

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. 1741, footnotes 34: Gal 5:1; 35: Cf. Jn 8:32; 36: 2 Cor 3:17; 37: Rom 8:21; No. 1742, footnote 38: Roman Missal, 32nd Sunday, Opening Prayer: *Omnipotens et misericors Deus, universa nobis adversantia propitiates excludere, ut, mente et corpore pariter expediti, quae tua sunt liberis mentibus exsequamur.**

catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith, 4th ed.* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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September 18, 2022 ~ Twenty-Fifth 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 Am 8:4-7

Responsorial Psalm Ps 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8

Reading II 1 Tm 2:1-8

Gospel Lk 16:1-13

Opening or Closing Prayer

Holy Mary, full of God's presence

during the days of your life, you accepted with full humility the Father's will,
and the Devil was never capable to tie you around with his confusion.

Once with your Son you interceded for our difficulties, and,
full of kindness and patience,

you gave us the example of how to untie the knots of our life.

And by remaining forever Our Mother, you put in order, and make more clear
the ties that link us to the Lord.

Holy Mother, Mother of God and our Mother,

to you, who untie with motherly heart the knots of our life,
we pray to you to receive in your hands (name), and to free them [him/her]
of the knots and confusion with which our enemy attacks.

Through your grace, your intercession, and your example,

deliver us from all evil, Our Lady,
and untie the knots that prevent us from being united with God,
so that we, free from sin and error,
may find Him in all things,
may have our hearts placed in Him,
and may serve Him always in our brothers and sisters. Amen

Pope Francis' prayer to *Our Lady, Untier of Knots*

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2013

Spiritual Reflection

No servant can serve two masters.

He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and mammon. Lk16: 13

To serve mammon is to enslave oneself and become dependent on some kind of material or spiritual good. Notice that mammon is called a master, who is served as one serves a king. We either serve God and love Him and despise mammon, that is, our attachment to material and spiritual goods, or – it is terrifying even to think – we love our attachment to these goods and, perhaps unconsciously, we begin to despise God.

If you analyze your prayer, this will help you to identify what forms and images mammon takes in your life. **If you take stock of what you are thinking about most often during prayer, then you will see what your greatest treasure is...** Your distractions will allow you to discover how many attachments to mammon you have. If there are many, do not be surprised that it is difficult for you to concentrate during the rosary, during adoration or during the Eucharist...

How can you uncover your mammon? Are the tension, stress, restlessness, rushing, and sadness that accompany you through life signs that you serve some kind of mammon? There are people, for example, who live under constant stress. How great then must be their attachment to something opposed to God. People free from attachments are filled with the peace of God. The peace of God builds and strengthens mental health, which in turn reflects on physical health. In this way, the soul, the psyche, and the body participate in a person's great freedom. A person free from attachments is also free from facial wrinkles, from stress, and from the diseases of civilization. Mammon systematically destroys a human person. It not only blocks your way to Christ and your adherence to Him, but it also destroys your health and your psyche.

An obvious sign of attachments is also your sadness in situations when God takes something away from you. He will, therefore, take that to which you are enslaved; hence, He will take everything that is your greatest enemy – whatever causes your heart not to be free for Him. It is only when you start to cheerfully accept these kinds of situations, and submit with serenity, that you will become more and more free.

While standing before the Lord during prayer, show Him not only your empty hands, but also your dirty hands defiled by your attachments to mammon, and pray that He will have mercy on you. Prayer can only develop in the atmosphere of freedom. As a disciple of Christ, you are especially called to contemplative prayer. **For your prayer to become contemplation** – a loving gaze on Jesus Christ, your beloved – **it is essential to have a free heart.** That is why Christ fights so much

for your heart to be free. He fights through various events, difficulties, and storms, all the while giving you the chance to cooperate intensely with grace. In all these situations, Christ expects that you will try to cleanse your heart soiled by attachments and servitude to mammon. Hence, all these difficult moments and all the storms are graces for you. They are the passing by of the Merciful Lord who loves you so much that He wants to give you this magnificent gift – **the gift of the total freedom of your heart.** Your heart should not be divided; it should be a heart solely for Him.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp 19,21-22

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1741 *Liberation and salvation.* By his glorious Cross Christ has won salvation for all men. He redeemed them from the sin that held them in bondage. "For freedom Christ has set us free."³⁴ In him we have communion with the "truth that makes us free."³⁵ The Holy Spirit has been given to us and, as the Apostle teaches, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."³⁶ Already we glory in the "liberty of the children of God."³⁷

1742 *Freedom and grace.* The grace of Christ is not in the slightest way a rival of our freedom when this freedom accords with the sense of the true and the good that God has put in the human heart. On the contrary, as Christian experience attests especially in prayer, the more docile we are to the promptings of grace, the more we grow in inner freedom and confidence during trials, such as those we face in the pressures and constraints of the outer world. By the working of grace the Holy Spirit educates us in spiritual freedom in order to make us free collaborators in his work in the Church and in the world

Almighty and merciful God, in your goodness take away from us all that is harmful, so that, made ready both in mind and body, we may freely accomplish your will.³⁸

Questions for Reflection

1. In whom or what do I place my hope, count on?
2. Which distractions in my prayer or stresses in my life reveal to me who or what is a god that enslaves my heart?
3. Mary was free from attachments and therefore free to collaborate with Christ. What graces can I ask of Her in order to obtain "freedom" and be attached to the greatest Treasure?

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.