was sleeping through a human tragedy in a boat tossed by the waves and in danger of sinking at any moment. He must have been tired, but was it only His fatigue? Jesus slept in the apostles' boat and they thought that everything was lost. This is where their panic, stress, and terror had come from when they woke Jesus. During that storm two attitudes were revealed: the faces of the apostles contorted in fear and the peaceful face of Jesus who was sleeping. Christ's attitude seemed so strange that the apostles accused Him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' (Mk4:38).

Every storm has its purpose. It is God passing by, which will bring with it some great grace – primarily the grace of trust. During a storm you should direct the eyes of your faith on the peaceful face of Christ. A “theology” of God's sleep can be discussed here. **During our storms God seems to be sleeping.** The revelation of the Bible includes not only God's word but also God's gestures. How very rich in context is this gesture of Jesus sleeping during the dramatic moment of threat. Of course, this does not mean that when threatened with danger one should do nothing. Quietism is contradictory to the teaching of the Church. Jesus does not reproach the apostles because they tried to save the boat. He accused them of the lack of an attitude of faith, which caused them to succumb to the temptation of fear or even panic. It is with this gesture of sleep that He wanted to tell them: *But I am with you, you should be calm, for nothing can happen to a boat that I am in.*

The attitude of faith is simultaneously a prayer of faith. It is expressed by calmness in the face of danger, by peace on the spiritual level since we have no direct influence on our psychophysical level. There will be many anxieties that

will tear us apart, but that is not important. What is important is that fear, aroused at an emotional and mental level, does not cause a change in our attitude, deeds, thoughts, and desires. Our faith and our belief in the fact that He is present here, close to us, makes us calm in spite of our emotional state. His presence is a presence of eternal power and eternal love. When storms come into your life, internal or external, look at the peaceful face of Jesus. Then you will understand that you are not alone and that, in every situation, He is saying . *This storm will pass; it has to pass.*

During our storms and our trials of faith, we must also never forget about the continuous presence of Mary who is close to us as the Mother of our abandonment to God. Let us ask her to allow us to share in her abandonment to God, so that we may stop trusting ourselves, things, and people, and that we may perceive the continuous presence of her Son who is close to us and is our only security. We ask Mary that, following her example, we trust exclusively in the Lord: *Mother of Great Abandonment, I offer myself to you without reservation – to the end.*

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.124-126

References from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

675 Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers.⁵⁷³ The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth⁵⁷⁴ will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh.⁵⁷⁵

Questions for Reflection

1. When in my life was I privileged with the experience of a “storm”?
2. What was my attitude during this storm?...that of the Apostles?...or that of Jesus?
3. Have I abandoned myself to Mary, especially in the times when God seemed to be sleeping?

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.