

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. 160, footnotes 39: DH 10; CIC, can.748s2; 40: DH11; 41: DH 11; cf. *Jn* 18:37; 12:32; No. 953, footnotes 489: *Rom* 14:7; 490: 1 *Cor* 12:26-27; 491: 1 *Cor* 13:5; cf. 10:24. www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/
American Bible © USCCB. All rights reserved. <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>
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

January 23, 2022 ~ Third Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ 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	Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15
Reading II	1 Cor 12:12-30 or 1 Cor 12:12-14, 27
Gospel	Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Opening or Closing Prayer

Dear Father, great is Your Mercy.

My true vocation is intimacy with You in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the new model of righteousness Your Son has given me, "as I have done, you should also do," open me more to Your mercy and transform me into Your divine likeness.

Dear Jesus, holy is Your Name.

May your prayer, "that they may be one as you, Father, and I are one," become my own desire. Teach me how to build up the unity of Your Mystical Body by embracing and living out my vocation to authentic holiness and happiness.

Dear Holy Spirit, amazing is Your Grace.

Grant me your gifts in order to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks" the reason for my hope. Thank you that, through You, I can encounter Jesus daily in the Eucharist, the source of my hope, even in the situations of my life that are most difficult to understand.

Dear Mother Mary, source of my joy.

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." As a vessel of the Holy Spirit, teach me to live the Beatitudes of your Son. Wrap me in your mantle, where I can believe in His mercy and fulfill my vocation to be salt of the earth and light of the world.

I 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

For in one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves, or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many. You are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.

1Cor 12:27

An important redemptive consequence of baptism is the **incorporation of the newly baptized into the community of the Church**. The faith that is born in Baptism causes us to come out of the seclusion of our own self, and allows us to enter into communion with Jesus, as well as with those who are parts of His Mystical Body. The Church becomes the place of our faith. Our faith becomes a part of the Church's faith. If we were separated from the Church, our faith would have no chance of development. . .

One cannot build or deepen one's personal faith, of which Baptism is the source, only through private dialogue with Jesus, because **faith has the dimension of communion with others**. And, in this dimension, faith is also to be born and developed...

Through the sacrament of Baptism one enters the communion of saints.

The grace of Christ, like a powerful river of life, penetrates all who belong to His Mystical Body. The same Holy Spirit acts in everyone. His graces are received not only for oneself, but also for others – spreading these graces through thought, word and works of love. Growth in grace through a greater faithfulness to God intensifies one's specific influence on others like invisible radiation. . .

No one is a solitary island. As the Mystical Body of Christ, we constitute a unique network system, similar to a system of connected vessels. Your good as well as your evil has a social dimension, because it creates a specific supernatural pressure of good or evil on others. Prayer, seen in the light of faith, situates itself within a closed system of connected vessels. In such a system, there is never a solitary prayer. As a member of the mystical organism of the Church, you either enrich or impoverish it through your prayer of faith. This determines the ecclesial dimension of prayer and defines your responsibility toward the Church and toward others. It is not the thoughtless saying of prayers, but authentic prayer that, as a form of actualization of faith, reaches God Himself. In order to have an effect on others, prayer does not have to have the character of a clear intercession for someone. It is enough that faith, hope, and charity grow in you at the same time as your prayer life intensifies. The Church and the whole Mystical Body of Jesus will be able to feel the beneficial, saving influence of your prayer. . .

Within the Mystical Body of Christ, understood in this way, there are mutual bonds of varying degrees of closeness and depth. The physical image of a **system**

of connected vessel can enlighten us about the mystery of mutual bonds within the Mystical Body of Christ. A family, as a domestic church, can be an example of a system of connected vessels. Usually God, wanting to affect a particular group of people, uses one of them in a special way so that through that person He can bestow graces on the others. . . Before converting others, try first of all to be converted yourself. . . it is not important what you do, it is important who you are. **The more good there is in you and the more faithfully you follow grace, the more effective your influence on others will be. . .**

. . . The reformation of the world and the transformation of others must begin with ourselves. The life of Christ must first increase to such an extent in you that the graces and good accepted by you cause the conversion of others.

Fr. Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 172-177

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

160 To be human, "man's response to God by faith must be free, and. . . therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act."³⁹ "God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth. Consequently they are bound to him in conscience, but not coerced. . . This fact received its fullest manifestation in Christ Jesus."⁴⁰ Indeed, Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them. "For he bore witness to the truth but refused to use force to impose it on those who spoke against it. His kingdom. . . grows by the love with which Christ, lifted up on the cross, draws men to himself."⁴¹

953 *Communion in charity*. In the *sanctorum communio*, "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself."⁴⁸⁹ "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."⁴⁹⁰ "Charity does not insist on its own way."⁴⁹¹ In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion.

Questions for Reflection

1. In my life, who has had an influence for my good?
2. What events/situations in my daily life are calling me to greater conversion?
3. Reflecting on today's readings how do I see Blessed Mother's hidden life in Nazareth as influencing others/myself?

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.