

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.1021, footnote 592: Cf .2Tim 1:9-10; 593: Cf. Lk 16:22; 23:43; Mt 16:26; 2 Cor 5:8; Phl 1:23; Heb 9:27; 12:23; No 2831, footnote 118: Cf. Lk 16:19-31; Mt 25:31-46.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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S. C. Biela, *In the Arms of Mary* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation,

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Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

September 25, 2022 ~ 26th 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 6:1a, 4-7

Responsorial Psalm Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Reading II 1 Tm 6:11-16

Gospel Lk 16:19-31

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

*“You received what was good, Lazarus what was bad;
now he is comforted, whereas you are tormented” Lk 16:25*

Up to the very end, Lazarus was stripped of material goods and had to beg for the things most necessary for his survival. Stricken with misery and hunger, . . . Lazarus finally ended up at the *bosom of Abraham*. This means that he did not rebel against his dramatic situation; instead, he accepted it and, in this manner, became poor in spirit.

Lacking something does not guarantee a person’s salvation. Nevertheless, it does present a chance for salvation by making it easier to purchase the pearl of the Kingdom. However, it is easy to waste this chance when we rely on and place our hope in material things, rather than God. Normally, we fail to have Lazarus’ attitude. Regardless of whether we are poor or rich, we resemble the rich man from the parable. According to the mentality of his time, the rich man thought that his riches were a sign of his particular closeness.. [H]e felt exceptional in the eyes of God. He did not see the need to share with the poor, whom he considered worse than himself.

. . .When a person is immersed in temporality and lives as if God does not exist, he becomes blind and deaf to God’s grace. By adoring temporality, he does not see God’s presence in his own life. Nor does he hear the Lord who knocks through certain events, especially when God’s knocking is very soft.

. . . Commenting on this parable, the Holy Father, [Saint]John Paul II said that “The rich man was condemned because he did not pay attention to the other man – because he failed to take notice of Lazarus, the person who sat at his door and longed to eat the scraps from the table. Nowhere does Christ condemn the mere possession of earthly goods as such. Instead, he pronounces very harsh words against those who use their possessions in a selfish way, without paying attention to the needs of others.” The rich man, whose heart was full of the deception of riches and self-sufficiency, did not need God. He even regarded salvation like he did everything else – as something that he deserved. He considered himself great in the eyes of God. He probably had something in him of the attitude of the rich young man who was so attached to his material possessions that he was incapable of giving them away in response to Christ’s invitation. The rich young man *went away sad* while the rich man from the parable was closed to God’s mercy, which had the power to heal and purify him from greed.

Is there not something of the attitude of the rich man from the parable in us? Do we not consider ourselves the **worthy** owners of the different graces that we receive from God? Do we not turn away from God because we think that we can manage without Him?. . .God sustains our lives and gives us health and strength. Thanks to

Him we can see, hear and walk. God gives us the ability to think and act. Are we grateful for these graces?. . .

Everything is alms from God’s love. Do we thank Him more than just occasionally for these alms from His love? When we fail to thank God for these gifts that we receive from Him, we behave as if we were self-sufficient, as if our lives and the fate of the world depended on us. Is not a beggar, who is closed to his “knocking” Benefactor, a pitiful person because he has it in his head that he himself is a king? St. Paul asks, “What do you possess that you have not received? But if you received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?”(1 Cor 4:7). Why do we boast, even if in the depths of our own hearts, about our abilities, talents and achievements, instead of thanking God for these gifts?

S.C Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp. 13-16

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

1021 Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ.⁵⁹² The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief, as well as other New Testament texts speak of a final destiny of the soul – a destiny which can be different for some and for others.⁵⁹³

2831 But the presence of those who hunger because they lack bread opens up another profound meaning of this petition. The drama of hunger in the world calls Christians who pray sincerely to exercise responsibility toward their brethren, both in their personal behavior and in their solidarity with the human family. This petition of the Lord’s Prayer cannot be isolated from the parables of the poor man Lazarus and of the Last Judgment.¹¹⁸

Questions for Reflection

1. Reviewing my current life with the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, what would I say is my attitude in the face of the material and spiritual gifts God has bestowed on me and what have I discovered about myself in my attitude toward others and God?
2. How do I understand that my abilities and achievements, the work by which I make a living, are gifts from God I take for granted, or that I consider due me, instead of thanking God for these?
3. My mother Mary simply said ‘yes.’ Do I say ‘yes’ but think that I would like more or deserve more? Do I consider the will of God? Meditating on Mary’s lifelong ‘fiat,’ how can she teach me acceptance in everything that God chooses for me?

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.