

### 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. 2613, footnote 77: Cf. Lk 18: 9-14; No. 2839, footnotes 133: Cf. Lk 15: 11-32; 18:13; 134: Col 1:14; Eph 1:7; 135: Cf. Mt 26:28; Jn 20:23. [www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism](http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism)  
*New American Bible* © USCCB. All rights reserved. <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>  
André Daigneault, *The Long Journey to Serenity: to recover our heart of a child* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2022). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)  
Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

### October 23, 2022 ~ Thirtieth 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Sir 35:12-14, 16-18
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23
<b>Reading II</b>	2 Tm 4:6-8, 16-18
<b>Gospel</b>	Lk 18:9-14

### Opening or Closing Prayer

#### Father of Mercy and of Love,

**Thank you for the gift of reconciliation** through the Redemptive Sacrifice of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Your love is more powerful** than my sin. There is no evil that surpasses Your infinite mercy.

**Send your Holy Spirit** to convince me of my weakness so that I may live with a truth of conscience and a certainty of redemption.

**Open me**, Gracious Father, to the graces of being personally responsible for my sins, longing for forgiveness, and of being obedient to the call to conversion.

**When I seek forgiveness**, give me the courage to reveal the abyss of my misery and to accept my sins as "happy faults" so that, as Your child, I may run to Your loving embrace.

**Through the help and intercession of Mary**, Mother of Mercy, may I learn true contrition for the wounds I have caused Her Son.

**And may my continual renewal**, through the grace of Your sacraments, work to revitalize the Church, so that, as One Body in Christ, we may proclaim Your dominion over all the earth.

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

*Families of Nazareth USA*  
*Summer Retreat 2008*

## Spiritual Reflection

*'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity ... or even like this tax collector'... 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'* Lk 18:9-14

### The Pharisee: A Wounded Child

Where does this certainty originate which we carry inside, that love needs to be earned, that we have to merit the affection of others through our actions? Does it come from an old wound? We all, more or less, lack some confidence in ourselves, we hide under a false confidence because we fear recognizing our faults and weaknesses. In *The Respectable Addicts*, Barbara Killinger writes:

However, even if exteriorly he appears sure of himself and independent, inside he has a terrible need of admiration from others in order to live. Under his facade of false confidence, there is in him an eternal fight to resolve the wounds from long ago and the fears of a weak child who has a great need of approval.

In fact, if I do not feel accepted for myself, if I do not feel loved unconditionally for who I am, then I will constantly try to find ways to *assert* myself in my works. Is it not an eternal truth that a human being intensely desires to be accepted as he is? Nothing in this life has a more disastrous effect than the experience of not being loved and accepted for oneself.

The Pharisee is like a child who does not feel accepted. He needs to display his virtues: "The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity – greedy, dishonest, adulterous, or even like this tax collector'" (Lk 18:11). He has so little self-confidence that the opinion of others takes more importance for him. "All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor at synagogues" (Mt 23:5-7). The goal of the Pharisee is to *preserve* his image and live in such a way as to not commit any fault. What appears to be hypocritical reveals, in fact, that the Pharisee is incapable of accepting himself in his weakness. He needs to flaunt his virtues, his vows, his accomplishments. He needs to reiterate to himself the extent of being someone wonderful, extraordinary, and virtuous; furthermore, he seeks for others to follow him and admire him because, in the depth of himself, behind his shell, he feels fragile and very threatened.

Piet Van Breemen gives an example that makes us understand the wound and the psychology of the Pharisee:

Let us imagine a child who was never loved by his parents and sees other children showered with affection by theirs. He would be jealous and say: "I want to be loved also. I have never experienced it, but I will

earn my parent's love, incite it by my good behavior." The child works at behaving in a perfect manner to *earn* the love of his parents. This is the Pharisee. He acts in such a way as to give birth to God's love. He, himself, takes the initiative. What a terrible world! What an impossible burden!...For the Pharisee, the accent is placed on his own strength and his own deeds.

Accepting to confess is also a part of the long journey toward serenity. Is it not necessary to reconcile with one's past one day, to reconcile with oneself and to reconcile with God in order to die in peace? Confession is the response of a deep need in the human heart. Here I use the word *confession* or to *confess* and mean it in the wide sense of being truthful, to open up, to reveal one's life and one's past to someone else, without hiding anything, to take off one's mask. As a Catholic priest, I can only emphasize the sense of confessing to a priest and the role of confession, which has tended to be more and more without the means of individual confession. There is not always the sense of deep liberation that true confession brings by *verbalizing* before a human being our weaknesses and our sins, even the most secret ones and the most difficult to confess.

André Daigneault, *The Long Journey to Serenity*, pp. 92-94

### References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**2613** The Pharisee and the tax collector,"<sup>77</sup> concerns the humility of the heart that prays. "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" The Church continues to make this prayer its own: *Kyrie eleison!*

**2839** With bold confidence, we began praying to our Father. In begging him that his name be hallowed, we were in fact asking him that we ourselves might be always made more holy. But though we are clothed with the baptismal garment, we do not cease to sin, to turn away from God. Now, in this new petition, we return to him like the prodigal son and, like the tax collector, recognize that we are sinners before him.<sup>133</sup> Our petition begins with a "confession" of our wretchedness and his mercy. Our hope is firm because, in his Son, "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."<sup>134</sup> We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the sacraments of his Church.<sup>135</sup>

### Questions for Reflection

1. In my daily life, what attitudes might I discover that can be similar to this Pharisee?
2. How is God's love present in these situations? What is my response?
3. How can Mary, the lowly Handmaid of the Lord help me with the prayer of the tax collector?

### 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.*