

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. 2653, footnote 4: DV 25; cf. Phil 3:8; St. Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum* 1, 20, 88:PL 16,50; No. 2654, footnote 5: Guigo the Carthusian, *Scala Paradisi*: PL 40,998; No. 108, footnote 73: St. Bernard, *S. missus est* hom. 4, 11: PL 183, 86; 74: Cf. Lk 24:45. <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism>
New American Bible © USCCB. All rights reserved. . <https://bible.usccb.org/readings>
Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, 4th ed. (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary Foundation, 2020). All rights reserved. – www.inthearmsofmary.org
Families of Nazareth Movement – www.familiesofnazareth.us

JANUARY 14, 2024 ~ 2ND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME ~ YEAR B
SPIRITUAL REFLECTION ON SUNDAY'S READINGS

PREPARED BY:
FAMILIES OF NAZARETH MOVEMENT USA
COMMUNION OF LIFE WITH CHRIST THROUGH MARY

Reading I	1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19
Responsorial Psalm	Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10
Reading II	1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20
Gospel	Jn 1:35-42

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
FNM Summer Retreat 2012

Spiritual Reflection

Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

1 Sm 3:10, 19

The presence of Christ in the Word of God will overwhelm your interior life and your prayer. **Listening intently to the Word of God will cause you to meditate on the words, which will be engraved deeply into your heart.*** They will later come to mind during moments of prayer that will then become prayer based on the Bible, and they will also come to mind in moments of making decisions. Have you already asked yourself, *What is the role of the Bible in my prayer?* * (Emphasis added by editor)

Christ often used a specific literary form, the parable, which is an expanded symbol that draws your attention and engages you. Because of this, when you read the parable of the Good Shepherd, for example, you can truly recognize yourself among the sheep led by the shepherd. You can also imagine yourself as the lost sheep loved by Christ the Good Shepherd, who never stops searching for you and, when He finds you, sets you on His shoulders with great joy. The symbolism of the parables of Christ draws you into the realm of His works. **In such a simple and accessible way, He teaches you to love and to believe in love.** If it happens that you have had a great fall and your soul is shrouded in darkness, then maybe you will recall the parable of the Prodigal Son, which will let you believe once again that He has never stopped loving you. The parable will teach you the attitude of the repentant son who, with amazement and gratefulness, welcomes the joy of the forgiving father. Similarly, when some storms occur in your life you may be reminded of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Then you will realize that, just as Jesus slept in the storm-tossed boat of the apostles, He also "sleeps" now in the boat of your heart. Nevertheless, He is present within you, and when He is there, nothing bad can happen to you. All this may help you to include the Word of God in your prayer, which will allow you to regain an inner peace.

Through your reading of the Bible, a true image of God will be formed in you. You will avoid distorting His image, which so often happens. Maybe you are afraid of Him, or maybe you do not believe enough in His love because your love is so little. Your love should continue to grow until you die. **Prayerful meditation on the Bible will teach you about the love of God, who loves you incessantly, because He is Love...**

If you also want your prayer to be based on the Bible, you have to be like Mary from Bethany...

Mary, listening to and contemplating Jesus, the Word Incarnate, must have been His great joy. Whereas we, so often busy and anxious about many things, feel that we do not have the time to read the Bible. For Mary, however, there was nothing more important than the fact that He, the Master, was there in her home. The most appropriate place she found for herself was at His feet. . .

. . . The Blessed Virgin Mary could be called the Virgin of Meditation. Mary's hymn, the *Magnificat*, is a testimony of how much the Bible was a source of life for her...

You encounter the presence of Jesus in the pages of the Bible. You should, therefore, just as Mary did, absorb His thoughts and desires in order to later live by them. You should imitate Mary completely, to the end, in becoming open to the great work of Christ who transforms us in His image.

Tadeusz Dajczer, *The Gift of Faith*, pp.216-220.

References from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

2653 The Church "forcefully and specially exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ' (*Phil* 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. . . . Let them remember, however, that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man. For 'we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the divine oracles.'"⁴

2654 The spiritual writers, paraphrasing *Matthew* 7:7, summarize in this way the dispositions of the heart nourished by the word of God in prayer "Seek in reading and you will find in meditating; knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation."⁵

108 Still, the Christian faith is not a "religion of the book." Christianity is the religion of the "Word" of God, a word which is "not a written and mute word, but the Word which is incarnate and living." If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, "open (our) minds to understand the Scriptures."

Questions for Reflection

1. What is the role of the Bible when I speak to God in prayer?
2. How have I experienced that a certain Scripture passage helped me to understand God's love for me in a difficult or joyful moment? How have my reactions changed?
3. How can the example and intercession of Our Lady help me to focus more fully on the goal of transformation into the image of Christ?

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.