

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. 2090, No. 2091, No. 2092.

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Families of Nazareth Movement USA – www.familiesofnazareth.us

Nov. 12, 2023 ~ Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ Year

A

Spiritual Reflection on Sunday's Readings

Prepared by:
Families of Nazareth Movement USA

Opening Prayer
Read Decalogue
Read Scripture
Read Reflection

Reading I	Wis 6:12-16
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Reading II	1 Thes 4:13-18
Gospel	Mt 25:1-13

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 Movement USA
Summer retreat 2011*

Spiritual Reflection

“Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” Mt 25:13

“Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks” (Lk 12:35-36). How can we interpret this call to vigilance and readiness for the Lord’s coming? Is it only an appeal to be ready for our meeting with the Lord at the moment of our death?

The Lord wants you to await meeting with Him all the time – in every moment. After all, He is always standing at your door and knocking. He wants to meet with you during the day and during the night, in joy and in sorrow, in extraordinary events and in the monotonous rhythm of daily life.

He is present in you, around you, and through everything that He created. He is knocking on your door through great and small events. He is present in His will, which He desires to reveal to you.

Are you the vigilant servant who hears the Lord’s knocking? Do you run to the door to open it for Him?

The servant who is vigilant not only has *girded* loins in order to be ready to fulfill the Lord’s indications, but also a *lighted torch*, which is the Light of Truth. Openness to God means, above all, **remaining in truth**.

To remain in truth means to attribute every supernatural good in your life to God. It means to give up all delusions that this goodness is yours,

S.C. Biela, *Behold I Stand at the Door and Knock*, pp. 112-113

It would be good if you could live with the awareness that your last trial may arrive at any time. It is necessary to be vigilant and prepared, like the wise virgins who kept oil reserves for their lamps (cf. Mt 25:1-13).

Your ‘oil’ should be the childlike trust in God. From where does one get it? That kind of trust does not have to spring from positive feelings, because it is difficult to have them when one feels his lowest. Neither does it have to arise from the sphere of rational premises – when you discover the truth of your misery, reason can tell you that you cannot count on anything and you can expect nothing. However, without proof from feelings, from experience, and from logic, your **heart** should be filled with profound trust: “I shall get up and go to my father” (Lk 15:18).

Thanks to this kind of **trust up to the point of folly** and the faith that goes with it, God can bestow on you the immensity of His graces.

What will be the best robe or sandals in your case? What kind of ring will be put on your finger? This will remain a mystery. But, it will be evident for you as the worst of all men that you merit *nothing*. And so, whatever you will receive will be for you like the best robe, the most beautiful sandals, and the most valuable ring.

S.C. Biela, *In the Arms of Mary*, pp 106-107

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2090 When God reveals Himself and calls him, man cannot fully respond to the divine love by his own powers. He must hope that God will give him the capacity to love Him in return and to act in conformity with the commandments of charity. Hope is the confident expectation of divine blessing and the beatific vision of God; it is also the fear of offending God’s love and of incurring punishment.

2091 The first commandment is also concerned with sins against hope, namely, despair and presumption:
By *despair*, man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his sins. Despair is contrary to God’s goodness, to his justice – for the Lord is faithful to his promises – and to his mercy.

2092 There are two kinds of *presumption*. Either man presumes upon his own capacities, (hoping to be able to save himself without help from on high), or he presumes upon God’s almighty power or his mercy (hoping to obtain his forgiveness without conversion and glory without merit).

Questions for Reflection

1. How have I been preparing myself for my meeting with Christ? How can these present times of unrest and insecurity give me a renewed opportunity?
2. What is God revealing to me in what I experience? How can I respond?
3. Mary declared herself the handmaid of the Lord. In her life, what can I use as an example in order to be ready for God’s coming? What can I ask her?

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.