

### 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. 754, footnote 146:* LG 6; Cf. *Jn* 10:1-10; *Isa* 40:11; *Ezek* 34:11-31; *Jn* 10:11; § *Pet* 5:4; *Jn* 10:11-16; **No. 2656.**

[catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism](http://catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism)

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

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### April 30, 2023 ~ Fourth 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

<b>Reading I</b>	Acts 2:14a, 36-41
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 23:1-2a, 3b-4, 5, 6
<b>Reading II</b>	1 Pt 2:20b-25
<b>Gospel</b>	Jn 10:1-10

#### Opening or Closing Prayer

##### Lord Jesus,

You were sent by the Father  
to gather together those who are scattered.  
You came among us, doing good and bringing healing,  
announcing the Word of salvation  
and giving the Bread which lasts forever.  
Be our companion on life's pilgrim way.

**May your Holy Spirit** inflame our hearts,  
enliven our hope and open our minds,  
so that together with our sisters and brothers in faith  
we may recognize you in the Scriptures  
and in the breaking of bread.

**May your Holy Spirit** transform us into one body  
and lead us to walk humbly on the earth,  
in justice and love,  
as witnesses of your resurrection.

**In communion with Mary,**  
whom you gave to us as our Mother  
at the foot of the cross,  
through you  
may all praise, honor and blessing be to the Father  
in the Holy Spirit and in the Church,  
Now and forever. Amen

*Summer Retreat 2012*  
*Families of Nazareth USA*

## Spiritual Reflection

*"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. Jn 10: 1*

Christ, who descends into your heart, wants to love; He wants to give Himself to others and desires their good. He wants to love more and more, and He desires the greatest good for others, which in the light of faith means desiring their sanctity. If you love someone, and worry only about their material, temporal matters, then you must realize that you actually lack authentic love. It is not sufficient to be concerned about the affairs of temporal life, about education, health, and material wealth. **You can love fully only when you yourself long for sanctity and when you desire to engraft this longing into others.**

The truth that Christ loves another person through you implies that you cannot love a person without loving God. You alone are unable to love. It is Christ who loves in you. By loving Christ and becoming open to Him—becoming open to the divine agape that descends upon you—you allow Him to love you and to love others through you. Opening yourself to the descent of Christ, whether it is through the Holy Sacraments or in prayer, allows you to love others. **You can give Christ to others to the extent that you accept Him and to the extent that you allow Him to encompass you.** To love another person means to impart Christ to him. You cannot impart that which you do not have. The more you love God and accept Him in this love by allowing Him to live and act in you, the more capable you are of loving others.

To love means to give oneself, to impart good to others. However, it is not sufficient to give only material goods; in the light of faith, spiritual goods are more important. If you do not give them to those close to you, then a specific spiritual “theft,” a specific spiritual “harm,” takes place. Surely they have a right to these spiritual goods. Those around you have a right for you to become a pure channel of grace for them as you grow in sanctifying grace and in striving toward sanctity. Your growth in sanctity becomes, in the light of faith, the most precious gift for those close to you. You have to question your love, you have to stand in the truth and ask yourself whether you really love. You are most certainly convinced that you love your child because, not only are you concerned about temporal matters, but you also pray for him. Yet the value and efficacy of your prayer depends not on feelings, but on the greatness of sanctifying grace, on the greatness of your faith and love of God. If there is no spiritual life in you, if there is a lack of growth in faith and in God’s love, then, in the spiritual sense, you become a “thief” to those around you.

A mother who is a “lukewarm” Christian and has not adhered to Christ through faith should realize that, because she has not come to love Christ, she does

not fully love her child. In not receiving Holy Communion, she also deprives her child, who is precious to her, of special graces. Not being aware of it, she is stealing the graces that he would receive thanks to her Holy Communions. This is because every participation in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of Penance, every time you receive one of the other sacraments, and every one of your prayers are always the giving of good to others due to the “system of connected vessels.” These connected vessels are a system of our tight mutual bonds within the Mystical Body of Christ. You love your husband, son, daughter, parents, those close to you or those who are not, to the extent that you yourself are converted to God, to the extent that you strive for sanctity, and to the extent that you no longer live, but that Christ lives in you. He, who is the only love and only good, desires to love you boundlessly and is always seeking souls that He may flood with the boundless ocean of His love. One cannot love man without loving God. In fact, only saints truly love others; they are the ones who have fully opened themselves to Christ and in whom Christ can fully live and love.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp. 252-254

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

**754** "The Church is, accordingly, a *sheepfold*, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ. It is also the flock of which God himself foretold that he would be the shepherd, and whose sheep, even though governed by human shepherds, are unfailingly nourished and led by Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Prince of Shepherds, who gave his life for his sheep.<sup>146</sup>

**2656** One enters into prayer as one enters into liturgy: by the narrow gate of *faith*. Through the signs of his presence, it is the Face of the Lord that we seek and desire; it is his Word that we want to hear and keep.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What are my main concerns in my relationships with family and friends? Do I seek to give them Christ first or am I more concerned with temporal affairs?
2. How can I be more opened to the good Shepherd’s love so that, in turn, I may radiate to others the true love of Christ?
3. Mary’s hymn the Magnificat is a testimony of how much the Bible was a source of life for her. How can I imitate her so that I may become a gateway of sanctity?

## 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.*