

### 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 "you 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. 528, footnotes 212: Mt 2:1; cf. LH, Epiphany, Evening Prayer II, Antiphon at the Canticle of Mary; 213: Cf Mt 2:2; Num 24:17-19; Rev 22:16; 214: Cf Jn 4:22; Mt 2:4-6; 215: St. Leo the Great, Sermo 3 in epiphania Domini 1-3, 5: PL 54, 242; LH, Epiphany, OR; Roman Missal, Easter Vigil 26, Prayer after the third reading. [www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism](http://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](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)  
Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)*

### January 2, 2022 ~ Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord ~ 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Is 60:1-6
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
<b>Reading II</b>	Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6
<b>Gospel</b>	Mt 2:1-12

### 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

*Then Herod called the magi secretly . . . and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” Mt 2:7,8*

To climb the ladder or descend through love, these are the two ways offered to us. Of all the pages written about these two ways, without a doubt none can deepen and illustrate this subject more than the Gospel of Saint Matthew.

We have the story of two kings. One is named *Herod* and the other *Jesus Christ*. I think in all of history there existed no two personalities so opposite.

Herod the Great, king of Judea, who is certainly not known for his humility, was dismayed by a rumor that a child was born and that one day he could become the king of the Jews. Herod was afraid because, if there was one thing he could not accept, it was a rival – even a child – who could overshadow him and take away some of his power. He was then ready to do anything (calumny, lies, and even murder) to eliminate this potential rival.

At first, with a smile and diplomacy, Herod tried to seduce the Magi in order to find where the infant was born. When this attempt did not give any result, Herod abandoned his smile and exposed the claws of a fox in ordering the execution of all male children under the age of two. Thirst for prestige and power blinded him to such an extent that he resorted to killing innocents.

Herod was intoxicated by his search for power. Power was the only worthwhile goal. He wanted to climb to the summit, always higher on the ladder of power. . . .

In history, rarely have we seen so clearly a man as obsessed as this by the desire to climb the ladder of power in order to obtain more power. Herod wanted to manipulate and dominate at any price. . . .

Herod could be exceedingly kind if he knew that he would be *admired*. He knew the art of diplomacy and hypocrisy and he was capable of presenting different images of who he was, and even of accepting compromises, to keep himself at the highest degree of power.

History says that he organized a food and clothing distribution during a famine, and that he also reinforced the Temple of Jerusalem – but this goodness had nothing to do with real love for the poor or religion. He wanted the admiration of the crowds, captivating people to better manipulate them afterward. **He was primarily serving his prestige and his person instead of serving others. For him, the only important thing was to impress and be admired.\*** The goal of all his relationships was to give him more power.

For Herod, the only fear was to *climb down* the ladder and one could say that, for him, dying was less frightening than losing his power.

The two kings, Herod and Jesus, cross paths with each other but are totally opposite. King Herod represents the search for power at whatever price: “Climb, control, serve yourself and be powerful.” Jesus, God of Love incarnate, *descends* – lowers himself, kneels near the poor, lets himself be dispossessed, and dies abandoned, nailed to a cross – rather than accept a power that could have made him king. He is the *King of Love*.

Herod is a tyrant; Jesus is a servant. One manipulates the weak and the poor; the other serves, heals, empathizes, and loves with total self-denial. **We should not forget that these two kings always battle within ourselves. It is the fight between pride and humility.\*** [\*Emphases added—ed.]

André Daigneault, *The Way of Imperfection*; pp.45-47

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

**528** The *Epiphany* is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (*magi*) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee.<sup>212</sup> In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be king of the nations.<sup>213</sup> Their coming means that pagans can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Savior of the world only by turning towards the Jews and receiving from them the messianic promise as contained in the Old Testament.<sup>214</sup> The Epiphany shows that "the full number of the nations" now takes its "place in the

## Questions for Reflection

1. In what areas of my life do I experience that a fight between pride and humility is manifested?
2. How is God's descent as Emmanuel his invitation to me to beg for the grace to follow his example?
3. Our Blessed Mother knew the value of being the “humble handmaid.” How can she help me to descend rather than climb the ladder of pride in my daily 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.*