

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 my 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. 179, No. 2086, footnote 8: Roman Catechism 3,2,4.

www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism

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S.C. Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, 3rd ed. (Fort Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2011). All rights reserved. - www.inthearmsofmary.org

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April 23 2023 ~ Third Sunday of Easter ~ Year A 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 2:14, 22-33

Responsorial Psalm Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

Reading II 1 Pt 1:17-21

Gospel Lk 24:13-35

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.

Summer Retreat 2007
Families of Nazareth USA

Spiritual Reflection

Oh, how foolish you are!

How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Lk 24:25

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 and rely only on Him. We would call upon Him in every moment through our prayer and our persistent begging. . .

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. . .

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.

St. John of the Cross mentions in his writings about faith, that faith becomes the most important means in our seeking of reliance on God and our union with Him. The Mystical Doctor points out that when the natural capacity of our mind is permeated with the presence of God and subjected to Him, then it becomes faith, which enables us to lean on this unending power and love of our Creator.

We are witnesses of our God, who comes to us so frequently and yet we often behave as if we have not seen or experienced anything. 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 you admit with contrition that you are thinking and acting as if I did not exist. Do not forget that I AM.*

What is the whole might and power of this world, which **cannot be** compared to God who alone can say about Himself, **I AM**? And if that is the case, why do we worry and why are we discouraged? After all, if we treat **THE ONE WHO IS** as if He was helpless before the power of this world, it is not only stupid but also a great offense before God. God allowed men to crucify Him; in this way He revealed His own might, which "is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). This entire weakness, which we are struck by in ourselves and in the world that surrounds us, is permeated with the power of God, the power that alone can become a source of support for us. This **power wants to be revealed in the world**, even though this

world seems to be completely dominated by various human connections and 'rules of the game.'

It is impossible for us to imagine that we can get rid of our 'fear of people' completely because it is inherent in our nature. But it is important that we treat our own tendency to lean on the system of human calculations with some degree of irony and distance. We have to poke fun at what we can call the 'stupidity of our lack of faith,' which very successfully limits God's action. How many beautiful deeds and plans of God are abandoned because of our stupidity?

Our only rescue is to bring this 'stupidity of our lack of faith' before the feet of Jesus and beg Him to be united with us, the people who by their own weak faith limit the great plans of God. Then He will come to us and permeate our will and thoughts. He will take into His own hands the helm of our lives. Our Creator's will depends upon our interior disposition; therefore, such prayers constitute the only chance for us to stop placing boundaries to His omnipotence.

Slawomir Biela, *God Alone Suffices*, pp. 132-135

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

179 Faith is a supernatural gift from God. In order to believe, man needs the interior helps of the Holy Spirit.

2086 "The first commandment embraces faith, hope, and charity. When we say 'God' we confess a constant, unchangeable being, always the same, faithful and just, without any evil. It follows that we must necessarily accept his words and have complete faith in him and acknowledge his authority. He is almighty, merciful, and infinitely beneficent. Who could not place all hope in him? Who could not love him when contemplating the treasures of goodness and love he has poured out on us? Hence the formula God employs in the Scripture at the beginning and end of his commandments: 'I am the LORD.'"⁸

Questions for Reflection

1. In my daily life and in particular during times of turmoil and "woke" culture, does my reaction indicate a deeper faith or a 'slowness' of the heart? Why?
2. In trials of interior life and/or the difficult life circumstances of today, how do I perceive God's presence in what I experience? Are my eyes open to Him walking with me? How do I respond?
3. In pondering Mary's trials of faith, how can she help me to see Jesus in His sacrifice, seek a deeper reliance on Him, and surrender to the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

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.