

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: 981, footnotes 526:** *Lk* 24:47; **527:** *2 Cor* 5:18; **527:** *2 Cor* 5:18; **No. 2010, 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

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Tadeusz Dajczer *The Gift of Faith*, 3rd ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 20012). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org

Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

September 17, 2023~ 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ 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 Sir 27:30 28:7

Responsorial Psalm Ps 103: 1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

Reading II Rom 14:7-9

Gospel Mt 18:21-35

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

*The Lord is kind and merciful,
slow to anger and rich in compassion. Ps 103: 8*

Our faith should develop through the permanent process of conversion. Christ's rising from the dead means that there is no ultimate failure in our life, that no life is doomed, and that no evil is final. This is stated in the Offertory of the former Liturgy of the Mass, "God...miraculously created the dignity of human nature and even more miraculously restored it." God would not allow evil if He were not able to extract good from it. Our sin can become the "happy fault" that is mentioned in the Liturgy of Holy Saturday. **God can turn every one of our faults into a *felix culpa* (happy fault).** It is a fault that will remind us and show us, in the light of faith, how much we are loved by the One who died and has risen for us. However, not every fault becomes a happy fault. There are times when you do not return to Christ immediately after the fall, and you may even become hardened and intractable. It is then that the real tragedy takes place, because in this situation God is unable to forgive you.

All your sins and infidelities should become happy faults, but this can happen only if you are contrite and you long for forgiveness. That is why God, in His desire to help you to overcome your obstinacy, always approaches you first so that He may induce you to desire forgiveness.

God, who does not remember the wounds inflicted by us, constantly opens His heart to man. He does it in many ways. He often reveals Himself to us and calls upon us through the saints, whom He fills with His own Divine love, or through the ministers of the Word and of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of Reconciliation. Father Huvelin, the confessor who led Charles de Foucauld onto the path of conversion, said that he was given the grace of an unusually fervent desire from God to absolve people from their sins. This longing to grant absolution, which God gave to Father Huvelin, revealed God's own constant and insatiable desire to forgive our sins. This is why you should fight with your sadness. If you have strayed from God, regardless of how far you have wandered away, you can always return. **After every fall, remember that He is waiting. When you return and ask His forgiveness, you make Him happy, because you allow Him to love you through forgiveness.**

All your infidelities and sins will become happy faults if they help you know the mercy of the Lord more deeply. They will become happy faults if they make you more trustful and humble – trusting the Lord more and yourself less. You will grow in faith after they have been forgiven.

Your transgressions will become happy faults if knowing that you have hurt Jesus pours new life into your love for Him. They will become happy faults if

this knowledge deepens your desire to give yourself over to Him – so that your heart may beat exclusively for Him, just as His wounded Heart beats exclusively for you.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.74-75

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

981 After his Resurrection, Christ sent his apostles "so that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations."⁵²⁶ The apostles and their successors carry out this "ministry of reconciliation," not only by announcing to men God's forgiveness merited for us by Christ, and calling them to conversion and faith; but also by communicating to them the forgiveness of sins in Baptism, and reconciling them with God and with the Church through the power of the keys, received from Christ.⁵²⁷

2010 Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, *no one can merit the initial grace* of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, *we can then merit* for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life...

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.¹³³ 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."¹³⁴ We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the sacraments of his Church.¹³⁵

Questions for reflection

1. In my daily life, how have I experienced a "happy fault"?
2. Do I believe in God's insatiable desire to forgive my sins? Why or why not?
3. When I recite: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners," what does my heart desire from Her and how can I trust that it will be granted from God?

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.