

### 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 "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. 2074, No. 33 *Jn* 15:5, 34 *Jn* 15:12;  
No. 2082. <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/catechism/index.cfm>  
*New American Bible* © USCCB. All rights reserved. <https://bible.usccb.org/readings>  
S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ* (Ft. Collins, CO: In the Arms of Mary  
Foundation, 2005). All rights reserved. – [www.inthearmsofmary.org](http://www.inthearmsofmary.org)  
Families of Nazareth Movement – [www.familiesofnazareth.us](http://www.familiesofnazareth.us)

MARCH 3, 2024 ~ THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT ~ YEAR B  
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>	Ex 20:1-17
<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	19:8, 9, 10, 11
<b>Reading II</b>	1 Cor 1:22-25
<b>Gospel</b>	Jn 2:13-25

### Opening or Closing Prayer

**Dearest Father**, Your Son tells us, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." I long to be Your smallest child. Help me to rediscover You as the One Who delights in me, Who calls me as His own.

**My Jesus**, You say to us, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." You are the way to heaven. Thank You for saving me and giving me Yourself in the Holy Eucharist. Reactivate the call of my Baptism to serve the Church in childlike humility, "boasting only in God."

**Holy Spirit**, reveal to me my weaknesses that I may seek Jesus' strength. Reveal to me my nothingness, that I may await all things from Him. Convince me of Jesus' words, "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God."

**Blessed Mother**, I entrust my prideful doubt, fear, discouragement and ingratitude to your intercession so that I will believe, as God's beloved child and yours, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

**We 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 2010*

### Spiritual Reflection

*I, the LORD, am your God,. . .bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

Ex 20:2,6

You constantly meet God in your daily life. He is present to you through everything that He creates. You encounter God in people and events. In a special way, you also come across Him through His will. Through His will, God comes to you as if in His Own Person. God's will is not only something, it is also Somebody. God Himself comes to you with a concrete call. God reveals to you all that is salvific and, simultaneously, the best for you.

In answer to His call, what attitude does the Lord expect from us? This becomes clear when we take a look at what kind of attitude Jesus assumed when fulfilling the Father's will. Jesus said, "I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me," and "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work" (Jn 5:30, 4:34). Why did Jesus compare fulfilling God's will to food? This comparison shows us that our Lord could not live without fulfilling the will of the Father. Jesus sought God's will with determination, just like a starving person seeks food. Fulfilling God's will constantly nourished Him. At the same time, He was always hungry for it. . .

If a true hunger for God's will existed in us, then we would receive His will with joy and longing. More precisely, the plans and designs of each one of us would be secondary. In this way, would we not avoid many painful moments that come when we are so anxiously preoccupied with clinging to our own plans, even though God clearly calls these plans into question? In other words, the less we are attached to our own designs and conceptions, the more we become free to fulfill God's will. Consequently, it is easier for us to renounce everything that is not in accordance with His will. . .

It is necessary for you to hunger for everything that God wants to give to you, regardless of whether it is joy, suffering or even death. Even if God wants to give you success or difficulties, praise or unjust accusations, human friendship or loneliness and misunderstanding, you should hunger for it, because, if these gains and losses in life are according to His will, then they are salvific. . .

What happens if someone lacks the hunger for God's will? Well, if we stop experiencing physical hunger for many days, then we forget that we have to eat. We could become seriously ill or even die as a result of malnutrition. Likewise, if a person has no spiritual hunger and is not nourished by God's will, then his soul, deprived of food, is as good as dead. Even though such a person might have been greatly successful and obtained everything that the world has to offer, he is dead.

Only those who are unceasingly fed by fulfilling the will of God live because they feel the hunger for God's will. . .

Perhaps, when you hear God calling, you do not realize how much He wants to bestow upon you. By proposing to you His own will, He desires to free you from all of your wounds, disappointments, and difficulties, which are the result of seeking your own will. When you agree to let go of the steering wheel of your life and hand it over to a Father who loves you, then you will be freed from many fears and stress, as well as from **the torment of responsibility, which flows from the faith you have in yourself**. God does not want you to be so tormented. He desires to lift this weight from your shoulders and replace it with the **sweet burden of His will**. You only have to surrender to Him, and He will lead you. . .

Among all people, Mary most fully lived with a hunger for God's will. She was constantly hungry for God's will. This was her singular desire, the only program of her life. She longs to teach this attitude to every one of her children.

S. C. Biela, *Open Wide the Door to Christ*, pp.146-151

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

**2074** Jesus says: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." <sup>33</sup> The fruit referred to in this saying is the holiness of a life made fruitful by union with Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, partake of his mysteries, and keep his commandments, the Savior himself comes to love, in us, his Father and his brethren, our Father and our brethren. His person becomes, through the Spirit, the living and interior rule of our activity. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." <sup>34</sup>

**2082** What God commands he makes possible by his grace.

### Questions for Reflection

1. What attitude do I most often assume toward God's Commandments and my desire to seek His Will for me?
2. In what way can the fasting of Lent create a hunger in me to receive God's will with joy and longing?
3. How do I express my desire, my decision, to invite Mary to teach me a hunger for God's will?

### 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.*