

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. 51, footnote 2: DV 2; Eph 1:9; 2:18; 2 Pet 1:4; No. 2825, footnotes 104: Heb 5:8; 105: Cf. Jn 8:29; 106: Origen, De orat. 26: PG 11, 501B.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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Slawomir Biela, *God Alone Suffices* (Ventura, CA: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2002).

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May 1, 2022 ~ Third Sunday of Easter ~ 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 Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

Responsorial Psalm Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

Reading II Rev 5:11-14

Gospel Jn 21:1-19J

Opening or Closing Prayer

My Lord Jesus,

Thank you for Your gift of the Eucharist in which You desire to meet with me, accept me, and love me just as I am.

Forgive me for constantly submerging myself in the world, seeking its innumerable temporal treasures, proving that You are not my one true treasure.

O my Lord, during Holy Mass, and during every moment of this day, I entrust to You all my affairs, fears, uncertainties and distractions, and I beg You to...

Open my soul to ever deeper contrition for wasting so many graces, and to gratefulness for Your constant bestowals.

Help me to have the attitude of a helpless child and a contrite sinner in need of Your Mercy.

Heal me of my spiritual leprosy.

Help me to discover You in the Eucharist and to desire You as my only true treasure – my only Love.

Transform me that I may decrease and You may increase.

Unite me to You, my Eucharistic Savior.

May our Blessed Mother await and receive in me and through me Your kenosis – Eucharist – and may she always be grateful within me for Your Sacrament of Love.

I ask this through Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer retreat 2007

Spiritual Reflection

*"Cast the net over the right side of the boat
and you will find something." Jn 21: 6*

Those who are fully united with God are saints. The surest support they have is fulfilling God's will, which becomes the goal and meaning of their lives. A similar thing can happen to each one of us if we seek to rely on God in every aspect of our lives. Unfortunately, we undertake the various activities that God expects from us and fall very easily into discouragement, becoming doubtful.

The most significant reasons why we lack endurance in the carrying out of God's will are because we rely on ourselves and look at the world as if God did not exist. This is the temptation of Satan, contained in the words: "You will be like gods" (Gen 3:5). He approaches us in the same manner as our first parents, tempting us to do things according to our own will, without asking Almighty God about His plans.

If we truly believed in the omnipotence of our Lord, in the fact that He alone determines the face of the earth and the shape of our lives, then we would count on and rely only on Him. We would call upon Him in every moment through our prayer and our persistent begging.

After all, everything depends on our God. Our respect and praise belong only to Him – this is what we call a **fear of God**. When this fear of God is missing in us, we give an exaggerated value and our praise and respect to less important things – the situations and circumstances that should always be secondary when confronted with the action of God. We are afraid of people and their rules, which in our thinking govern the world, instead of fearing only God, whose will is necessary for all things to happen.

Because of human regard, we become stagnant and discouraged when we are faced with difficulties, circumstances that we consider as unfriendly winds preventing us from achieving our goal. We forget that there are only two scenarios: either God wants these difficulties for reasons that we do not have to know, or at least he allows them to happen.

Perhaps He allows these difficulties to show us how much we lack faith? Our connections toward people and the different 'rules of the game' invented by them is a form of idolatry because we are either too afraid of them, or we adore them without any reservations. In this way we disregard our Almighty God. If our hearts properly feared God, if we sought reliance on our Lord and Creator in every situation, then a certain distance would be generated in us toward the illusory calculations of our minds, which are not enlightened by faith.

If faith indeed was our reliance, then we would be convinced that there is no such thing as an impossible situation, and there would be no reason for us to succumb to discouragement when facing difficult circumstances. We would know that, in order to discover God's strength for endeavors within ourselves, it is sufficient for us to contritely admit to the truth that we fail to seek reliance on God's will and on His love...

...Each coming of our God, each encounter with Him, is a challenge that he places before us, we people of little faith: *Why do you doubt? It is about time that you admit with contrition that you are thinking and acting as if I did not exist. Do not forget that I AM.*

Slawomir Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp. 131-133

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

51 "It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will. His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine nature."²

2825 "Although he was a Son, [Jesus] learned obedience through what he suffered."¹⁰⁴ How much more reason have we sinful creatures to learn obedience – we who in him have become children of adoption. We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father.¹⁰⁵

In committing ourselves to [Christ], we can become one spirit with him, and thereby accomplish his will, in such wise that it will be perfect on earth as it is in heaven.¹⁰⁶

Questions for Reflection

1. How attuned am I to God's will and why or why not do I take it into consideration?
2. When facing difficult circumstances, in what ways can I become discouraged or seek reliance in God?
3. Through her "Fiat," Mary demonstrated her readiness to do God's will. How can she help me to surrender my will to God's loving will?

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.