

### 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. 2500, footnotes 290: Wis 13:3, 5; 291: Wis 7:25-26; 292: Wis 7:29-30; 293: Wis 8:2.

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

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Andre Daigneault, *The Long Journey toward Serenity: to recover our heart of a child*, (Ft. Collins, CO. IAMF, 2022). All rights reserved.- [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)

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### May 21, 2023 ~ Ascension of the Lord ~ 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 1:1-1
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9
<b>Reading II</b>	Eph 1:17-23
<b>Gospel</b>	Mt 28:16-20

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**Dear Father**, great is Your Mercy.

My true vocation is intimacy with You in the Kingdom of Heaven. May the new model of righteousness Your Son has given me, "as I have done, you should also do," open me more to Your mercy and transform me into Your divine likeness.

**Dear Jesus**, holy is Your Name.

May your prayer, "that they may be one as you, Father, and I are one," become my own desire. Teach me how to build up the unity of Your Mystical Body by embracing and living out my vocation to authentic holiness and happiness.

**Dear Holy Spirit**, amazing is Your Grace.

Grant me your gifts in order to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks" the reason for my hope. Thank you that, through You, I can encounter Jesus daily in the Eucharist, the source of my hope, even in the situations of my life that are most difficult to understand.

**Dear Mother Mary**, source of my joy.

"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." As a vessel of the Holy Spirit, teach me to live the Beatitudes of your Son. Wrap me in your mantle, where I can believe in His mercy and fulfill my vocation to be salt of the earth and light of the world.

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

*Families of Nazareth USA*  
*Summer Retreat 2011*

## Spiritual Reflection

*All you peoples, clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness.  
For the Lord, the Most High, the awesome, is the great king over all the earth.*  
Psalm 47: 2-3

“God looked at everything he had made and found it very good.” This judgement on the world from God should challenge us. At times, what man or woman did not pose the question: Is life worth living? Is the world beautiful? Is life a gift or only adversity?

Let us not forget that, in biblical thought, God reveals himself with life throughout human history. For the Hebrews, faith meant opening themselves to the God of life revealed through their history. God called them to walk, to have confidence, to march forward in faith and trust. In faith, Abraham left without knowing his destination, but trusting this God who called him forward. Through faith, Moses left the security of Egypt for the insecurity of the desert, trusting that a life was waiting for him and his people, provided they walked in faith and confidence. The Hebraic faith, the biblical faith, is centered first on life and not the afterlife. The world is declared good and very good. Biblical theology, biblical faith, is oriented toward life and not against life. This faith tells us that God is found in life, but this God of life is more than life.

Genesis, the account of creation, clearly affirms the greatness and beauty of life. Material things are delightful and good but one needs to know how to use them. Life is beautiful, life is good and should be appreciated. The world is permeated with God’s love.

For the people of the Bible, to be spiritual meant to be alive for God and alive for the world. It did not signify being pious or detached from the world in the sense of disdain for the world or rejection of human life. The Hebrews were so devoted to living life in this world that they had little thought of life after death. It did not mean that they were disbelieving of life after death. But, for them, it was most important to exercise their faith in the present, in this life. Death was natural. After living, one accepted to die, but possibly very old and in serenity, “filled with days,” as mentioned in the Bible.

The God of the Bible is a God of life who assures us that all he created “is very good.”

Do we love life? “When I search for you, my God, I search for a radiant life,” wrote St. Augustine. God is delightful, God is joy, God is truly the God of life, the *living* God. The injunction, “You will rejoice before your God, the Lord,” is at the heart of the Hebraic tradition. In Hebrew, joy is said *gool*, meaning “to spin under

the influence of a violent emotion.” In the New Testament, Jesus told his disciples that they *must* live in joy: “I have told you this so that my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete” (Jn 15:11). It is because God is Love, Life, and Joy, and love by nature tends to diffuse itself, for “God created the world so that all creatures would be supplied with his blessings and rejoice in the splendor of his glory.” “The God of my joy and my delight,” is the title given to God in Psalm 43:4. Therefore it is time to proclaim with courage this *joyful news* of the fullness of life, this *good news* that God is life and beatitude; that it is beatitude and not suffering, deprivation, and the cross that will have the last word. For humanity has ended up enclosing itself in the false conviction that it must choose between God and life, between God and happiness.

Andre Daigneault, *The Long Journey toward Serenity*, pp. 59-60

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

**2500** The practice of goodness is accompanied by spontaneous spiritual joy and moral beauty. Likewise, truth carries with it the joy and splendor of spiritual beauty. Truth is beautiful in itself. Truth in words, the rational expression of the knowledge of created and uncreated reality, is necessary to man, who is endowed with intellect. But truth can also find other complementary forms of human expression, above all when it is a matter of evoking what is beyond words: the depths of the human heart, the exaltations of the soul, the mystery of God. Even before revealing himself to man in words of truth, God reveals himself to him through the universal language of creation, the work of his Word, of his wisdom: the order and harmony of the cosmos-which both the child and the scientist discover-“from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator,” “for the author of beauty created them.”<sup>290</sup>

[Wisdom] is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness.<sup>291</sup> For [wisdom] is more beautiful than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be superior, for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil does not prevail.<sup>292</sup> I became enamored of her beauty.<sup>293</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. What am I searching for in my life?
2. What experiences this week convinced me that life is beautiful and permeated with God’s love?
3. How do I experience Mary, my Mother, leading me to Her Son, Jesus?

## 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.*