

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. 2705, No. 2706, No.2707 footnote 5: Cf. *Mk* 4:4-7, 15-19. www.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 Foundation, 2020). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org
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October 16, 2022 ~ Twenty-Ninth 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	Ex 17:8-13
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Reading II	2 Tm 3:14-4:2
Gospel	Lk 18:1-8

Opening or Closing Prayer

We fly to thy patronage,

O Holy Mother of God;

despise not our petitions in our necessities,

but deliver us always from all dangers,

O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Amen.

Considered to be the most ancient complete prayer to Our Lady

*Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2018*

Spiritual Reflection

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. Lk 18:1

The Priority of Prayer

Some fundamental questions arise here: How much time do you devote to prayer in your everyday life? What place does prayer have on your list of the most important things you are to do? Before what and after what do you place it? **Does it head the list** of your life's affairs, or is it the least important? What about your day of recollection? What about your examination of conscience, which is looking at yourself before the face of God? The answers to these questions will indicate **what is more important than God in your life.**

At this point you may begin by objecting that with a whole mass of duties it is difficult for you to find the time to pray. During a meeting with priests, Cardinal Lercaro, the Archbishop of Bologna, spoke with his unique fervor and ardor about the necessity of half an hour of meditation every day. During the discussion after the conference meeting, one of the young priests stood up and said:

“Of course, your Eminence, in theory this is clear and simple; one should meditate ... but when? My day looks like this: I get up in the morning at 6:30; at 7:00 I say Mass; after that I listen to confessions, then religious instruction, and lunch; after lunch I have lessons with the boys in the oratory; then I visit the sick, I work in the parish office, and I have pastoral meetings. In the evening I work with youth groups until about midnight. Where am I to find time for half an hour of meditation if I can barely find time to say the breviary?” “You’re right,” said the Cardinal, “you really don’t have time for half an hour of meditation. Your activities ‘smother’ you to such an extent that you have no time to pray. If you cannot afford half an hour to meditate, you should meditate not for half an hour, but for one and a half hours.” (A. Pronzato, *Ho voglia de pregare*, 113.)

Of course, this was not intended to be a bright, paradoxical response. The tragedy of our Christian activism is that **activities really do smother us.** This young, zealous priest who was devoting himself to God and to saving souls, was so smothered by activism that he needed a greater antidote.

If you look at yourself in the light of faith, you will understand that **the more suppressed you are with activities, the more time you should dedicate to prayer.** Otherwise you will be empty; you will have the impression that you are giving something, but this will only be an illusion. **You cannot give what you do not have.** It could be said to the young priest who was talking with Cardinal

Lercaro, *What of it, that you devote so much time to your ministerial work, that you spend so much time with the boys in the oratory, that you visit the sick, that you hear confessions, and have pastoral meetings? All of this is like trying to carry water in a sieve.*

The exhausted, overworked, busy priest trying to carry water in a sieve does not realize who is the One who really makes all the decisions. To say that this priest has no faith would be too emphatic, but his faith is undoubtedly poor. With his attitude he seems to say, *It is I who am making history, be it only in my own area in the parish or some other place; it is I who decides who will be a believer; the salvation of others depends solely on my work.*

Meanwhile, **everything depends on God**; it is He who decides, and only He can give you strength. Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 224-226

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- 2705** Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history the page on which the “today” of God is written.
- 2706** To meditate on what we read helps us to make it our own by confronting it with ourselves. Here, another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality. To the extent that we are humble and faithful, we discover in meditation the movements that stir the heart and we are able to discern them. It is a question of acting truthfully in order to come into the light: “Lord, what do you want me to do?”
- 2707** There are as many and varied methods of meditation as there are spiritual masters. Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower.⁵ But a method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus.

Questions for Reflection

1. How much time do I devote to prayer in my everyday life?
2. Where do I place prayer in the list of my daily activities? What is God revealing to me?
3. What role does Mary play in my prayer life? How can she teach me how to pray?

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.