

### 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.222, No. 224, footnotes 48: 1 Cor 4:7; 49: Ps 116:12; No. 226, No.2638, footnote 120: 1 Thess 5:18; Col 4:2.*

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

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S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary

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Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

### October 22, 2023 ~ Twenty-Ninth 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** Is 45:1, 4-6

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8, 9-10

**Reading II** 1 Thes 1:1-5b

**Gospel** Mt 22:15-21

#### 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.

*Families of Nazareth USA  
Summer retreat 2007*

## Spiritual Reflection

*Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar  
and to God what belongs to God. Mt 22: 21*

...Nowhere does Christ condemn the mere possession of earthly goods as such. Instead, he pronounces very harsh words against those who use their possessions in a selfish way, without paying attention to the needs of others. The rich man, whose heart was full of the deception of riches and self-sufficiency, did not need God. He even regarded salvation like he did everything else – as something that he deserved. He considered himself great in the eyes of God. He probably had something in him of the attitude of the rich young man who was so attached to his material possessions that he was incapable of giving them away in response to Christ's invitation (see Mt 19:22). The rich young man *went away sad* while the rich man from the parable was closed to God's mercy, which had the power to heal and purify him from greed.

Is there not something of the attitude of the rich man from the parable in us? Do we not consider ourselves the **worthy** owners of the different graces that we receive from God? Do we not turn away from God because we think that we can manage without Him? Does God not continuously bestow countless graces upon us? God sustains our lives and gives us health and strength. Thanks to Him, we can see, hear and walk. God gives us the ability to think and to act. Are we grateful for these graces?

If God did not sustain us and bestow new graces upon us at every moment, then we would lose everything in an instant. Meanwhile, deafened to God's knocking and immersed in the spirit of this world by looking at the world without faith, and constantly maintaining the absurd conviction that we gain everything we have on our own, we turn away from God. Do we remember that the work by which we make a living is a gift from God? Certainly our heavenly Father is the one who bestows upon us the necessary strength and ability to make it possible for us to work.

Everything is alms from God's love. Do we thank Him more than just occasionally for these alms from His love? When we fail to thank God for these gifts that we receive from Him, we behave as if we were self-sufficient, as if our lives and the fate of the world depended on us. Is not a beggar, who is closed to his "knocking" Benefactor, a pitiful person because he has it in his head that he himself is a king? St. Paul asks, "What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?" (1 Cor 4:7).

Why do we boast, even in the depths of our own hearts, about our abilities, talents and achievements, instead of thanking God for these gifts?...

It is very important that you **agree to lose**. In addition, it is very important that you joyfully accept the concrete realities of the path to sanctity to which you have been invited to follow. Do not forget the pearl you want to obtain is the Kingdom of God's reign. Moreover, it is not a surprise that we have to do away with **our own wills** and give up **our own visions** of life in order to open ourselves to everything that is **God's will** and **His vision** of life.

S.C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.14-17

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

- 222** Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life.
- 224** *It means living in thanksgiving:* if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him: "What have you that you did not receive?"<sup>48</sup> "What shall I render to the LORD for all his bounty to me?"<sup>49</sup>
- 226** *It means making good use of created things:* faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him
- 2638** As in the prayer of petition, every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving. The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"; "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."<sup>120</sup>

## Questions for Reflection

1. In what areas of my life do I most recognize that everything is alms from God's love? In which area(s) do I feel in control or self-sufficient? What is my attitude most of the time?
2. When I find myself immersed in the spirit of the world or fail to thank God for his everyday gifts, to what is God calling me?
3. In her Magnificat we see that Mary was open to her "Benefactor" and always magnified the Lord. How can she help me repay to God what belongs to 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.*