

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. 3, footnote 6: 6 Cf. Acts 2:42.; **No. 1343, footnote 169:** Acts 20:7. catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism
New American Bible © USCCB. All rights reserved. bible.usccb.org/readings/calendar
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
Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

APRIL 16, 2023 ~ DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY ~ YEAR A
SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

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 2:42-47
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
Reading II	1 Pt 1:3-9
Gospel	Jn 20:19-31

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

50th International Eucharistic Congress Prayer, Dublin 2012

Families of Nazareth USA
Summer Retreat 2012

Spiritual Reflection

They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. Acts 2: 46-47

In our present society, who will be a reliable *source* of hope so that pure water often buried under the mud of our hearts is capable of flowing out? Who will be true spiritual guides, spiritual fathers and mothers who, without dominating or possessing the other, will affirm in individuals what is most beautiful in each one? The future of the world depends on this.

In my ministry, I sometimes meet people from all ages, including young people. What surprises me with the young generation of today (thirty or less) is to realize that the teenage years sometimes seem to be prolonged up to twenty-five or thirty years old and, in view of affective and identity balance, to what extent these young people are fragile and wounded in their hearts. Often, they are unable to freely open up to another person. However, despite their astounding ignorance of the basics of Christian faith, they have hearts that are poor because of their sufferings and are open to Jesus Christ's salvation when it is presented by true witnesses of the Gospel. . .

Our world needs true spiritual fathers, as opposed to gurus or domineering personalities, who use the immaturity of the young in order to manipulate them. Since our society has suffered from paternalism at times, it often rejects true paternity. However, how society is awaiting true fathers! Olivier Clement has this reflection:

People are searching for real spiritual fathers able to welcome them, to love them, to make them understand that each person is worthy of love because most people are in need of love. Some have the impression that no one loved them and end up doubting and hating themselves.

What people await from Churches are spiritual fathers. A spiritual father is one who, from his look and presence, warms you and lets you see that you are loved. Then one

first believes that they are loved by him, and he lets it be known that through him it is Someone else...

True saints are not awkward or rigid...They are men and women incarnate who, having accepted their heart, are witnesses of God's tenderness which our world has so much need of. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit to give us such true witnesses.

André Daigneault, *The Long Journey to Serenity*, pp.134-136

Reference from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

3 Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer.⁶

1343 It was above all on "the first day of the week," Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection, that the Christians met "to break bread." ¹⁶⁹ From that time on down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Church's life.

Questions for Reflection

1. How do I celebrate Sunday's Holy Mass? Am I full of exaltation and sincerity of heart? Or is attending Mass just routine?
2. Have I experienced the "spiritual father, spiritual mother, spiritual friend" that is described in this reflection?
3. My spiritual Mother, Mary welcomes me with love and understanding. What is she teaching me about proclaiming the Good News!?

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.