

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, footnote 337: LG 42 s3; No. 2547, footnotes 341: Lk 6:24; 342: St. Augustine, De serm.Dom. in monte, 1,1,3:PL. 34,1232; 343: Cf. Mt 6:25-34. www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism
New American Bible © USCCB. All rights reserved. <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>
S.C.Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2005). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org
Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

November 14, 2021 ~ 33rd 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	Dn 12:1-3
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11
Reading II	Heb 10:11-14, 18
Gospel	Mk 13:24-32

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dear Lord,

The world of temporality constantly pulls on my heart, although I want to seek only God's will for my life.

Thank you for giving me your Mother who teaches me, first of all, how to discover Your Love, and then how to trust in Pure Love.

Transform me with the power of the Eucharist, giving me your Divine Light to penetrate my heart and reveal its deepest truths.

Through Mary, give me hope and lead me to contrition. May my contrition give birth to gratitude for Your constant bestowals, given to me because You Love me just as I am ~ a sinner.

Let every act of gratitude multiply in my heart into new acts of gratitude as Blessed Mother carries me securely under Her mantle toward You, my Redeemer.

I beg for these graces through You, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2006

Spiritual Reflection

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Mk 13: 31

Building Castles out of Snow

When you believe in your own strength, you live as if God does not exist. Also, you behave as if the law of passing away does not exist, as if you will live on earth forever. A person who does not accept his status as a pilgrim and ignores the law of passing away is similar to someone who builds a large castle out of snow and does not realize that, when spring arrives, his great snow castle will melt to a mere puddle. Even if someone considers himself wealthy because he owns a beautiful castle, he is really only a pitiful beggar. Only the attitude of spiritual poverty gives us freedom from illusions because, in due time, all illusions have to melt away in God's light of truth.

When we remember about our status as pilgrims, it helps us to maintain a certain distance of spiritual poverty from the world. It shields us from excessive involvement in things and relationships that are essentially short-lived. On the path to fulfillment, thanks to the attitude of spiritual poverty, we engage in various activities only to the extent to which it is God's will, rather than giving our hearts to those things.

We do not know the plans that God has for us. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain the proper distance from everything of "value." For example, when learning a new language, it is easy to give into the illusion that you are acquiring something of lasting and unchanging value. Yet, this is not true. A single injury, even a slight damage to the brain, is sufficient to completely wipe out your memory, just like a magnetic tape that has been erased. Due to this brain injury, you could have serious difficulties communicating in your native language, let alone the foreign language that you had previously learned with such difficulty.

It is unwise if we look at everything that we have acquired in our lives without the consciousness that everything *is dust, and to dust it will return*. Constantly thinking about the law of passing away, without being open to God, can result in discouragement, apathy, or even severe depression. In the end, is it worthwhile to be so preoccupied with everything that we acquire, since these things are only dust, ashes, which we will have to leave behind in order to advance along our pilgrimage?

God wants us to obtain this dust in order to fulfill His will. Because God expects this from us, we have to participate in certain activities. We are not supposed to do this to feed our egoism and pride. Instead, we do this only because of Him. Moreover, God wants us to continue building castles from snow. He does

not want us to place our hope in them, however. We must remember that one day all of our castles will melt away without a trace. If everything that we do does not pertain to eternal things, then everything will pass away.

Our days are numbered. We do not know how many more days we have left. Consequently, it is better to live one day at a time. We must approach everything with great involvement and with the love that God expects from us. At the same time, we must do everything as if tomorrow we will have to move on and leave it all behind. Our hearts are created for God and only for Him. It is not worthwhile to surrender our hearts to the things and matters that you pass by as you walk along the path. A person who is poor in spirit always remembers that everything he does is only a means to union with the Lord. Everything is but a step on the path that leads to fulfillment.

S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.159-161

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

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

2547 The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods.³⁴¹ "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."³⁴² Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow.³⁴³ Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God.

Questions for Reflection

1. How do I regard my possessions – my achievements – my relationships? Am I conscious that everything is dust or am I focused on acquiring, accomplishing, getting recognition, or inclined to take things for granted?
2. How do I react when events make me aware that everything is subject to passing away? Where do I find God's love in what I experience?
3. Pondering Blessed Mother's life of trust and surrender, how can I learn to focus more on eternal things while not neglecting God's will in my day to day life?

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.